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Nurses, Fairytales, Cannibals:  
Constructing a Nationalist Narrative in Beatrice Grimshaw's  
Papuan Landscapes

During her lifetime, Beatrice Grimshaw wrote thirty-one novels, eight volumes of short fiction,<sup>1</sup> plus hundreds of other short stories published in magazines and newspapers, four travelogues, two travel brochures, and numerous political pamphlets.<sup>2</sup> Writing for such publications as *The Daily Graphic* (London), *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Times* (London), *The National Geographic*, *The Wide World Magazine*, *Irish Cyclist* (Dublin), and *The Social Review* (Dublin), Grimshaw was also a prolific journalist. With a large readership in much of the English speaking world, she was one of the best known writers working in popular fictional genres during the first decades of the twentieth century. But despite celebrity, a prolific output, and a life that eschewed many of the norms governing the cultural expectations of women's place in the world, Grimshaw's work has received very little critical attention, especially here in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Of the limited amount of scholarship that exists, little has focussed on the part Grimshaw played in the production of imperial knowledges, or her active involvement with colonisation in Oceania. Grimshaw was not so much a commentator on, as an active participant in various colonial projects in the Pacific. Her enthusiasm for the British Empire could go some way to explaining why she has, largely, been ignored by Irish feminists. Despite recognition of her sporting prowess, intrepid travelling and putative predilection for sleeping with a revolver under her pillow, as far as I am aware, my Doctoral dissertation is the only in-depth study of Grimshaw's voluminous literary output undertaken in Ireland to date.<sup>4</sup> That Irish critics appear to be more content with viewing Grimshaw as a cornucopia of unconventional biographical facts rather than as a writer, could suggest a resilient trait amongst feminists to silence those problematic voices who are deemed, by today's standards, to be ideologically unsound.

Frequently dismissed as eccentrics and globetrotters, or hailed as proto-feminists, Sara Mills, commenting on women who travelled during the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, states that criticism has tended to position these women outside the imperial sphere and, thus, disconnected them from the production of imperial knowledges.<sup>5</sup> In this paper I position Grimshaw where she positioned herself: within the imperial/colonial milieu of early twentieth-century Papua. In what follows I examine

Grimshaw's attempt to construct a nationalist narrative in Papua's great forests.<sup>6</sup> Such an analysis demands an engagement with how discourses of race, class and gender inform and intersect within these specific landscapes. Deconstructing any notion of a centre/periphery divide, this discussion demonstrates how discourses of class from the putative metropolitan centre coloured relations within and conceptions of that which was posited as a new, unexplored terrain. Also, destabilising the rigid dichotomy between coloniser and colonised, this paper problematises any simplistic engagement with Ireland's position *vis-à-vis* imperialism. While living in Dublin, Grimshaw converted to Catholicism. During the same period she described the English as "that race that we do not love".<sup>7</sup> Yet she vehemently endorsed colonial and imperialistic schemes in various parts of the Pacific. However, the central concern in this paper is two closely connected binarisms:<sup>8</sup> self and class Other, self and racialised Other; polarities which I will analyse through an examination of Grimshaw's engagement with the colonial trope of cannibalism. Stephen Greenblatt has stated "that every version of an 'other', wherever found, is also the construction of a 'self'".<sup>9</sup> In this paper I demonstrate how these representations of a race and class, the components of her nationalist narrative, which must be excluded, tell us more about the travel writer than any construct external to her; more about Beatrice Grimshaw than any Other.

Writing in her fourth and final travelogue, *Isles Of Adventure* (1930), Grimshaw states: "If I were asked what I have most enjoyed in all my life, I think I should say the clearing of that forest, my forest".<sup>10</sup> The forest in question was situated on Sariba, a Papuan island, where Grimshaw lived for two and a half years, and where she made a concerted effort to remodel the landscape along colonial lines: "First go the knife-men, with their three-foot-long weapons, slashing away at the underbrush, and clearing up for the axemen who are to follow" (*Isles* 211). Grimshaw goes on to say: "Power? Authority? You can revel in both to the top of your bent" (*Isles* 212).

In her study of the fantasies and experiences of women on America's various frontiers, Annette Kolodny has stated that "massive exploitation and alteration of the continent do not seem to have been part of women's fantasies."<sup>11</sup> In contrast to Kolodny's findings, "massive exploitation and alteration of the continent"<sup>12</sup> were definitely on Grimshaw's agenda, and nowhere are her dreams more immodestly panoramic than in the forests of Papua. Surveying the land that lies beneath, on one of her first visits to the bush, Grimshaw projects a cartography of social order rooted in the English estate and park onto the surrounding sea of impenetrable vegetation. The merciless destruction required to translate Papua into a

landscape of orderly plantations is, to Grimshaw, a beauty in itself; it is a landscape of reclamation and production rather than devastation:

It seems untidy and desolate and ugly; but the stretch of bare brown earth littered with splintering logs and black stumps is beauty itself to the planter's eye, and in a very few months, when the coffee, or the rubber, or the coconut palms begin to spring up, it will be as picturesque as any English park.<sup>13</sup>

Although Grimshaw claims that there is "[n]o landscape gardening" (*New* 61) involved in forest clearing, it is precisely this type of garden design that she goes on to describe: "it will be as picturesque as any English park" (*New* 61). Remaining with the theme of parkland cultivation in Papua, Grimshaw states that:

There is scarcely a plantation in the territory that is not picturesque by nature, and none that cannot be made so. The more favoured beauty spots - and of these there are many - need little to turn them into very Paradises of loveliness [...] The numbers of rivers and streams that cut through the mountain ranges and the natural lie of the ground, always more or less sloping, suggest fountains, ponds, terraces almost of themselves. (*New* 84)

Rivers, streams and slopes metamorphose into "fountains, ponds, terraces" (*New* 84) as Grimshaw attempts to recreate in Papua a form of landscape gardening closely associated with the eighteenth-century English country estate. In this colonial setting the professional middle classes that she addresses would be able to establish themselves as a landowning class.

The society that Grimshaw imagines in a future Papua is divided along racial lines wherein, among the white population there are no class distinctions. Her propagandistic appeals to settlers are directed specifically toward the upper middle class. The working class, the unemployed, single women of either class, those sections of the population usually considered superfluous and, therefore, targeted by emigration officers are not a part of Grimshaw's Papuan fantasy.<sup>14</sup> She is creating a classless society because only one class will be admitted. Land speculators are not welcome, and corporate capital is not addressed (*New* 87); this is a country for men and women of "education and refinement" who take "sheer pleasure in handling elemental things" (*New* 85). How often they handle them, however, is entirely a matter of choice; the planter will be required to provide "ordinary industry" only (*New* 87). The hard manual labour will be carried out by Papuans who, we are told, will receive "seven shillings" a month (*New* 61). This toil is not described; deforestation is achieved without sweat, landscape gardens have always tended to be scrupulously

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deodorised, as is to be expected when one considers how closely these parklands were associated with a national conception of self.<sup>15</sup> "[S]een from above, from the new elevated sites; the large windows, the terraces, the lawns; the cleared lines of vision",<sup>16</sup> eighteenth-century landscapes gardens were, according to Raymond Williams, the "expression of control and command".<sup>17</sup> Purged of signs of labour, they exuded a "kind of confidence", the ability to make nature "move to an arranged design".<sup>18</sup> They suggest not only social and economic, but also physical order. Eschewing the notion of production, they were being "organised for consumption – the view, the ordered proprietary repose, the prospect".<sup>19</sup> This is true also of the landscape gardens which Grimshaw is imagining in Papua. Designed for consumption rather than production, these spaces are intended to appeal to the devouring touristic eye as well as to those individuals who may be persuaded to settle in the new nation that Grimshaw is trying to construct.

In an oft-quoted definition, Benedict Anderson describes the nation as "[a]n imagined political community".<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, Ernest Gellner states that nationalism is not the "awakening" of "mythical, supposedly natural and given units. It is, on the contrary, the crystallisation of new units".<sup>21</sup> Nation building is an act of the imagination. Situated high above the indigenous population and the land itself – "I reined up on the top of the slope, above a sea of weltering peaks and ridges and clambering crests" (*New* 59) – Grimshaw is trying to imagine a new nation on her first trip into the Papuan bush:<sup>22</sup>

There is a gold mine in the earth of these rich countries, and the planter is the prospector and miner. I had known this in a vague and general way, but the sight of the tropic forest was the first thing that really brought it home to me. And I wondered, as we turned our horses down the slope and got on our way again, how it was that the millions at home knew so little, and cared so much less, about these golden lands lying unawaked and untouched, like the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tale, in the far-away corners of England's wonderful empire. (*New* 62)

From her Archimedean vantage point, Grimshaw is inscribing a nationalist narrative on Papua.<sup>23</sup> Like all nationalist narratives, this one involves a poetics of inclusion and exclusion; a concern with nativity, mythologised inevitability and heroic intervention. On the one hand, Grimshaw states that Papua is "like the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tale, in the far-away corners of England's wonderful empire" (*New* 62). Innocent, virginal, passive and royal, the real Papua lies under the forest of thorn that has encroached upon the court. She will be awakened not by a kiss, but simply because her time has come; the hundred years have passed and the curse

has worn off. The forest of thorn has transmuted into a forest of flowers and the ineluctable must happen. As Clarissa Pinkola Estés observes, “[f]airy tales instruct us over and over again: when it’s time, it’s time”.<sup>24</sup> This genesis narrative posits the nation as an inevitable product of linear time; nation building is merely revealing that which has always been there, quietly awaiting its true heirs. At this narrative juncture, the forest, like the forest in the fairy-tale, resignedly fades away. From the predominantly masculine visual perspective,<sup>25</sup> which Grimshaw occupies at this point, it has come to represent only that which lies beneath: “this luxuriance of growth advertises the value of the land to the experienced eye” (*New* 60). The sleeping beauty of Papua is its soil; soil and nation are synonymous.

Grimshaw’s imagined Papua is built upon a female body that is passive, virginal and, it can be said after one hundred years of sleep, enduring. But there is another feminine entity within this nationalist discourse, one that is inseparable from the forest and one that requires heroic endeavour to overcome. In Papua, Grimshaw’s forest landscapes comprise a blend of dismissal – they are merely indicative of rich soil – and terror:

Often enough, riding along the narrow ribbon of forest track, I have looked at the huge, silent, scarce penetrable dells and billows of woodland beside me, much as a passenger on a steamer may look at the unfathomable sea below the rail. So safe upon this tiny space of plank, or clearing – so close to death, one step outside. (*New* 71)

This is not nature as it is known in Europe: “Nature in the Old World has been for so many hundred and thousand years just ‘the old nurse’ of her children, that it is terrifying to meet her face to face in the lands where she turns a hard unseeing countenance upon us, and crushes us - not for sport, simply not knowing of our existence” (*New* 72). In this strand of Grimshaw’s nationalist narrative the new Papua can only be established when the female Other has been conquered. This Other is an ambivalent figure: a nurse who is oblivious to her charges. In Papua, Grimshaw’s new social order will be constructed upon the broken body of working-class femininity. For nature is not the (m)other; it is that shadowy figure in middle-class households – the children’s ‘old nurse’. Technologies of violence are unleashed; the result is an assault upon the body of working-class woman: “Yet our revenge is waiting, for in the generations that are to come we shall seize and crush her and tame her to our will” (*New* 72). Anne McClintock has observed that: “Within colonial narratives, the eroticizing of ‘virgin’ space also effects a territorial appropriation, for if the land is virgin, colonized peoples cannot claim aboriginal territorial rights,

and white male patrimony is violently assured as the sexual and military insemination of an interior void."<sup>26</sup> Insemination is not, however, the focus of the scene that Grimshaw describes. She does not write the body of the nurse/forest as a virgin space. Indeed if 'nurse' is taken to signify wet-nurse the forest/body is certainly not a virginal zone. Dominant nineteenth and earlier twentieth-century discourses of femininity did not designate working-class female bodies as sites of purity.<sup>27</sup> As Lynda Nead, in her work on sexual myths in Victorian Britain, states:

Bourgeois attitudes towards working-class women were highly contradictory; on the one hand they were perceived as picturesque and healthy, and on the other hand they were believed to be morally degraded and threatening. As objects of class fear, working women were regarded as dangerous and infectious; as agents of disease, they threatened to undermine the nation with their prolific breeding and inferior offspring.<sup>28</sup>

Within this medicalised discourse of contagion, one of the most dangerous bodies was that of the nurse: "The moral and physical health of the working-class women who were engaged as nurses was called into question and doctors described the possibility of moral/physical contamination from nurse (i.e. working class) to child (i.e. middle class) through the feeding".<sup>29</sup> In this nationalist narrative the destruction of the nurse is an attempt to prevent contamination (*New 87*). Grimshaw's injunction that prospective settlers should come to Papua with "anything from two to five thousand" (*New 87*) pounds would, in 1910, have excluded the vast majority of working-class people. In order for Grimshaw to reveal a virgin space, a sleeping beauty of Papua, the body of the nurse/forest must be annihilated. This may happen through a seemingly inevitable process – the thorn forest quietly recedes, or it may require heroic and brutal intervention; either way Grimshaw's virgin space, a space of origin/ownership can only be located in the pages of a fairytale. But even here it is problematic. The unveiling of the sleeping beauty simultaneously reveals a youthful sixteen-year-old-girl and a one-hundred-and-sixteen-year-old woman. The colonial desire for beginnings is foiled; origins, it would seem, are impossible.

Writing virgin territory in Papua either metaphorical or, as in the following quotation, apparently non-metaphorical, presents Grimshaw with difficulties. Rhapsodising on "the nameless charm of Papua" she describes how the "fascination which many have felt but none can express – first lays its compelling hand upon the traveller when he looks at such scenes as these, and knows for a certainty that his eyes are resting upon hills unprofaned by the white man's foot – upon lands where 'no one has

been'" (*New* 21). Grimshaw's use of inverted commas indicates that these are, in fact, hills where somebody has been; merely unprofaned by the white man, the Other has been and is there. And this Other, like the landscape itself, has a capacity to devour: "Every airman takes his life in his hand when he flies over a country that would swallow up his plane, in case of accident, as utterly as the sea; that in some places, would swallow himself, not figuratively, but literally, if it had the chance" (*Isles* 187).

Grimshaw's obsession with cannibalism is relentless. Arriving in indigenous villages only to speculate that they have just missed or interrupted a cannibal ritual, an absence of evidence is irrelevant: "I looked at the raft with peculiar interest, since it seemed very probable indeed, from the elaboration of the whole affair and the warlike demeanour of the men, that I was witnessing a cannibal ceremony minus the corpse" (*New* 131). A raft "decorated with leaves and grasses" (*New* 131) is enough to indicate foul play. Almost any verbal or non-verbal behaviour – a flushed face, anger, a degree of excitement, sullenness, withdrawal, agitation or fear – are all capable of evincing cannibalistic intent. Simply being Other, a black Other, is enough to indict one of cannibalistic urges. Even when stating that an individual or an ethnic group had never sampled human flesh, Grimshaw is quick to add the rejoinder that it was common practice among their forefathers. They are only a generation or two, a mere step, away from it, the practice being stopped, and a revival prevented, by the presence of colonial authority. Grimshaw's delight in cannibal tales did not wane over the years. The above quotation is taken from her final travelogue, a text in which a chapter – full of speculation and second hand accounts – is devoted to the topic. Regardless of the ethnic group that she is engaging with, Grimshaw almost invariably calls attention to a putative cannibal past. As Frantz Fanon observes: "Face to face with the white man, the Negro has a past to legitimate, a vengeance to extract; face to face with the Negro, the contemporary white man feels the need to recall the times of cannibalism."<sup>30</sup>

I should add at this point that my use of the term cannibal is not intended to denote a practice that took place in the South Seas. It may or may not have been a cultural happening;<sup>31</sup> evidence suggesting that it was an established, widespread practice is, however, lacking in substance.<sup>32</sup> I use the term to evoke an important aspect of the European imaginary which projected a stream of longing and revulsion, fascination and fear onto a racialised Other. A central figure in European myth and fairytale, the man-eating ogre metamorphosed into those terrifying and compelling 'blank spaces' on the imperial map and the people who inhabited them.<sup>33</sup> In an essay which draws attention to the seriously flawed sources upon

which ethnography has sought to establish the existence of cannibalistic practices in nineteenth-century Fiji, Gananath Obeyeskere defines cannibalism as "a cultural construction which refers to the inordinate capacity of the Other to consume human flesh as an especially delectable food".<sup>34</sup> The consumer of human flesh is the supreme Other; the act of cannibalism the supreme dissolution of otherness.<sup>35</sup> Submerged in the blackness of physiological density, the ultimate communion with the Other *may* be achieved. Boundaries intimate a desire for demarcated separation and transgressive union; the Other both allures and repels. The image of the cannibal invokes an urge to be consumed and to consume.

Grimshaw figured her Papuan forest as a nurse, not a malevolent entity, but an "unseeing" one who no longer knows "of our existence" (*New* 72). Turning her back on her wards she denies access to the maternal breast. Commenting on Freud's delineation of the oral stage of development, Maggie Kilgour states:

In this phase, the infant at first has no sense of its own separation from the world: it is aware only of the mother's breast, which it does not see as a separate object but, as it can be taken inside itself, as part of itself. The individual's original existence, the Golden Age of the infant, is thus described as a cannibalistic experience of fluid boundaries between self and world, who are joined in a symbiotic oneness.<sup>36</sup>

Individuation is dependent upon movement away from this phase; "all pathology stems from either fixation or regression to an earlier stage".<sup>37</sup> This is not to suggest that Freud's theory of development follows a narrow linear trajectory. He explains how "one phase does not succeed the other so suddenly but gradually, so that parts of the earlier organization always persist side by side with the later, and even in normal development the transformation is never complete, the final structure often containing vestiges of earlier fixations".<sup>38</sup> The past infiltrates the present in a longing for oneness which is a longing to consume. Perhaps nowhere is this desire to consume more indubitably present than in certain of the West's colonising missions. As Grimshaw physically and metaphorically ingests the produce of Papua, constructing a fantasy of wholesale exploitation, imperialism becomes an act of both literal and symbolic consumption. This overriding urge to consume and the aggression which it embodies are projected onto a man-eating Other. As Peter Hulme argues, "the imagery of cannibalism stems in part from a denial of the very violence underlying colonising (and other similar) relations, a violence which is then projected onto its victim".<sup>39</sup> Where does the real cannibalistic desire lie in Grimshaw's travel writing – among the colonised who somehow are never



ever caught in the act? Or in Grimshaw's desire for land – desire for mastery over the forest?

So far, Grimshaw's desire for mastery over the forest has been discussed largely in relation to the axe. At times in her travel writing, however, this urge to subjugate is communicated much more subtly. This is evident in Grimshaw's account of her stay with a local planter during one of her first visits to the Papuan bush. Enthusiastic about vernacular architecture in the Pacific, she is enormously impressed with the planter's house. Part of what attracts her to the "mere three-roomed, one-storeyed bungalow" (*New* 80) is the interaction of interior and exterior space. When Grimshaw is commenting on South Sea design, more often than not, she praises the dissolution of boundaries between the two, but here the concern appears to be the way in which the interior can manage, and stage, the exterior:

There were no pictures on the walls, but you could always have one – much better than anything Corot or Turner could have done for you – by simply swinging wide one of the oblong bamboo-plait shutters and instantly painting on the wall a matchless landscape study, four feet by three [...] The back door opened upon a picture after the Japanese style – a gigantic arcade of feathery bamboos fluttering with the pretty black and white wings of small birds that came after the drying coffee. (*New* 83)

Breaking it down into aestheticised slices, Grimshaw – converting house and bush into an art gallery – is trying to frame and contain the forest (*New* 83). This need to control terrain, to break it up into manageable, digestible portions, is also evident in Grimshaw's description of her initial journey to the Pacific. It is a representation dominated by latitudinal lines: "Happenings are largely a matter of latitude. About the fiftieth parallel, nothing interesting happens but policemen, bankruptcies, and Lord Mayors' shows".<sup>40</sup> Grimshaw goes on to say, "Down towards the thirties, colour begins to glow upon the grey outlines of Northern life, and in the twenties, strange scenes and astonishing peoples paint it over and over" (*From Fiji* 9-10). The final stage of the journey is depicted as crossing a line: "Cross the Line, and now you may take the brush, and indulge your vagrant fancy to the full, for nothing that you paint will be too bright or too strange" (*From Fiji* 9-10).

Grimshaw creates a framed space, an inside, then she enters it; the artist at work is both inside and outside the frame. She is both observer and observed. Grimshaw's first representation of the Pacific is primarily a cartography of lines and framed spaces. This suggests not



only a desire to see, but a desire to see an *all*, an easily digestible *all*, an *all* that is manageable and contained. I have argued elsewhere that the imperialist/touristic urge to observe/consume a site/sight in its entirety could offer one reason for the attraction of islands. These small areas, appearing to be decisively framed,<sup>41</sup> present the tourist with what seems to be an opportunity for absolute visual consumption. And there is no doubt that Grimshaw, frequently moving from island to islet, was fascinated by ever-decreasing land masses. In sharp contrast to South Sea atolls are the great forests of Papua, which the viewing Grimshaw, describing them as "much better than anything Corot or Turner could have done" (*New* 83), frames from the inside of the planter's house. While clearly compelled by the beauty of the forest, this concentration on the visual is an attempt to reduce landscape to composition, limiting "understanding to background/foreground and perspective".<sup>42</sup> Fracturing the landscape with geometrical interludes, Grimshaw is trying to impose some kind of order, at times unfurling a pin-striped topography: "Moreover, nothing could be more stately than the avenues of splendid palms that make up a copra plantation" (*New* 84). Similar sentiments are expressed when she is visiting a Fijian plantation: "The palms of the estate number about sixty thousand, planted for the most part in regular rows forming arcades of extreme beauty" (*From Fiji* 119). Grimshaw is concerned with both the economic viability and the aesthetic dimension of plantations. Enthusing on the latter during her stay at the Papuan settlement she states:

There is scarcely a plantation in the territory that is not picturesque by nature, and none that cannot be made so. The more favoured beauty spots – and these there are many – need little to turn them into very Paradises of loveliness. Brilliant shrubs and trees take root and grow for the asking; flowers are neglected for the most part, but would grow, practically without attention, if once sown. (*New* 84)

What is interesting here is the collision of garden and plantation; the domestic and the colonial, growing through each other, are literally inseparable. Colonial projects, taking place in various parts of the world during the age of high imperialism, were almost always dependent upon the domestic. White women were perceived as culture-carriers; explorers, traders, the military and colonial administrators were merely paving the way for their civilising influence. Homes and gardens were inextricable from the imperialist sphere.

The garden that Grimshaw imagines is not one in which detail is foregrounded. Reflecting a predominantly masculine visual perspective,

this fantasy landscape is not the small scale Victorian garden; it is, as stated earlier, the park-land of the eighteenth-century estate, a garden ideology that clearly exerts a much greater degree of control over the landscape. In contrast to these elaborate garden designs is the planter's house. Grimshaw revels in its "perfect simplicity" (*New* 81), suggesting a soil-coloured consonance between dwelling and inhabitant: "with a flight of rustic steps leading up to its little brown door, and a high, deep, palm-thatch roof set low down on its walls of woven bamboo, like a shady hat pulled over a planter's sun-browned face" (*New* 80). Grimshaw's attempt to naturalise both occupant and premises, harmonising the various components in her landscape, abruptly becomes a process of denaturalisation as she declares, "it was as if the house had been built upon a watch-tower" (*New* 82). Precariously situated, this site of rustic simplicity is a home-under-threat, or a home that perceives itself to be under threat. Grimshaw's description of the house – a construction on top of a watchtower – is an image which calls to mind Bentham's panopticon. Commenting on the latter, Foucault states:

The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it rehearses the principal of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions – to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide – it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.<sup>43</sup>

Highly visible within door and window frames, Grimshaw has trapped the forest. But she too is flooded in light; also situated within the frame, she too is visible. Her position suggests not only a desire to see, but also to be seen. Her gaze is both scopophilic and exhibitionistic, active and passive.<sup>44</sup> It bespeaks an urge to be both viewer and viewed. Positioned in front of the window, this is something that Grimshaw may well have achieved. As a centre of surveillance, the planter's home fails, for while the elevated position of the house renders it highly visible, its ability to return the gaze is savagely hampered by those framed masterpieces which surround its exterior. The residents of this soil-coloured panopticon flag-up their whereabouts, but their ability to locate what may be any number of eyes in the tangle of the forest is seriously limited. Like many panoptical constructions/discourses, the house/gallery is not a stable space: while "the infinitely minute web of panoptic techniques"<sup>45</sup> scrutinises, the observed know the position of the observer; they know at least that he or she is located in the tower. While the residents and guests in the planter's house believe that they dwell in the privileged position of the viewer, they may



simultaneously inhabit the realm of the viewed. And, when one positions oneself within the frame of a masterpiece, an image, which, like a two-way mirror, may hide any number of eyes, perhaps that is what one desires: to be both observer and observed, consumer and consumed.

In this paper I have examined Beatrice Grimshaw's attempts to construct a nationalist narrative in Papua, an endeavour centred in a place of putative nativity – the forest. Disrupting stereotypes of women travellers as more environmentally friendly than their male counterparts, Grimshaw was actively (insofar as she directed Papuan labourers) involved in attempts to erase Papua's turbulent and unruly heart of darkness. Grimshaw impacted on Papuan landscape. 'Reined up' on top of a promontory, her gaze displays all the characteristics of the colonial grand sweep, a visual perspective practically synonymous with the imperial male. Grimshaw's horticultural imaginings are also seemingly boundless in scope. Her imagined Papua is not a country of small scale Victorian gardens, but rather of landscape designs harking back to eighteenth-century England and the country estate.

In her nationalist narrative, Grimshaw translates forest into parkland, a metamorphosis predicated on the negation of working-class femininity; the body of the white Other must be annihilated if the virgin soil, 'the sleeping beauty of Papua', is to be revealed. As has been demonstrated, in Grimshaw's writings Papua's sable centre is a locus of discursive interaction, a place where discourses of race, class and gender intersect, three categories which must be rigorously controlled if the new Papua is to be delivered. Like all such constructs, Grimshaw's nativity narrative involves a poetics of inclusion and exclusion. She is constructing a classless society because only one class will be admitted. Those sections of society normally targeted by emigration promoters have no role to play in Grimshaw's 'virgin' Papua. But origins, as we have seen, are impossible. There is no pristine soil: the indigenous Other has been and is there. This Other, like the blank spaces on the imperial map, is depicted as having an incredible capacity to devour. The insatiable greed at the centre of European imperialism is projected onto a racialised Other, a construct born out of longing and revulsion, fascination and fear, a yearning for demarcated separation and transgressive union, an Other that both allures and repels. Like Grimshaw's gaze in the planter's panopticon, the image of the cannibal invokes a desire to consume and to be consumed.

#### Notes

1. As an expert in the popular fictional genres that she exploited, Grimshaw was acutely conscious of and sensitive to audience.

2. Compiled by Peter Ruber and Victor A. Berch, one of the fullest bibliographies of Grimshaw's works can be found at <http://pulptrack.com/arch/000168.html>
3. Outside Ireland the only in-depth study of Grimshaw's work is Susan Gardner's Doctoral dissertation. Susan Gardner, "For Love and Money: Beatrice Grimshaw's Passage to Papua." Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Rhodes University, 1985.
4. Clare McCotter, "Colonising Landscapes and Mapping Bodies: Imagining Tourist Space & Place in Beatrice Grimshaw's Travel Writing." Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Ulster, 2005.
5. Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 23.
6. The fact that this narrative is being constructed within a forest is extremely relevant. See, Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995).
7. Beatrice Grimshaw cited in "'A 'vert to Australianism': Beatrice Grimshaw and the Bicentenary." Susan Gardner, *Hecate* 12 (1987): 31-69, 51.
8. Race and class are distinct categories. I am not attempting to collapse them into each other. As is evident in Grimshaw's representation of Papua's forests, however, in certain contexts they do intersect.
9. Stephen Greenblatt cited in the Introduction to James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (London: U of California Press, 1986, 1-7), 3-4.
10. Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure* (Herbert Jenkins, 1930), 210. Further references to this publication will be provided by page number in parentheses in the text.
11. Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1984), xii.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Grimshaw, *The New New Guinea*, 61. Further references to this publication will be provided by page number in parentheses in the text.
14. For a discussion of those groups usually considered superfluous during the age of high imperialism, see Rita S. Kranidis, *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Experience: Contested Subjects* (London: MacMillan, 1999), 19-57.
15. See, Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), 120.
16. *Ibid.* 25
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.* 124.
20. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.
21. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992),
22. Mary Louise Pratt associates the colonial sweep exclusively with imperial males. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 213.
23. Krista Comer uses the expression "Archimedean overview" in *Landscapes of the New West: Gender and Geography in Contemporary Women's Writing* (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina Press, 1999), 24.

24. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With The Wolves: Contacting The Power Of The Wild Woman* (Reading: Cox & Wyman, 1998), 495.
25. Grimshaw's visual perspective here is predominantly, not exclusively, masculine.
26. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender And Sexuality In The Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), 30.
27. See Roberta McGrath, 'Medical Police', *Ten*, 8 (1984): 13-18, 14.
28. Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 31.
29. *Ibid.* 27
30. Frantz Fanon cited in "Ghost stories, bone flutes, cannibal counter-memory" by Graham Huggan in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, Eds. *Cannibalism And The Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 126-141, 126.
31. My concern here, however, is not with the ongoing Shalins and Obeyesekere debate, it is with cannibalism in Beatrice Grimshaw's travel writing. And Grimshaw does depict certain ethnic groups, particularly in Papua, as being addicted to human flesh. Yet she fails to provide a single shred of evidence that cannibalistic practice took place despite the fact that she was resident in the country for twenty seven years.
32. For an opposing view of cannibalistic practice in Fiji, one which draws heavily on Shalins and Fergus Clunie, see, Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Raw Women and Cooked Men: Fijian Cannibalism in the Nineteenth Century, Divine Hunger* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 151-168.
33. See Marina Warner, "Fee fie fo fum: The Child in the Jaws of the Story" in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, eds. *Cannibalism And The Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 158-182.
34. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Cannibal Feasts in Nineteenth-century Fiji: Seamen's Yarns and the Ethnographic Imagination" in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, eds. *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998, 63-86), 63.
35. See Maggie Kilgour, "The unktion of cannibalism at the present time" in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, eds. *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 238-259, 240.
36. Maggie Kilgour, *op cit.*, 244.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Freud cited in Kilgour, 244.
39. Peter Hulme, "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene" in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, eds. *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 1-38, 34.
40. Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1907), 9-10. Further references to this publication will be provided by page number in parentheses in the text.
41. Regarding islands and boundaries, see, Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, "Introduction" in Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith, eds., *Islands In History And Representation* (London: Routledge, 2003: 1-18), 2.
42. Judith Fryer, "Desert Rock, Shelter, Legend: Willa Cather's Novels of the Southwest" in Vera Norwood and Janice Monk, eds. *The Desert is no Lady:*

- Southwestern Landscape in Women's Writing and Art* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), 28.
43. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth Of The Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 200.
  44. See, Sigmund Freud, "Instincts And Their Vicissitudes" in James Strachey, ed. *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement: Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works. The Standard Edition* (Volume XIV, 1914-1916) (London: The Hogarth Press, 1971), 130.
  45. Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Foucault Reader* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1984), 213.

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