Reasons for Cannibalism and Evidence in Pre-Historic Man

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Cannibalism, also known as anthropophagy, occurs when an animal eats all, or part of, a member of the same species. This paper will deal with cannibalism in man, even though other animals, such as lions, have been known to engage in cannibalism. In this paper, I will submit fifteen reasons why cannibalism occurs in man, and I will also examine the evidence of cannibalism in prehistoric man.

In addition to reasons for cannibalism, distinctions can also be made between types of cannibalism. Before looking at the reasons for cannibalism, I would first like to list and briefly describe these different types. There are three main types of cannibalism: endocannibalism, exocannibalism, and autocannibalism. Endocannibalism occurs when the people of a society eat its own members, while exocannibalism is the eating of people outside of the cannibals' society. The Yanomamo would be an example of an endocannibalistic society, while the Aztecs would be an example of an exocannibalistic society. Autocannibalism occurs when a person eats part of his own body, either because of extreme hunger, or, as will be seen as a reason for cannibalism, because the victim is forced to eat part of his own body as a method of torture.

Before submitting my fifteen reasons for cannibalism, I would also like to explain why I have used some of the same examples of cannibals for more than one of my fifteen reasons for cannibalism. I did this because I feel that except for survival cannibalism, cannibalism can rarely be explained by just one reason. For example, I have used the Aztecs to illustrate six of my fifteen reasons for cannibalism. There were several factors that drove the Aztecs to cannibalism, and I showed this by using them as an example six times. I should also note, that not all of my fifteen reasons are accepted by all...
anthropologists. My tenth reason, dealing with protein, has strong supporters and equally strong opponents. I have compiled reasons from different sources and authors, so my reasons are naturally not agreeable to all anthropologists.

The first of my fifteen reasons is that cannibalism often occurs because it is a ritual. In many tribes cannibalism is part of the customs of that tribe, and is practiced as a ritual. Many cultures use cannibalism as a rite of passage. Different cultures have different rituals for cannibalism; in other words, cannibalism varies culturally. In some cultures only the tribal elders eat the victims, in other cultures only the young are cannibals, while in still other cultures both young and old are cannibals. The variety of ritual cannibalism includes who can eat the victim, who can be the victim and how the victim should be cooked. For example, the Fijians painted the corpse like a live warrior, and cooked the body (which was in a sitting position) whole, and after the body was cooked they did dances around it before eating it. The Yergum in Africa in the Niger Basin had a different recipe; they cooked the head separately, and only those warriors who killed an enemy in battle could eat part of the head, while in parts of New Guinea, the slayer could eat only a small part of the victim's liver. The Zumperi warriors (also of the Niger Basin in Africa) gave their fathers the heads of their victims for their fathers to eat, while the warriors had to content themselves with licking the victims' blood off of their weapons. The Hill Angas, however, killed and ate the old men of the village.

In most tribes, an important ritual is a boy's rite of passage into society, or a man's initiation into a secret society. Among the Tiv of Nigeria, a boy had to develop his own "personal potency" (called tsau) to become a man in the society. To develop his tsau, the boy would have to eat human flesh. The more human flesh the boy ate, the more he increased the power of his tsau. Men tried to increase their tsau all their lives, so they were constantly eating people. A member of this society owed a "flesh-debt" to the person who first supplied
him with flesh. A flesh-debt could only be cleared by the debtor killing a close younger relative and giving the victim to the original provider to be eaten. In another example, a youth who wanted to join the elite of the Hamatsas Indians had to prepare a special meal of human flesh for the Hamatsas elders. There would be dancing around the corpse, and then in order of seniority the Hamatsas would select parts of the corpse, eat the part, and wash it down with salt water. One further example of the rite of passage/initiation ritual aspect of cannibalism comes from the coast of West Africa. Initiation into the infamous Leopard Societies of Sierra Leone involved the new member providing a victim from his or his wife's family to be eaten by the other Leopard Society members. Young girls were the most popular victims.

The second reason for cannibalism is that it is an integral part of religion and sacrifice. Societies sacrificed and ate victims usually for the desire to please their gods in order to receive benefits from their gods. The Fijians, mentioned above under ritual cannibalism, also ate human flesh to please their gods so they would be victorious in battle (although one of the reasons Fijians fought was to get more victims for their ritual cannibalism). The Fijian sacrificial gods demanded man eating; parts of the body went to the war gods, while the head of a body was given to the Fijian's priests.

The Aztecs viewed cannibalism as communion with superior beings. To the Aztecs, "the sacrificial victims were believed to have become sacred. Eating the flesh was the act of eating the god itself."\(^1\) The victims actually became gods to the Aztecs, and eating the victim was a "commemorative act of eating the god, personified by a fellow human being."\(^2\) The Aztec priests would first sacrifice the victim, rip out the heart and offer it to the gods, and would then kick the body down the steep temple steps, where at the base the body was taken away and butchered by old men (called Quaquacuilitini) and was later served in a stew with tomatoes and peppers. It will be seen later in this paper, that
Aztecs had other reasons for cannibalism besides religion, although the nobles and priests always defended the practice by claiming that cannibalism was done solely for religious purposes.

People of other cultures had different beliefs about why their religion required the eating of human flesh. The Kwakiutls of northwest Canada, the Papuas of New Guinea, and the Tupinambas of Brazil all had the myth of a cannibal creator. Cannibalism was used in these tribes to commemorate the original act of cannibalism performed by their gods at the beginning of time. Another belief held by some tribes was that their gods had died a violent death, and that their bodies had been transformed into food to be eaten by the gods' worshippers. Captain Cook observed in Tahiti that part of the sacrifice to the tribe's God was eating the victim. "Where the victim is eaten, the practice has to be repeated again and again as a periodical renewal of what the God himself had suffered."  

One could almost consider Catholics cannibals. The Aztec religion was similar to the Christian communion, only more direct and literal. According to Catholic doctrine, Jesus was a human sacrifice; his body is represented by bread, and his blood is represented by wine in communion. When Christianity was first adopted by the Roman Empire, the bread used in communion was arranged to resemble a body. One of the reasons Protestants and Catholics branched off was the Catholic theory of transubstantiation; that the bread and wine used in communion were actually transformed into Christ's body and blood. Pope Innocent III had said that the bread was truly Christ's body, and the wine his blood, and by eating the bread and wine, one was actually eating Christ. This is what the Aztecs did in their religion, except they did not use bread and wine, but used human flesh and blood.

The third reason for cannibalism is that it is practiced for magical purposes. These magical purposes have nothing to do with receiving benefits by
going through a god as an intermediary, instead some tribes believe that by eating human flesh they will get direct results because of the magical properties of the flesh. There are three subdivisions under this reason for cannibalism: fertility, absorption and supernatural benefits and fears. One New Guinean tribe thought that they could gain fertile gardens and fertile women by devouring human flesh. They connected the ghosts of the dead with how fertile their fields and women would be; they thought by eating human flesh their gardens and women would be more productive. The Cuhero tribe thought cannibalism would increase human fertility. At the end of a feast in which an enemy from another tribe was consumed, the Chief’s wife would eat the victim’s penis to increase her fertility.

One of the most common reasons for cannibalism is the second subdivision, absorption. Believers in absorption feel that by eating human flesh, the eater can absorb the victim’s spiritual qualities contained in the victim’s bodily essence. The eater wants to receive the "soul-stuff" of the victim. According to this theory, the old would eat the young to restore their vigor. Absorption has been practiced by many tribes. One of the reasons the Iroquois Indians ate the heart of a brave warrior was to acquire his courage and strength. Absorption was even practiced by the pre-Dynastic Egyptians.

The third subdivision, supernatural benefits and fears, has a variety of examples. The Kwakiutl in Alaska hated to eat human flesh, but they did at certain rituals because they thought by defying their own instincts, they could tap their supernatural powers. The Bagesco, however, ate human flesh because of their fear of the spirit of the body. The Bagesco carried the corpse out to wasteland, and at night, the elderly women went out and butchered the body and brought the flesh back to be eaten by relatives and left the remains for vultures and scavengers. They did this because "if they allowed the body to decay the ghost would haunt the place of death and cause illness in the family."
The fourth reason for cannibalism is **gustatory**. Cannibals ate human flesh because they thought it was an acceptable food, and in many cases, a good tasting food. The Aztecs consumed the edible parts of a human body just like other people consume domesticated animals. The different Congo tribes ate human flesh because they liked its taste; in fact, many Oceania and African tribes fattened the victim up before killing and eating the hapless prisoner. New Zealand warriors would use the flesh of enemies to supplement field rations when they were at war. Many cannibals developed a "consuming" passion for certain types of victims, by race and sex, and also favored certain body parts. In Australia, for example, certain tribes acquired a passion for Chinese flesh. In 1858 when a crew of 300 Chinese were shipwrecked off the coast of New Guinea, all but four of them were eaten by the delighted cannibals. Gustatory cannibalism is one reason why many missionaries were not eaten. Many tribes had a color prejudice about who to eat, and would rather eat blacks. In Australia a white man was considered to be too salty. A Maori chief said he preferred to eat women and children, but if he had to eat a man, the man should be fifty years old and black. Most cannibals developed a fetish for the human brain, considering it to be a delicacy. The brain was usually reserved for the chief or priest.

The fifth reason for cannibalism is **ancestor worship**. Many cannibals love their ancestors so much, they feel the best way to worship them and remember them is to eat them. To such tribes, cannibalism is a way of homage to their ancestors to continue the presence of the dead among the living. For example, Australian aboriginal tribes carried little bags of flesh from their dead with them. When one of the aborigines felt grief and wanted to remember and worship a deceased relative, the aboriginee would eat some of the relative's flesh from the bag, and save the rest of the flesh for when he grieved again.

Many African tribes revered their elders, and "preferred to absorb their old and infirm into their own bodies, rather than let them rot in the cold
These tribes truly felt that relatives were happier in their stomachs than being left to the worms. Many South American tribes felt that consuming a dead person was actually passing the dead person's life to the living. This way, the deceased was still part of the tribe. These tribes preserved the dead person's life in the bodies of friends and relatives.

The Panoans of South America are another example of ancestor worship. They felt it was their duty to eat their relatives and friends in order to prevent the deceased's spirit from going back in its body and getting stuck there. A final example of ancestor worship as a reason for cannibalism would be the endocannibalistic Yanomamo. After the body of a friend or relative is cremated, they pulverize the remaining bones, and relatives and friends drink the ashes and bone powder in plantain soup. Ancestor worship is not the only reason for Yanomamo cannibalism, as will be seen by the next reason.

The sixth reason for cannibalism is that it is a way of disposing of the dead. Instead of burying the corpse or burning it, some tribes feel that it is more convenient and proper to eat the corpse. Other tribes feel it is wasteful to just bury the corpse. Some tribes feel there is no better way of disposing of the body; to tribes with such beliefs cannibalism is a mortuary custom. One observer said of the New Guineans "their bellies are their cemetaries." The Kallatians felt that cremation was barbaric; they preferred to eat dead members of their tribe. The Yanomamo are another example of this. Besides ancestor worship, the Yanomamo are endocannibalistic because they use cannibalism to dispose of their dead. When many of the Yanomamo die from epidemics, the corpses are brought outside the village and are left to rot. After most of the flesh has rotted off, the bones are brought back to the village, cremated, pulverized and drunk. It almost seems that no matter how a villager dies, he will be eventually eaten. To the Yanomamo, eating the body of a fellow villager is the accepted means of disposing of the body.
A seventh reason for cannibalism is that it is used to either show respect or to humiliate an enemy. The Iroquois ate the heart of a brave warrior to show respect for him, not just to absorb his strength as mentioned under my third reason for cannibalism. However, eating an enemy was usually used to humiliate him and the rest of his people. In Fiji 125 years ago, there was nothing more humiliating than being eaten. In southeastern Australia, the Theddora and Ngarigo used to cut off and eat the victim's leg and arm muscles, and would also eat the skin and flesh from the victim's sides. While they did this, they would also utter "declarations of contempt and scorn for the dead man." A final example of causing humiliation as a reason for cannibalism comes from the New Hebrides. After a fight, a slain enemy was eaten to humiliate him and his tribe. The corpse would be "cooked in an oven as if a pig, and then each member of the tribe eats a portion of him." 

The eight reason for cannibalism is that it has been used for political reasons. Cannibalism was often used as a political reward by the Aztecs. The Aztec ruling class maintained power by using cannibalism as a reward for brave warriors. The ruling class found out it would be better for their political future to sacrifice, redistribute and eat prisoners of war than to use them as slaves. As will be seen in my tenth reason, the Aztecs needed food, so allowing the prisoners to be eaten eased food pressures in Aztec society and allowed the ruling class to maintain power. Human flesh was a highly sought reward for the Aztecs. Not only was bravery in battle and capturing prisoners the only way an Aztec could achieve wealth and government office, it was also the only way an Aztec was guaranteed to be awarded human flesh. If a warrior had captured an enemy in battle without any assistance, he was entitled to at least three of the prisoner's limbs after the prisoner had been sacrificed. The reward of human flesh was an incentive for commoners to try hard in battle. This gave the Aztecs an aggressive and effective war machine.
The Aztecs also used cannibalism as a threat to areas they were having wars with. The Aztecs would tell the people whom they were fighting that it would be advantageous for those people to surrender, because once they surrendered they would become part of the Aztec Empire, and the Aztecs ate very few members of their empire (Aztecs periodically dressed youths up like particular gods and sacrificed and ate them). The Aztecs usually kept part of their empire in rebellion, and used this rebellious area as a source of victims, or "stew meat." Occasionally (and not just with the Aztecs) cannibalism would be used as a means of peace. To prevent further attacks, or to start negotiations, a tribe might give one of its members to the other tribe to be eaten. Cannibalism also fostered tribal unity. The whole tribe frequently got together for cannibalistic feasts, and because of this desire for peace within the tribe, cannibalism was often used to achieve it.

A ninth reason for cannibalism is that it was used to celebrate victory and other special events. A popular way to celebrate defeating an enemy was to eat the enemy at a celebration feast. As far as special occasions are concerned, it is hard to top the Aztecs in sheer numbers when they dedicated the temple at Tenochtitlan in 1487 by sacrificing and eating 20,000 people. One further example showing that cannibalism was used to celebrate special events is provided by the Marquesans from the Marquesas Islands in the Pacific. The Marquesans celebrated the birth of a child to their king, or deaths and marriages of kings, by harpooning victims through the mouth and devouring them. Victory and celebration cannibalism is one of the most frequent kinds of cannibalism.

The tenth reason for cannibalism, protein, is definitely the most controversial. The two main proponents of the theory that cannibalism was caused by lack of protein in existing sources of food are Marvin Harris and Michael Harner. According to them, at the end of the ice age, Mesoamerica (the region for the future high civilizations of Mexico and Guatemala) was left in a more depleted
condition, as far as animal resources were concerned, than most other areas. In this area, by about 7200 B.C., "ancient hunters had completely eliminated herbivores suitable for domestication from... Mesoamerica."9 Because of this, Aztecs did not have cattle, sheep, and in fact the "Aztecs had the least domesticated protein sources among the ancient states of either hemisphere."10

When the Aztec population began to grow and the limited animal resources could not support the population, the Aztecs responded at first by trying to reclaim soil from the marshes and lake bottoms (known as the floating garden method) in order to have more land to produce more grain to make up for the lack of protein from animals. The Aztecs had succeeded in domesticating only the dog and the turkey, both of which competed with man for food. The Aztecs could not have survived (as critics of the protein theory say they did) from other potential food resources, like fish, insects, lake alga and frogs, because the Aztec population was too large. The "total meat from all wild sources would not have exceeded 0.3 percent of the annual requirement [of calories]."11

The Aztecs probably had no word for protein, but they must of known if they were eating properly or not. Protein is necessary for normal body functions and for recuperating from wounds and infections. The Aztecs decided to turn to humans as a source of protein. Humans are a strong source of protein, and animal (in this case human) sources of protein are universally more valued than plant sources of protein. Protein can be obtained from plants, but a large number of plants have to be eaten to get the same amount of protein that can be obtained from eating less animal (human) sources.

The Aztecs started to sacrifice humans and then eat them in large numbers; about 15,000 to 25,000 humans a year were sacrificed and eaten. "The Aztec ruling class...found itself waging war more and more not to expand territory but to increase the flow of edible captives."12 Hernando Cortes and his expedition counted 136,000 heads mounted on racks, and the Aztecs also had towers
made entirely out of human crania and jawbones. Clearly, the Aztecs sacrificed and ate astronomical numbers of victims. It has also been argued that the Aztecs are not an isolated incident of protein being a reason for cannibalism. It is thought that in parts of New Guinea, the supply of protein was also limited, and that some of the tribes had to wage wars just to obtain human flesh.

My eleventh reason for cannibalism is that it was used to control population growth. Often when the population of a group is growing but food resources are scarce, cannibalism occurs to keep the population down and at the same time provide food. The Eskimos have been known to be cannibalistic for this reason. When a woman has a second child soon after having her first, she will often kill and eat the younger child to keep it from competing with the first child for food. When the Aztecs had population problems, the would go conquer other tribes for food. This kept the population down in two ways. First, many Aztec warriors would be killed in battle, reducing the population and at the same time the victorious warriors would provide enemy victims to be consumed. Secondly, going to war was a popular excuse for the priests to sacrifice and eat Aztec youths as offerings to the god of war. According to Sherburne Cook, this combination produced an annual increase in the death rate of twenty-five percent.

The twelth reason for cannibalism is that it is used as a means of justice, or more specifically, cannibalism can be and has been used for torture, revenge and punishment in dealing with enemies or in dealing with deviants within the tribe. The Iroquois used cannibalism as torture by making their captive eat part of his own body. The Fijians also used cannibalism for torture. They would cook the victim slowly, and they would also often cut off the victim's limbs and would eat them in front of the victim while he was still alive.

The Marquesans always ate their enemies out of revenge. They felt that by eating the enemy they would get back at the enemy for all the damages the enemy had inflicted on them. Tribes that used cannibalism as revenge would
abuse the body, hurl objects at it, and if the body was that of a female enemy, the males would even copulate with the corpse, feeling that by copulating with the dead female, they were getting revenge on the enemy.

Other tribes used cannibalism as their method of punishment and execution for enemies and also for tribal deviants. Among the Wotjubaluk of Australia, a man involved with a woman forbidden by the law of exogamy would be eaten, while in the Congo, if adultery was discovered, both culprits would be eaten. The Batales of Sumatra also used cannibalism as a form of execution. The Batales ate spies, traitors and thieves, and even forced the victim's relatives to attend the feast and to bring salt and lemon with them.

My thirteenth reason is that there are a variety of psychological reasons why people practice cannibalism. The way many people think is the reason why they eat other people. The Freudian view of cannibalism is that there is a love/hate relationship involved, and that cannibals are actually reenacting their love/hate relationships with their fathers. Another view is that cannibals, because they are "savages," do not have the scientific knowledge necessary to tell distinctions between species; they eat members of other tribes not knowing they are eating one of their own kind. This theory only applies to exocannibalism. To these cannibals, other tribes and races are not real men; every one of these tribes thinks of themselves as "the men." It has been argued by some anthropologists that the reason many tribes develop kinship is so they can tell the members of their own species. Tribes that were exocannibalistic, and did not think they were eating members of the same species, were actually disgusted when asked by an anthropologist if they would eat members of their own tribe.

Another psychological view of cannibalism is that people are cannibalistic because they themselves have a fear of being eaten. In the Marquesan culture the people have a fear of being eaten, so they act aggressively and eat others.
Abram Kardiner says this fear of being eaten arises from frustrated dependency and starvation fears. Kardiner relates this fear to the story of Hansel and Gretel. The two children are starved and thrown out of their house by their cruel mother, and they meet a witch who wants to eat them and she tries to push the children into an oven, but instead they push her into the oven, and they are found by their kind father who brings food to them. In this story, the mother wants to starve her children, and she is later represented by a witch who wants to eat them. Kardiner says that this story also shows that the wish to eat the mother is very strong, and that a person is a cannibal because of this fear of starvation and the desire to eat his mother.

My fourteenth reason for cannibalism is that it occurs for symbolic reasons. Cannibals sometime symbolize an event by eating human flesh, such as among the Yorubes of West Nigeria, where a new king eats the heart of the old king to symbolize the passing of rule. In one Samoan tribe, the guilty would be symbolically roasted in an oven and eaten for breaking one of the tribe's taboos.

My fifteenth and final reason for cannibalism is that is has been used for survival. Sometimes an event occurs that forces the survivors to eat human flesh because it is all that is available to them. In Egypt in 1069 A.D. there was a destructive flood, and food became so scarce that people had to eat each other. In 1847, the Donner party was emigrating from Illinois westward, and got snowbound at the foot of the Sierra Mountains in Nevada. Some of the party went snowshoeing across the mountains to get help from California, while those that remained behind, to prevent starvation, ate the dead. More recently, in 1972 an Uruguayan rugby team's plane crashed in the Andes. Once again, to prevent starvation, those that survived the crash ate those that did not. In all the above examples, cannibalism was used only as a last resort to survive.

Having submitted my fifteen reasons for cannibalism, I will now look at cannibalism in pre-historic man. There is no evidence that shows pre-historic
man lived just on cannibalism, but there is evidence to show that our ancestors were cannibals. Clear signs of cannibalism are when the bones of prehistoric man are buried in shallow graves close to the hearth, and when the bones are charred, with the femurs cracked (so that the marrow could be extracted) and when the foramen magnum has been artificially enlarged to obtain access to the brain. These conditions have been found in bones from several stages of man's evolution, leading to the conclusion that man's ancestors were cannibals.

Raymond Dart claims that his discovery Australopithecus was a man eater. According to Dart:

Australopithecus lived a grim life. He ruthlessly killed fellow Australopithecines and fed upon them as he would upon any other beast, young or old. He was a flesh eater and as such had to seize his food where he could and protect it night and day from other carnivorous marauders...Life was bought at the price of eternal vigilance.

There is also evidence that Peking man was cannibalistic. Peking man was a gatherer-hunter, and since recent gatherer-hunter groups are usually endocannibalistic (according to Richard Leakey), it can be assumed that Peking man was endocannibalistic. Peking man was most likely cannibalistic because of my fifth reason for cannibalism, ancestor worship; Peking man ate his relatives and friends to continue their presence because he revered them. This can best be shown by how Peking man ate the brain. It would have been easier for Peking man to smash the top of the head open to get at the brain, but instead Peking man enlarged the foramen magnum to get at the brain. This showed respect for the victim, and left the skull in one piece.

In Neanderthal, cannibalism declined and burial ceremonies increased. There is evidence that Neanderthal tended to be more exocannibalistic; that is, he usually went after people outside of the particular band of Neanderthals he lived with. Since Neanderthal, cannibalism has been in a decline, due in more recent times to extermination of cannibalistic tribes, and due to the pressure exerted on cannibals by "civilized" people for them to stop the practice.
This paper has assumed that cannibalism exists and has existed throughout history. Cannibalism has been documented by many ethnographers, explorers and missionaries, and there is no reason to doubt that it exists. All the books and magazine articles used in this paper did not even bother questioning if cannibalism existed or not, except for one; William Arens' *The Man-Eating Myth*. In his book, Arens transforms skepticism into a fine art. Even though there are many eye-witness accounts of cannibalism, Arens either tries to discredit the observer or ignores the evidence altogether. Napoleon Chagnon has clearly documented that the Yanomamo are endocannibalistic, but Arens decides to ignore Chagnon, and does not even mention the Yanomamo in his book. Because of all the factual accounts and concrete evidence of cannibalism, Arens' opinions should not be taken very seriously. It is hard to imagine discounting such sources as when Captain Cook discovered the remains of a cannibal feast in New Zealand, or accounts of Fijian cannibalism that even describe how the flesh was cooked and what kinds of pots were used, and it is even harder to think that Arens would dismiss cases of cannibalism that were recorded as facts, such as when cannibals have eaten the "civilized" people who came into contact with them. When Zaire was still a Belgian colony, a Belgian officer was killed and eaten raw by the natives, and the Ashantis killed an English administrator and ate his heart. These are just two examples of cases that have been factually documented, but they do not stop Arens from announcing that cannibalism has never existed. Arens only grudgingly admits that there have been instances of survival cannibalism, adding that survival cannibalism has happened only very rarely.

Some of Arens' attempts to discredit observers are ridiculous. One of the few recent ethnologists Arens deigns to discuss is Gertrude Dole. Arens claims that Dole cannot be counted as a source, because in her description of ethnocannibalism among the Amahuaca Indians of the Peruvian-Brazilian border, Dole
does not explain how the bones of a mother's child become the bone powder which the mother drinks. If Arens had read Chagnon's *Yanomamo: The Fierce People*, Arens would have known that the bones are pulverized by grinding them with a stout pole. If the Yanomamo can make bone into bone powder this way, I fail to see why the Amahuaca Indians could not have done this. Dole either did not witness the bones being pulverized, or assumed most readers would not have too difficult of a time figuring out how the bones became bone powder. Arens concludes his book by saying that because anthropologists believe all reports of cannibalism, both cannibalism and a science of anthropology are myths.

Arens has a point that not all sources can be trusted, but he goes to extremes. In this paper, I omitted sources that are generally considered rather dubious. I did not use the account of Hans Staden in this paper. Staden, a sixteenth century German sailor, was shipwrecked off the coast of Brazil. I did not use his lurid account because it was written nine years after he had been rescued, the account was illustrated by someone else, and the account was filled with mistakes and moralizing. Staden could not speak the natives' language, but this does not stop Staden from constantly informing the reader about what the natives are saying. I also omitted many older views about cannibalism. I did not use the once accepted theory that cannibals are a perversion of the natural order, nor did I use Lévi-Strauss' view that cannibals were motivated by "a maniacal obsession with blood and torture," or as Raymond Dart puts it "the loathsome cruelty of mankind to man." I was also careful to avoid sources from missionaries who were clearly not scientific, and who used the word "fiendish" often. In general, sources that are highly emotional and not detached were avoided.

When many natives first saw white men, they told these explorers and missionaries stories of cannibalism often to amuse themselves. The following story should not be taken seriously; it was told by a smiling native to Lewis
Cotlow. In this story, a Mangbeto woman's husband has died. Instead of burying him, she made a stew out of him and invited friends and relatives over for the feast. "'You know,' she said to a guest,'this is the first time I really appreciated my husband.'"16

In conclusion, cannibalism has existed since pre-historic man, and has been caused by a variety of reasons. In this paper I submitted fifteen such reasons. Cannibalism is usually caused by different reasons in each incident of it. Cannibalism should not be looked on by anthropologists as deviant behavior, because in some cultures, cannibalism was and is an accepted part of the culture.
Footnotes


3 Ibid., p. 278.


5 Davies, pp. 161-162.


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 336.


14 Farb and Armelagos, p. 143.

15 Dart and Craig, p. 201.


