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**THE CARNIVORESQUE:
AN ESSAY IN
LITERARY LYCANTHROPOLOGY**

**by
JIM LARWILL**

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts
Department of English Language and Literature**

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

May 1, 2002

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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of this thesis

THE CARNIVORESQUE: AN ESSAY IN LYCANTHROPOLOGY

Submitted by Jim Larwill
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.B. Re...', is written over a horizontal line.

Thesis Supervisor

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Chair, Department of English Language and Literature

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May 1, 2002

Abstract

The Carnivoresque is a literary theory. It uses literature as an archeological site of exploration and postulates a human culture of origin. It argues early human culture was very similar in its structure to the wolf pack and suggests that hunting and a totemic identification with the wolf were integral aspects of human behaviour that are intertwined with the development of language and culture. This paper defines key Carnivoresque terms and provides an archetypal plot structure that can be used to examine the power relationships displayed in stories.

This thesis applies the Carnivoresque to six literary works. These include three short stories by Lu Hsun; "The New Year's Sacrifice," "A Madman's Dairy," and "The True Story of Ah Q." It also examines the novel Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy, and the poems "Howl," by Allan Ginsberg, and "A Cloud in Trousers," by Vladimir Mayakovsky.

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For all of my many children

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to introduce a new theoretical tool and demonstrate how it can be used to read a variety of literary texts. The theory is called the Carnivoresque. The first half of this paper will present some of the anthropological and ethological background the Carnivoresque draws upon and grows from. The second half will use the Carnivoresque as a hermeneutic instrument to examine six literary works. These include three modern Chinese short stories, a late nineteenth century English Novel, and a twentieth century American cult poem that will be compared with a Russian precursor. Each of these works is part of a canon; the canons are not connected; by the end of this essay, however, these works will be included in the same canon, that of the Carnivoresque.

Chapter 1 opens with a meditation on the question of why we study literature and suggests that the process of reading and writing is related to the primitive activity of hunting. It proposes that literature can be used as a site of archaeological exploration and that digging into literature can reveal information about the origins of human culture. An archetypal story upon which all other stories were eventually constructed, one closest to our human beginnings, is outlined. Particular attention is given to Desmond Morris's thesis in The Naked Ape; that the human animal is a biological vegetarian who turned into a social carnivore.

Chapter 2 investigates human totemic identification with an animal other. The primary taboos associated with totemic practice are incest and restrictions associated with eating the totem animal. Biologist Ian Tattersall argues that the ability for symbolic

thought was probably dormant in the human species for as long as 100,000 years before it developed quite rapidly to its current level. Tattersall suggests that the advent of symbolic thought coincided with our species becoming less tolerant of other hominid populations. On this basis, the thesis postulates that the advent of symbolic thought and territorial behaviour is connected to contact with the animal with which our ancestors formed a fundamental totemic relationship, the wolf.

Chapter 3 proposes that, while the term *Naked Ape* describes the biological reality of our species, *Naked Wolf* signifies its social reality. Drawing on a collection of essays Wolf and Man: Evolution in Parallel, it argues that the wolf pack is a better model for early human social organisation than the ape troop. Feral children are offered as one possible way a strong identification with the wolf came about. Examples from George Frazer's The Golden Bough illustrate the prevalence of wolf cults in human societies.

Chapter 4 defines the Carnivoresque as a trope, the *dramatic persona* of the wolf pack, that can be used to deconstruct literary texts. The five terms – Alpha, Omega, Beta, Wag, and Carnivorize – are defined and the basic plot structure of the Carnivoresque outlined. Peter Steinhart's The Company of Wolves provides the background for wolf pack social organisation that the Carnivoresque then uses to postulate its hybrid culture of ape and wolf, the first human culture. Evidence proving the importance of dispersal wolves in small territorial groups for the prevention of incest based upon the extended family is introduced. The Carnivoresque argues that the adoption of this behaviour was important for the survival of our ancestors. The role of social cannibalism is then placed in the Carnivoresque context and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the Novelesque is

compared to that of the Carnivoresque as an instance of the trope at work in shaping thought.

Chapter 5 begins to apply the Carnivoresque to literary texts. First it acknowledges the debt the idea of Carnivoresque owes to the leading literary figure of the Chinese revolution, Lu Hsun. Biographical information on Lu Hsun's is presented and then three of his stories "The New Year's Sacrifice", "A Madman's Diary," and "The True Story of Ah Q," are used as exemplary examples of the Carnivoreque in literature, with special attention paid to Lu Hsun's concept of Ah Q-ism.

Chapter 6 applies the Carnivoresque to Thomas Hardy's novel The Return of the Native and examines the territorial relationship between the Alpha, Omega, and Wag figures among the novel's characters. Chapter 7 looks at the poem "Howl" by Allen Ginsberg and compares it to "A Cloud in Trousers" by Vladimir Mayakovsky. The focus is on the difference between a poetry of Beta plight as opposed to the one of Wag fight.

"Theory is as theory does" (Rutland, *passim*). Whatever the merits of the Carnivoreque as anthropology, its utility as a literary hermeneutic will be vindicated, I hope, by its power to elicit new patterns of meaning and enjoyment.

CHAPTER 1

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF LITERATURE

Why study literature?

And have you ever seen a dog find a marrowbone? (In book two of the Republic, mind you, Plato says the dog is the most philosophical beast in the world.) If you have, you saw with what devotion he guards it, with what passion he holds it, with what care and judiciousness he takes the first bite, with what love he cracks it open, and with what care he sucks it dry. What impels him? What does he expect from such zeal? What benefit does he expect? Just a bit of marrow, that's all.... Just like the dog, you ought to be running with your educated nose to the wind, sniffing out and appreciating such magnificent volumes – you should be light on your feet, swift in the chase, bold in the hunt. Then by reading hard and constant reflection, you ought to crack the bone and suck the nourishing marrow....

(Rabelais 8)

In literature we are both the hunted and the hunter. In literature we leave behind the tracks of who we are and we follow these tracks in the hope of hunting down ourselves. While stories may come with us into the future, they are imprints from the past. The word story is taken from the word “history” and the term “history” is derived from the Greek word *histos*, meaning “web” or “tissue”.¹ To study the threads of literature is to hunt the flesh of the past and this pursuit can be seen as a form of self-hunting. In a similar way, the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset, sees philosophical thought in general as a form of hunting.

[. . .] with maximum frequency, when a philosopher wanted to name the

¹ Tissue is derived from the Latin word *texere* that the word text also comes from.

attitude in which he operated when musing, he compared himself with the hunter. “Thereates” Plato says over and over again; Saint Thomas Aquinas repeats “Ventator.” (Ortega y Gasset 151)

For Ortega y Gasset the hunter is the alert man “in the absolute outside of the country side, the philosopher is the alert man in the inside of ideas” (152). Perhaps the literary theorist can be seen as the alert man inside the landscape of literary texts. Further to Ortega y Gasset’s view of philosophy as a hunting activity, if one adds the fact that (despite a large number of human vegetarians) man is “the world’s preeminent predator, killing more kinds of creatures in more kinds of ways and for more kinds of reasons than any other species” (Steinhart 51), one could see philosophy and the study of literature, in fact all human activities, as carnivore activities. And if in the study of literature we are both the hunted and the hunter, this would make the study of literature a cannibalistic ritual, a carnival where we symbolically devour human flesh.

It was literature that first stimulated the young Carl Gustav Jung to eventually postulate the existence of a collective unconscious. Unlike the personal individual consciousness, which differs between individuals, the collective unconscious is:

[. . .] a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. The collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (Jung 60)

According to Joseph Campbell, the young Jung “read ravenously” and he was fascinated by the fact that the Swiss folk tales he heard as a child were similar to the stories he read

in a “book on spiritualistic phenomena that immediately caught and absorbed him” (Cambell qtd. in Jung ix). Jung noticed that stories from all over the world and from many different cultural traditions had certain similarities. Eventually Jung developed the theory of the collective unconsciousness and the idea of the archetype. The existence of archetypes evokes the possibility that the “man of the past is alive in us today” (Jung 65) and, as Jung points out when speaking about the rise of Nazi Germany, these archetypes can be powerful forces. This is especially the case when “activated, and as a result, those explosive and dangerous forces hidden in the archetype come into action, frequently with unpredictable consequences” (66). Jung suggested that the main source of proof of the collective unconsciousness is dreams, but he also proposed the “active imagination” as a source and he encouraged patients to contemplate a “fragment of fantasy that seems significant to him” (68) and to elaborate “the fantasy by observing the further fantasy material that adds itself to the fragment in a natural manner” (68). This focusing upon a fantasy and then following the fragments that accrete to it readily is also a model of the writing process.

If a collective unconsciousness does exist, evidence should be displayed in literature in some way. Literature should be like an archaeological site where we can search for the fragmented evidence of our origin. Furthermore, if the past is actively alive in the present it could turn our future into a never-ending cycle of return. The study of story can help us to see who we once were, and who we still are. With this knowledge we can make choices that can determine our future. It can make the difference between a destiny and a destination. Without knowledge there is no real freedom to choose. A

greater understanding of the archetypal structure of what we are can help liberate an individual or a group.

The Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen uses the archetypal figures found in Greek myths to write popular self-help books, such as Goddesses in Everywoman and Gods in Everyman. She views myth as “archaeological sites that reveal cultural history to us” (Bolen 19). Stories are sites for research “Some are like small shards that we piece together and infer from; others are well preserved and detailed like frescoes once buried in the ashes of Pompeii but now uncovered” (19). Connected to “our genetic memory,” Bolen sees a reciprocal nature to these stories that can “convey to the present generation something about who we are and what is expected of us” (19). She even goes as far as saying that myth and story are “part of the psychological legacy that shaped us and invisibly affects our perceptions and behavior” (19). While Bolen focuses primarily on Greek myths, she also points out the usefulness of examining modern stories, such as the George Lucas’ film Star Wars. According to Bolen, “Archetypal stories and figures – whether from contemporary motion pictures or ancient Greek myths – tell us truths about our human family story and the roles we may be playing in it” (17). A deeper understanding of human relationships can be found by studying both modern and ancient stories. Patriarchal power relationships can be understood by comparing Zeus, who overthrows his father, Cronus, and Luke Skywalker, who overthrows his father, Darth Vader.

Here is a hypothesis: Before we were human we did not tell stories. At some point after we became human, and after we as a species became a hunting animal, we began to narrate. It is possible to imagine a first story told, and if all stories in one way or

another are about ourselves in the past, the first story would be about our human beginnings, an archetypal story upon which all others were eventually constructed. This archetypal story, reflecting our first culture, would be carried consciously and unconsciously by generations through time and space, so that the most recent of stories told could be as good a place as any to search for its vestiges.

Human story telling is much older than writing and may have developed relatively soon after, and even in connection with, the development of language. Writing is a very recent invention in the evolution of man and this means that, in the broad scale of human evolution, all writing, no matter how old, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Bible, exists at the very end of the scale of human development. Writing developed long after the invention of agriculture and “agriculture is only a few thousand years old, and we are dealing in millions of years” (Morris 20) when talking about the species *Homo sapiens* and its origins. This means that all writing represents only a recent sample of human storytelling and that elements of the archetypal story of origin will be as present in a story on an ancient clay tablet as in a recent cyber text. Even if we knew the stories associated with the prehistoric paintings left by hunters on the walls of caves, we would still not have the archetypal story but only a group of stories that might contain elements of the original story all others grew from. But, if astronomy can postulate the big bang origin of the universe by studying the ever spreading elements of a point of beginning moving ever more dispersed thorough time/space, perhaps literary theorists, by examine the diffuse entropic material of literature, can postulate a point of human cultural origin.

What is a literary theory?

A literary theory can be regarded as a tool that enables the user to see connections within literary texts that may not have been readily visible without the use of the theory. In addition, the theory may provide a list of terms that enables the practitioners of the theory to engage in discussions that otherwise may not have been possible without the terminology. An ideal literary theory is one that is simple to use and reveals complex connections in a wide range of texts. The language of the ideal theory is comprised of a few basic terms and enables a broad community to join in the practice of literary study and criticism.

Theorists using literature to postulate a point of human cultural origin provide themselves with opportunities to *stub their big toe* and make as large mistakes as scientists.² For example, Newton's gravitational laws become useless when a body approaches the speed of light; the framework in which Newton's body of knowledge existed has been surpassed. In the newer, larger context this suggests that Newton's laws are erroneous; however, they are correct within the framework in which they were deduced and they are still operational in appropriate context. In fact, until the recent GPS technology of positioning satellites was put in place, the old pre-Copernican Ptolemaic astronomy was still being used for marine and aerial navigation. Furthermore, it is Newton's laws, which were developed to explain the dynamics of the Copernican system, that enabled the framework of the knowledge of physics to be pushed beyond them. One

² I allude to Georges Bataille and Claude Lévi-Strauss as examples of two theorists who straddled the disciplines of anthropology and literary theory; Michel Foucault blended his study of literature with physics.

could, however, by deconstructing the frame that surrounds Newton's laws, also demonstrate that the power relationships they explain are arbitrary and are not to be taken dogmatically.

Newton's laws deal with matter moving thorough time and space and it is possible to argue that time and space are merely concepts that exist in a discourse. The metaphysics of the idealist school of philosophy stands against the physics of the materialist school. It is an old debate and the modern form of this debate was begun by "the work of Bishop George Berkeley published in 1710 under the title Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" (Lenin 11), where he claims that the "doctrine of matter" is an absurdity. In reaction, Lenin states in Materialism and Empirio- Criticism:

If time and space are *only* concepts, man, who created them, is justified in *going beyond their bounds*, and bourgeois professors are justified in receiving salaries from reactionary governments for defending the right to go beyond these bounds, for directly or indirectly defending medieval 'absurdity'.

(Lenin 206)

A monologic idealist view sees time and space as *only* concepts; a monologic materialist view sees time and space existing outside of concepts. A monologic idealist focuses on the signifier; a monologic materialist focuses on the signified. A dialogic view balances signifier and signified: Time-and-space is a concept of man that at the same time exists outside of the thoughts of man. The role of *authoritative* materialist knowledge is to preserve itself as a *fixed truth* by reifying a frame of universals in time and space in which the authoritative knowledge exists. The role of *anarchist* idealist knowledge is to

transcend all *arbitrary truths* by destroying frames of knowledge wherever and whenever they are conceived. The role of *revolutionary* knowledge is to take the fragments of broken frames moving in time and space and to build a new frame, one that is large enough to hold an expanded *momentary truth*. We can never know: we can only be in the process of knowing. This is why even suggesting that there is a single point of human cultural origin is a waste of space and a total waste of time. Nevertheless, it may be useful to explore a possible point of human cultural origin even if it should ultimately prove incorrect because this may provide tools to expand anthropological knowledge. This is a valid reason to search for the origins of human culture in literature. Within the framework of Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, it is possible to postulate a culture of origin and then look for evidence of its existence in the stories humans tell. If the collective unconscious does in fact exist, it should display itself in literature in some fragmentary way and a theory of human cultural origin should be able to draw connections between these fragments.

The first half of this paper will postulate a human culture of origin. It will name it the Carnivoresque. Once the Carnivoresque is defined, its evolution as a literary concept will be explained. Finally, sample texts will be placed within the frame of the Carnivoresque and will be examined. Each text will be treated as if it were a shovel full of earth from a larger archaeological site. Each shovel full of text will be placed in the frame. The sieve will be shaken; the remaining fragments of stone, bone, and petrified flesh will be pieced together and offered up for consumption.

The Authority of Stories of Origin

Our present system of education (in Britain at least) denies to the committed humanist much serious participation in scientific work from the time that he joins the Faculty of Arts at his University. Similarly, the scientist has probably ceased to have any formal contact with any Arts subject since he left school [. . .]

(Cornwall 242)

Ever since Darwin published On the Origin of Species, there has been a debate over who gets to tell the story of origin that carries the most cultural weight. In recent Western society, it has primarily been an argument between a Christian view and a scientific view. Basically, the Christian view of human origin has been based upon an interpretation of pre-existing ancient stories collected in the Bible and these stories have been interpreted by a clerical hierarchy and, in some cases, the lay followers of the religion. The scientific view has been based upon a collection of stories written in recent times by a class of professionals following the sacrament of the scientific method. The axiomatic view of the world is contrasted with the mythopoetic view. Yet, it is interesting to note that the stories of human origin that the Biblical and scientific view tell are remarkably similar.

In the Biblical version, humans originally live in a lush garden and are forced into a new environment after eating something which leads to a change in the very nature of their being. With this change of essence and environment comes the discovery that they are naked: “and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Gen 3, 7). Our ancestors then put on clothes and develop agriculture: “... and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Gen 3, 18-19). In the scientific view of evolution our ape ancestors first developed in jungles then, due to

an environmental change, the jungles reduced in size and they were forced on to the savannas. This less sheltered habitat did not provide our ancestors with their staple of fruits and nuts that the jungle had previously supplied in abundance: “Their ape ancestors already preferred eating fruit but as the woodlands dried up fruit was in short supply” (MacKinnon 154). Once on the (at times thorny) savannas, our ancestors were reduced to eating herbs: “Grass seeds provided a rich food supply for which there was little competition” (155). However, while the plant life on the savannas provided our ancestors with enough food to survive, it did not provide them with enough to thrive. In the scientific version of our story of origin, it is generally agreed that something dramatic happened that changed the very nature of who we once were and this change led to us becoming who we are today. This idea of a dramatic change in our nature of being is not dissimilar to the Biblical notion of the fall from an original state of grace.

Desmond Morris in the Naked Ape looks at modern humans through the eyes of a zoologist. Morris’s basic thesis is that “we are vegetarians turned carnivores” (Morris 23). The behaviour of the modern human is primarily that of a carnivore, but it remains “an animal with a dual personality” (Morris 23) in that the behaviour of this carnivore ape is still effected by its vegetarian origins. Morris sees the evolutionary change from vegetarian to carnivore as a dramatic shift.

This brings us to the last million or so years of the naked ape’s ancestral history, and to a series of shattering and increasingly dramatic developments. Several things happened together, and it is important to realize this. All too often, when the story is told, the separate parts of it are spread out as if one major advance led to another, but this is misleading.... These things did not

follow one another in a major, set sequence; they blossomed together, minute advances being made first in one quality and then in another, each urging the other on. A hunting ape, a killer ape, was in the making. (20-21)

Man is an animal with a dual nature: He evolved as one thing and then made a dramatic shift in order to survive and took on a very different role in the social order of the animal world. It could be said that man has had two births, and, as Jung puts it, “the motif of the dual mother, an archetype to be found in many variants in the field of mythology and comparative religion” (Jung 63), is a common collective motif. This motif of the *dual* *decent* is everywhere. According to Jung, the “idea of a second birth is found at all times and in all places” (63). This, then, is a major archetype. But who is the mother of our second birth?

CHAPTER 2

MAN, WOLVES, AND LANGUAGE.

Totems, Taboos, and Naked Apes

By the late twentieth century in US scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted if not turned into amusement parks. Language, tool use, social behaviour, mental events, nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal. [...] Biology and evolutionary theory over the last two centuries have simultaneously produced modern organisms as objects of knowledge and reduced the line between humans and animals to a faint trace re-etched in ideological struggle or professional disputes between life and social science.

(Haraway 293)

A totem is a symbol attached to a family or a clan division within a tribe. Sigmund Freud in Totem and Taboo identifies animals as the most common sacred totems. Totems are also associated with a clan's origin and, according to Freud, the "totem is first of all the tribal ancestor of the clan" (Freud 3). The clan descends from its totem and connected to the clan totem are a series of magical taboos that act as restrictions and internalized fears. These restrictions and internalized fears in turn work to regulate social practice and convention within the tribe. Furthermore, clan totems also regulate and preserve the power structure of the tribe. Taboos connected with the totem protect the power of chiefs and priests. At the same time as protecting the ruling class, these tribal taboos supposedly aim at "safeguarding of the weak – women children and common people generally – from the powerful mana (magical influence) of chiefs and priests" (33). In addition, taboos protect the private property of individuals, determine the acceptable

handling of the dead, and watch over the cycles of life, such as birth and initiation (33). Taboos associated with totems are central to the preservation of a tribe's power structure. From Freud's twentieth century Western viewpoint, it would appear that conscious totems and taboos form the organizational foundation of the tribal life of "these poor naked cannibals" (8). But what about the foundation of our *dog-eat-dog* society? Freud argues in Totem and Taboo that there are similarities between conscious totem culture and the unconscious behaviour of Western compulsive neurotics. He even suggests the label of "taboo disease" for this unconscious behaviour (44). Does our evolving global tribe have an unconscious totem animal? Are there unconscious taboos connected with this animal? Is the wolf the original totem ancestor of the monkey-with-laptops-and-guns? Is the wolf the mother of our second birth?

A clan's primary taboo "is the obligation not to kill (destroy) their totem, to abstain from eating its meat, or from any other enjoyment of it. Any violation of these prohibitions is automatically punished" (Freud 4). An almost universal taboo that persists to this day is the eating of canines.³ In addition to the taboo of abstaining from the killing and eating of a totem animal, there is the taboo of incest, the most universal of taboos. The tribal clan system organized around the principle of taboos regulates the acceptability of potential mates through totem heredity. Sexual contacts between members of the same clan are taboo and this ensures tribal reproductive health and fertility. Thus, according to Freud:

³ One exception is parts of China where dogs are eaten. Interestingly, the dog in China is also associated with the West (Eberhard 81).

The oldest and most important taboo prohibitions are the two basic laws of *totemism*: namely not to kill the totem animal, and to avoid sexual intercourse with totem companions of the other sex.

It would therefore seem that these must have been the oldest and strongest desires of mankind. (Freud 53-54)

The taboo of eating certain kinds of meat (if not all meat) and deviant sexual practices continues to be linked by some tribes to this day, for example, certain vegetarian groups in North America. Carol J. Adams in her book, The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory, makes a direct connection between a meat-eating patriarchy and the exploitation and sexual subjugation of women. This connection between meat-eating and the role played by woman in society may not be as far-fetched as it sounds on first reading. Desmond Morris in The Naked Ape examines the possible behavioural shifts that occurred when our ape ancestors underwent the metamorphosis from browsing vegetarian into hunting carnivore. Morris postulates that several major shifts took place within the pre-human ape paradigm, including “a major change in primate socio-sexual behaviour” (Morris 38). The Naked Ape is the only primate that forms pair bonds; other primates, such as the chimpanzees, “do not know the exclusiveness of pair formation” (Waal 156). Ironically, the Naked Ape is also the only ape to have fleas, and this, like pair-bonding, is connected to the fact that carnivores are territorial and return to a fixed bedding site, which is necessary for fleas to breed (Morris

36).⁴ Morris argues that pair bonding behaviour came about with the Naked Ape as a result of the division of labour that developed in a carnivore ape culture when males tended to form hunting parties and females remained at a den site to look after the young. Primates display very little paternal behaviour; however, “the hunting ape males also had to carry food supplies home for the nursing females and their slowly growing young” (37). Morris compares this new paternal behaviour in the Naked Apes with the paternal behaviour of wolves (37).

The change from a browsing to a hunting animal also caused a basic psychological change in the species. Morris points out that fruit-picking primates and hunting carnivores have very different motivational systems when it comes to feeding and eating. The fruit-picking primate does not need to have separate motivations for food collection and food consumption since a grazing animal eats as it collects. In contrast to the direct motivation of the grazing animal is the hunting motivation of the carnivore:

The advanced carnivore separates the actions of food-seeking (hunting and killing) from the actions of eating. They have become two distinct motivational systems with only partial dependence one on the other. This has come about because the whole sequence is so lengthy and arduous. The act of feeding is too remote, and so the action of killing has to become a reward in itself. (Morris 35)

⁴ Other primates have mites and ticks. However, it does seem appropriate that carnivores should have something that feeds upon their blood. In contrast, a connection between blood sucking insects and marriage may seem inappropriate to some. See John Donne’s poem, “The Flea.”

Clearly, in becoming a carnivore our species changed its relationship to the world and our relationship to ourselves. This metamorphosis into a carnivore was not primarily a physical change; it was behavioural. We did not develop the fangs and claws of a typical carnivore; we developed the culture of a carnivore. We developed our brain and with this brain we developed technologies of fangs and claws.

Evolution, Language, and ???????????

In human and some other primate societies, meat eating is about politics as well as nutrition. The control of a valued resource is about power.

(Stanford 201)

But how did this all come about? Evolution is the easy answer. According to evolutionary theory, we are a vegetarian that turned into a carnivore in the same way the Panda turned from a carnivore into a vegetarian, the end product in both cases being “an animal with a dual personality” (Morris 23). But which came first in our case, the dual personality or the evolutionary change? We are also the species that is conscious of its self. When did this consciousness arise? Is there a connection between our carnivore ability to separate the motivations of hunting and eating and the development of our consciousness? What part did “monkey see, monkey do” play in the evolution of our species?

Freud in Totem and Taboo quotes J. Pikler, who makes a connection between totemism and written language:

Thus totemism arises, not from a religious, but from a prosaic everyday need of mankind. The giving of names, which is the essence of totemism, is a

result of the technique of primitive writing. The totem is of the nature of an easily represented writing symbol. But if savages first bore the name of an animal they deduced the idea of relationship from this animal. (Pikler qtd. in Freud 183)

This links primitive writing with the act of taking on a totemic name of an animal with which the name bearer identifies. The nineteenth century Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure states, “No one disputes the fact that linguistic signs are arbitrary” (Saussure 12); but, is the arbitrary linking of an animal symbol and the signification of a totemic clan the first *arbitrary* step towards a written language? If the person taking on the name of an animal identifies with this animal to the point of taking on the behaviour of this animal, are the signifier and the signified arbitrary in this case? If language begins with a vegetarian identifying with, and then taking on the behaviour of, a carnivore, will this primary identification remain in the collective unconsciousness as an archetype and display itself thousands of years later in the literary products of this dual personality animal? Does literature betray a relationship between a non-genetic animal of origin (an animal of cultural origin) and human totemic practice? Is reading a carnivore activity that mirrors the separate carnivore motivations of hunting and eating?

In Meditations on Hunting Ortega y Gasset postulates that “hunting is an imitation of the animal” (Ortega y Gasset 142). When man hunts, “not only does man imitate the animal’s generic integration but a number of the fundamental hunting techniques are mimetic also” (142). Furthermore, Ortega y Gasset points out that the primary task of the hunter is to “bring about the presence of the prey” (76) which is not present, and that the raising of the non-present prey “is not merely the first task, but rather the fundamental

task of all hunting” (76). In a similar way, one could see the process of reading as a raising of non-presence by the reader’s mental imitation of the text. At this very moment have you not hunted through the written tracks I have left behind? At this very moment do you not search for meaning amongst these signs? Why do you do this? Is it because you hunt the prey of reason? Is it so you can capture meaning, make it your own, devour it? Are you disappointed if the chase affords you no trophy to place upon the mantle of your mind? Have these words concealed meaning and left the belly of your brain empty and confused? Or are you dancing around these pages shaking your erect spear shouting – Yes! Yes! Yes! I understand.

Why does a track in the snow mean an animal to you? And why is it you know which animal made that track? Why do you relate a present signifier to the non-present signified? Is this the behaviour of an omnivore ape that grazes as it moves responding to the stimulus of the food which is present before it? Or is this dance of non-presence your eyes now dance - the dance of wolves?

Language is often used to define the monkey-with-laptops-and-guns as being different from the other animals, but:

The idea of talking animals probably is as old and as widespread among human societies as language is itself. No culture lacks a legend in which some animal plays a speaking role. (Fromkin 18)

If language is a web of arbitrary links constructed by past social practice, literature can be examined as a kind of language by-product that betrays the origins and nature of the species that produces it. If reading is a carnivore activity, literature can be examined in the same way archaeologists study the petrified scatological remains of extinct animals.

While the use of language may differentiate humans from animals, it does not define us as human. Language is not the cause: the use of language may coincide with the birth of humanity, but language is a side effect of being human. Put in another way: The use of language does not cause us to be human; but there may be something to being human that caused the development of language. If language is a result of being human, the origins of language may hold the key to when we became human and what it is to be human.

Ian Tattersall in his Scientific American article “Once We Were Not Alone” points out that *Homo sapiens* co-existed with other hominid species such as *Homo neanderthalensis* for as long as 100,000 years before we became less tolerant of sharing territory. He also maintains that “anatomically modern humans behaved archaically for a long time before adopting modern behaviours” (Tattersall 62). He concludes that this was not because of a lack of ability in *Homo sapiens*. The ability for *modern* behaviours was waiting there to be developed for as long as 150,000 years.

It is much more likely that modern human capacity was born at – or close to – the origin of *H. sapiens*, as an ability that lay fallow until it was activated by a cultural stimulus of some kind. If sufficiently advantageous, this behavioural novelty could then have spread rapidly by cultural contact among populations that had already had the potential to acquire it. (62)

Tattersall suggests that the “emergence of modern cognition – which, it is reasonable to assume, is equivalent to the advent of symbolic thought” (62), coincided with our species becoming “intolerant of competition” (62) from neighbouring hominids that previously we had shared territory with and that this happened around 40,000 years ago. He

suggests that this behaviour of “modern man” led to the extermination of other hominid populations. While Tattersall believes that within the frame of evolution “all innovations must necessarily arise *within* preexisting species – for where else can they do so?” (62), he also declares that “we need to bear in mind the phenomenon of emergence whereby a chance coincidence gives rise to something totally unexpected” (62). Tattersall speculates that the innovation that gave our species a great advantage was the invention of language. Language is, of course, an obvious advantage, but, if the basic ability for language lay dormant in the human species for over 100,000 years, why would it develop relatively quickly only 40,000 years ago? If one goes back to the fragmented frame of knowledge that preceded scientific discourse and examines totemic belief and mythology, it is not hard to conclude that an innovation might have arisen from outside of the pre-existing species and that a meeting with another species could give rise to something totally unexpected. The cultural change caused by this meeting could have provided an advantage. In addition, the rapid changes in human development seem to have coincided with our species becoming more competitive with other hominids. This suggests that the major paradigm shift that led Homo Sapiens to develop symbolic thought and language could be directly or indirectly connected to our species also developing territorial behaviour.

A vegetarian species that begins to hunt in a supplementary or opportunistic way will for a long time retain its old vegetarian behaviours and social structures. A large herd means safety to the vegetarian. They move over large areas and close contact with other herds of similar species means an increased security from predators. In contrast, carnivores are territorial and will defend a territory to the death. They are solitary or are

members of small tightly woven social groups. As a grazing creature becomes more dependent on meat for its staple diet, at some point it will move towards becoming a carnivore in its social behaviour. In most cases the social evolution will be gradual and will mirror the physical evolution of the species. But what happens when the species is becoming more successful by increasing the size of its brain and is using technological evolution to augment biological evolution? Tool making takes one shape and turns it into another shape. If techniques are passed on from one generation to the next, the idea of what a stone axe looks like will also begin to be passed on from one generation to the next. 'Make it like this,' one generation will show the next, and if innovation improves the design, that improvement will also then be passed on. If you come across a group who has a better stone axe, you copy their design. The axe is a metonym inside the stone. Technological development is metonymic. But social development needs to accompany technological development and this development is metaphoric.

Metonym and metaphor both play a part in hunting. Achilles is not a lion; Achilles is an Alpha wolf. The metaphor hunts meaning by following the metonym. The metonym is the axe in the stone or the tracks of the unseen prey that becomes your next meal. You can make the metonym or you can ingest it. The metonym is connected to the material 'real.'⁵ The metonymic stone is congruous with the axe; the metonymic track in

⁵ I draw upon Roman Jakobson's essay "The metaphoric and metonymic poles" here. Instead of presenting them as poles in conflict I present them as poles in cooperation. Jakobson associates the metonymic pole with prose and the metaphoric pole with poetry (Jakobson 57-61). I associate the metonymic pole with the technological and the metaphoric with the social. This is similar to the associations made by Northrop Fry in his essay "The Motive for Metaphor" where he associates the metaphor with the artistic, which stands in contrast to the scientific (Fry 47-56). It is important to remember that the line between the metaphoric and the metonymic poles is a blurry one, and that in the end it is also important to remember metaphors and metonyms inevitably pile up one on top of the other.

the snow is congruous with your prey. If you see an animal that hunts like you but hunts and eats better than you do, you want to transfer yourself into the position of that animal. You do this by turning yourself into a metaphor of that animal, but now you must never destroy that animal because, if you do destroy it, you also destroy your totemic relationship with that animal and, furthermore, you destroy the metaphoric image you have of yourself. A metonymic track in the snow leads to a pile of bones and hopefully the metaphor has a good meal in between. The metonymic bones of your prey can be made into tools that can help you obtain more meat that was once attached to these same bones. The metaphor also helps you obtain more meat, and you share this meat with your metaphor since you now hunt together whether directly or indirectly.

The first social symbolic thought is not “I am”; the first social symbolic thought is “I other.” Once self can be perceived outside of itself it becomes aware of the possibility of its own existence and it is an existence that can move within fames of possibility. “I wolf” is the first social symbolic thought of the human race. “I wolf” is the metaphor that causes a social revolution that creates the human species and eventually leads to the invention of language.

Identification with wolf culture revolutionizes an out-dated ape culture that is holding back an ape carnivore in its struggle to survive. There are immediate advantages to the new social order now adopted, including the unexpected leap forward in the development of symbolic thought and language. In a short period of time, physical and genetic advantages are also realised as a direct result of the new social order. Wolves become part of our symbolic clan: We live in harmony with them; we adopt their territorial behaviour. Because wolves are culturally similar to us, we eventually live

together with them. We become human; some wolves become dogs.⁶ Ironically, the physically similar but now culturally dissimilar Neanderthals next door are all of a sudden trespassing on our territory and begin to look like so much meat on the hoof.

⁶ If nothing else, the canine must be the best metaphoric species available for the human species to identify with, if for no other reason than it is the animal we have had the longest social association with.

CHAPTER 3

LITERARY LYCANTHOPOLOGY

The Naked Wolf

Lycaon fled, terrified, until he reached the safety of the silent countryside. There he uttered howling noises, and his attempts to speak were all in vain. His cloths changed into bristling hairs, his arms to legs, and he became a wolf. His own savage nature showed in his rabid jaws, and he now directed against the flocks his innate lust for killing. He had a mania, even yet, for shedding blood. But, though he was a wolf, he retained some traces of his original shape. The greyness of his hair was the same, his face showed the same violence, his eyes gleamed as before, and he presented the same picture of ferocity.

(Ovid 35)

Science does not tell us *what* it is to be human. It also doesn't tell us *when* we became human. However, science does offer us a story of *how* we became human. It offers us a story called evolution that can be seen as the ultimate chronotope of the road, where "representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages – intersect at one spatial and temporal point" (Bakhtin Dialogic 243). This story of evolution, like Bakhtin's chronotope of the road, "is a particularly good place for random encounters" (243). Yet a story is not a series of random encounters, but of reactions and the effects in relation to random encounters.

We know that at some point along the road of evolution the Naked Ape came in contact with the wolf. We also know it was an important meeting: the domesticated dog is living proof of this. But there are also numerous similarities between wolves and man.

Roberta Hall and Henry S. Sharp in the collection of essays Wolf and Man: Evolution in Parallel cite many examples of these.

The similarities between the wolf and the hunting-gathering human are impressive. Both are social animals whose living units are relatively small. Both are intelligent, clearly more intelligent than the prey on which they subsist. Both are capable of extreme physical exertion and, more important, of sustained physical exertions at a relatively high level. Both exploit the open ground and broken forest areas. Neither species has any single physical attribute that allows it to either overpower or to outrun large prey at will. The two species are about the same body weight and, though not among the largest animals in the world, are virtually immune from predation. Except under unusual conditions, neither can effectively reproduce except as a member of a social unit larger than the conjugal pair.

The demographic structure of the wolf pack provides a good fit with that postulated for bands of early humans.... Proportionately wolves spend the same portion of their lives as infants and subadults as humans.... (Hall and Sharp 2-3)

The similarities listed by Hall and Sharp are indeed impressive. The authors go on to suggest that the wolf pack serves as a better model for early human society than modern ape social organisations because, while apes “are relatives of man, they are relatives who adapted in a different direction” (4). Furthermore, “because no primate population depends on hunting and meat eating for its day-to-day survival, no primate group can serve as a totally effective model of the life-style of early man” (4). While biologically

the term *Naked Ape* is an appropriate term for humankind, a cultural term closer to the day-to-day practice of human kind is the *Naked Wolf*.⁷

Man has had a long association with wolves. He did not domesticate the wolf in quite the same way he domesticated other animals. The domestic dog is the result of a long association with wolves that goes back to before “tamed wolves, or ones associated with man, are first recorded with Late Palaeolithic mammoth hunters at Mezine, Ukraine, during the last ice age” (Churcher 2322). Man’s intimate relationship with the wolf goes back before true domestication, which is the “entire subjection of the animal to man’s requirements” (Cornwall 212), and true domestication only took place after “man had first domesticated himself, by settling in one place and establishing territorial ownership” (212). Before this man was a wanderer in search of food and, ironically, the ice age provided an abundance of food for predators. As Richard Fiennes puts it in The Order of Wolves;

Strangely, the Ice Age produced conditions ideal for the development of vast herds of grazing animals. The forest cover was reduced, and the melting of the ice in summer meant that great areas of open land, well-watered from the melting snow, provided an enormous amount of suitable fodder. (Fiennes 30-31)

Herds of large animals flourished. The wolf “evolved to take his part in the ecological scene. Man was forced into it by ecological changes [. . .] an outcast from his own home, an intruder on an ecosystem to which his ways were not adapted” (31). This, then, is the

⁷ Naked is not the only adjective that can signify human when joined with a canine term. If one wanted to focus upon a behavioural difference rather than a physical difference the *Lunatic Lupine* would also work.

stage upon which the outsider man became a neighbour of the wolf. The story is one where the wolf is a previous resident and has already adapted to its environment and the newcomer, man, needs to adapt in order to survive. Two cultures come into contact and one culture needs to learn what the other has already acquired, either directly, that is to say, culturally, or by the natural process of evolution.

Hall and Sharp label the behavioural structure of the wolf pack as a culture; they do not see culture as limited to *Homo Sapiens* (Hall and Sharp 9). Wolf and Man: Evolution in Parallel includes an essay by Michael W. Fox that examines the resemblance between the behavioural traits of wolves, dogs, and humans. In “Man, Wolf, and Dog,” Fox compares wolf pack rituals with human rituals: “Both wolf pack and human tribe practice certain rituals - ceremonial greeting centred around the leader and gathering and singing before going hunting, after eating, and in the evening” (Fox 19). Clearly, there are crucial similarities between the cultures of wolf and man.

While *Canis Lupus* and *Homo Sapiens* have been in contact for some time and share many traits, nevertheless, despite the similarities between human culture and wolf culture, the story told by scientific authors often tends to be one of where our ancestors begin a parallel evolution with the wolf and, as a result, come into competition. Morris in The Naked Ape notes our symbiont relationship with the dog but the story he tells of our early contact with the wolf is one of competition.

The most ancient symbiont in our history is undoubtedly the dog. We cannot be certain exactly when our ancestors first began to domesticate this valuable animal, but it appears to be at least ten thousand years ago. The story is a fascinating one. The wild, wolf-like ancestors of the domestic dog must

have been serious competitors with our hunting forebears. Both were co-operative pack-hunters of large prey and, at first, little love can have been lost between them. (Morris 218)

The story is indeed a fascinating one, but the symbiotic relationship between wolf and man in the standard story of evolution only begins when wolf cubs are brought into the camp of the superior species.⁸ These wolves are domesticated by the superior species and eventually become the sucky human dog. In the story of evolution, the suggestion is that the domestication of the dog is proof of the dominance of the monkey-with-laptops-and-guns.

Science loves to tell stories of competition. The plot line of the story of evolution is one of winners and losers vying for resources and space in an unforgiving unconscious environment. An external all-knowing timeless God does not control the unfolding plot of evolution; instead, the machinery of *the survival of the fittest* acts as an omnipresent force that descends to devour the weaker puppets, who supposedly dance without strings across this finite stage that spins in the sky.⁹ Evolution offers an elaborate plot-driven story that tells us how we became human, but it does not tell us what it is to be human. Time is the thread that strings the spatial plot of evolution together, but the question of when we became human (or will become human) cannot even be asked if a definition of

⁸ It is worth noting that it has been postulated that coyotes and badgers cooperate in hunting (Hall 52). This would seem to suggest that cooperation with species other than itself is not beyond the realm of wild canine experience.

⁹ The popular science of the television documentary has become the epic poem of late capitalism. The television nature documentary sings the truth of capitalism in the same way the illuminated Bible once was used to sing self-righteous praise of late feudalism. The technological advance of the printing press led to the publishing of a people's Bible, which in turn was used by early capitalism to mock the basic assumptions of feudalism. Perhaps a similar technological advance will lead to a form of ironic science, which will one day ridicule and repudiate the basic assumptions of capitalism.

what it is to be human hasn't already, at least arbitrarily, been sketched on the wall of the cave. In contrast with evolution's story of how we became human, the dialogic nature of totemism and its link to language, as has been suggested above, may hold the key to when we became human and what it is to be human.

Instead of evolution's competitive story with the wolf, one can postulate a totemic story of co-operation. The conquering and pillaging of wolf dens is not the only possible explanation of the origins of the symbiotic relationship of the domestic dog and the domestic ape. Instead of wolves and early man competing for similar prey, perhaps they cooperated and this led to a mutually beneficial relationship which eventually changed them both. Perhaps the defining moment of our humanity came with the decision of an ape to become wolf-like and the similarities between wolf culture and human culture reflect that decision. Perhaps an ape's totemic identification with a species other than a primate one, the wolf, and the possibilities that arose out of this identification, is a very old definition of what it is to be human. Perhaps human culture is a dialogic culture – a hybrid culture of ape and wolf.

Feral Children

When I was a boy, on Monday nights after supper I would be sent alone across the fields towards suburbia and to St. Gabriel's Catholic Church. I would enter by the side door and descend a flight of stairs to a basement that was overflowing with the echoes of screaming and the noise of roughhouse antics, coming from a room filled with pre-adolescent boys. "Pack. Pack. Pack. Pack." an adult would shout. With these words all

the running children would stop, change direction, and then form a circle around a real wolf head that was impaled on a stick.

One night it was announced that we would go on a treasure hunt. We were given a clue to begin with and, when we found the answer to the first clue, there was another clue written on the discovered piece of paper leading to the next – and so on. The chase led us through the fields, the ditches, and the construction sites that lay east of the church. In the end, the hunt took us to a new totem around which we assembled. It was made of plywood and, while it was roughly the same shape and size as our previous totem, it could not be described as being a wolf head. It could best be described as being plywood fragments that constructed the idea of a wolf head.

The pack met this new totem with curiosity. For many of us it may have been our first encounter with the post-modern. We were told that killing wolves to stick their heads on poles was barbaric. The old wolf head was moved to the back of the storage room to collect dust and the plywood icon was moved to centre stage. We circled around the new totem when called, but it did not seem the same. It was as if an old friend had been taken from us. We had all poked its glass eyes, rubbed its withered nose, brushed its silky hair, and pulled its white teeth. At the centre of our Monday night circle we had gathered around Death. Now we were being asked to show respect for something that was little more than a cardboard cartoon figure that somehow or other would replace death. It made the pretending to be wolves that the leaders encouraged us to do seem silly. As we left that night, some of us wondered what the world was coming to.

The next Monday night, before being called to circle, I confronted the Akela. I confronted him even though I knew he had made the new totem and would be offended

by my suggestion to have the old totem brought back; however, I thought my compromise position of placing the new plywood one next to the real one would appease the Akela's appearance of status. In response he repeated the argument that it was barbaric to kill wolves and to stick their heads on poles. I agreed that killing more wolves to stick their heads on poles was wrong, but I also felt it was a disrespect to the wolf already killed to just hide it away in a closet. "It's already dead," I tried to explain. Akela then said something dismissive in response, but by that point I realised he wasn't really listening to me, so I stopped listening to him. When he was convinced that I was silent, he stopped. I went over to join a group of friends who had assembled next to one of the cement pillars that held the floor of the church above in place.

I was almost fifty years of age before I realised that I had been a member of a wolf cult in my youth. George Frazer in Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild points out that wolf cults were common in Europe and often connected to rites of fertility and harvest. The corn-spirit was a common spirit of fertility and it was symbolically often "conceived of as a wolf or a dog. This conception is common in France, Germany, and Slavonic countries" (Frazer 271). In Prussia, a wolf running through the field was seen as an omen and the wolf's tail held symbolic "fertilising power".

For in the neighbourhood of Feilenhof (East Prussia), when a wolf was seen running through a field, the peasants used to watch whether he carried his tail in the air or dragged it on the ground. If he dragged it on the ground, they went after him, and thanked him for bringing them a blessing, and even set tit-bits before him. But if he carried his tail high, they cursed him and tried to kill him. (272)

Harvest rituals connected with the wolf were common throughout Europe. The last sheaf cut was often referred to as a wolf connected to the crop, such as a Rye-wolf, or some variation of a dog, such as The White Dog. In some cases the person to cut the last sheaf in which the spirit wolf was said to reside would take on the behaviour of a wolf “by pretending to bite the other harvesters or by howling like a wolf” (273). In other cases a human figure was made out of a sheaf and, while it was dressed in human cloths, it was called the Wolf (274). In addition to the wolf being connected to harvest rituals, in “Poland a man, with a wolf’s skin thrown over his head, is led about at Christmas; or a stuffed wolf is carried about by persons who collect money” (275). Frazer connects this to an older custom of a man covered in leaves being called the Wolf and used to collect money; he lists numerous similar examples.

Midsummer fires are also connected to the wolf. As recent as the first half of the nineteenth century, in Normandy the Brotherhood of the Green Wolf was still active. According to Frazer, their “midsummer festival was marked by certain singular features which bore the stamp of very high antiquity” (185). When a new Green Wolf was elected, he “donned a peculiar costume of a long green mantle and a very tall green hat of a conical shape and without a brim (185). The hat described is reminiscent of a wizard’s. Later, the new Green Wolf and his brothers, “holding each other by the hand, ran round the fire after the man who had been chosen to be the Green Wolf of the following year” (186). When they caught him they would pretend to throw him into the fire, and one can postulate that during even earlier times the ritual had in fact included the consumption of a human sacrifice by fire, or even earlier the cooking of a human on the fire and a ritual cannibalization. During the 19th Century, part of the ceremony was to eat at the house of

the Green Wolf. The events preceding the arrival of Midsummer Day contrasted with those that followed its arrival. In true carnivalesque manner the fare was meagre and “a sort of religious solemnity prevailed” (186).

But at the stroke of twelve all this was changed. Constraint gave way to license; pious hymns were replaced by Bacchanalian ditties, and the shrill quavering notes of the village fiddle hardly rose above the roar of voice that went up from the merry brotherhood of the Green Wolf. (186)

Christian culture eventually tried to stamp out these rituals based on the pagan rites of the past, yet it is ironic to note that in England the burning of Guy Fawkes in effigy while people gather around bon fires is still widely practised today. While this festival is connected to November 5, 1605, and the Catholic gunpowder plot, the burning of a rogue human figure with a canine name may have archetypal roots that go back much farther than Protestantism.¹⁰

According to Liz Bomford in The Complete Wolf, the attempt to stamp out the wolf in Europe may not have only been because it is an animal of prey that at times feeds upon livestock, it could also have been because it is a symbol connected to pagan beliefs. Bomford points out that the drive to eradicate the wolf was not as rigorous in Italy as it was in northern Europe.

The Italian wolf expert, Dr Luigi Boitni, believes that Mediterranean people have accepted the presence of wolves more readily than their northern

¹⁰ In *Jane Eyre*, when Mr. Rochester first encounters Jane he suspects her of being a fairy and later asks her about her possible association with *the men in green*. Jane at first thought Mr. Rochester and his horse and dog were a *Gytrash*, a fantastical spirit of solitary places that can take the form of a large dog.

neighbours for cultural reasons. Among southern peasants who retain elements of pre-Christian faith in the form of superstitions, the wolf represents the power of fertility as well as death. It is only in purely Christian cultures that we are confused by the two images. (Bomford 47)

Greek myths, which formed the basis of Roman pagan belief, are filled with wolves. The Greek word for wolf is *Lykaos*. The Greek god Zeus is often called Lycaean Zeus and Richard Fiennes in The Order of Wolves finds this connection of interest: "Nevertheless, the use of the word 'Lycaon', the Greek for wolf, is significant, and establishes the connection of the people of Arcadia with the wolf cult. Furthermore, it strongly suggests a totemic origin" (Fiennes 185). Wolf cults have been common in the past. Important myths connected to wolves are found throughout the world. They may be still active in ways we are not aware of. For example, the name Luke is connected to "the Attic hero, Lukos, whose statue as a wolf stood near the law courts" (187) and who was a form of the God Apollo. In addition, Luke is also an evolution of the Greek word for wolf *Lydaos*. This means that a character essentially called Wolf Skywalker not only connects the modern film *Star Wars* with the myths George Lucas was obviously drawing upon when he created this movie but that a metaphoric character called Wolf Skywalker also connects its viewers to something much, much older.

In Cub Scouts the exemplary leadership model was Lord Baden-Powell and his life story of myth-like adventure was given authority. But there was another story associated with the Wolf Cub Scout organization, The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling. This is the story of a human baby who flees a tiger and is taken in by a mother wolf and is raised by the wolf pack. While Kipling's story is artistic fiction, there are numerous

stories of humans being raised by wolves that, in some cases at least, appear to have grounding in fact.

The kindness of wolves is celebrated in scores of fables that celebrate their talent for parenthood. Romulus and Remus may have been a historical construct, but we now step out of the realm of mythology. Genuine feral children have turned up from time to time in every century. This is fact.
(Bomford 47)

Liz Bomford in The Complete Wolf lists a number of cases of feral children. She points out that Rousseau was fascinated by the five cases he was aware of. A contemporary of Rousseau, “the taxonomist Linnaeus listed seven cases [...] (and) he subdivided his order of humans to include *Homo ferus*.” (Bomford 47-48). In the 20th Century there were numerous cases recorded in India and The Jungle Book may have been inspired by Indian stories Kipling heard in the 19th Century. The most recent recorded Indian example was in “the forest of Musafirkhana near Sultanpur in 1972” (48). Bomford suggests that the practice of human parents abandoning unwanted children, combined with the strong instincts of wolves to nurture, especially within the *safety zone* of a den, could explain recent as well as older stories of children being raised by wolves (49). There are many cases of observed cross-species nursing, such as cats adopting rats.

Within historical times, there have been numerous accounts of wolves adopting and looking after human children. Within the last few hundred years there have been at least a dozen examples of this. If it has happened during the last few hundred years, it would stand to reason it has also happened at times in the few hundred years before that, and the few hundred years before that, continuing all the way back to when our ancestors

first had contact with wolves. Interestingly, the date suggested by Ian Tattersall for the development of language is also the approximate date we came into contact with wolves. As our ape ancestors moved north into the territory of wolves in order to take advantage of the abundance of game provided by the Ice Age, they would have faced multiple difficulties adapting to the new environment. Many individual bands of migrants could have been wiped out and at times a suckling child would have been the last living member. The only hope of survival for this individual would have been to be adopted by a wolf pack. Later, the adopted child might return to a pre-human herd. For the last few hundred years feral children have been studied in order to understand primitive human behaviour. The context of a feral child would have been very different at a time when wolves as hunters had already developed obvious cultural advantages that humans needed to learn in order to survive. It seems obvious that, if a feral child returned to its own kind, it would carry the knowledge of the different culture and, if that knowledge was advantageous, it would be adopted. For example, large band populations covering wide areas of territory as a group may have been an advantage in the south but, as the populations moved into the rougher terrain of the north, which also had a winter, such groups would become a disadvantage. Smaller bands, each with smaller territories, would become the optimal social organisation. Within the larger bands pair bonding might not have developed. The randomization of genetic material is not a problem in a large band based upon the harem. In contrast, smaller bands based upon the harem would face the problem of inbreeding. It is known that eventually we developed a cultural solution similar to that of the wolf pack and at some point during our evolution we moved towards pair bonding.

Learning a cultural practice rather than evolving one would provide a great advantage. When our ape ancestors were already learning through trial and error how to make fangs and claws out of stones, bones, and sticks, and were passing the practices on to each successive generation, it seems obvious that learning a cultural practice either directly or by observation from outside of the species could also be possible. Feral children are only one example of how the cultural practices of wolves could be learned. If nothing else, a pre-human coming upon a child being raised by wolves would have its curiosity sparked. Who knows where the curiosity could lead?

I offer this instance of cultural transfer from one species to another as one way in which humans learned from wolves. Perhaps it has too slight a grounding in proven fact to hold water. Perhaps we learned to be two-legged wolves simply by observation and imitation, something we are very good at. That is, we turned ourselves into metaphors of wolves. Perhaps feral child experience and adult observation worked in tandem.

Within our own time, as we move into the new territory of space, stories of alien abductions by extra-terrestrial species have become common. It is obvious that, if in the future we ever did come into contact with an alien species that was more culturally and technologically advanced than we are, its culture would have a profound effect upon ours. We would try to learn from it and would use what we learned to our advantage. These changes would have profound effects upon who we are. We would not ignore the new contact species. If one of our children was abducted by them and raised as an alien, when our child was returned to us it would be treated with special status. If this child had learned behaviours that would benefit our culture and if these behaviours could help secure our survival in the future, we would not wait for the passing of thousands of years

in order to learn the same behaviours through trial and error. The child would be seen as looking like us but would also be recognised as being something that was beyond us and, if this difference seemed to be an improvement in some way, we would begin to mimic its behaviour. If this is an obvious scenario for future contact with an extra-terrestrial alien species, it should also be a possible scenario for past contact with a terrestrial species that at one time was alien to us and had some kind of advantage to offer.

CHAPTER 4

THE NARRATIVE APE

The Carnivoresque

Uber parted his thick lips, showing those chiselled teeth. 'I am Das Uberdog,' he growled. 'The world is my shitting place.' And his eyes were wild and free, as his claws tightened on the wet throat.¹¹

(Noon Vurt 288)

The carnivoresque is a literary theory that postulates a human culture of origin and then applies this framework to modern power relationships found in literature. The carnivoresque assumes the existence of Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious and searches for archetypal evidence of a culture of origin in literary texts. The theory uses the simple terms: 'Alpha', 'Omega', 'Beta', 'Wag' and 'carnivorize', to explore complex power relationships in the stories we tell. The carnivoresque posits that the first human thought was "I Wolf". At the point an ape ancestor identified with an animal other, it stepped into the realm of symbolic thought. This revolutionary step led to the rapid development of language. Wolf is the totemic animal of the human race; human culture is a dialogic mediation of ape culture and wolf culture.

It should be remembered that carnivoresque culture is not simply wolf culture but an ape culture that identifies with wolf behaviour. Unlike wolves, we did not evolve from carnivores, we are primates. According to Desmond Morris, the primate troop is "a

¹¹ According to Steinhart, the name Adolf is derived from the Teutonic word meaning 'fortunate wolf.' In addition, Hitler often referred to himself as "Wolf" and others called him "Uncle Wolf." In Steinhart's words, "the implication of the name was proof that his dominance provided an efficient and companionable order" (Steinhart 101-102).

rigidly established social hierarchy" (Morris 147) and primates are often "violently dictatorial in their social organization. There is always a tyrant . . ." (147) and, while this tyrant at times is tolerant and willing to share "females amongst the lesser males" (147), any sign of revolt is crushed. In contrast, the carnivore pack needs the "full co-operation from the weaker members when out hunting" (148) and in this case the leader may be more responsive, "obliged to take the feelings of his inferiors more into account" (148). It would appear that there are two very basic systems of power: in simple terms, one is based upon the *stick*, the other is based upon the *carrot and the stick*. Either system can lead to infighting and, according to Morris, among animals there are two reasons for physical conflict.

Animals fight amongst themselves for one of two very good reasons: either to establish their dominance in a social hierarchy, or to establish their territorial rights over a particular piece of ground. Some species are purely hierarchical, with no fixed territories. Some have hierarchies on their territories and have to contend with both forms of aggression. We belong to the last group: we have it both ways. (146)

This means that the dual forces of human culture are a struggle for territory and a struggle for dominance in a hierarchy or, as Stanley Diamond puts it: "Civilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home. Each is an aspect of the other" (Diamond 1).

In today's society the territorial social unit is the nation state and within the nation state exist individual organizations that regulate the internal hierarchy. External territorial disputes between states are resolved by diplomacy laced with economic reward or by war. Internal hierarchies are policed by a variety of political systems that all in

some way regulate a citizen's individual desire for social power and balance their social responsibility to co-operate with the group. But, even within individuals there may be conflicts between primary desires. The author Lu Hsun, who is considered "the founder of modern Chinese literature" (Lu Stories cover), sees living creatures as having two prime desires. He argues:

We know from common sense that nothing matters more to living creatures than life. For all creatures are what they are precisely because they have life – without this they would cease to be living creatures. And in order to preserve life, animals have certain instincts, the most conspicuous being the desire for food, which makes them take nourishment, to keep themselves warm and maintain life. Still, since individual animals must all grow old and die, in order to propagate life they must possess another instinct – sexual desire. This then leads them to have sexual intercourse, produce offspring, and propagate life. So while the desire of food preserves each individual and the life of the moment, sexual desire preserves posterity and life everlasting. (Lu Works II 58)

Any social hierarchy will, in some way, have to manage these prime desires of its members. Power will, in some way, always be connected to hunger and the sex drive. The state is the table and the bedroom of the nation.

The wolf pack also balances these two prime desires. The structure of the pack is based on collective labour which ensures that all of the members are well fed. The pack enables individual members to feed on prey larger than each could kill alone. The pack, however, is dominated by a breeding pair and normally they are the only members of the

pack who reproduce. The Omega, the breeding female, chooses a den site. The Alpha, the breeding male, marks and defends a territory around the den site. Betas, the non-breeding members of the pack, share hunting and the responsibility of rearing the young. This helps to ensure a greater success rate of survival for the young of the pack. Since the packs “generally contain a breeding pair and their offspring of one or more litters” (Smith 384), genetic material close to that of the Betas is certain to be passed on to subsequent litters by the Alpha and Omega who are their parents. However, this can lead to the possibility of incest within the pack if siblings form replacement breeding pairs or if an Alpha or Omega is replaced by an offspring.

A study authored by several prominent wolf researchers which appeared in Behavioural Ecology examines this possibility in some detail. Using DNA evidence from several wolf packs, “Is incest common in grey wolf packs?” answers the question poised by its title with a ‘no’.

Wolf packs generally consist of a breeding pair and their mature offspring that help provision and protect pack young. Because the reproductive tenure in wolves is often short, reproductively mature offspring might replace their parents, resulting in sibling or parent–offspring matings . . . results suggest that full sibling or parent and its offspring rarely mate and that incest avoidance is an important constraint of grey wolf behavioural ecology.

(Smith 384)

This study gives evidence in support of the idea that wolves which are dispersed from the pack eventually become those who form new packs or replace the Alpha or Omega of other packs. The study concludes by suggesting that “inbreeding avoidance may be one

of the primary reasons for dispersal from natal packs” (390). There are obvious advantages for dispersing individuals from the pack. As Peter Steinhart observes in The Company of Wolves: “Inbreeding leads to the loss of such genetically determined traits as immunity to disease, and also to reduced fertility: sperm in inbred animals typically shows much higher rates of deformity and lower rates of motility” (Steinhart 99). A small human band would share the same danger of inbreeding.

Steinhart points out that wolf society is extremely social but, at the same time as working as a member of a hunting collective, the individual in the group is also competing with other members of the group to have their genetic material passed on. This causes conflict in wolf communities.

Wolves are social beings, enjoying warm, companionable, and highly emotional lives within the pack. But wolves are also individuals, occupying different roles in a pack and competing, sometimes violently, for social standing and the right to pass on their genes. It is in the wolf’s interest to accommodate and coordinate with other wolves, yet also to contend with the same wolves. This dual nature draws the interest of humans almost as powerfully as the act of killing, because it mirrors our own contending social natures. (100)

This dual nature is the primary conflict balanced in the culture of the carnivoresque, an archetypal social organization very similar to that of the wolf pack. The behaviours displayed by members of carnivoresque culture closely mirror the social displays of the wolf pack. This is the core of the carnivoresque as a generative and interpretive template for literature.

Human carnivoresque culture is also based upon pair bonding and a breeding pair supported by the collective labour of the submissive members of pack. In the human pack, other members of the pack also may be allowed to pair bond and reproduce, but the offspring of the dominant pair will be favoured by the group. The Omega, the dominant female, chooses the den site. The Alpha, the dominant male, marks and defends a territory around the den site. Together the Alpha and Omega dominate the submissive Betas. The symbolic equivalent of an erect tail signifies dominance; the symbolic equivalent of a tail between the legs signifies submissiveness. Whenever a Beta raises its symbolic tail, it is confronted by the Alpha or the Omega. When the desire to create new life becomes stronger than the desire to preserve present life, a Beta will begin to repeatedly flick his or her symbolic tail. The Alpha or the Omega will meet this flag waving with an attack. If a Beta comes to believe the dominants have the power to see everything, and if it also believes it does not have the power to kill a dominant, it will remain a Beta and will continue to keep its symbolic tail between its legs. If it should keep flicking its tail it will be killed or driven from the pack.

Outside of the pack a Beta will become a rogue. A rogue is a “wild beast living apart from the herd and of savage temper” (Fowler 719). A rogue is also referred to as a wag. The word wag is a cultural remnant of the carnivoresque still present in the English language. Wag also means to shake to and fro. Alphas and Omegas have erect tails; Betas have their tails between their legs. Betas that repeatedly wag their tails by lifting them in defiance of the social order are driven from the pack and live as outsiders. The dispersed Beta then becomes a Wag. It is interesting to note that the word ‘penis’ in Latin means tail and that ‘phallus’ means to blow or to inflate: a phallus is an inflated

penis that, in a broader power context, is also a symbolic representation of the erect tail of the dominant in the social order. A wolf's erect tail signifies that it is a member of the pack who is open for sexual reproduction; a wolf's tail between its legs signifies it is a member of the pack who is closed off from sexual reproduction. A flag blowing in the wind has come to be an indexical signifier of the nation state, and to blow or to flare relates to the word phallus, a fertility symbol directly related to the word penis, which means tail. The carnivoresque circulates throughout language.

The Wag with its symbolic tail now held high will live outside of the pack and will spend a long time observing the pack from a distance. Once outside the pack, the Wag will come to understand how the gaze of the Alpha and the Omega controls the Betas. The Wag will also become a wanderer and will observe other packs from a distance. A Wag may then become a trickster who experiments with attempts to mate by slipping into the pack. Eventually, when other members of the group show signs of following the Wag, the stability of the pack will be threatened. If sufficient hunting territory is available, a group may break off and form a new pack; if not, a confrontation between the Wag and a dominant is inevitable. There will be a battle to the death.

All of these features of wolf life translate into symbols of the carnivoresque.

Wolves do not practice cannibalism – primates do. No doubt in our primitive past, the human pack would have watched while the victor devoured the body of the vanquished. This made the Alpha seem immortal. The pack would watch this cannibal festival of reversals and, as the Wag became Alpha, the material body of the old Alpha would bit by bit vanish into the body of the new pack emperor. Any magical essence, such as the Alpha's gaze, the ability to watch the Betas no matter where they were, would

also be consumed and incorporated into the new Alpha body. Two bodies would become one and the material that made up the old Alpha would still be leading the pack. The Alpha is dead. Long live the Alpha.

Cannibalism and the role it plays in society is one important difference between the culture of the wolf pack and carnivoresque culture. Cannibalism is a primate practice and it has been observed in wild chimpanzees by a number of researchers, including Jane Goodall (Waal 18). Wolves are not cannibalistic even if man, who is cannibalistic, often associates rites of cannibalism with the wolf. As Steinhart puts it:

When humans begin to fear their own predatory nature, wolves come in for very much darker imagery. At the festival of Lupercalia in Sabine cities, men dressed in wolf skins, slaughtered goats, and ran through the town beating whomever they met. Among the Greeks, there was a cult that imitated wolves and practiced ritual cannibalism. In Navaho society, witches were identified with wolves. Navahos believed in "skinwalkers," men or women who dressed in wolf skins, climbed on top of a neighbour's Hogan at night, and dropped pollen or the ground-up bones of children down the smoke hole. It was said that they gathered in caves and sang songs backward to create chaos out of order, that they ate the flesh of the dead and had intercourse with corpses. They broke the boundaries between life and death, good and evil, community and selfishness. (Steinhart 33)

Here again we see the primary conflict between community and selfishness working itself out and in these cases it is directly connected to the wolf and the act of cannibalism. In fact, the word cannibal means *canine-head*.

Mario Klarer in his article “Cannibalism and Carnavalesque: Incorporation as Utopia in the Early Image of America” traces the etymology of the term cannibal that “replaced the older ‘adrophage’ or ‘anthropophage’” (Klarer 391). His article examines the projection of European images upon the New World. One important projection “is the notion of a benevolent Nature which eagerly provides everything necessary for human life” (390). By traveling to the New World, Europeans hoped to catch a glimpse of the Golden Age, that time of Utopian beginnings from which civilization sprang. I agree with Klarer that much of what the Europeans saw when they came to the New World was a projection rather than an accurate account of what was actually before them. Ironically, what was projected by the collective unconsciousness of the explorer Columbus and captured the general imaginations of the Europeans back home was the image of a primitive place where people had the heads of dogs and ate human flesh.

Famous misconceptions in the context of the discovery of America include erroneously calling the natives “Indians” as well as the term “cannibal,” which also derives from semantic shortcomings indirectly expressed by Columbus in the following passage: “All the people I have encountered up until this time greatly fear the people of Caniba of Canima . . . The Indians with me continued to show great fear . . . insisting that the people of Bohío had only but one eye and a face of a dog, and they fear being eaten. I do not believe any of this. I feel the Indians they fear belong to the domain of the Great Khan.” Christopher Columbus, who interpreted the name of the tribe of the “Canibe” – due to the first syllable “can” – as subjects of the Great Khan or man eaters with dog-like snouts (from the Latin *canis* – dog), provided the

basis for subsequent treatments of these “cannibals” in the texts of the sixteenth century [...] Columbus and his successors project a number of ancient and medieval topoi of anthropophagy onto the newly-discovered continent. (390 – 391)

When the Old World looked at the New World it saw a hybrid of man and canine who were cannibals.

Although there are limitless possible variations, the basic plot structure of the carnivoresque is simple. It is a master trope based upon the wolf pack model. The social group of the carnivoresque is controlled by the Alpha and Omega and power is balanced between them. The Omega picks the den site and the Alpha protects the territory around the den site. The Alpha and Omega pair are supported by the collective labour of the Betas. Dominance is signified by the symbolic equivalent of an erect tail, submissiveness by the symbolic equivalent of a tail between the legs. When a Beta threatens the social order by raising its symbolic tail once too often, it is driven from the social group and becomes a Wag. Like the protagonist of the picaresque novel, the Wag is a wanderer. Once outside the social order the Wag is free of the gaze of the Alpha and Omega; s/he is strengthened by this period of living outside of the social order. The Wag often becomes a trickster. If the Wag wishes to re-enter the social group, it must confront the Alpha or Omega. If the Wag replaces one of the dominants, this leads to an actual or symbolic cannibalization of the displaced Alpha or Omega. This, then, is the very basic plot of the carnivoresque: a Beta who is in a position of lack is expelled from the social group; the Beta becomes a Wag; the Wag eventually becomes an Alpha or Omega. Or does not.

The Novelesque

A genre is a mapped territory. It is a collection of self authorizing texts. To write within a genre is to give words generic authority. To write between genres is to explore territories in an attempt to give words multiple authority. All writing exists in a genre of some kind and evokes the authority of territory. Even nonsense is a genre. Nonsense is someone's territory. To write outside of authority is bullshit. The ultimate genre is totally self authoritative. (Larwill 52)

Cannibalization of the Alpha by the Wag is a central part of carnivoresque culture and reading is often described as eating. In addition, books are often described as *food for thought*. Maggie Kilgour in From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation claims the literature of the Western tradition is a two thousand year old closed system, "where the laws regulating exchanges are all the more rigid when they are not known, and where human beings are too easily reduced to food" (Kilgour 248). Pamela K. Gilbert in Disease, Desire, and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels expands upon Kilgour and claims the Victorian novel in its day was seen at times as a text which was not just food to be "devoured" but a "drug" which could render "the consumer bestial, like an animal in his or her consumption" (Gilbert 21). Gilbert also makes a connection between "reading, eating, and sex" (17) and this coincides with the necessity of a Wag to Carnivorize an Alpha before becoming sexually active. Furthermore, Mikhail Bakhtin examines the interaction between competing genres and it seems that genres themselves also reflect an Alpha/Wag/Carnivoresque tropology.

In the process of becoming the dominant genre, the novel sparks the renovation of all other genres, it infects them with its spirit of process and

inconclusiveness. It draws them ineluctably into its orbit precisely because this orbit coincides with the basic direction of the development of literature as a whole. (Bakhtin 7)

According to Bakhtin, a genre can be classified as dominant or an outsider that eventually incorporates the body of the dominant genre into its own. The novel in the process of becoming dominant is in the position of an outsider that infects and causes a change in the social order of all genres. The novel, which acts as a Wag, eventually draws all genres into its pack and becomes the dominant genre. Furthermore:

The individual in the high distanced genres [i.e. epic] is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image. As such he is a fully finished and completed being. This has been accomplished on a lofty heroic level, but what is complete is also something hopelessly ready-made; he is there, from beginning to end he coincides with himself, he is absolutely equal to himself. He is, furthermore, completely externalized. There is not the slightest gap between his authentic essence and its external manifestations. All his potential, all his possibilities are realized in his external social position, in the whole of his fate and even in his external appearance; outside of this predetermined fate and predetermined position there is nothing. He has already become everything that he could become, and he could become only that which he has already become. (34)

The epic poem is an Alpha genre that has reached the top of the hierarchy. An Alpha genre is nothing more than the external appearance of its erect tail and it can do nothing

but defend the social position it has attained. The novel stands in contrast and in conflict with the epic. According to Bakhtin:

... (1) the novel should not be “poetic,” as the word “poetic” is used in other genres of imaginative literature; (2) the hero of a novel should not be “heroic” in either the epic or the tragic sense of the word: he should combine in himself negative as well as positive features, low as well as lofty, ridiculous as well as serious; (3) the hero should not be portrayed as an already completed and unchanging person but one who is evolving and developing, a person who learns from life; (4) the novel should become for the contemporary world what the epic was for the ancient world. (Bakhtin 10)

It would seem: (1) the novel is a Wag genre that stands in contrast to the “poetic” Alpha epic; (2) the hero of the novel is a Wag in process and may be a trickster; (3) the Wag is learning and will not remain a Wag; (4) the novel will eventually carnivore the epic and become the Alpha genre. Indeed, the novelesque and Bakhtin’s literary overview of the evolution of the novel matches closely with the carnivoresque. In addition, a totemic identification with the wolf by apes undergoing the paradigm shift caused by the development of a carnivore culture agrees with Bakhtin’s concept of the dialogic, which stands in contrast to the monologic. It would appear that the carnivoresque is present in literature at the macro level.

Modern rituals also reflect the carnivoresque. The most famous ritual of Western civilization, the Last Supper, is based upon troping the power of the carnivoresque. Jesus, when faced with the inevitability of public execution, called his Wag followers together and, through the ritual of the last supper, let the collective symbolically devour

his body and drink his blood before the Alpha Roman emperor, through his representatives, had the chance. Jesus, with his eye on the future, was the author of a ritual that symbolically gave leadership authority to all consumers of his text. It is a ritual that helped democratize the State and, while it is a ritual that may have been used to mystify a later Alpha Christian power structure, in the time of Jesus it worked to demystify the power structure of the society he lived in. Almost two thousand years later, Lu Hsun, working to demystify the power structures of the society he lived in, reflected upon the crucifixion of Christ and drew significance from Jesus' words on the cross:

“Eloi. Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)

God has forsaken him, and so he is the son of man after all. But the Israelites are crucifying even the son of man.

Those who reek most of blood and filth are not those who crucify the Son of God, but those who crucify the son of man. (Lu Wild Grass 17)

It was Lu Hsun who provided me with the wild grass seed that eventually grew into the idea of carnivoresque. In particular one book, Selected Stories of Lu Hsun, translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang. The precise edition that inspired the carnivoresque was the third edition published in Peking by Foreign Languages Press in 1972. The cover of this book is plain beige paper. Most of the cover is filled with the muted etching of a man sitting sideways. Below the sitting man's moustache his mouth is broken into a half-cocked smile; he leans towards the reader; his half-shut eyes glance sideways into your

eyes. His right arm forms a V. His fingers are holding a large hand rolled cigarette; white smoke curls and twists up from the tip of the cigarette and past the frame of the cover. "All around is still nothing but dusk; cigarette smoke rises in the motionless air like tiny specks of cloud in the summer sky, to be slowly transformed into indefinable shapes" (Lu Works I 365). The two short stories that specifically inspired the carnivoresque from this collection are "A Diary of a Madman" and "The True Story of Ah Q."

CHAPTER 5

BETA AH Q-ISM AND THE STORIES OF LU HSUN

The True Story of Lu Hsun

Because the hierarchy handed down since ancient times has estranged men from each other, they cannot feel each other's pain; and because each can hope to enslave and eat other men, he forgets that he may be enslaved and eaten himself. Thus since the dawn of civilization countless feasts – large and small – of human flesh have been spread, and those at these feasts eat others and are eaten themselves; but the anguished cries of the weak, to say nothing of the women and the children, are drowned in the senseless clamour of the murderers.

(Lu Works II 157)

Shoahsing, Chekiang Province, 1881: within the walls of a family compound called New T'aimen, surrounded by feudal China and the backdrop of rebellion, Chou Shu-jen was born into a middle class family of officials and secretaries, a family that is about to lose its status. In 1893 the grandfather is dragged into court when he is caught bribing a government official. The stubborn grandfather refuses to admit any wrong-doing since bribery is so common. Of course, the government wants to hide its own corruption, so in response it gives Chou Shu-jen's grandfather the option of being labelled *lunatic* because, as R.D. Laing states, "psychiatry is concerned with politics, with who makes the law, who defines the situation" (Laing 8). The grandfather, by refusing to admit any wrong-doing, threatens to expose the collective lie of State corruption.

If one person blows the gaff, the mind police (psychiatrist) are called in. A crime (illness) is diagnosed. An arrest is made and the patient taken into custody (hospitalization). Interviews and investigations follow.

A confession may be obtained (patient admits he is ill, displays insight).

He is convicted either way. The sentence is passed (therapy is recommended).

He serves his time, comes out, and obeys the law in future. (Laing 7)

In the case of Chou Shu-jen's grandfather, the label of *lunatic* is offered as a panoptical punishment in lieu of corporal punishment. The grandfather must bear the name *lunatic* in order to help define the government as *just*. Instead, the grandfather chooses to shout out the names of prominent people who also engaged in the common practice of bribery, thus giving the government the label of corrupt.

In the mind of the government official, this public outbreak proves the diagnosis. There is obviously something wrong with this man's head and the standard recommended therapy of the time, decapitation, is prescribed but, thanks to the corruption of the government, Chou Shu-jen's family is able to prevent the grandfather's execution with a long series of bribes. In 1901 the grandfather is released from prison in an amnesty following the Boxer Rebellion. The grandfather's imprisonment leads to a lowering of the family's status and depletes its resources. This has a profound effect upon Chou Shu-jen and is one of the factors that leads him to become a writer.

In the preface to his first collection of short stories Call to Arms, Chou Shu-jen under the name Lu Hsun tells the story of his decision to become a writer and sets the context for the short stories that follow. In addition to stories, Lu Hsun also wrote essays and prose poems. He often blurred the lines between these genres. At times his stories became like essays, his essays like poetry, and his poetry like stories. In Call to Arms the preface is used by Lu Hsun to construct Chou Shu-jen as an author. The constructed character of Lu Hsun is a compassionate one. Speaking as author in the preface, he

explains: “I believe those who sink from prosperity to poverty will probably come, in the process, to understand what the world is really like” (Lu Selected 1). One of the factors that led to the sinking of Lu Hsun’s family status was his grandfather’s defiance of the state. Another factor was the lingering terminal illness of his father. Later in the preface Hsun continues:

For more than four years I used to go, almost daily, to a pawnbroker’s and to a medicine shop. I cannot remember how old I was then; but the counter in the medicine shop was the same height as I, and that in the pawnbroker’s twice my height. I used to hand clothes and trinkets up to the counter twice my height, take the money proffered with contempt, then go to the counter the same height as I to buy medicine for my father who had been ill. (Lu Selected 1)

The physicians who sold the young Lu Hsun medicine were “either unwitting or deliberate charlatans” (2) and Lu Hsun’s father died.

Lu Hsun eventually traveled to Japan to study medicine himself, but first he went to the Kiangnan Naval Academy in Nanking, where he rejected the study of classics in favour of *foreign subjects*. At that time in China, many saw this as the equivalent of selling “his soul to foreign devils” (2). But he discovered while studying translated histories “that the Japanese Reformation had originated, to a great extent, with the introduction of Western medical science to Japan” (2). With this information in mind, Lu Hsun decided to become a doctor and in 1902 he went to Japan to study medicine.

Lu Hsun spent several years away from China and lived in the Imperial Japanese context. This led to a dramatic revelation about his own country.

It was a long time since I had seen any compatriots, but one day I saw a film showing some Chinese, one of who was bound, while many others stood around him. They were all strong fellows but appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands bound was a spy working for the Russians, who was to have his head cut off by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to enjoy the spectacle.

Before the term was over I had left for Tokyo, because after this film I felt that medical science was not so important after all. The people of a weak and backward country, however strong and healthy they may be, can only serve to be made examples of, or to witness such futile spectacles; and it doesn't really matter how many of them die of illness. The most important thing, therefore, was to change their spirit, and since that time I felt literature was the best means to this end, I determined to promote a literary movement. (3)

Shortly after seeing the film of the execution, Lu Hsun returned to China and became involved with the New Culture Movement, the magazine *New Youth*, and the May Fourth Movement.

Lu Hsun's first short story, 'K'uang-jen-jih-chi' (The Diary of a Madman), which appeared in *New Youth* in May, 1918, was also the first Chinese short story to be written in the vernacular and in modern style. Once he had boldly declared war on China's feudalism through his 'Madman', he abandoned his solitude to become a fearless fighter on China's ideological front. (Huang 44)

Lu Hsun's writing was deeply involved with the anti-colonial politics of the New Culture movement. He realized that Chinese isolation had to come to an end and that the old morality of Confucian teaching, which in the past had worked to preserve China as an independent nation, would not carry his people into the future. Chinese national culture had been protected by the walls of a feudal social order and those wall were being breached by the battering ram of Western Capitalism.

Lu Hsun recognized that the "classical literature (wen yen) was still enjoying undisputed prestige, and . . . was still serving as the basis of Confucian teaching and as a treasure house of old Chinese ideology, art and life" (Huang 13), while for all intents and purposes the old feudal order had collapsed. Chinese literature had to evolve and come to reflect the present reality instead of *murdering the present*. Those *cultured gentlemen* who held on to the lofty ancient cultural forms were the enemy.

Not content to be mortals, they want to be immortal. Living on earth, they want to go up to heaven. Modern men, breathing modern air, they want to ram moribund Confucian morality and a dead language down people's throats – what an insult to the present! These are "murderers of the present." And by murdering the present, they are murdering the future too. (Lu Works II 44)

Even the Chinese form of writing, which was based upon the ideogram rather than the transcription of oral communication, was working against the preservation of the Chinese nation. There were few who could read it and even fewer who could write it. When Lu Hsun used the letter Q from the Western alphabet to identify his character Ah Q in the short story The True Story of Ah Q, he slapped the face of the *cultured gentlemen* and supported the *vulgar* move towards the vernacular, a movement that was giving voice to

all “the sounds uttered by China’s four hundred millions” (44) who for too long had been held *beneath contempt*.

Foucaultian elements of panopticism and the pharmakon were part of Lu Hsun’s life experience. The medicine Lu Hsun bought for his father during his youth brought more economic harm to his family than medical benefit to his father. His grandfather, by not accepting the label *lunatic*, rejected the psychological panoptic gaze of the state. While watching a movie in Japan, Lu Hsun got a chance to sit in the tower of a panopticon and to look into the Chinese jail cell. “This was during the Russo-Japanese War, so there were many war films, and I had to join in the clapping and cheering in the lecture hall along with the other students” (Lu Selected 2). The spectacle of decapitation was common in China at the time. It is a form of punishment similar to the dismemberment of the regicide Damiens that Foucault refers to in “The Structures of Punishment” (Foucault 104).

Dismemberment is a feudal form of discipline that has its roots in cannibalization. In contrast, panopticism is an invention of capitalism and the panoptic gaze grows with the development of capitalism. Lu Hsun’s metaphor for society was also a structure of punishment. Similar to Foucault’s use of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon prison as a metaphor for the overall functioning of power in society, Lu Hsun saw his society as “an iron house without windows” (Lu Selected 5). The inhabitants of this indestructible house of darkness were all asleep and were dying from a lack of air. One could cry out in an attempt to awaken some of the sleeping prisoners, but this would just lead to their death being painful (5). At times Lu Hsun could be quite pessimistic. However, when the editors of *New Youth* magazine asked him to write something, they argued that to

awaken a few of the sleepers would at least give hope that the iron house might be destroyed. Lu Hsun agreed to put his pen to paper and the result is “A Madman’s Diary.” It is the story of a man who awakens: the first thing he sees is the moon; soon he becomes aware of being watched. Lu Hsun’s momentary seat in the Japanese panopticon was never forgotten.

The movie camera takes the two eyes of the feudal ruler and merges them into one eye, yet when this mechanical capitalist form of the gaze replaces the feudal gaze of the emperor, it can also put on display the inefficiency and barbarity of the older method of feudal discipline, which is based upon the silencing of a victim, the placing of an anti-emperor label upon him, the parading of this anti-emperor through the community, and finally the execution. Execution is a form of dismemberment, the carving up of a body, a ritualistic meal where the emperor symbolically devours the anti-emperor. In China the livers of executed bandits were often eaten because it was felt one could gain the strength of the executed by eating it. This is a cannibalistic ritual that goes back to our most primitive past, a time before even the tribe, the time of the carnivoresque.

The New Year’s Sacrifice

Wolves are often associated with the rite of cannibalism in the stories of Lu Hsun. For example, in “The New Year’s Sacrifice,” the sacrifice is both a ritual meal and the consumption of two characters. One character is eaten by a wolf, the other character is eaten by society. The tale begins with the narrator of the story returning to his “native place,” which is called Luchen. In this village the New Year’s ritual meal is called “the

sacrifice”, a meal where animals are killed and after “the meat is cooked some chopsticks are thrust into it at random and this is called the ‘offering’” (Lu Stories 126). The narrator stays with his Fourth Uncle, who carries the same family name as Lu Hsun, the pen name of Chou Shu-jen.

Lu Hsun’s narrators often seems to exist somewhere between the page and Chou Shu-jen. In fact, calling Lu Hsun a pen name is very apt. Lu Hsun frequently speaks through a first person narrator who is also a constructed persona and the presumed fictional author of the story. Furthermore, satire and irony are Lu Hsun’s favourite tools. Referring to his writing, Mao Tsetung calls Lu Hsun’s use of satire and irony weapons: “Living under the rule of the dark forces and deprived of freedom of speech, Lu Hsun used burning satire and freezing irony [...] to do battle; and he was entirely right” (Mao 278). Persona facilitates satire and irony and, if satire and irony can be seen as Lu Hsun’s weapons, perhaps his use of persona can be seen as his armour. In his burning satire “The New Year’s Sacrifice,” Lu Hsun uses freezing irony to drive his point home. In addition, he plays with his pen name and through this play a forged realism is created. Since Mr. Lu, the Uncle in this story, has the same family name as the writer Lu Hsun, this indirectly gives the narrator of the story the name Lu as well. Even Luchen, the name of the village, is very close to the name Lu Hsun. In the postscript to his collection of essays, Tomb, Lu Hsun states: “It is quite true that I often dissect other people, but even more often – and even more ruthlessly – I dissect myself” (qtd. in Lyell 187). This dissection is very evident in the short story, “A Madman’s Diary.” In general, the stories of Lu Hsun are satirical critiques of Chinese society by the individual Chou Shu-jen. At

the same time, they are also self criticism born of realization that, as a member of society, the author also must share the traits of his society.

In “The New Year’s Sacrifice” the uncle, Mr. Lu, is “a traditional scholar with a bent for Neo-Confucian studies” (Lyell 142). Lu Hsun often ridicules intellectuals in his stories. According to William Lyell, in the works of Lu Hsun the “majority of important roles go to intellectuals,” (140) as in this narrative. Furthermore, traditional intellectuals “are presented as either the oppressors or the oppressed; there is no middle ground” (141). Fourth Uncle Lu follows the old ways: he is the Alpha of this chronicle and he is a “memorable traditional intellectual presented as oppressor” (141). The story is primarily about Hsiang Lin’s wife, however. As the narrator puts it, he writes her story from the fragments “of her life, seen or heard before, now combined to form one whole” (Lu Stories 131). Hsiang Lin’s wife is Uncle Lu’s servant and the persona-writer documents the absolutely brutal treatment of women in traditional Chinese society. Hsiang Lin’s wife is both the Wag and the Beta of this story. After her husband has died she flees her husband’s family, where she has been treated as a slave. The flight from a dominant social order makes her a Wag, but in Luchen she finds a job as a servant and returns to Beta status. Unfortunately, her first husband’s family catches up to her, takes the accumulated wages she had made while working for Uncle Lu, and then marries her off to a man in the mountains who is willing to pay a high price for a bride, “since few women are willing to marry someone living deep in the mountains” (134). The money made from Hsiang Lin’s wife is used for the wedding party of a young brother-in-law from her first husband’s family. This is set up by her mother-in-law who is the Omega of the story and thus the plot falls into the paradigm of the carnivoresque, where

reproduction is controlled by the Alpha and Omega social order. Hsiang Lin's wife is tied to the wedding chair, dragged off screaming, forced into marriage, and then raped. Once she is firmly in her Beta position life improves for a little while. She is well fed and has a son. But then her new husband dies of typhoid fever and the fate of her son is not much better.

Only in the afternoon, after looking everywhere else, did they go to look in the glen and see one of his little shoes caught on a bramble. 'That's bad,' they said 'he must have met a wolf.' And sure enough when they went further in there he was, lying in the wolf's lair, with all his entrails eaten away [. . .]
(137)

Hsiang Lin's wife returns to the employ of Uncle Lu but, because she has had two husbands, she is now considered an immoral person and is not allowed to help with the sacred preparations of the New Year's celebration. Tradition forces her into submission and then she is chastised by tradition for her submission. In addition, as a Beta she has no future generation because her son has been eaten by a wolf. Eventually she is kicked out of the household and dies a beggar, worrying that when she goes to Hell she will be cut in half by her two husbands. This fear of being carved up after her death symbolically connects her to the ritual of cannibalism. "The New Year's Sacrifice" is the story of a Beta who becomes a failed Wag and is carnivored by the Alpha and Omega social order.

Cannibalism of one form or another is a recurring theme in the stories of Lu Hsun. As Lyell puts it:

In this story, as in a number of others, Lu Hsun would have his readers believe that traditional society is a cannibalistic feast where the weak are served up for the delectation of the strong, where the oppressors take and the oppressed are taken. (Lyell 144)

This story takes place in a village associated with the old ways and referred to as a “native place.” Lu Hsun is often obviously metaphoric in his stories and a possible reading of “native place” could be a place of origin. The New Year’s feast consists of “the sacrifice” and “the offering”: animals are killed for “the sacrifice” and, once the meat is symbolically stabbed with chop sticks, it is called “the offering.” This rite is referred to as an “old custom” and one can only wonder how old the roots of it are. The reader is indirectly encouraged to wonder about the origins of this custom and how it may be functioning in relationship to forms of cannibalism active in society today. In the last paragraph of this story, the events of Hsiang Lin’s wife life has left the narrator “bewildered, hearing as in a dream the confused continuous sound of the distant [fire]crackers” (Lu Stories 143). The reader is encouraged to wonder how the first person narrator/writer of this story will react to this cannibalistic New Year’s feast. Will he reject the Alpha/Omega order and take up the stance of a Wag? Or will he accept a Beta status? The narrator, who is perhaps mirroring the reader, is befuddled by the hidden meaning of this obviously metaphoric story. In the last paragraph the narrator listens to the sounds of carnival-like celebrations blending with the sound of whirling snow as the entire city is engulfed in a storm. These swallowing sounds lull the narrator into serenity as the celebration sweeps away “the doubt which had preyed” (143) upon him, and in the end he takes solace in knowing that the sacrifice is accepted by the saints of heaven, who

are “all reeling with intoxication in the sky, preparing to give the people of Luchen boundless good fortune” (143). The story ends with these ironic words.

As Lyell has pointed out, the cannibalistic feast is a recurring theme in the stories of Lu Hsun. In this story Hsiang Lin’s wife, who has no identity of her own, is always associated with food and in particular the New Year’s feast. She is not directly eaten but her son, who is her future generation, is eaten by a wolf. Lu Hsun’s metaphors are clearly political. As Lyell notes, in this story Lu Hsun is attacking the so-called reason of traditional Chinese intellectuals (Lyell 187), but the carnivoresque is also very close to the surface of the story.

A Madman’s Diary

In contrast with traditional intellectual reason, madness is a central issue broached in “A Madman’s Diary.” This story consists of two parts: the first is an introduction written in the first person and, in the Chinese version, in formal Chinese; the second part of the story is a diary of a madman, written in colloquial Chinese. The division between the two sections of this story marks a turning point in Chinese literature. After publishing this story, “Lu Hsun wrote almost exclusively in colloquial Chinese” (Lyell 98). In 1932 Lu Hsun’s older brother Chou Tso-jen noted the politics behind this choice of language.

In a lecture given at Fujen University in 1932, Tso-jen pointed out that during their years in Japan colloquial Chinese was viewed primarily as an instrument of communication to be used in establishing contact with the common people or laborers; for any serious literary enterprise one would use

the classical language. “We may say that at that time the classical language was used [to communicate with] the master, while the colloquial was used [to communicate with] the servants.” (Lyell 98)

Lu Hsun was part of a movement of intellectuals who were turning away from traditional forms and were beginning to write for the common people. After Lu Hsun took up this style, all of China came to write with the voice of the “madman.” In the opening section of “A Madman’s Diary” the traditional first narrator, who frames the words of the colloquial second narrator, describes how he came into possession of the diary he is now presenting. According to the traditional framing narrator, the writing that constructs this diary is a “confused and incoherent” collection of “wild statements” that lacks dates and the first narrator explains he has taken great care to put the material into chronological order by analysing the different colours of inks used by the madman; but he also tells us that some sections have been omitted. In addition, he has changed the names of the people involved; however, since they are country folk they are “of no consequence” (Lu Stories 7). Clearly, the opening narrator writes within the old paradigm.

The madman’s diary consists of thirteen entries that put us inside the mind of a man who thinks he is surrounded by a society of people who literally eat each other. The forms of cannibalism Lu Hsun describes in his short stories were still being practiced at the time he wrote, but he also uses cannibalism as a metaphor for feudalism. China was a nation ruled by carnivore warlords. It was also threatened by hungry foreign powers. The first narrator labels the second as mad, but one begins to wonder after reading the first entry of the diary if the madman is using his madness in a conscious way which the

first narrator has failed to notice. The first entry documents how this alleged madman is beginning to see the world differently.

Tonight the moon is very bright.

I have not seen it for over thirty years, so today when I saw it I felt in unusually high spirits. I begin to realize that during the past thirty-odd years I have been in the dark; but now I must be extremely careful. Otherwise why should that dog at the Chao house have looked at me twice?

I have reason for my fear. (Lu Stories 7-8)

Why should the madman be afraid of the gaze of a dog? It is important to note that the diarist himself states that there is “reason” for his fear. In contrast to the assumption that the writer of these words is mad, one could assume he was in fact coming to see the world clearly. As previously mentioned Lu Hsun provided the inspiration for the carnivoresque. When I first read the madman’s question, it seemed to me to be a rhetorical question asked of the reader. The speaker seemed to know why the dog has looked at him twice and his fear is connected with coming to see the world clearly. The answer I eventually came up with is the carnivoreque. In contrast to the frame of madness applied to the diary by the opening traditional narrator, once the trope of the carnivoresque is applied to the opening section of this madman’s diary, a reader can understand why seeing things clearly can get you into trouble. It also explains how this trouble might in some metaphoric way be connected to the barking of a dog.

Part of the metamorphosis a Beta goes through in becoming a Wag is to begin to see things clearly. A Wag is a Beta who rejects his/her status and no longer keeps its symbolic tail between its legs. To raise your tail is to be in much higher spirits. In this

case, the backdrop for these higher spirits is the full moon and it is well known that wolves howl at the full moon. As well, the full moon is a common symbol of fertility. Furthermore, the full moon also marks a new month and can be seen as a symbol of change. A carnivoresque reading of the first section of the madman's diary reveals an opening to a story that is simple, rational, and straightforward: a Beta of thirty years raises his symbolic tail and now must be wary of the gaze of the Alpha.

The very next section of the madman's diary is written when "there is no moon at all" and in this entry the madman becomes aware of the gaze of Mr. Chao. According to the madman, Mr. Chao "had a strange look in his eyes, as if he were afraid of me, as if he wanted to murder me" (Lu Stories 8). Mr Chao is the owner of the previously mentioned dog and, along with the madman's brother, he represents the Alpha social order. The Alpha order is always threatened by the presence of a Wag and this is the case here. Not much later the madman hears of events that have taken place in Wolf Cub Village: a Wag figure referred to as "a notorious character" (9) has had his heart and liver eaten. This ritual cannibalism is carried out in order to increase the courage of the ones who perform the rite. In another story, "Medicine," which appears in the same collection, it is a revolutionary who is eaten. He, of course, is also a Wag figure. His blood is seen as having curative power and a mother feeds this carnivoresque medicine to her child, but the child dies anyway. Cannibalism passed on from one generation to the next is also a central theme of "A Madman's Diary" and it is also very possible that the "notorious character" eaten in the Wolf Cub Village of this story is also a revolutionary. After hearing the story of the cannibalism, the madman exclaims: "They eat human beings, so they may eat me" (9). His first reaction is to try to understand what is happening around

him and he turns to the written word, but ironically between the lines he finds a hidden message:

Everything requires careful consideration if one is to understand it. In ancient times, as I recollect, people often ate human beings, but I am rather hazy about it. I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology, and scrawled all over each page are the words: "Virtue and Morality." Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words – "Eat people." (10)

Ironically, or perhaps not, my study of literature has brought me to the same conclusion as the madman. The madman tries talking to his brother but he is immediately labelled insane. After this conversation the madman notes in his diary: "The Choa family dog has started barking again" (13). The madman continues to try to reason with his brother: The brother calls a doctor. The madman doesn't trust the doctor and eventually he comes to think that his brother may have fed him the flesh of his dead sister without his knowing it. Throughout the story, the madman connects cannibalism with an act of ancient man that has been passed on from one generation to the next. When he realises he is also guilty of the offence, he is thrown into deepest despair: "How can a man like myself, after four thousand years of man-eating history – even though I knew nothing about it at first – ever hope to face real men?" (18). Yet, the story does not end in despair; it ends with a question and an unfinished statement: "Perhaps there are still children who have not eaten men? Save the children. . . ." (18). It concludes with an ellipsis and a hope for the future.

While “A Madman’s Diary” ends with three words and three dots, it is important to remember that this story is also framed by the opening remarks of the first narrator. The first narrator acts as an editor who assembles the story from fragments in a similar way that the narrator of “The New Year’s Sacrifice” has assembled his story of Hsiang Lin’s wife from collected bits and pieces. Presentation of a story can effect the message heard and those who do the presenting exercise power. The madman subverts this power by actively reading between the lines; this hermeneutic approach leads him to discover a hidden message. As suggested by the madman, who sees the message “eat people” between the lines of everything he reads, it is important to search actively for the “true story” between the lines and not to accept passively what is presented to us on the surface. Ironically, I am a Canadian English speaker interested in a Chinese writer. This means I read the works of Lu Hsun in translation. The translator reads for me and then puts the words of Lu Hsun into a language I can understand. I read the works of Lu Hsun through these translators. But the carnivoresque is the story between the lines and wolves are the absent centre of every text, so if you read between the lines of the translator’s choices you can also do a carnivoresque reading of the different choices made by these different translators. A prime example is displayed by two translations of the same passages from “A Madman’s Diary.”

In my beat-up 1970s version of Selected Stories of Lu Hsun published by the People’s Republic of China’s Foreign Languages Press, the translation of “A Madman’s Diary” is done by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang. In this Chinese version, according to the opening frame that is provided by the traditional narrator, the madman, after writing this diary, “had gone elsewhere to take up an official post” (Lu Stories 7). At the end of

the story the character is presented as a Beta that has raised his tail in defiance of the Alpha social order and can be seen as a Wag who leaves to go somewhere else. The central character is no longer passive but is active. He has taken up an official post after writing the open-ended statement “save the children”, and the implication is that this *official post* will be connected to a new social order that will replace the cannibalism of the society he has left behind. This reading puts ironic potential into the meaning of the term “official post”.¹² In contrast, an American translation by William Lyell in Lu Hsun’s Vision of Reality and published at Berkeley by the University of California Press in 1976 translates the madman’s final action as being he “had gone elsewhere to await a substantive official appointment” (Lyell 270). In this translation the madman is passive at the end of the story: he is waiting for an appointment that will be bestowed by the Alpha social order. The madman is not longer a Wag but has returned to his Beta status and he will be rewarded in some way for his submission. Which is the “true” translation? Both are. Both translations provide information about the translators’ points of view. These conflicting versions force readers to choose which they wish to accept. In a similar way, the opening frame of the “A Madman’s Diary” provides the reader with the information that the person who wrote these diaries is insane; an authoritative voice attaches a label of insanity to this character. The reader can choose to believe this assessment or can question it. Readers have an opportunity to learn something about themselves and this process can lead them to question where they fit in the social order of the carnivoreque. “A Madman’s Diary” is a dialogic text. Two speakers are present in

¹² A post is also a phallic symbol and this official post can be seen as a carnivoresque raising of the tail.

the text, two views contend. Two opposing readings are possible. “A Madman’s Diary” is both a readerly and a writerly text. The reader can be passive and accept the label of madness provided by the opening frame; the reader can be active and question the label.

The True Story of Ah Q

In Lu Hsun’s most famous story, “The True Story of Ah Q,” the first person narrator/writer struggles with the arbitrariness of applying a label to a character. While the narrator is setting out to tell the “true” story of Ah Q, he soon explains that he actually knows very little about his central character. He isn’t even sure of Ah Q’s real name. The narrator also faces the difficulty of fitting this character into the territory of a biographical genre. As the narrator puts it: “There are many types of biographies: official biographies, autobiographies, unauthorized biographies, legends, supplementary biographies, family histories, sketches . . . but unfortunately none of these suited my purpose” (Lu Stories 65). The narrator’s tone is ironic and he mocks the notion that writing requires an immortal character and an immortal pen. The pen of this narrator/writer is far from immortal and the character he is writing about is also far from immortal. Leo Ou-Fan Lee sees “The True Story of Ah Q” as Lu Hsun’s “summation of the characteristics of the crowd; in fact, Ah Q in his facial features (or lack thereof) is literally and figuratively a face in the crowd” (Lee 10). In its form, “The True Story of Ah Q” is a “devastating mockery of the traditional Chinese biography” (Lee 10). Lu Hsun’s fiction has also been called a cross-genre “story theatre.” There is limited description of setting; however, the scene drawn with cryptic but suggestive brush strokes

foregrounds the interplay between characters (Lee 11). Often the interaction is “between narrator and protagonist” (11). The narrator/writer of “The True Story of Ah Q” struggles with the post-modern dilemma of subjectivity and the role of authority in writing. The narrator/writer rejects the epic writing of immortal authors whose subject is immortal characters that become “known to posterity through the writing and the writing known to posterity through the man – until finally it is not clear who is making whom known” (Lu Stories 65). The epic is about fixing origin and Ah Q is a character that cannot be placed. The narrator/writer makes it very clear that Ah Q is not an immortal hero. The five pages of the introduction are used to list all the difficulties involved in fixing this character. His surname, personal name, and place of origin are all in question.

Ironically, the opposite of immortal is mortal and, while Lu Hsun is a writer interested in the past, he is most concerned with the here and the now. Not writing for posterity matches closely with the position taken by Lu Hsun in his forward to his collection of prose poem/essays, Wild Grass. He likens his waggish writing to this plant:

Wild grass strikes no deep roots, has no beautiful flowers and leaves, yet it imbibes dew, water and the blood and flesh of the dead, although all try to rob it of life. As long as it lives it is trampled upon and mown down, until it dies and decays. [. . .] I love my wild grass, but I detest the ground which decks itself with wild grass. (Lu Wild Grass 3)

If a writer writes to become immortal or to become an Alpha or Omega, it means his or her words work to preserve society as it is. In contrast to the immortal writer, mortal writers write to change the society they live in. To be forgotten is the goal. If a writer is remembered it is because his or her words still have relevance in the future; but if his or

her words have relevance in the future, it means they have failed to change the context in which they were uttered or written. For this reason Lu Hsun hoped “for the swift death and decay of this wild grass” (4) because, if his writing became immortal it would mean he had “not lived, and this would be truly more lamentable than death and decay” (4). This ideological position stands in opposition to the Alpha concept of a canon filled with immortal works that live forever. The canon is a sarcophagus where the mummified bodies of immortal works are placed. Fixed forms are the coffins of writing: in the end, an immortal work becomes its genre. The genre devours the work. Genre is the brightly painted fixed representation of transcendent material held forever *alive* inside a protective sarcophagus, pretty to look at on the outside, but empty on the inside except for decay, dust, and death.

As previously stated, the narrator/writer of “The True Story of Ah Q” lists the numerous biographical genres available to him but none of them seem to fit his “far-from-immortal work” (Lu Stories 65) or the character he is writing about. At the same time, this lack of identity and confusion around the name of Ah Q works to identify him as a common man or a Beta. In addition, the double meaning of the Chinese word Quei, cinnamon or nobility, indicates that the name of this character is metaphoric. In Chinese folklore, the cinnamon tree must be cut down every thousand years, otherwise it will grow up to cover the moon. The cinnamon tree can be seen as a waggish earthly force that threatens to cannibalize the heavenly Alpha status of the moon. Cutting down the cinnamon tree symbolises keeping earthy Betas in their place. Furthermore, the use of the letter Q from the western alphabet points to the waggish nature of this character/character. He is signified by a Western letter and is not from within the

traditional discourse. And, ironically, this Western letter also becomes an ideogram for the character in this story.

The letter Q is from the Phoenician letter Koph that originally was used to signify a head. “Its name, *cue*, is said to be from the French queue, a tail” (Webster 895). *Queue* is derived from the old French *coe* or *coue*, which means coward. In China, the queue was the “[l]ong hair in a pigtail imposed on Chinese males by the Manchu conquerors in 1644 and compulsory until 1911. Cutting the queue was a symbolic act for 19th century revolutionaries” (Dillon 168). Pigtails are prominent throughout this story and the raising and lowering of the cowardly Ah Q’s pigtail matches with his shifting Beta/Wag status. “Lu Hsun was fascinated by the resemblance between the ‘Q’ and a head with a pigtail hanging down” (Lyell 228). The queue was a symbol of submission to Manchu (Man/Chew) authority and a signifier of a servile mentality. Lu Hsun came to call this servile mentality Ah Q-ism and he saw it as the force that “was responsible for China’s impotence in the face of foreign invasions in past centuries” (Huang 131). “The True Story of Ah Q” is a case study of the colonial or Beta mentality. As Feng Hsüeh-feng put it in “*On The True Story of Ah Q*,” Ah Q-ism can be described as:

[...] contempt for oneself and others; an ability to forget injuries easily; the use of ‘moral victories’ to reconcile oneself to failure; the practice of venting one’s anger on someone weaker when oppressed and insulted by someone stronger – all these are related to each other, the chief being the use of ‘moral victory’. (Feng qtd. in Huang 61)

The only victories Ah Q achieves during the story are moral victories and these moral victories are achieved by words. Ah Q is able to accept his Beta position within the

social system by living in a false consciousness. This *false consciousness* is illustrated time and time again in the story.

Ah Q creates his false consciousness out of words and compensates for a lack of control in his life by manipulating words rather than attempting to alter his social position. For example, he has scars on his scalp from ringworms, so he defines the word 'ringworm' as a taboo word or politically incorrect utterance. He does this because he believes his ringworm scars only exist because there is a word for ringworm and, if there is no word for ringworm, he cannot be ridiculed for his personal appearance. If someone uses the word "ringworm" or any other word Ah Q has labelled taboo, he flies into a rage. If the person is smaller and weaker, then and only then will Ah Q attack; but in most cases it is Ah Q who ends up beaten and it is his queue that is used to bang his head against the wall. He is the laughing stock of the village and he is clearly a Beta of the lowest level. Ah Q is able to accept his Beta status because he turns any situation into a *moral victory* or convinces himself he is in fact the victor.

But presently he changed defeat into victory. Raising his right hand he slapped his own face hard twice, so that it tingled with pain. After this slapping his heart felt lighter, for it seemed as if the one who had given the slap was himself, the one slapped some other self, and soon it was just as if he had beaten someone else – in spite of the fact that his face was still tingling.

He lay down satisfied that he had gained the victory. (Lu Stories 74)

Ah Q is also quick to point out that he "used to be much better off" (71) and alludes to an Alpha heritage that he is convinced he still retains in some way. A superior sense of himself is partially achieved, ironically, through self-belittlement. Ah Q can see himself

as an Alpha rather than a Beta if he is the “foremost self-belittler” and ignores the word “belittler” to focus on the fact he is “foremost.”

Ah Q is the opposite of the madman in “A Madman’s Diary.” Ah Q does not come to see the world clearly; in fact, by his manipulation of discourse, Ah Q scrawls the words “Virtue and Morality” all over the pages of his own personal history. Ah Q never sees that between the lines the whole book of history is filled with the two words – “Eat people”. At the end of this story it is Ah Q who is symbolically devoured and a wolf-like gaze is associated with his execution. The plot of “The True Story of Ah Q” follows the basic plot structure of the carnivoresque in that Ah Q is a Beta who quite literally raises his tail by wrapping his queue up on his head during a revolution. This symbolic act signifies Ah Q as a Wag in defiance of the Alpha social order, only in Ah Q’s case he is a failed Wag destined to be carnivORIZED by the Alpha/Omega order. “The True Story of Ah Q” documents Ah Q’s transition from a ridiculous Beta to a ridiculous Wag. This transition begins with a lice catching contest.

Whiskers Wang is a hairy cheeked Beta. Ah Q sees Whiskers Wang as having even lower status than himself. It is even an honour for the animal-like Whiskers Wang to sit next to Ah Q. When Whiskers Wang begins to catch lice, “cracking them in his teeth with a popping sound” (Lu Stories 75), Ah Q becomes envious of this apish ability and enters into competition with him. Eventually, a fight breaks out after Ah Q calls Whiskers Wang a “Hairy worm!” In response, Whiskers Wang calls Ah Q a “Mangy dog.” They fight. The contemptible Whiskers Wang wins. Foreshadowing the execution at the end of this story, Whiskers Wang drags Ah Q to a wall by the pigtail and proceeds to bang his head. As this is happening Ah Q falls back on his manipulation of discourse

and his superior virtue and morality: “ ‘A gentleman uses his tongue but not his hands!’ ” protested Ah Q, his head on one side” (76). After this *moral victory* Ah Q faces another adversary: he confronts Mr. Chien’s eldest son who has gone to a foreign school and has cut off his pigtail. At first under his breath, Ah Q calls him “Imitation Foreign Devil” and “Traitor in Foreign Pay.” But, when this Imitation Foreign Devil gets close, Ah Q forgets himself and calls him a “baldhead ass” out loud. This leads to the *moral victory* of Ah Q being wacked over the head by the walking stick he calls a “staff carried by a mourner” (77). Ah Q is passive in this attack except for an attempt to bravely blame the utterance on a small child who happens to be close by. After the beating, “the precious “ability to forget” handed down by his ancestors stood him in good stead” (78). In the opening chapters of “The True Story of Ah Q,” the character Ah Q shows a contempt for himself and others; an ability to forget injuries easily; and has used *moral victories* to reconcile himself to failure. The next aspect of Ah Q-ism to be displayed is the practice of venting anger on someone weaker. Ah Q’s humiliations lead him to find a victim of his own. In the end he finds a small nun who he tries to molest. The degradation of this nun helps him to “avenge” his own humiliation and “after the beating, he felt light and buoyant as if ready to float into the air” (78). However, Ah Q’s victory is soon deflated when the nun curses Ah Q with the words “Ah Q, may you die sonless” (78). This is a reminder of his Beta status Ah Q cannot ignore.

Ah Q decides to try and reproduce. He asks Amah Wu, the maidservant of his employer Chao, to sleep with him. In the paradigm of the carnivoreque this is not acceptable behaviour for a Beta. Chao is the local Alpha and only Alphas and Omegas reproduce, as shown by Mr. Chao’s wife who is pregnant and the fact that Mr Chao is

also in the process of obtaining a concubine. When Mr. Chao discovers Ah Q's attempt to reproduce within the territory of his home, he beats Ah Q. To reaffirm his Beta status Ah Q must kowtow and pay a large amount of money to Mr. Chao to atone for his lack of respect.¹³ Ah Q is not required to compensate Amah Wu in any way.

Ah Q's attempt to reproduce leads to isolation from the pack. This pathetic endeavour leads to a loss of his Beta status in society and he can no longer find work. Driven by hunger, he ends up trying to steal some turnips. This Wag action gets him chased "by an enormously fat, black dog" (Lu Stories 89). The appearance of this canine figure coincides with him leaving his home village and going to town. In town he lives the life of a petty criminal. After a year's absence Ah Q returns with the air of a Wag and he even pays cash for his wine, which is out of the ordinary for him. At first the community treats him with respect since he may be a threat to the power of the dominant, but the only extent of Ah Q's wag activities has been to stand by a window as stolen goods are passed to him. Even as a Wag he manages to be passive. In addition, Ah Q's greatest claim to fame is that he has seen the execution of a revolutionary. For a few days, the returning Wag Ah Q manages to be a presence that threatens the power of Mr. Chao. As the narrator puts it: "Although we cannot say that in the eyes of the inhabitants of Weichuang Ah Q's status at this time was superior to that of Mr. Chao, we can at least affirm without any danger of inaccuracy that it was about the same" (92). The only problem with Ah Q's status is that his only real power is to shout the word "Kill!" after telling his story of the execution. While this utterance manages to scare Whiskers Wang,

¹³ Kowtowing is a ritual Beta act of submission similar to a Beta wolf's lowering of its head and body in the presence of an Alpha.

it is soon shown to be unconnected to any real power and Ah Q's new found status is short lived.

The first half of "The True Story of Ah Q" displays Lu Hsun's analysis of the Beta mentality as manifested in the Ah Q-ism of semi-feudal and semi-colonial China. Clearly, Ah Q is a Beta, but he is also a Beta who tries to act like a Wag. The last chapters of "The True Story of Ah Q" are a "picture of the 1911 Revolution, which failed because the peasants were not mobilized" (Feng qtd in Lu Works I 20). When news of the 1911 Revolution reaches the village, Ah Q sees how even news of the revolution scares the successful provincial candidate (the regional Alpha) and Mr. Chao (the local Alpha). Ah Q decides to join with the revolutionaries; but, when he goes to find them, everybody has already coiled their pigtailed upon their head in a symbolic and actual collective raising of the tail. In the end Ah Q is one of the last to get his tail up.

This revolution doesn't change anything. In town all the old officials are now revolutionaries and are still the ones in charge. The same happens in Ah Q's home village. Mr. Chao and the Imitation Foreign Devil become the local Wag representatives after going to the Convent of Quiet Self-improvement to push down a tablet with "Long Live the Emperor" inscribed upon it. They also beat up an old nun because "they considered her as the Ching government" (Lu Stories 100). Interestingly, this action of attacking words and attacking someone who is obviously weaker is a form of Ah Q-ism. When Ah Q tries to join the revolution he is ignored by the Imitation Foreign Devil and not allowed to participate. At first Ah Q is hopeful that the Revolution of 1911 will bring a change to his life, but very quickly he discovers his life hasn't changed. "So no rebellion for me, only for you, eh?" (106), Ah Q exclaims in frustration to himself. He

even thinks of turning informer and hopes for the punishment of his enemies because he wants to see them dragged into town to have their heads chopped off.

One night this pathetic revolution becomes slightly more sinister when a gang of men in white helmets and armour show up in the village and loot the home of Mr Chao. It is never directly explained who these bandits are, but the most likely culprits of this pillaging are revolutionaries. This pleases Ah Q; however, a few days later an oversized military force shows up to arrest him; a reward of twenty thousand cash has been offered for the capture of this notorious character. Ah Q is caught without incident and dragged into town, where the officials of the revolution are now in charge of re-establishing order and apprehending the criminals. Ironically, the captain in charge, who has only been “a member of the revolutionary party for less than twenty days” (109), is not worried about finding the stolen property. What is important is to make an example. Ah Q becomes the example.

Ah Q is never able to read what is happening around him. Ah Q does not understand that nothing in the pack has really changed. He is an unsuccessful Wag. The pack, having gone through a Wag/Alpha conflict, will now need to enact the ritual of the carnivoresque. Unfortunately for Ah Q, he is the one symbolically cannibalised. Ah Q is dressed up as an anti-dominant and paraded through the streets. First he is dressed a white vest made of foreign cloth that has “some black characters on it” (110). This label marks him and he is the spectacle of this ritual festival of discipline. Ironically, Ah Q who is labelled cannot even read the label that is placed upon him. Previously, when being interrogated, he is asked to sign a paper. He cannot write, so he is told to draw a circle. In true Ah Q fashion he determines to make the circle round, perhaps in a pathetic

attempt to achieve one more *moral victory*. “Instead it wobbled from side to side; and just as the line was about to close it swerved out again, making the shape like a melon seed” (109). One can imagine the shape Ah Q drew on the paper was not unlike the letter “Q” and in the end this character becomes known to posterity through his one attempt at writing.

Before Ah Q is executed he catches a glimpse of Amah Wu in the crowd. This reflects back to when his desire to reproduce led him to become a Wag. Amah Wu is a hopeful presence at the end of this story. She is no longer under the dominance of Chao. In fact, the Chao family is beginning to sink down to the level of Ah Q and “gradually assumed the air of the survivors of a fallen dynasty” (112). This situation is very similar to Ah Q at the beginning of the story when he claims he “used to be much better off” (71). Now Amah Wu, who used to be the servant of the Choas, is working in town. Instead of watching the foolish spectacle of Ah Q, she is “looking intently at the foreign rifles carried by the soldiers” (111). Amah Wu notices the foreign rifles, a symbolic and actual presence of foreign power, aid, and control. Unlike Ah Q, who is in the position of one who is watched and who never came to understand the power relationships of the pack, Amah Wu is in the position of one who watches and who is coming to understand how the social order is structured. Amah Wu represents the possibility of a successful Wag that will eventually become an Omega. This story written in 1921 accurately displays the contradictions present within Chinese society. This text is a criticism of the Revolution of 1911; it calls out for a revolution lead by peasants and the working class. According to Lu Hsun, “the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat” (Lu Works I 26).

As Ah Q approaches his execution he becomes aware of the role he must play and he tries to fill this role the best he can. Carnivoresque rituals are based upon two strong wolves battling for dominance. It ends in a ritualistic meal where two bodies become one. Even a failed Wag dies a heroic death and Ah Q tries to think of brave operatic songs to sing. The best he can come up with is the standard phrase "In twenty years I shall be another stout young fellow" (Lu Stories 111), but he does not complete the utterance and leaves out "stout young fellow." The crowd growls like a wolf in response. The execution cart moves closer to its destination. In the end the crowd will be disappointed, because Ah Q is a ridiculous culprit. The Revolution of 1911 is guilty of Ah Q-ism in that it has picked on someone much weaker than itself. This revolution is a *moral victory* that will change nothing in the day to day lives of the people. As Ah Q nears his death he looks at the crowd and he is reminded of a similar situation he once had found himself in.

Four years before, at the foot of the mountain, he had met a hungry wolf which had followed him at a set distance, wanting to eat him. He had nearly died of fright, but luckily he happened to have an axe in his hand, which gave him the courage to get back to Weichuang. He had never forgotten that wolf's eyes, fierce yet cowardly, gleaming like two will-o'-the-wisps, as if boring into him from a distance. Now he saw eyes more terrible than the wolf's: dull yet penetrating eyes that, having devoured his words, still seemed eager to devour something beyond his flesh and blood. And these eyes kept following him at a set distance. (111-112)

Ah Q remembers seeing a wolf at the bottom of a mountain. According to A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols, “the mountain and the Emperor corresponded to and reflected each other” (Eberhard 194). The eyes that have followed Ah Q for so many years are the eyes of the Alpha. It is the gaze of the Alpha that penetrates right into the soul of the Beta.

Ah Q’s execution is not the decapitation he has associated with the death of the rebel; Ah Q’s execution is by firing squad. The description of the bullets hitting his body evokes the possibility that this event is being filmed: “All had turned black before his eyes, there was a buzzing in his ears, and he felt as if his whole body were being scattered like so much light dust” (Lu Stories 112). This is the death of Ah Q.

The room darkens. A projector begins to hum. Light hits a screen. The image of an execution appears. A young medical student watches the execution of a compatriot. He decides to become a writer. His words work to change his country – perhaps, eventually, the spirit of man.

CHAPTER 6

HARDY'S CARNIVORESQUE LANDSCAPE

The landscape in The Return of the Native is outside of time and space. The countryside Thomas Hardy paints with words is a “vast track of unenclosed wild” (Hardy 1) but, while this heath is described as unenclosed, its surface in contrast is the floor of a tent cut off by “the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky” (1). Egdon Heath is a land of contrast and contradiction. This landscape is vast and unenclosed at the same time as being wrapped and isolated. Egdon Heath is the möbius strip of the mind, and, like the scene Hardy maps in the opening of The Return of the Native, the human imagination is endless and wild in its scope at the same time as being confined and clouded by the billowing folds of the brain. Space is infinite in our minds at the same time as being trapped and enclosed by the projections of our perceptions that reflect upon the tent-like canvas of our consciousness. In a similar way, the heavens above Egdon Heath are spread with a pallid screen. The earth below is covered with the darkest vegetation. This dark vegetation evokes the murky material reality of day-to-day existence. Hardy’s poetic description of Egdon Heath is a metaphor for the human mind and the wild, untamed scope of the imagination.

History moves slowly in the unenclosed yet trapped space of our evolving mind. Our conscious self tries to connect with time and space, but the soil of our collective unconscious remains hidden. It is similar with the heath: “Not a plough had ever disturbed a grain of that stubborn soil. In the heath’s barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian” (15-16). The plough is the symbol of modern agricultural

society. The farmer is modern man who seeks to dominate the landscape by submitting it to the mechanical force of his own will. The historian is more like the artist who digs into the untouched and hidden recesses of the mind. The Return of the Native is as much a meditation on origins as it is a novel.

On Egdon Heath the heavens continue to display day “distinct in the sky” while on the ground below “the heath wore the appearance of an installment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon” (1). We often think the meeting line between heaven and earth, mind and body, is clearly marked but, as Hardy illustrates, the concept of time blurs clear boundaries. Those who stand upon Egdon Heath are caught between the future and the past. When the furze-cutter looks up, it is day; when he looks down, it is dusk. This is also the marginal landscape we occupy: our subconscious, like Egdon Heath, is “the home of strange phantoms” (1) and in the end it is untouched by the material trappings of the modern world. Egdon Heath is the landscape of the carnivoresque.

The title, The Return of the Native, evokes the possibility of a return of some kind. The setting for this return, this landscape, is also described as a face. While the title of this novel suggests that the story may be about the return of a son or a daughter to their place of birth, or even possibly the return of Christ to this world, this destination of return may not be to a place but to a time or a past state of existence. ‘Native’ can also be read as an inborn or innate state of being. The return of the native could also be the return to an eternal or inborn nature present within us all. An ancient state of being is mentioned time and time again in this book:

The untameable, Ishmaelitish thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation. In its venerable one coat lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. A person on a heath in raiment of modern cut and colours has more or less an anomalous look. We seem to want the oldest and simplest human clothing where the clothing of the earth is so primitive. (4)

The outward trappings of modernity can dress us up in a civilized costume, but what is behind the mask? Egdon Heath is a “face on which time makes but little impression” (1). It is the face of the native. It is the untamable Ishmael that marks the founding of the human tribe. It is a place “where any man could imagine himself to be an Adam” (123). Egdon (egg-dawn) Heath is the origin of man that continues to mock us no matter how far we think we advance:

Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crisis of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis – the final overthrow. (2)

In biblical terms, Egdon Heath is the original fall and the apocalypse all wrapped up in one. However, while there are Christian overtones throughout this novel, the undertone of this novel is pagan and the novel explores how old ways continue to intertwine with a present that may perceive itself as being free from the past but is not. Clym Yeobright is a character who embodies this.

Yeobright returns to the heath from the new cosmopolitan world of Paris and international trade. This identifies him as a Wag who will confront an Alpha and then

submit to the territory of an Omega's den site. After his return to Egdon Heath, he marries Eustacia Vye, whose "family is a good one on her mother's side; and her father was a romantic wanderer – a sort of Greek Ulysses" (251). Ulysses is an example of a Wag wanderer who returns to his Omega's den site and carnivorizes the waggish suitors of his Omega and reestablishes his Alpha status. Eustacia is clearly not a Beta and the opening image of her standing upon the barrow places her as a dominant in the landscape. "Above the plain rose the hill, above the hill rose the barrow, and above the barrow rose the figure" (12). In addition, she is connected to the structure she stands upon: "The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon" (12). The motionless structure Eustacia stands upon is a pagan barrow and it is important to note that she is not represented as being rooted in the landscape but is an organic part of this pagan barrow. Later in the book she is further associated with strange phenomenon when she is accused of bewitching children and is stabbed with a knitting needle in church by her accuser.

Unfortunately for Clym, his new wife Eustacia is a contradictory Omega in that she is not rooted to the landscape of Egdon Heath even if she may be connected with past pagan practices. She prefers Paris as a den site and even literally dreams of a faceless rescuing knight in shining armour. When she awakens from this dream she imagines Clym to have the face of her dream knight. Later she meets Clym face to face by taking the place of the Turkish knight in the Christmas mummer's play, thus reversing the roles of her dream and presenting herself to Clym as the waggish knight with a hidden face. However, this also places her in the role of a doomed Alpha male, given that the Turkish

knight is defending a home territory against the successful Wag intruder, St. George.¹⁴

This indirectly places Clym in the St. George role, who in the end will cut off the head of the Saracen, and stands in opposition to the Alpha aspect Eustacia displays in her disguise. Since Eustacia considers Clym to be the potential Alpha who will enable her to fulfill her desire for a Paris den site, later that night she cuts off her “communication” with Wildeve who is the keeper of the Quiet Woman Inn. While the inn provides an economic security as a den site, it also suggests a Beta role for Damon Wildeve’s marriage partner. “Quiet Woman” is a signifier that fails to signify Eustacia Vye. Furthermore, in this complicated plot of love triangles – Clym/Eustacia/Wildeve – Wildeve/Thomasin/Venn – it is the omnipresent reddleman Diggory Venn who delivers the note from Eustacia to Wildeve.

Clym’s marriage to Eustacia is doomed to failure. Eustacia marries Clym because she sees him as a way of leaving the heath; however, Clym, who is not always that aware, decides to open a school and bring the people of the heath into the modern world by means of education. Ironically, and in a thinly veiled metaphor, Clym almost goes blind from reading too much and, instead of opening a school, he becomes a lowly furze-cutter. While this poetic Rousseau-like existence might endear him to some, it brings Eustacia to the realization that her relationship with Clym is a dead end. She had already rejected the advances of Damon Wildeve, who is described by the narrator as being the “Rousseau of Egdon” (254). At the end of the novel Clym becomes an itinerant open-air Christian preacher; but the platform he now speaks from is the pagan barrow.

¹⁴ Much can be also made of the fact this transgendering is done within the stereotype of an oriental character.

There are two man-made structures on Egdon Heath. One is a white Roman road that “traversed the lower levels” (5) that stands out as it dissects the heath. In contrast, the other man-made structure is a Celtic barrow and its construction blends in with the landscape. Roman Catholicism, while not directly mentioned in the novel, is the vestige of a past conqueror and can be seen as a hypocritical presence in this landscape. In contrast, radical Protestantism that “walks in a green place by the roman road” (460) connects with the history of the indigenous. At the end of the novel, Clym Yeobright begins a series of “lectures or Sermons on the Mount” (480) that are a combination of the secular and the religious. “What a dog he used to be for bonfires!” (35) is how he is described at the beginning of the story, but after going blind from too much reading and stumbling around as a furze-cutter on the Heath, Clym by the end of the book is Christ-like and going for long walks upon this wilderness. In contrast with Christ, he does not speak with the devil; instead, he imagines the people of the past and he comes to the point where “he could almost live among them, look in their faces, and see them standing besides the barrows, which swelled around, untouched and perfect as at the time of their erection” (451-452). Yet, while Clym connects with the old ways he does not live in the past. His church is the living landscape of the heath. When he speaks, the common people of the heath gather around him. As they listen to his lay sermons, they sit on the ground, playing with bits of heather and fern; they are connected to this place and are at one with the landscape.

Clym takes his discourses from all kinds of books and stands on the barrow at the end of the novel “just as Eustacia had stood on that lonely summit some two years and a half before” (480). Eustacia represents a way of life on the heath that is present but not

connected to this landscape, even if, in terms of the plot, she is also associated with past pagan rituals. Clym and Eustacia represent conflicting forces. Clym is the one who returns to his origins; Eustacia is the one who wants to leave her origins behind and is unaware of the effect of these origins. In the end, Clym reconnects with the landscape and the past, Eustacia is swallowed by it. If we are alienated from the past, if we do not recognize the part it plays in who we are, it will consume us.

Clym's sermons begin one Sunday after a wedding. It is the wedding of two Wags. Their wedding is made possible by the deaths of Damon Wildevie and Eustacia Vye, the previous Alpha and Omega of the territory; Egdon Heath swallows them both. The face of the carnivoresque is unchanging. The face of the carnivoresque is omnipresent. The first section of this novel is titled "The Three Women" and, while Eustacia Vye, Thomasin Yeobright, and Mrs. Yeobright can be seen as the three women, Mrs. Yeobright is not as central to the plot as the other two. Eustacia and Thomasin both reflect aspects of the Wag/Omega. While Mrs. Yeobright is the mother of Clym, the ultimate mother can be seen as Mother Nature. The third woman of this text can be seen to be Egdon Heath (or perhaps even the fourth woman), since Egdon Heath is the Omega that swallows and is the force Clym is married to at the end of the novel.

It is not surprising that the face of the carnivoresque shows itself in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Later Victorian novelists wrote in the new context of Darwin's theory of biological evolution through natural selection. As Roger Ebbatson puts it: "A writer like Hardy was enabled creatively to restructure his imagination in the light of *The Origin of Species*, in a prolonged and seminal process of reorientation" (Ebbatson x). Ebbatson goes on to describe literature's inclusion of evolution as "a kind of ingestion." Previous

to the Victorian age, many Romantic writers in search of the sublime had broken away from tradition and looked in a new direction. In contrast to looking in the Bible, they tried to reorient themselves by using nature as a mirror. As Wordsworth puts it in his preface to the Lyrical Ballads, the poet “considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature” (Wordsworth 455). The paradigm had shifted from the feudal collective/God to the capitalist Individual/nature. Yet the idea of an original state of grace lingered: if not Eden, then Arcadia. If an idyllic past has been left, it can be returned to. Even communists postulate a primitive tribal communism that can be used to prove the possibility of a newer version of communism in the future. However, by the Victorian age evolution was casting a shadow of doubt upon the notion of our ideal past.

Hardy slaps the face of Romantic ideology. The “bearded” pool around which Eustacia Vye and Damon Wildeve meet at the beginning of the novel reflects a fire that “appeared upside down” (Hardy 64) and, like the upside down fire, Hardy tropes the Romantic model. The banks of this reflecting pool are bare except for clumps of furze that look like “impaled heads above a city” (64). In this case, nature reflects an urban aspect of man that is less than ideal. Next to this pool is the home of the Vyes and the out-of-place white mast attached to the home of Eustacia’s seafaring grandfather rises up into the clouds and reflects Eustacia’s desire to sail away as far as possible from Egdon Heath. But she will not escape. The two splashes that are heard in the pond that night foreshadow the end of the novel, where both Eustacia and Damon will be swallowed and drowned in a pool. On Egdon Heath it is cannibalism and the “fragments of Teutonic rites” (455) that reflect in the mirror of nature. Hardy makes numerous references to

ancient rites and, when a barrow is opened up and bones are found, they are taken to Miss Vye because she “has a cannibal taste for such churchyard furniture” (224). This novel does not reflect the sublime spiritual nature of man. This novel shows the upside down face of imperialist industrial England as it reflects in the English landscape. The rituals of this novel are pagan: the festival fires, the maypole dances, the mummer’s play, while Christian on the surface, all harken back to earlier times. The narrator intrudes time and time again to make this point clear to the reader. For example, speaking about the bonfire gathering, the narrator states:

Indeed, it is pretty well known that such blazes as this the heathmen were now enjoying are rather the lineal descendants from jumbled Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies than the invention of popular feeling about Gunpowder plot. (16)

This story itself can be seen as a ritual enactment of practices from the past acted out by its characters. This novel consciously tries to connect with past pagan practices and in doing so it connects with the ritual of the carnivoresque.

Hardy sets the scene for this story upon a flat open landscape for a reason. Mountains evoke the sublime within the *sensitive* because, somewhere in the psyche, an ideology postulates we are the decedents of Gods and Goddesses that once lived in the clouds. Once-upon-a-time we walked down the Arcadian mountain to live upon this world. If we walk up those mountains to the summit again, then, if not physically, at least spiritually, we can touch the Deity that is in nature all around us as we look down on it from our position of spiritual superiority. Evolution changed this perspective. Science

eventually replaced the cloud like-deities with scum floating in a primordial soup. The paradigm shifted from sublime to slime.

Hardy's Egdon Heath is a wonderful pre-Modernist/post-Victorian trope of the seas and mountains of the Romantics. The first chapter of The Return of the Native is openly anti-Romantic. The voice of Hardy's intrusive narrator deconstructs the trope of the timeless sea and holds up Egdon Heath in contrast.

Who can say of a particular sea that it is old? Distilled by the sun, kneaded by the moon, it is renewed in a year, in a day, or in an hour. The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained. Those surfaces were neither steep as to be destructible by weather, nor so flat as to be the victims of floods and deposits. (5)

Hardy in the opening of The Return of the Native is downright polemical and his stance echoes with William Morris in its aesthetic rejection of so called classical forms imported from the south of Europe. Instead of English culture looking south, it was to turn toward the indigenous cultural fragments of the European north. England had become the economic center, therefore, it should now become the cultural center as well. Hardy in the opening pages suggests that, in the future, Iceland will replace "the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe" (3) as a tourist destination. Let the tourist stamped from the Southern Alps to the "sand-dunes of Scheveningen" (3) begin. Unfortunately for English Imperialism, the idea of going north for the winter to the cold, the damp, and the dark never really caught on. However, the seeping of these harsh elements throughout The Return of the Native makes for fascinating reading. Eustacia Vye, who stands upon the pagan mound at the beginning of the story, can also be seen as a

representation of the foreign artistic Omega present within this landscape and, while the view of Clym at the end of the novel can be seen as ironic since his marriage is a failure, if Eustacia represents an ideal that focuses upon the foreign, then the view of Clym at the end of the novel can be seen to represent a culture that turns away from foreign influences and gives agency to its own history and past.

While both Eustacia and Clym embody certain aspects of Egdon Heath in their personalities, the character that is consistently represented as being part of the landscape and in harmony with the past is the reddleman, Diggory Venn. This story begins with a chapter devoted to the description of a carnivoresque landscape. The second chapter begins with two typical carnivoresque characters meeting on the road. The third chapter is the community of the heath meeting around a bonfire in a ritual that harkens back to prehistory. The reddleman Diggory Venn is a wanderer who has left his settled life after being rejected by a woman. This clearly defines him as a Wag. He lives on the outskirts of the community and is constantly traveling, moving from town to town selling redde, which is a red powder used to dye sheep. Diggory Venn is a character associated with old ways. Even his trade is being replaced by modern practices. In addition, the redde he sells “spreads its lively hues over everything it lights on, and stamps unmistakably, as with the mark of Cain, any person who has handled it half an hour” (90). Diggory’s skin is dyed red by the redde in the same way as the “dyed barbarians” (452) who once inhabited this heath. He is a “nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail” (7). His arrival on Egdon Heath at the beginning of the

novel is associated with the sighting of a ghost “dripped in blood” (28). He is a blood coloured outsider. He is the Wag waiting to carnivoresize an Alpha, and he is a figure that has recurred from one generation to the next on this heath.¹⁵

That blood-coloured figure was a sublimation of the horrid dreams which had afflicted the juvenile spirit since imagination began. ‘The reddleman is coming for you!’ had been the formulated threat of Wessex mothers for many generations. (90-91)

Throughout the novel, the reddleman is in the position of watching others from the margins. He appears at pivotal moments and directs the outcome of events. One exception to the reddleman being in the position of the gaze is at the very beginning of the story, which begins with a young Wag and old Alpha passing on the chronotope of the road.

At the beginning of the novel it is the elder Vye who is in the Alpha position of the one who watches: “The old man frequently stretched his eyes ahead to gaze over the tract that he had yet to traverse” (6). He watches the waggish reddleman who is covered in red dye: “The old man knew the meaning of this” (7). Inside the reddleman’s gypsy-like cart he is carrying the hidden Thomasin, whose marriage ceremony with Damon Wildeve has just fallen through due to a technicality with the licence. While Thomasin is hidden, the old man is in possession of the power of the gaze and seems to be able very

¹⁵ It is also possible to do a reading of this text that places Diggory Venn as a human representation of the omnipresent Alpha force and to see Susan Nunsuch as a human representation of the omnipresent Omega force.

quickly to ascertain who is hidden in the van, even though the reddleman avoids giving direct answers to his inquisitor. When they part the gaze is reversed and the reddleman watches the old man as he “diminished to a speck on the road and became absorbed in the thickening films of night (10). The Alpha initially is in possession of the gaze; the Wag reverses the gaze; the Alpha is then symbolically swallowed. This meeting on the road foreshadows the carnivoresque plot of the novel.

In another pivotal carnivoresque scene, the reddleman wins the Yeobright money back from Wildeve in a game of dice. As they play, the mood is set by moths flying into the flame of the lantern. At one point they are encircled by wild animals – the small shaggy almost wolf-like heath-cropper ponies of Egdon. The gaze of these Wag ponies unnerves the Alpha, the economically superior Wildeve. These ponies are the same breed that pull the van of the reddleman. “What a plague those creatures are – staring at me so!” (276) Wildeve proclaims. The reddleman and Wildeve continue to cast the dice, but “Fortune had unmistakably fallen in love with the reddleman” (274) and the stone they role upon “to them was an arena vast and important as a battle-field” (272). They are playing for Thomasin’s gold and the winner is destined to marry her in spite of even an author’s intentions. At one point “a large death’s head moth” (274) flies into the candle and extinguishes it. They then collect glowworms; play resumes by the light of thirteen pale phosphoric lights. When one of the pair of dice is lost, they play with the remaining die and reverse the order of winning from highest to lowest. The atmosphere is steeped in the occult. When Wildeve reaches his last five guineas, he throws an ace. It looks like his luck will turn, but when the reddleman throws the die, it splits into two blank halves and this makes his score a zero. Previously, Wildeve in carnivoresque

fashion had “seized the die, and clenched his teeth upon it in sheer rage, as if he would bite it in pieces” (276); it is this action that leads to the reddleman’s final victory.

In the end, this victory leads to the reddleman marrying Thomasin. However, this was not the author’s original intention. It would appear that pressure from readers demanded an ending that would be consistent with a Wag uniting with an Omega. According to Hardy, the reddleman was to remain waggish at the end of the story.

He was to have retained his isolated and weird character to the last, and to have disappeared mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing whither – Thomasin remained a widow. [...] Readers can therefore choose between the endings, and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one. (469)

Hardy resisted bringing total closure to this text, but, as he puts it: “[...] certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent” (469). It would appear that Hardy’s conception of the reddleman was as a quasi or actual supernatural character. Indeed, after Diggory Venn’s attempt to save the life of the drowning Eustacia, the reddleman changes his colour from red to white and, according to Thomasin, this change “seemed supernatural” (453). This is not the only supernatural event at the end of this novel.

Previous to her death, Eustacia is burned in effigy by Susan Nunsuch, who blames the illness of her child on the woman she thinks is a witch. Susan makes a likeness of Eustacia out of bees’ wax. She decorates it with thread and ribbon and then sticks the figure with pins until it “was completely permeated” (421). Then, while repeating the Lord’s Prayer backwards, Susan places the figure in the fire, where it is consumed by

flames. The Eustacia doll turns red as it is symbolically devoured. One assumption is that, later that very same night, Eustacia Vye commits suicide and Damon Wildeve drowns while trying to save her. But the reader is never shown Eustacia jumping into the water by her own choice. Her husband Clym Yeobright and her potential lover Damon Wildeve hear the sound of her body hitting the surface of the water. Another possible assumption is that the strange phantom-like forces of Egdon Heath have been at play that night and it is interesting to note that it is the omnipresent reddleman who jumps into the water to *save* the drowning victims. Early in the text, Wildeve had urged Eustacia to leave with him and to turn their “backs upon this dog-hole of England” (120). They do not escape the dog-hole of Egdon Heath: they are a failed Omega and a failed Alpha; Egdon Heath swallows them both. Who knows what lurks in the carnivoresque shadows of Egdon Heath? Who knows what lurks in the carnivoresque shadows of our evolving mind?

CHAPTER 7

GUTTING GINSBERG. HAMMERING HOWL.

*Like a homosexual capitalist afraid of the masses—
and that's my situation, Folks—*

“This Form of Life Needs Sex”
(Ginsberg Collected 286)

Howl is the tremulous cry of a wolf in the night. The lone wolf wanders, guided by the light of the moon; it moves freely from territory to territory; it searches for a new social order. If language begins with the thought “I Wolf,” the first human utterance is a cry in the night. It calls from one hilltop to the next. It calls from one species to another. It is a cyborg heterglosia “burning for the heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night” (Ginsberg Collected 126). Apes can make a howling sound, but what happens when an ape begins to mimic the cry of a wolf? And what happens when a species changes its relationship to the night? Many small vulnerable animals are nocturnal because it is safer to move and eat in the dark. Larger animals rest and hide. Darkness conceals; but, the liminal space between day and night, dawn and dusk, are the domains of the predator and, when the moon is full, dusk extends through the night, “illuminating all the motionless world of Time” (126). The moon reflects day into the night. The hunted fears the open eye of the moon; the hunter revels in its symbolic bounty. Not only is the night scattered by the light of the moon, silence is shattered by the collective call of the gathering pack. From afar the calls of foreign packs can be heard. Size and strength is displayed by the echo of the distant chorus. Each territory marks the night with voice in the same way the Alpha writes territory with scent. And

sometimes on a mountaintop, silhouetted by “the wartime blue floodlight of the moon” (128), a lone voice calls out. It calls from the margins of pack territory: it threatens the bonds of packs and challenges Alpha/Omega orders.

Before the Epic there is the starving and naked poetry of the Wag. Its wild call gives birth and rebirth to the best minds of a thousand generations. However, in the end a Wag poem becomes the Alpha/Omega epic it replaces. This is the case with the poem “Howl” by Allen Ginsberg. On the record jacket of “Allen Ginsberg Reads Howl and Other Poems,” Ginsberg claims his “poetry is Angelical Ravings, and has nothing to do with dull materialistic vagaries about who should shoot who” (Ginsberg Notes 83). He also says, “Fate tells big lies, and the gay Creator dances on his own body in Eternity” (83). A Creator is fertile in the same way a Wag is fertile when it becomes an Alpha or Omega. A successful Wag dances upon the dead body of the Alpha or Omega it replaces. A Wag comes to power by coming to understand the power structure of the carnivoresque system. Ironically, once a Wag becomes an Alpha or Omega it must also understand that part of the Eternal cycle of the carnivoresque is that the Alpha or Omega body devoured, which becomes the Wag’s own body, will also one day be devoured by a Wag.

While Ginsberg’s denounces academics as an “ignorant and frightened bunch of bores” (83) who “wouldn’t know poetry if it came up and buggered them in broad daylight” (83)¹⁶, his denunciation of politicians and the material politics of who shoots who is less endearing. In contrast with Ginsberg, I have seen the best minds of my

¹⁶ This perhaps explains why Ginsberg eventually became an academic.

generation, and my children's generation, buggered in the brain by Beat poetry. "Howl" is about power and a relationship to power. "Howl" is steeped in the carnivoresque.

Howling breaks free. A howl often accompanies an orgiastic release. To howl can be to let loose with unrestrained pleasure. Sex is certainly one of the themes in "Howl." In Part I there are pubic beards, cock and endless balls, waving genitals, saintly motorcyclists who fuck in the ass, human seraphim sailors who blow and are blown, semen that scatters freely, Turkish Baths, loveboys, visions of cunts, gyzym, the snatches of a million girls, flashing buttocks, whoring, innumerable lists of lays in various locations, and in the end even mother gets *****. One can also howl in pain. In the Part I world of "Howl," people sit up in the darkness of cold-water flats, cower in unshaven rooms, listen to the Terror through the walls, wake up with nightmares, eat fire, drink turpentine, break down crying in gymnasiums, walk around with shoes full of blood, and even alarm clocks fall on their heads. They cut their wrists, jump off Brooklyn Bridge, fall out the subway window, die in Denver, and perhaps worst of all, they are forced to open antique stores. Bodies turn to stone and generally every one is "really in the total animal soup of time" (Ginsberg Collected 130). There is also howling in anger. Basically, Part II is Ginsberg howling at Moloch in anger. In addition, to howl can be to laugh and in Part III Ginsberg takes us to the Rockland insane asylum. Here we meet his friend Carl Solomon to whom the poem is dedicated. "I'm with you in Rockland/where you laugh at this invisible humor" the poem proclaims, sharing the inside joke with his friend. The poem ends in laughter and solidarity. According to the summary of "Howl" by Judge Clayton Horn who presided over the "Howl" obscenity case:

The first part of “Howl” presents a picture of a nightmare world; the second part is an indictment of those elements in modern society destructive of the best qualities of human nature; such elements are predominantly identified as materialism, conformity, and mechanization leading to war. The third part presents a picture of an individual who is a specific representation of what the author conceives as a general condition. (Horn qtd. in Ferlinghetti 52-53)

“Howl” ends with a bond between the speaker and the collective listener who is represented by Carl Solomon. The madness of Carl Solomon and Rockland is described in revolutionary terms; for example, “twentyfive thousand mad comrades all together sing the final stanza of the Internationale” (Ginsberg Collected 133). The madness displayed in this poem can be seen as a metaphor for rebellion against social convention. Furthermore, Rockland is the insane asylum Carl Solomon is interned in and this chaotic landscape of jazzy beat madness that is present through out the poem can be seen as the territory the speaker claims. Carl Solomon can be seen as the Omega of this territory. But the name Carl Solomon is not repeated in the chorus; the pronoun *you* is. The chorus of Part III repeatedly states that the speaker is with “you” in Rockland and by the end of the poem “you walk dripping from a sea-journey on the highway across America in tears to the door” (133) of the poet’s cottage. The tone of Part III is much lighter than the previous sections of the poem. In contrast with the regular repetition of the single word “who” in Part I, and the random repetition of the single word “Moloch” in Part II, the repetition of the complete phrase “I am with you in Rockland” gives Part III a sing song cadence. Part I is a throbbing howl of pain and sexual frustration; Part II is a growling howl of anger and defiance; Part III is the victorious howl of laughter.

“Howl” is not known for its humor: the humorous aspects were not immediately visible when the poem was first published in 1955, partly because the law and the media focused on its “pornographic” display of homosexuality and other forms of the erotic. As well, the poem itself suggests that the joke may be hidden. In later years its humor became much more apparent; in 1981, when Ginsberg read this poem in New York, the audience howled with laughter. In his Time magazine article “In New York Howl Becomes a Hoot,” William A. Henry III points out that “Howl” begins “with one of the bitterest and best-known lines in American poetry”. He then goes on to describe the carnival atmosphere of this 1981 reading.

But something has changed. This puckish little figure, this professorial imp with the loony grin, does not sound angry. He is not wailing about the wickedness of his time. He is mocking the past – mocking the angry radicals, mocking the dreamers, mocking the quest for visions. The audience is laughing with him. They are howling in pleasure rather than anger, as he thrusts an arm up for each of the jokes. They hear satire, not nobly expended pain [...] (Henry III 368)

The raising of the arm is a well-known symbol that mirrors the Alpha, Omega, or Wag raising of the tail. According to William A. Henry III by 1981 this poem mocks angry radicals and dreamers.

Part I of “Howl” can be seen as the Beta struggling to become the Wag – “who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in policecars” (Ginsberg Collected 127). Part II is the Wag facing the Alpha/Omega, “Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo” (131). Part III is the glee of victory: “O starry-spangled shock of mercy the eternal war is

here. O victory forget your underwear we're free" (133). But is this poem a Wag poem that threatens an Alpha/Omega order? Or is it an Alpha/Omega poem that encourages Beta submission?

A Wag is a Beta that escapes the Alpha/Omega gaze and comes to understand its power. A successful Wag reverses this gaze. In Part I Ginsberg's generation is repeatedly described as being naked, which not only connects them to a primitive state of being but also puts them in the Beta role of being totally exposed and visible. Time and time again these beat angels of the night are made visible once they engage in Wag behaviour. And then they are punished: they are illuminated on tenement roofs only later too be dragged off the roof; they gleam in supernatural ecstasy, but are self-destructive and suicidal. The soul illuminates its hair (or perhaps its raised tail) for a second and, in the next line, minds are crushed in jail.

"Howl" and Ginsberg's poetry stands in contrast with the work of Vladimir Mayakovsky. In Howl: Original Draft Facsimile, Transcript & Variant Versions, etc. edited by Barry Miles, Mayakovsky's poem "At the Top of My Voice" is listed as one of the model texts that were an inspirational precursor to "Howl." Another example of a poem that "Howl" reflects is "Brooklyn Bridge," in which Mayakovsky says of New York: For some,/life/here/had no worries;/ for others,/it was a prolonged/and hungry howl" (Mayakovsky 181). Mayakovsky is an obvious influence on Ginsberg. The first draft of "Howl" was typed using Mayakovsky's stylistic invention, the fragmented triadic line. But while Mayakovsky may be a stylistic influence, the way Ginsberg handles similar subject material is very different. While "At the Top of My Voice" is cited as a model text for "Howl" – the titles are very similar – the poem of Mayakovsky's that is a closer

match to “Howl” is “A Cloud in Trousers.” In “Howl” the city comes alive and turns into a monster that cannibalizes the poet’s generation. In “A Cloud in Trousers” the city also comes alive but, in contrast, the poet who is tramping the streets in search of a poem is in harmony with the tongueless city that is also trying to speak. This is the opposite of the tramping beats in “Howl”, who wander the city streets only to be devoured by it. In contrast, in “A Cloud in Trousers” the rising of the city matches a rising pride: “In our pride, we raise up again/the cities’ towers of Babel” (77). Mayakovsky’s city is not the Alpha cannibal: the city is having its throat crushed by a jealous god who wants to grind it back into a pasture. The city rises up and advances in wrath like a god who has been pillaged but, in contrast with Ginsberg’s Moloch city and similar to the beats of “Howl”, this city loses its nerve and sits down and guzzles paint (77). In “Howl” some of the beatniks “drank turpentine” (Ginsberg Collected 126). It is well known that Ginsberg wrote most of “Howl” while stoned; at least that is the story. Consciously or unconsciously, “Howl” reflects many aspects of “A Cloud in Trousers.” A simple denunciation of “Howl” could be that it is an unconscious rewrite of a revolutionary Russian poem done by a stoned capitalist American during the cold war. A more complicated denunciation would involve a CIA conspiracy of some kind.

Written in 1915, “A Cloud in Trousers” gave voice to a generation on the edge of revolution. It is rooted in a specific time – “the year 1916 cometh/in the thorny crown of revolutions” (Mayakovsky 83) – and it is focused upon the immediate future. “Howl” gave voice to a generation on the edge of a shift in conformity. Like the typical epic, “Howl” looks back to the past. According to Bakhtin: “The epic absolute past is the single source and beginning of everything good for all later times. [...] The novel, by

contrast, is determined by experience, knowledge, and practice (the future)” (Bakhtin Dialogic 15). While the beat past in “Howl” is not ideal, it is described as angelic and it is a negative past that is idealized and marks the founding of a dominant mainstream poetic movement. Similar to the epic, “Howl” is outside of time. It tries to dream incarnate gaps in Time. It is concerned with epic prophecy and is not concerned with novel prediction (see Bakhtin Dialogic 31); in the same the way, “A Cloud in Trousers” is concerned with prediction or with the immediate. As the narrator puts it, “a nail in my boot/is more nightmarish than Goethe’s fantasy!” (Mayakovsky 81). It is not surprising that “A Cloud in Trousers” is more rooted in the here and the now and displays aspects of novelesque discourse, in contrast to “Howl,” which displays aspects of epic discourse. Ginsberg set out to write a prophetic poem of heavenly connection; Mayakovsky set out to write a revolutionary poem.

Long before the beatniks, Mayakovsky proclaimed that “I too am an angel”; but, the speaker in “A Cloud in Trousers” rejects looking at the world “with a sugar lamb’s eye” (107). In contrast with the illuminated Beta angel-headed hipsters dragging in the dark, the Wag cloud in trousers struts and fixes “the sun like a monocle/into my gaping eye” (89). The Beatnik is a poetic character who has become part of America’s epic past; The Cloud in Trousers is a novelesque hero who remains an indefinable Wag moving into the future. The Beatnik is a definable symbol; it can be turned into a cartoon. Disney has done this: Goofy’s son has been depicted as a beatnik. Goofy is the Beta sidekick of the Alpha Mickey; Goofy is a stupid dog.

The major difference between “A Cloud in Trousers” and “Howl” is the tone. “A Clouds in Trousers” is a poem that focuses upon the struggle that stands before the

downtrodden; “Howl” focuses on the plight of the downtrodden. The Canadian “People’s Poet”, Milton Acorn, draws a significant distinction between the poetry of fight and the poetry of plight. In his essay “On Not Being Banned by the Nazis,” Acorn explains the reasons why the seemingly progressive poet Rainer Maria Rilke was never banned by the Nazis. According to Acorn, the Nazis even “promoted him, idealized him as an expression of the ‘immutable German soul’ and so on” (Acorn 64). Acorn concludes that poetry of high abstraction expressed in so called ‘universal human terms’ in the end gives no offense to anyone, not even Nazis. Simply put, the poetry of plight is a form of Beta Ah Q–ism that does not threaten the Alpha/Omega order. Poetry that articulates the Wag fight of the downtrodden is different. “A Cloud in Trousers” is poetry of fight; “Howl” is the highly abstract plight poetry of human universals. “Off with your hat!/I am coming” (109), the straightforward narrator proclaims at the end of “A Cloud in Trousers.” He speaks directly to Heaven and its superior residents: “Swindlers with wings./huddled in heaven!/I’ll rip you, reeking of incense/wide open from here to Alaska!” (Maykovsky 109). Heaven is a representation of the Alpha/Omega order that stands in the way of this Wag meeting with his potential Omega Maria, the love Mayakovsky addresses in this poem. At the end of this poem the potential union of a Wag and an Omega openly threatens the present Alpha. At the end of “Howl” the Alpha Ginsberg and the Omega Solomon “hug and kiss the United States under our bedsheets” (Ginsberg Collected 133) and, in contrast with the speaker in “A Cloud in Trousers,” who indirectly encourages the reader to stand up as a Wag and follow him into an undefined future, in Ginsberg’s *revolutionary* American poem “you” are asked to walk across America as a Beta in tears to the Alpha poet’s door.

Mayakovsky's poem begins by announcing it will attack "Your thought,/musing on a sodden brain/like a bloated lackey on a greasy couch" (Mayakovsky 61). In no way does this Russian poem idealize Beta behavior; it leads the reader onto the streets to where the poet stamps on his soul until it spreads out in blood. The poem offers the reader this red flag as a banner (85). It speaks in the present tense. In "Howl" Part I the narrator speaks in the past tense. Ginsberg's generation is the distant "who" in Part I and the distant "they" in Part II. Moloch is the distant "whom." The first words of "Howl" are *I saw*; the speaker does not speak of present experience. Again, this poem falls into the epic paradigm. This speaker also begins the poem with the power to see. The gaze is the power of the Alpha and the Omega, or the Wag that is observing the social order from outside. In Part II the speaker, who has already learned the power of the internalized gaze, asks the question, "What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?" (Ginsberg Collected 131). This question is rhetorical: it is an internalized question the speaker asks and then answers himself. This speaker focuses on the fate of unsuccessful Wags. When Mayakovsky asks a question, he focuses upon Beta Ah Q-ism. "Have you seen/a dog lick the hand that thrashed it?!" (Mayakovsky 83). Mayakovsky puts it directly to the reader and leaves the question open ended. Furthermore, later in the poem the narrator states, "and Napoleon/will precede me, like a pug, on a leash" (89). Napoleon is an Alpha reduced to Beta status by the Wag speaker.

In "Howl" cannibalism and food are a recurring theme: "cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail" stands in contrast to "the pure vegetable kingdom" (Ginsberg Collected 129). In contrast with "A Cloud in Trousers" and the symbolic raising of the

Wag's tail in the form of a red flag, "Howl" describes itself as a carnivoresque offering. The last line of Part I refers to "the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered out of their own bodies good to eat a thousand years" (131). Moloch is an old testament god who demanded the sacrifice of children, and in this poem Moloch is modern society that internalizes its psychological control over the individual and forces Betas with wag tendencies to sacrifice themselves at the carnivoresque altar. Ironically, in Part III the narrator's voice, which may appear like a singsong of solidarity that meets with the mad Carl Solomon in sexual union, occupies the same psychological position as the Alpha/Omega Moloch, whose power is based upon a gaze that is omnipresent. "I am with you in Rockland. I am with you in Rockland. I am with you in Rockland," the narrator repeatedly states.

Rockland is the jazzy beatnik territory of madness; Carl Solomon is the Omega of this territory. The Alpha voice of the narrator of this poem unites with this Omega after confronting a previous Alpha. The poetic territory of the United States is under the bedsheets of the new Alpha and Omega, and at the end of this poem this narrator, who now has the ability to transcend time and space, is addressing "you." The reader is the Beta of this territory.

"My Breath is long" (Ginsberg Notes 81) Ginsberg states. Stylistically, "each line of "Howl" is a single breath unit" (81) and each breath unit keeps its beat by the use of repetition. The "saxophone-like chorus lines" (81) of "Howl" are not dissimilar to the drawn out call of the wolf: "Howl" howls. Yet, while the obvious animal associated with howling is the wolf, the animal mentioned and evoked by the poem "Howl" is *not* the wolf.

The carnivoresque is based upon reversals: Tail up, Tail down. A Beta can become a Wag; A Wag can become an Alpha or an Omega. Humor is also based upon reversals and the carnival is a ritual reflection of a carnivoreque world that is acted out within the controlled boundaries of the pack; carnival means festival of meat. A Wag can exist within the pack if it occupies a humorous space. Betas generally have their tails between their legs and the Alpha and the Omega keep their tails up. A Beta who raises its tail threatens the social order. However, if a Beta only raises its tail in association with an act of submission, such as the lowering of the head, or only raises its tail when the Alpha and Omega have their backs turned, this can generate humor. A humorous Wag or buffoon Alpha or Omega acting out a ritual carnivoreque can decrease the distance between the Alpha/Omega and the Betas. This can strengthen social bonds by making the higher strata in society seem familiar. However, a humorous trickster Wag can also work to create an actual Wag that will eventually confront the social order. According to Bakhtin, laughter destroys hierarchical distance; in addition, "Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically" (Bakhtin Dialogic 23). A Beta that raises its tail and is expelled from the pack will require fearlessness and to be free of the internalized fear of being cannibalized. The carnivoresque is based upon an incredible irony. As previously stated: the Wag devours the Alpha or Omega and as it does so it realizes it has now ensured its own cannibalization in the future. It is trapped in a cycle of devourings.

No doubt "Howl" may have acted as a Wag poem in 1950's California. However, today it is an icon of American pop culture. It is an Alpha poem that internalizes the

cultural gaze of the economic center. It does not talk about wolves; it talks about lambs.

Howl is a poem that celebrates the glory of lambs. "Howl," according to Ginsberg, is:

Part I, a lament for the Lamb in America with instances of remarkable
 lamblike youths; Part II names the monster of mental consciousness that preys
 on the Lamb; Part III a litany of affirmation of the Lamb in its glory.

(Ginsberg Notes 82)

"Howl" is a carnival hymn singing the praise of the Beat generation: to be Beat is to be simultaneously beaten down and beatific. "Howl" is an Alpha poem that promotes Beta Ah Q-ism in the guise of a Wag lamb; "Howl" is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Lambs do not howl; they are lead one by one into the Moloch slaughterhouse, convinced that the filth of their material existence is about to be washed away by the foggy water of a heavenly and spiritual moral victory.

"In Society" is an early poem by Ginsberg that also illustrates the carnivoresque. The narrator describes going to a cocktail party: he is in the position of an outsider; he is spoken to by a group who speak "queertalk" and he responds in "hiptalk." The speaker's remarks are "understood but not appreciated" (Ginsberg Collected 3). The speaker begins the poem as a Wag. He is then handed an "enormous sandwich of human flesh" (3). As he eats it he humorously notices "it also included a dirty asshole" (3). After this cannibalization, the speaker is confronted by a woman who is described as a "princess." The speaker is angered by the rejection of this Omega and denounces her "in a violent/and messianic voice, inspired at/last, dominating the whole room" (3). Clearly, "Howl" displays wag-like tendencies, but in the end it does not promote the material liberation of Betas in society. In the end it dominates the whole room with the mythical

power of its messianic voice. It is an enormous sandwich of human flesh that also includes a dirty asshole. It is an Alpha that waits to be eaten. "Yum-yum-yum!" (Mayakovsky 89).

CONCLUSION

This, then, is the Carnivoresque. Using literature as a site of archeological explorations it has postulated a human culture of origin. Focusing upon a possible cross-cultural connection between our ape ancestors and wolves, the Carnivoresque has defined human culture as a hybrid mediation between wolf and ape culture. This hybrid culture has been assumed to be very similar to the structure of the wolf pack while retaining aspects of ape culture, in particular, cannibalism. In effect, the carnivoresque defines the origin of humanity as the point at which an ape ancestor identified with a wolf and through this totemic association transformed itself into a metaphoric wolf. That metaphor continues to model the stories we tell ourselves across time and across cultures.

I was brought up as an air-cooled engine mechanic. I started working in the shop when I was quite young and one day I asked my father how an engine worked. His answer was, "I don't know. I just know how to fix them." Growing up a mechanic, you learn about the relationship between theory and practice. Theory has its place, but ultimately any tool is only useful if it can do work of some kind. I have found the carnivoresque to be a useful tool when analysing power relationships in many different kinds of texts. Its utility is its ultimate justification.

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