'Restless Birds': Avian Encounters in the Fiction of the Brontës and Daphne du Maurier

HABIBI, HELENA

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Helena Habibi

Abstract

Avian encounters pervade the Brontës’ and Daphne du Maurier’s fiction, though a sustained study of this phenomenon has yet to emerge. This thesis engages with critical debates in ecofeminism, animal studies, and vegetarian theory in its examination of interspecies interactions between restless bird-heroines and dead birds. The introduction contextualises these two bodies of work within contemporaneous cultures of gender-inflected avian exploitation and their counter narratives of feminist-vegetarian discourse. Analysis of avian encounters in Anne Brontë’s novels and du Maurier’s memoirs demonstrate intersections between speciesism and gendered oppression, and foreground the challenging questions posed by the thesis regarding the assumed power of humans over other animals.

Chapters one and two establish a complex system of avian gendered politics in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. This includes, amongst other areas, examination of bird consumption, bird hunting, and speciesist language with gendered implications. These two chapters examine the speciesism that underpins the former novel’s celebrated proto-feminist status and the masculinist cultures of avian cruelty that dominate the latter novel. They assess the extent to which bird-women in both novels realise a feminist-vegetarian consciousness with their rejection of bird corpse consumption, revealing the extent to which these women writers explore and interrogate interconnected subjugations. Chapters three to five and the coda investigate this legacy of Brontëan avian gendered politics in a selection of du Maurier’s critically neglected novels and short stories. With its exploration of the ways in which these two bodies of work form a dialogue with each other, this study of avian encounters is also a study of avian afterlives. All of the texts examined in this thesis, by the Brontës and du Maurier, are haunted by restless, exploited, and murdered birds, a presence that reverberates palimpsestuously across time.

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Helena Habibi

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Statement of Copyright

Declaration

No material in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other University. The work is solely that of the author, Helena Habibi, under the supervision of Professor Sarah Wootton. Excerpts from chapter one, in an earlier form, have been published as '"The volume was flung, it hit me": Coarseness, Bird Imagery, and Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds* in *Jane Eyre*', *Brontë Studies*, 44 (2019), pp. 56-67.

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Note on Style

Style and referencing are in accordance with *MHRA Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors and Editors*, ed. Brian Richardson, Robin Aizlewood, Derek Connon, Malcolm Cook, Gerard Lowe, Graham Nelson, and Chloe Paver, 3rd edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013). What follows are a few exceptions. In references to books, articles, and films, I omit 'by' after 'ed.', 'eds.', 'intro.', 'trans.', and 'dir.'. When referencing a chapter in a book or article in a journal, I give inclusive pages of a chapter or article, followed by the specific page or pages being referenced, in the following format: 'pp. 179-99, p. 80', or 'pp. 179-99, pp. 80 and 84'. For subsequent references, I give particular page references only. In recording inclusive numbers, I follow *MHRA* style with the exception that I omit the inclusion of a zero in the penultimate position. Thus, I record 'pp. 405-9' as such, rather than as 'pp. 405-09'. Repeated citations are abbreviated to author(s) last name(s), a shortened version of the title of the book, chapter, or article, followed by page numbers.

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Introduction: Restless Birds

'like my caged doves of long ago […] the cage, indeed, was all we knew.'[1]

On Monday 19 March, 2018, Daphne du Maurier's son, Christian Browning, unveiled a giant steel bird at Berrills Yard by the banks of Fowey Estuary in Cornwall. The sculpture, *Rook with a Book*, seen in figure 1, depicts a rook clutching an edition of du Maurier's short story, 'The Birds' (1952).[2] Honouring du Maurier with reference to this tale chimes with the recent turn in scholarship towards reassessing the value of du Maurier's prolific and multiform literary contribution beyond her famous novel, *Rebecca* (1938).[3] This avian dedication also intuits the broader significance of birds throughout du Maurier's fiction.

Fig. 1. Gary and Thomas Thrussell, *Rook with a Book*, 2018.

That same spring, at the Brontë Parsonage Museum in West Yorkshire, a film installation, titled *Wings of Desire*, seen in figure 2, commemorated the bicentenary of Emily Brontë's birth. Like its Cornish counterpart, the artist, Kate Whiteford, centres her vision of Brontë's fiction on the haunting image of a bird. As Whiteford states, her evocation of Brontë's merlin hawk, Nero, encapsulates themes of 'flight, hunting,

[1] Daphne du Maurier, *Vanishing Cornwall: The Spirit and History of Cornwall* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 5 and 8. First published in 1967. Henceforward *VC*.
[2] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Birds', *The Birds and Other Stories* (London: Virago, 2013). First published as *The Apple Tree*.
[3] Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *R*.

cruelty, entrapment and escape' that characterise Brontë's fiction. In a BBC television interview, Whiteford further emphasises

> this idea of entrapment, escape, of longing for freedom, liberty. [Brontë is] always writing about liberty. She roams this landscape and the hawk is like a metaphor for the way she could fly above this in her own mind […] soaring over the landscape.[4]

Like the artists of the du Maurier sculpture, Whiteford apprehends the importance of avian imagery in the writer's imagination. In the latter case, a connection between women and birds is recognised.

Fig. 2. Kate Whiteford, *Wings of Desire*, 2018.

[4] Interview with Kate Whiteford, 'West Yorkshire', *Countryfile*, BBC2, 9 April 2018.

Emily Brontë memorialised her avian companion, whom she apparently found in a deserted nest on the moors, in a sensitive watercolour dated October 1841, seen in figure 3.[5]

Fig. 3. Emily Brontë, *Nero*, 1841.

[5] Thought to be inspired by Thomas Bewick's strikingly similar depiction of the female merlin, shown in figure 4. See plate no. 324 in Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 384-85.

Fig. 4. Thomas Bewick, *The Female Merlin*, 1797.

In a diary entry of the same year, Brontë refers to Nero 'in his cage'[6] and in her poem, known as 'The Caged Bird', also dated 1841, she conjures a bird yearning for liberation:

> And like myself lone wholly lone
> It sees the day's long sunshine glow
> And like myself it makes its moan
> In unexhausted woe
>
> Give me the hills our equal prayer
> Earth's breezy hills and heaven's blue sea
> We ask for nothing further here
> But our own hearts and liberty
>
> Ah could my hand unlock its chain
> How gladly would I watch it soar
> And ne'er regret and ne'er complain
> To see its shining eyes no more
>
> But let me think that if today
> It pines in cold captivity
> Tomorrow both shall soar away
> Eternally entirely Free[7]

[6] Comment about Nero quoted in Emily Brontë's diary paper, 30 July 1841. See The Brontës, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, ed. Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 488.
[7] Emily Brontë, 'And like myself lone wholly lone', *The Complete Poems*, ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 129.

Brontë establishes a connection between the speaker's desire for liberty and a bird's imagined yearning for freedom from captivity. With the pronoun 'we' in the second stanza, a shared plight between woman and bird is made explicit. Brontë's identification with the bird's captive state reflects a preoccupation with chains, imprisonment, and the language of captivity that pervades Emily Brontë's poetry and is the precursor to a pervasive bird-woman connection in the Brontë novels.

Du Maurier's interest in the bird as a symbol of longed-for liberty is strongly evocative of Brontë's. In her prologue to *Vanishing Cornwall*, du Maurier similarly foregrounds the caged bird as a pivotal symbol in her own imaginative schema.[8] In a childhood anecdote, she recalls a pair of caged doves she set free. Sensing that this was a transgressive act – 'guilt was heavy upon me. Nobody must know […] I moved *restlessly*' (*VC*, 3, my italics) – she is overjoyed when she discovers the cage empty, the birds flown free.[9] Like Brontë's merlin hawk, the caged doves du Maurier release become a metaphor for her own sense of confinement and restlessness as a woman whose spirit is hampered by the 'cage' of feminine propriety. Reminiscing about childhood with her sisters, du Maurier recalls

> the cage imprisoned us. The cage, indeed, was all we knew. Ours was the sanded floor, the seed, the water, even the rod on which to perch, the swing to make us gay. We were cherished, loved, protected. No trio of turtle-doves could wish for more. (*VC*, 5)

Darkening the species boundaries between entrapped girls and 'pet' doves, du Maurier, like Brontë, co-opts the curtailed freedoms of the caged bird as a metaphor through which to articulate her own yearning for 'the freedom I desired, long sought-for, not yet known' (*VC*, 6). Also like Brontë, this interspecies symbiosis finds expression throughout her fiction.

Restless birds, and restless bird-heroines, who inhabit the Brontë and du Maurier novels and short stories examined in this thesis – Jane Eyre, Bertha Rochester, Catherine Earnshaw, Isabella Linton, Catherine Linton, Mary Yellan, Dona St Columb, Honor Harris, the nameless narrator of 'The Chamois', and Marda West – are either explicitly or implicitly 'restless', are associated with birds, and are invariably

[8] In this memoir and homage to Cornwall, its landscape, people, history, and spirit, du Maurier muses on, 'a country known and loved in all its moods' (*VC*, 8).
[9] Du Maurier similarly released pigeons on Hampstead Heath to mark the death of her father, Gerald du Maurier, on 11 April 1934. See Margaret Forster, *Daphne du Maurier* (London: Arrow, 1994), p. 111.

connected to issues of avian exploitation.[10] The entrapped bird is one of the most enduring images in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), which has been much remarked upon, but has thus far failed to attract a significant analysis within the context of the novel's broader bird imagery.[11] Jane Eyre is 'too feverish to rest' (*JE*, 171). Echoing her own sense of 'the restlessness [that] was in my nature' (*JE*, 125), Rochester recognises in her 'the glance of a curious sort of bird through the close-set bars of a cage: a vivid, restless, resolute captive is there; were it but free, it would soar cloud-high' (*JE*, 158). He similarly postulates Jane's restlessness in avian terms: 'Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation' (*JE*, 284). Avian restlessness is a crucial and prevailing element of Jane's struggle against 'stagnation [and] the viewless fetters of an uniform and too still existence' (*JE*, 132). Catherine Earnshaw, of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), who is associated with the lapwing, 'is often restless and anxious looking'.[12] Heathcliff attributes this to her confinement: 'how the devil could it be otherwise, in her frightful isolation?' (*WH*, 164). Catherine's daughter, Cathy, who shares her mother's connection to birds, also has a propensity for restlessness.[13] Nelly Dean, Cathy's nurse, avoids exposing her to the world beyond the confines of her father's home 'lest she should be restless, and anxious' (*WH*, 204). Echoing the plight of her mother, Cathy, 'contented at first, in a brief space of time grew irritable and restless. For one thing, she was forbidden to move out of the garden, and it fretted her sadly to be confined to its narrow bounds' (*WH*, 289). The women characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, including Bertha Rochester of the former and Isabella Linton of the latter, are connected to particular bird species, which, I shall argue, comment upon their particular forms of oppression. These Brontë novels are deeply concerned with the ways in which avian exploitation, such as consumption, hunting, and plumage

[10] The words 'restless' and 'restlessness' are commonly used in biographical accounts of du Maurier's life by both critics and du Maurier herself. Examples include Alison Light's recognition that Cornwall is du Maurier's own version of 'her favourite authors, the Brontë [sisters' Yorkshire moors] where she could be a restless spirit and a writer in retreat'. See Alison Light, 'Preface', in Daphne du Maurier, *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories* (London: Virago, 2006), p. ix. Du Maurier refers to her restless spirit three times in her memoir, *Myself When Young: The Shaping of a Writer* (London: Virago, 2004), pp. 148, 155, and 167. First published as *Growing Pains: The Shaping of a Writer* in 1977. The latter instance appears as she declares that 'a line from a poem by Emily Brontë has come to me clearly, and I shall call my book *The Loving Spirit*'. Forster also refers to du Maurer's restlessness. See Forster, *Daphne du Maurier*, pp. 109 and 124.

[11] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996). Henceforward *JE*.

[12] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Toronto: Broadview, 2007), p. 164. Henceforward *WH*.

[13] Henceforward, I will refer to the first-generation heroine, Catherine Earnshaw, as 'Catherine' and her daughter, the second-generation heroine, Catherine Linton, as 'Cathy'.

adornment, is interconnected with the plights of bird heroines whose restlessness dominates the novels. These issues are also taken up by Anne Brontë in her two novels, *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), which I will consider in due course.[14] Suffice to say at this point that connections were clearly being made in the Brontë imagination between humans' exploitative relationship to birds and women's yearning for emancipation.

In du Maurier's fiction, there is likewise a pervasive restlessness that encumbers women and birds. In *Jamaica Inn* (1936), Mary Yellan's mother, whose 'heart was heavy and distressed at the thought of a future so insecure', 'turned restlessly in her bed, plucking at the sheets' and died.[15] Mary herself 'prowled about the room, her mind as restless as her body' (*JI*, 260); horses 'were restless and uneasy' (*JI*, 285); and even the eponymous Jamaica Inn itself is 'disturbed and restless with every breath of wind' (*JI*, 201). The whole ecosystem, from women, animals, soil, wind, and the human-made dwelling, is, in this novel, reeling with unrest. Restless birds, in particular, dominate the landscape, echoing the restless plights of the heroines. Patience Merlyn, associated with the chicken, is, like Mary, subject to speciesist language with gendered overtones employed by predatory bird men. Similarly, restlessness is a dominating mood in *Frenchman's Creek* (1941).[16] The novel charts Dona St Columb's grappling with restlessness, 'all the restless devils inside her who fought and struggled so often for release' (*FC*, 86), amidst a cacophony of avian life emitting 'a wailing cry, and a flapping of wings' (*FC*, 118). Honor Harris, of *The King's General* (1946), is likewise depicted as undergoing a restless awakening in the context of avian exploitation.[17] In du Maurier's short fiction, Marda West of 'The Blue Lenses' (1959) and the unnamed narrator of 'The Chamois' (1959) also grapple with restless yearnings.[18] Both women protagonists experience a disconcerting restlessness that urges them to drastic retaliation against confinement. Like the heroines before them, explicit restlessness presages moments of avian revolt, when they reject the consumption of birds.

[14] Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, eds. Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Henceforward *AG*. Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, ed. Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Henceforward *TWH*.
[15] Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (London: Virago, 2015), pp. 7-8. Henceforward *JI*.
[16] Daphne du Maurier, *Frenchman's Creek* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *FC*.
[17] Daphne du Maurier, *The King's General* (London: Virago, 2004).
[18] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Blue Lenses', *The Breaking Point: Short Stories* (London: Virago, 2009); du Maurier, 'The Chamois', *Breaking Point*.

Du Maurier and the Brontës

In 1923, sixteen-year-old du Maurier noted in her diary that she had read *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Over half a century later, when she came to write her memoir, *Myself When Young*, du Maurier noted how 'strange that my first encounter with the Brontë sisters produced no more than "Charming" for *Jane Eyre* and "Very good" for *Wuthering Heights*'.[19] Strange, indeed, given the important and enduring role the fiction and lives of the Brontë sisters would have on her literary imagination. From the beginning to the end of her writing career, du Maurier repeatedly turned to the Brontës for intellectual and imaginative sustenance. Her first published novel, *The Loving Spirit* (1931), is an homage to Emily Brontë.[20] This novel, which establishes du Maurier's ability to conjure an atmosphere rich with vivid and restless avian life, self-consciously evokes the writings of Brontë. Each of the four books comprising *The Loving Spirit* begin with an epigraph quoting Brontë's poetry and the novel's title is a reference to her poem, 'Self-Interrogation' (1846):

> Alas – the countless links are strong
> That bind us to our clay,
> The loving spirit lingers long,
> And would not pass away.[21]

The novel's interest in the reincarnation of familial 'spirit' through successive generations suggests that du Maurier had the Brontës in mind as she embarked on formative fictional endeavours – not least because this comprises a significant theme in *Wuthering Heights*. Du Maurier's use of the poem also speaks to the manner in which the 'spirit' of the Brontës' fiction 'lingers long' in du Maurier's own artistry; the metaphor is pertinent to the avian literary lineage that I will construct in this thesis.

Du Maurier was fascinated by all of the Brontë siblings, their lives and their fiction, including their juvenilia and poetry. She maintained a deep interest in the Brontës throughout her life. In the Malet letters alone, correspondence making brief or lengthy reference to the Brontës are numerous.[22] We know from these letters that du Maurier read widely on the Brontës, including many foundational biographical and

[19] Du Maurier, *Myself When Young*, p. 65.
[20] Daphne du Maurier, *The Loving Spirit* (London: Virago, 2003).
[21] Emily Brontë, 'Self-Interrogation', *The Complete Poems*, pp. 23-24. Originally published, 'at the authors' own expense', in *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846). See Gezari, 'Introduction', in Brontë, *The Complete Poems*, p, xv.
[22] Du Maurier maintained a long-standing correspondence with her friend and fellow writer, Oriel Malet, between the early 1950s until the former's death in 1989. See Daphne du Maurier, *Letters from Menabilly: Portrait of a Friendship*, ed. Oriel Malet (New York: M. Evans, 1992).

critical works, such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), Fanny Ratchford's *The Brontës' Web of Childhood* (1941), Margaret Crompton's *Passionate Search* (1955), 'the new book by the French professor person about Emily Brontë', Winifred Gérin's *Anne Brontë* (1959), 'and all the [Brontë Society] Transactions since the year Dot!'.[23] In her correspondence with Malet, du Maurier reveals that she read these publications with keen interest and an often critical eye. On being invited to write the introduction to a 1955 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, du Maurier visited the parsonage at Haworth where she 'spent happy hours among the books and papers there'.[24] She conducted her own extensive archival research at Haworth Parsonage, wrote a biography of Branwell, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (1960), planned, but never executed, a book inspired by letters written between the four surviving Brontë siblings, and opened a correspondence with the controversial Brontë scholar, and one-time President of the Brontë Society, Alex J. Symington.[25]

In her chapter titled 'Brontë Heritage' in *Vanishing Cornwall*, du Maurier traces a maternal lineage for the Brontë siblings to her beloved Cornwall. In doing so, du Maurier locates the origins of the Brontë literary imagination, 'that narrative power, that sense of the dramatic' (*VC*, 165), in the aural traditions of supernatural folk tales that Maria Branwell, the Brontë children's mother, and her sister, Elizabeth, brought with them from Penzance to Haworth. Amongst these, du Maurier recounts vivid details of the restless dead, haunted houses, graveyards, and dungeons. Thus, du Maurier establishes a shared Cornish literary heritage for herself and the Brontë sisters. The process of imagining fictional worlds became known, in du Maurier code, as 'Gondalling', a reference to the Brontë juvenilia, specifically the imaginary world shared by Emily and Anne.[26] Malet considers the Brontës as 'pegs' for du Maurier:

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[23] Du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. 40, 59, 86, and 89. In a letter dated 9 January 1976, du Maurier wrote to Malet with characteristic candour: 'Have you had your Brontë *Transactions*? They are rather good this year, not *too* scraping the barrel'. See du Maurier, *Letters*, p. 278, original italics. In her footnote to du Maurier's letter, dated 4 January 1956, Malet mistakenly attributes authorship of *Passionate Search: A Life of Charlotte Brontë* to Margot Peters, who wrote *Unquiet Soul: A Biography of Charlotte Brontë* (1975) and *Charlotte Brontë: Style in the Novel* (1973). Du Maurier would no doubt have been thrilled with the flourishing of Brontë scholarship in the decade after her death in 1989.

[24] Du Maurier, 'Introduction', in Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (London: MacDonald, 1955), pp. vii-xxiv. Du Maurier, *Letters*, p. 41. Malet is referring to a letter by du Maurier, dated 6 January 1955. See du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. 42-45.

[25] Daphne du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (London: Virago, 2006). Du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. 86-88.

[26] To 'Gondal', and its derivatives, 'Gondalling', 'Gondalled', and 'Gondally', was du Maurier code for 'To make believe, or pretend'. Inspired by the fantasy world of the Brontë juvenilia, 'to Gondal' is referred to as something that writers in particular are prone to do. See du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. x, 33, 162, 163, and 238.

'some writers range further still – into the past, as [du Maurier] did with the Brontës'.[27]

In her notebook, memoir, and collection of essays known as *The Rebecca Notebook* (1981), du Maurier contemplates two of her most treasured and long-standing creative muses: the Brontës and birds.[28] She is particularly interested in the 'two sisters from Haworth […] Charlotte and Emily Brontë' (*RN*, 96) and articulates a deeply felt connection to these creative and restless spirits, stating: 'I am a writer too […] a spinner of webs, a weaver of imaginary tales' (*RN*, 123). In addition to this writerly identification, in which she positions herself as a descendent of the Brontës, du Maurier turns to *Wuthering Heights* during personal deliberations on the nature of love and, later, the realities of widowhood and bereavement. She recalls details from Brontë's novel and personal life as a means of articulating her own ideas about literature, the creative process, love, and loss. Similarly, du Maurier's letters to Malet reveal a sense of personal sympathy and literary affinity with the interior life, and works, of Charlotte Brontë.[29] It is likewise telling that in *The Rebecca Notebook*, her second from last publication, du Maurier is no less concerned with birds as she is in her preceding novels and short stories. 'One of the greatest miracles of all', du Maurier declares in an essay written as she is about to turn 70, is the migration of the swallows, who 'fly overhead in a *restless* manner' (*RN*, 170, my italics). This thesis offers a sustained assessment of du Maurier's fiction through the lens of these two interconnected strands – a Brontëan inheritance and birds.

As Helen Taylor pointed out in 2007, 'many critics have observed [that] the Brontës were extremely important to du Maurier'.[30] Taylor goes on to claim that du Maurier 'transformed and adapted [the Brontës'] work into her own', that du Maurier's 'works owe a great debt to all the Brontë sisters'.[31] Since its publication in 1938, critics

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[27] Du Maurier, *Letters*, p. 107. In her glossary of du Maurier codewords, Malet explains that 'Pegs or to peg' refers to 'Someone whom one momentarily invests with romantic glamour, but more particularly as the inspiration for a fictional character'. See du Maurier, *Letters*, p. x.

[28] Daphne du Maurier, *The Rebecca Notebook and Other Memories* (London: Virago, 2006). Henceforward *RN*.

[29] In a letter to Malet dated 5 February 1968, du Maurer reveals that a personal tragedy 'made me think of Charlotte and Monsieur Héger, and how she would have felt if he had fainted at a lecture in Brussels! She would have written pages to Emily about it, who would have smiled scornfully, but written back nonetheless, telling Charlotte it was no business of hers, and not to be fussed. (If *only* we had her letters!)'. In the early 1970s, du Maurier continued to reference Charlotte Brontë in her letters to Malet: 'Look at how all the early Gondals and Angria influenced Charlotte and the others', and she once again sympathises with 'Oh dear, poor Charlotte, with memories of Héger and her old Angrian tales all mixed up!'. See du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. 214, 238, and 273. In a letter to Symington, du Maurier wrote 'I feel rather like Charlotte Brontë when nursing the Rev. Brontë and finding it difficult to get on with Villette'. See Forster, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 308.

[30] Helen Taylor, ed., *The Daphne du Maurier Companion* (London: Virago, 2010), p. xviii.

[31] Taylor, *Companion*, p. xviii; and Taylor, 'Introduction', in du Maurier, *Myself When Young*, p. xvii.

and readers alike have associated du Maurier's fifth and most successful novel, *Rebecca*, with *Jane Eyre*. Contemporary reviews cast it as an inferior version of *Jane Eyre* that nonetheless 'has its own real power and a strange passion comparable with Charlotte Brontë's'.[32] In the wake of *Rebecca*'s success, Joan Fontaine was cast as the nameless narrator in a film adaptation that spawned a cycle of Brontë-du Maurier cinematic adaptations throughout the 1940s.[33] Ever since, *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* have been intertwined in both the popular and critical imagination. In scholarship from the 1980s onwards, this perception of *Rebecca*'s Brontëan antecedence is reiterated. Alison Light pronounced that '*Rebecca* is a rewrite of *Jane Eyre*' and Richard Kelly associated *Rebecca* with the 'gothic details' of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.[34] Despite this early consensus in du Maurier studies, connections between the Brontë novels and du Maurier's fiction have scarcely been examined in detail.

The appearance of two recent contributions to Brontë afterlives and adaptation studies – a second, expanded edition of Patsy Stoneman's seminal *Brontë Transformations* (2018), and Amber K. Regis and Deborah Wynne's edited collection, *Charlotte Brontë: Legacies and Afterlives* (2017) – suggests a new wave of interest in the ways in which the Brontës' fiction continues to find expression in literary culture.[35] With respect to these two publications, however, the opportunity to investigate the broader interconnections between the Brontë and du Maurier corpuses is not pursued. The latter study contains one brief mention of plot similarities between *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*.[36] Stoneman's discussion of du Maurier focuses entirely on the relationship

[32] Forster, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 140.
[33] The flourishing of 1940s film adaptations repeatedly mis-cast Joan Fontaine as Brontë and du Maurier heroines. Although well cast as the mousy, nervous narrator of *Rebecca*, Joan Fontaine's subsequent portrayals of Jane Eyre and Dona St Columb, the latter in an adaptation of du Maurier's novel *Frenchman's Creek*, fail to capture the fortitude of these more indomitable heroines. Fontaine was cast as numerous other heroines in films that, as Patsy Stoneman points out, contain plot similarities to *Jane Eyre*. See Patsy Stoneman, *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights*, 2nd edn (Brighton: Edward Everett Root, 2018), pp. 272 and 273. Laurence Olivier played both Maxim de Winter and Heathcliff, and Fontaine's sister, Olivia de Havilland, played Rachel in an adaptation of du Maurier's novel, *My Cousin Rachel* (1951). See, in chronological order: *Wuthering Heights*, dir. William Wyler, with Merle Oberon and Lawrence Olivier (MGM, 1939); *Rebecca*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, with Joan Fontaine and Lawrence Olivier (Motion Pictures, 1940); *Jane Eyre*, dir. Robert Stevenson, with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles (Twentieth Century Fox, 1944); *Frenchman's Creek*, dir. Mitchel Leisen, with Arturo de Cordova and Joan Fontaine (Paramount Pictures, 1944); and *My Cousin Rachel*, dir. Henry Koster, with Richard Burton and Olivia de Havilland (Twentieth Century Fox, 1952). See Daphne du Maurier, *My Cousin Rachel* (London: Virago, 2003).
[34] Alison Light, '"Returning to Manderley": Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality, and Class', *Feminist Review*, 16 (1984), pp. 7-25, p. 7; Richard Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), p. 53.
[35] Stoneman, *Brontë Transformations*; Amber K. Regis and Deborah Wynne, eds., *Charlotte Brontë: Legacies and Afterlives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).
[36] Emma Liggins, 'The Legacy of Lucy Snowe: Reconfiguring Spinsterhood and the Victorian Family in Inter-War Women's Writing', in *Charlotte Brontë*, eds. Regis and Wynne, p. 178.

between *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*.[37] Similarly, Heta Pyrhönen sees *Rebecca* as forming a link in an intertextual lineage of 'Bluebeard Gothic' that includes *Jane Eyre*, *Rebecca*, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* (1976), and Angela Carter's re-writings of 'Bluebeard', including *The Bloody Chamber* (1979).[38] Although these studies offer sustained and subtle analysis, making valuable contributions to debates about the Brontës' afterlives – Pyrhönen's book goes some way to challenge and complicate Angela Carter's dismissal, in 1992, that 'Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* […] shamelessly reduplicated the plot of *Jane Eyre*' – they remain within the bounds of the critical tradition that reads *Rebecca* as du Maurier's only intertextual connection with the Brontës.[39] These approaches also perpetuate the assumption that *Rebecca* is the only du Maurier novel deserving of scholarly analysis.

Concurrently, du Maurier critics have made tentative connections between du Maurier's earlier novel, *Jamaica Inn*, and the Brontës' novels. A review of *Jamaica Inn* observed that: 'Mary [the heroine] found herself a kind of Jane Eyre with two Rochesters'.[40] Kelly, mentioned above, stated that 'du Maurier obviously drew heavily upon *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* for some details of her novel', *Jamaica Inn*.[41] Light posits that '*Jamaica Inn* reworks *Wuthering Heights*'.[42] In spite of this consensus, the nature of this intertextual relationship has yet to receive sustained examination. I address this lacuna in chapter three of this thesis.

Some critics have briefly ventured beyond passing comparisons. Light, for example, who reiterates that 'echoes of *Jane Eyre* abound in [du Maurier's] work', perceptively sees a common interest in 'attractive repulsiveness' and cites Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* as a likely precursor.[43] Furthermore, she

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[37] Stoneman sees *Rebecca* as part of an interwar flourishing of *Jane Eyre* 'derivatives'. Stoneman, *Brontë Transformations*, p. 94.
[38] Heta Pyrhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic: Jane Eyre and Its Progeny* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).
[39] Angela Carter, *Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992), p. 163. This seems an odd position to take given the nature of Carter's own re-writings of the fairy tales of Charles Perrault. See, for example, Angela Carter, 'Bluebeard', *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* (London: Penguin, 2008), and 'The Bloody Chamber', *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (London: Vintage, 2006). For a study of the 'anxiety of influence' at play in relation to these intertextual networks, see Pyrhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic*, p. 197. See also Angela Carter, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Virago, 1990), pp. v-xvi, and Angela Carter, 'Love in a Cold Climate', *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings* (London: Virago, 1992), pp. 165-80.
[40] Anonymous, 'Romance in Cornwall', *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 January 1936. Cited in Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 146.
[41] Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 50.
[42] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism Between the Wars* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 164-65.
[43] Light, *Forever England*, p. 165.

recognises in du Maurier's fiction a debt to the 'language of sensibility, the primacy given to her protagonists' thoughts and desires, to the idea of a tumultuous inner life and to a language of developing selfhood'.[44] Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, who also posit that du Maurier 'absorbed [the narrative power of the Brontës] into her own', also detect similarities between *Wuthering Heights* and *Jamaica Inn*, and *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*.[45] They recognise that 'the similarities between *Jamaica Inn* and *Wuthering Heights* are not merely superficial similarities of setting'; they perceive in both novels an interest in the exploration of 'the boundaries of the *female* self'.[46] These observations are not wrong – they bear witness to a deep literary affinity between the two oeuvres – but they barely go beyond brief mentions or general observations regarding two du Maurier novels that might apply equally to 'female' Gothic more broadly. For too long, *Rebecca* has remained the only du Maurier novel considered worthy of academic consideration and the only du Maurier novel to receive detailed analysis in conjunction with the Brontë corpus.[47] A sustained study of the precise ways in which these two oeuvres are interconnected has yet to emerge.

This thesis ventures far beyond *Rebecca*; it spotlights echoes, allusions, and parallels that demonstrate the myriad ways in which the fiction of the Brontës has infused critically neglected aspects of du Maurier's corpus. A focus on avian imagery leads this thesis away from *Rebecca*; a prevailing presence throughout her prolific writing career spanning seven decades, birds are relatively absent from her most famous novel.[48] In extending beyond passing references to plot similarities between *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*, and *Wuthering Heights* and *Jamaica Inn*, and by shifting focus

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[44] Light, *Forever England*, pp. 164-65.
[45] Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity, and the Gothic Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p.69.
[46] Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 72, original italics.
[47] Du Maurier was bemused by the success and enduring appeal of *Rebecca*. In a letter to Malet, dated 3 January 1962, du Maurier reveals, 'I shall never know quite *why* [*Rebecca*] seized upon everyone's imagination'. See du Maurier, *Letters*, p. 131, original italics. In her introduction to *The Rebecca Notebook*, du Maurier reflects on *Rebecca*'s success, stating 'Why, I have never understood!' (*RN*, 3).
[48] The following are the few exceptions: 'the rooks circling above the woods as they used to do at Manderley' (*R*, 6) evoke the rookery of Thornfield Hall in *Jane Eyre* – Thornfield's 'grey front stood out well from the background of a rookery, whose cawing tenants were now on the wing; they flew over the lawn and grounds to alight in a great meadow' (*JE*, 114). Furthermore, the narrator of *Rebecca* refers to 'an article on wood pigeons, and as I read it aloud it seemed to me that once again I was in the deep woods at Manderley […] How strange that an article on wood pigeons could so recall the past and make me falter' (*R*, 6-7). Reminiscing about the England from which she is exiled, the narrator recalls bird hunting culture: 'I know how many grouse are killed, how many partridge' (*R*, 8). During one of her many moments of self-abnegation, the narrating heroine admits 'I wished I could lose my identity and […] eat hard-boiled eggs' (*R*, 288), suggesting a connection between the erasure of self and bird consumption. The thought of bird consumption is followed by loss of appetite: 'I was not hungry. I did not think about lunch' (*R*, 288). These avian incidents concur with some of the tropes that I will be exploring throughout the thesis.

onto the prevailing presence of birds and restless bird-women common to both oeuvres, more subtle interconnections come to light, such as avian motifs, psychological resonances, and an enduring concern with interspecies relationships and gendered power dynamics. Through the lens of bird imagery, hitherto unremarked intertextual dialogues between the two oeuvres are brought into sharp focus. In doing so, this thesis complicates the tracing of a linear chronology of influence from the Brontës to du Maurier and challenges some long-held assumptions within Brontë scholarship.

Julie Sanders posits that 'to read intertextually in this way […] clearly enriches the potential for the production of meaning'.[49] Sanders's theorisation draws attention to the ways in which the Brontës' novels have invited collaboration across time.[50] Pyrhönen also highlights the benefits of reading bodies of work as intertexts, seeing her own study of

> the afterlife of [Charlotte] Brontë's novel [*Jane Eyre*] as a means of probing its literary and cultural significance. The adaptations tell us more about the kind of mnemonic symbol the novel has become over the decades than if we discussed solely the novel and its scholarly history.[51]

Linda Hutcheon articulates such textual responses as 'inherently "palimpsestuous" works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts'.[52] Du Maurier herself seems to apprehend this when she writes:

> to think how imaginative writers, like you and me etc, really must have the same sort of feeling when we do our Gondally novels […] I've always felt that everything one read as a child does go into the unconscious and comes flooding out in niggling ways when one *does* write.[53]

Pyrhönen theorises this phenomenon, stating that she is

> interested in examining how adapters as witnesses not only talk with but also talk back to their literary heritage. In this capacity they may tell their readers another kind of story, one that includes identifying the adapted narrative itself as somehow traumatic for later generations. In such instances as these we are

[49] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 8.
[50] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, p. 60.
[51] Pyrhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic*, p. 8.
[52] Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 6. With her first novel, *The Loving Spirit*, as outlined above, du Maurier signals her intention to engage 'palimpsestuously' with the Brontës' fiction.
[53] Du Maurier, *Letters*, p. 238, original italics.

> dealing with cultural trauma involving the adapted narrative under scrutiny as a symptom of cultural haunting.[54]

A central purpose of this thesis is to illustrate the myriad ways in which du Maurier's corpus beyond *Rebecca* is haunted by the Brontë novels' interest in the shared trauma experienced by women and birds as exploited commodities.

Avian Contexts

Despite evidence of human interest in birds since the Palaeolithic period, and the ubiquity of avian symbolism in literary culture since antiquity, the subject of literary birds has received relatively little critical attention. Leonard Lutwack's *Birds in Literature* (1994) surveys a history of (predominantly poetic) literary birds that stops short of critically engaging with his material or making a contribution to animal studies debates concurrent with the publication of his book.[55] Lutwack's book does not engage with the exploitation that underpins human-avian encounters in literature and is essentially humancentric in outlook. Methods of restraining animals, employed by a 'distinguished zoologist and pioneer in the science of ethology', go unchallenged by Lutwack in favour of 'two worthy purposes': 'close scientific observations' and 'a deeper understanding of nature' (*BiL*, 158).

[54] Pyrhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic*, p.16.
[55] Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994). Henceforward *BiL*.

Fig. 5. Joseph Wright 'of Derby', *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump,* 1768.

Lutwack is subscribing to a tradition of avian cruelty in the name of 'science' that can be traced back to the beginning of the Scientific Revolution, as succinctly encapsulated in Joseph Wright's painting, *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768), seen in figure 5. This speciesist bias is maintained throughout Lutwack's chapter, titled 'Birds Caged, Hunted, and Killed', which charts a catalogue of human cultures of cruelty inflicted upon birds.[56] After reporting that 'John James Audubon loved shooting as much as he did drawing birds', Lutwack remarks that 'the need to have models for his art justified him', before declaring that 'we cannot question the need that ornithologists have to gather specimens for scientific examination' (*BiL*, 167). Lutwack is concerned with identifying 'the humour' (*BiL*, 168) in such instances of avian suffering and with offering a 'defence of what seems to be the callous attitudes' (*BiL*, 169) that he surveys. After relating a scene in Isabel Colegate's *The Shooting Party* (1980), in which 'the count of pheasants shot by [the hunting

[56] 'Speciesism', 'originally coined by activist Richard Ryder in the early 1970s', is 'in use among a range of posthuman animal theorists today. […] Echoing analogous terms like racism and (hetero)sexism'. See Derek Ryan, *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 121. Speciesism describes 'a prejudice or attitude of bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species against those of members of another species'. See Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (London: Bodley Head, 2015), p. 6. First published in 1975.

protagonist's] guests reaches over five hundred even before the last drive', one lost human life is deemed the only 'tragic outcome' (*BiL*, 172) by Lutwack. A particularly telling moment in Lutwack's speciesist project is when, in his lamentation of 'the sad deterioration of the upper class as it is evidenced in the hunt', he insists that 'a respectable defence of the individual hunter can be made […] even in a time of diminishing wildlife' (*BiL*, 174). His concern for the impact of dwindling avian life on 'the needs of an advanced civilisation' (*BiL*, 250) is essentially humancentric, disburdening our culpability for inflicting suffering upon birds, and reveals his failure to engage with animal studies debates. Birds, in Lutwack's estimation, exist solely for the purpose of the humans who are systematically extinguishing them; they are merely 'measures of our fate' (*BiL*, 241) or a source of poetic inspiration. Lutwack's chapter on 'Birds and the Erotic' is also problematic when viewed from an ecofeminist perspective. He revels in the gendered, speciesist premise of the 'Hemingway hero': 'shooting ducks and making love to beautiful women serve a purpose […] to help keep him from thinking about war and his imminent death' (*BiL*, 175). This thesis challenges the various atrocities that Lutwack's project surveys at best and endorses at worst. As such, I engage with aspects of both animal studies and ecofeminism, which I shall elaborate upon in due course.

Animal studies in literature, specifically those focusing on the Victorian and Modern periods, have produced valuable critical accounts of relationships between humans and other animals that confront the exploitation underpinning these encounters.[57] Given the Victorians' obsession with birds, as I shall outline below, there is a surprising lack of attention to birds in particular within this field.[58] Stevie Davies' introduction to the 2006 Penguin Classics edition of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is indicative of the status of bird-related scholarship in both the Brontë and du Maurier canons: her reading fleetingly acknowledges a number of bird scenes, but these serve

[57] Notable examples include: Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Deborah Denenholz Morse and Martin A. Danahay, eds., *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Laurence W. Mazzeno and Ronald D. Morrison, eds., *Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture: Contexts for Criticism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Marian Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); and Philip Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[58] Notable exceptions include those that focus on particular avian species: Julia Courtney and Paula James, eds., *The Role of the Parrot in Selected Texts From Ovid to Jean Rhys: Telling a Story from an Alternative Viewpoint* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2006); and Anca Vlasopolos, 'Pacific Harvests: Whales and Albatrosses in Nineteenth-Century Markets', in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, eds. Denenholz Morse and Danahay, pp. 167-77.

to illuminate humancentric concerns that obscure the nature of the interspecies relationships being depicted.[59] Scenes in *Jane Eyre* in which bird imagery is centrally important have attracted critical attention by, amongst others, Lisa Sternlieb and Melanie Monahan; but the significance of such scenes within a broader system of avian imagery that speaks to the interconnected oppressions of birds and women is yet to be fully examined.[60] Although acts of cruelty are inflicted upon a range of nonhuman animals in the Brontë novels – dogs in *Wuthering Heights* for example – none are subjected to such sustained systematic exploitation as birds, this most beloved and beleaguered animal.[61] Furthermore, no other nonhuman animal is more consistently associated with the restless heroines at the core of the Brontës' writings or the predatory avian men who surround them. No other nonhuman animal in literature offers such a diverse species range as that of birds. Thus, since primitive times, they have been enlisted for a broad spectrum of humancentric symbolic potentialities. In contrast to the avian symbolism that the Brontë sisters inherited from their Romantic predecessors, which largely employs birds as symbols of the poet's imaginative capacity or yearning, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne's novels began to figure birds in relation to gendered exploitation. By the time the Brontës were writing about birds in their novels, issues of speciesist and gendered exploitation were surfacing as interconnected issues in public debates.

Nineteenth-century England was at once a hotbed of male-dominated avian exploitation and a locus of persistent agitation by (predominantly) women on the subjection of birds to hu*man* depravity. The mania for natural history encompassed a plethora of bird-specific forms of commodification including cabinet collections (comprising dead, stuffed birds and stolen eggs), a rise in the 'art' of taxidermy, poultry fancying, menageries, and the caging of 'pet' birds. Barbara T. Gates points

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[59] Stevie Davies, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Stevie Davies (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. vii-xxviii. Examples are given in chapter one.

[60] Lisa Sternlieb, '*Jane Eyre*: "Hazarding Confidences"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53 (1999) pp. 452-79, and Melodie Monahan, 'Heading Out is Not Going Home: *Jane Eyre*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 28 (1988), pp. 589-608. Further examples are given in chapter one.

[61] See, for example, Graeme Tytler, 'Animals in *Wuthering Heights'*, *Brontë Studies*, 27 (2002), pp. 121-30, and Ivan Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18 (2005), 87-110. I use the term 'nonhuman animals' here and throughout the thesis to refer to animals who are not human. Although this term is useful in insisting upon the fact that humans are also animals, thereby challenging the tendency of assumed human supremacy, 'nonhuman animals' is nonetheless an 'ideologically loaded' term since 'only from the point of view of the human are other animals nonhuman'. See Marianne DeKoven, 'Why Animals Now?', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), pp. 361-69, p. 363. Despite my use of 'nonhuman animals' for the sake of clarity, I agree with Ryan that this term needs 'to be worked through, critiqued and perhaps, eventually, disposed of'. See Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 15.

out that 'birds, both wild and domesticated, […] were magnets for Victorian naturalists. They were studied, represented, classified […] caged'.[62] Ornithologists observed, catalogued, and illustrated birds from the furthest reaches of the British Empire.[63] Charles Darwin, a contemporary of the Brontë sisters, catalogued birds of the Galapagos and was a fancier of domestic fowl at home. Darwin's relationship with fellow naturalist, William B. Tegetmeier, whose publications on domesticated birds were available to a wide readership during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, was an influential figure in nurturing the former's interest in birds.[64] Gates relates that

> domestication and the evidences it could provide for his study of origins of species was central to Darwin's studies as well as [Tegetmeier's]. At one time, Darwin kept ninety pigeons, working to breed them, observe their variations, and establish that they might have come from a common wild ancestor, the rock dove. As James Secord says, Darwin 'hoped to show his readers that wild nature could be seen with the practical eye of a pigeon fancier'.[65]

Such avian research informed Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), published just over a decade after *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.[66]

This avian craze encouraged an insatiable demand for natural history publications, which peaked in the 1840s when the Brontë novels were published. This 'golden age' of natural history – a 'fascination with scrutinizing nature' – with its attendant cruelty and commodification, emerged in the latter decades of the eighteenth century when Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds* (1797) first appeared.[67] The meticulous detail that Bewick captured in his wood engravings of birds captivated his

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[62] Barbara T. Gates, 'Introduction: Why Victorian Natural History?', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35 (2007), pp. 539-49, p. 543.

[63] The ornithologist, John Gould's, study of birds of Asia and his *Birds of Australia* are representative of this public interest. See Gates, 'Why Victorian Natural History?', p. 543.

[64] Gates, 'Victorian Natural History', p. 544.

[65] Gates, 'Victorian Natural History', p. 544. Karen Sayer explores the collaboration between Darwin and Tegetmeier for the sake of 'scientific progress', in '"Let Nature Be Your Teacher": Tegetmeier's Distinctive Ornithological Studies', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35 (2007), pp. 589-605.

[66] Darwin began research for *Species* twenty years prior to its sudden publication, prompted when a rival, Alfred Russel Wallace, looked set to publish his own theory of 'natural selection'. The notion of unstable species boundaries was already percolating when the Brontë sisters conceived of their novels. See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. vii.

[67] Gates, 'Victorian Natural History', p. 540. Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume One: Containing the History and Description of Land Birds* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), and *A History of British Birds Volume Two: Containing the History and Description of Water Birds* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1972). First published in Newcastle in 1797, then expanded in 1804. *History of British Birds* is Bewick's best-known work of natural history and was popular during his lifetime. In it he details the appearance, habitat, diet, habits, and characteristics of each known bird species in Britain, accompanied by the precise wood engravings for which he is now revered.

large readership – not least the Brontë siblings, who executed numerous drawings and paintings after his avian images.[68]

Fig. 6. Emily Brontë, *The Whinchat*, 1829.

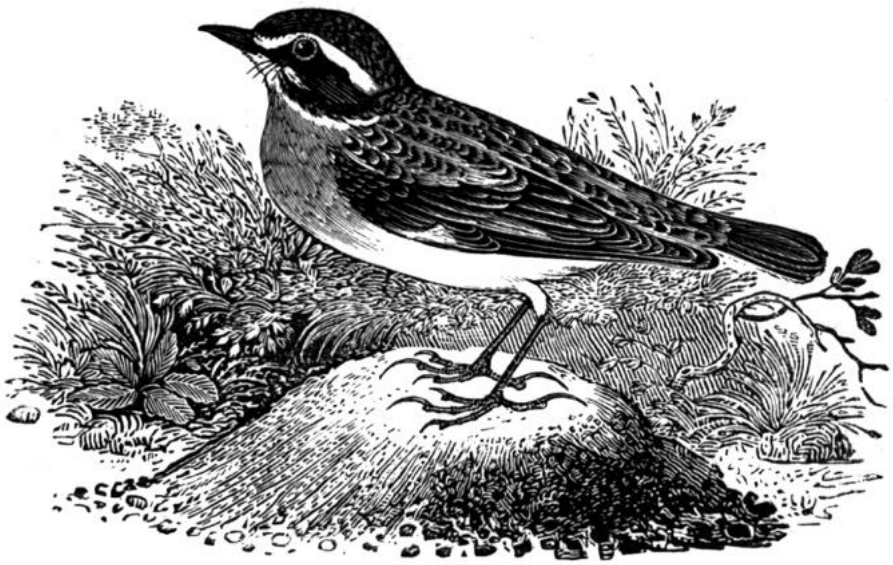

Fig. 7. Thomas Bewick, *The Whinchat*, 1797.

[68] The Brontë family owned a copy of Bewick's *Birds*. Charlotte, along with her siblings, used the book extensively as a copy book for practicing drawing and painting. See figures 6 and 7. Charlotte's reading recommendations to her friend, Ellen Nussey, include works of 'natural history by Bewick, Audubon, Goldsmith and White'. See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, p. 54.

Bewick's ambition to set himself apart from previous bird naturalists derived from his commitment to 'do my utmost to give faithful representations from nature', to 'draw from life wherever he could'.[69] The dark side of Bewick's celebrated ornithological endeavours is that his commitment to 'life' was actually predicated upon death; it entailed relying on bird hunting acquaintances, a fan base of landed gentry from whom he received donations of bird corpses which were used as the basis of his illustrations.

Bewick began his extensive *British Birds* project by drawing a celebrated collection of stuffed dead birds in County Durham whilst staying at the house of a taxidermist.[70] Jenny Uglow relates that, as Bewick

> became impatient with the stiff stuffed forms, finding a 'very great difference between preserved Specimens & those from nature' […] there was nothing for it but to wait for birds newly shot. (*NE*, 199)

Uglow further relates that,

> when word got round that Bewick needed birds, packages and crates arrived at the Forth and the workshop, some with their contents putrid and maggoty, others containing specimens as glossy as if they were still alive. […] Local gentry donated prize specimens from their collections and aviaries, and country landowners and clergymen, whose interest in birds had grown from a love of hunting, kept an eye out for odd species. […] Bewick responded warmly, carrying out his own dissection[s]. [Many of these birds] went under the knife. (*NE*, 242-43).

In fact, natural history and ornithology had been synonymous with avian death since its earlier conceptions. Author of the *Ornithological Dictionary* (1802), Lieutenant Colonel George Montagu, 'the father of British ornithology', whom Bewick was greatly influenced and inspired by, 'filled the empty hours […] hunting and shooting' (*NE*, 244). In the eighteenth century, as one historian put it, 'the first impulse of many naturalists on seeing a rare bird was to shoot it' (*NE*, 242). Thus, when the abused orphan, Jane Eyre, states, in seeking sanctuary from her bird-torturing cousin, John Reed, that 'with Bewick on my knee I was then happy' (*JE*, 15), she is referring to a catalogue of bird corpses. When John strikes Jane over the head with 'my' (*JE*, 17) Bewick book in an assertion of his patriarchal privilege, Jane's exploitation becomes inextricably connected to that of birds. Thus, Brontë reveals the interconnectedness of

[69] Jenny Uglow, *Nature's Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 200 and 242. Henceforward *NE*.
[70] Uglow, *NE*, p. 195.

male-dominated cultures of violence, including bird cruelty (whether that be boyhood bird torture, or adult versions, such as science, natural history, or ornithology), that mar the lives of birds and women.

Bird consumption is inextricable from Bewick's endeavours as an ornithologist. He frequently received murdered birds with notes attached urging him to either stuff and return them or eat them once he had finished his 'life' drawings.[71] In his letters, Bewick comments on 'how good particular wild birds are to eat' (*NE*, 256). Given this disregard for the 'life' of his avian objects of scrutiny, it is little wonder that Bewick, who considered himself a man of science in the age of Enlightenment, resorted to anthropomorphic descriptions.[72] Bewick's anger at the way current hunting laws supported the sporting rich's obsession with bird murder was also humancentric. His outrage was motivated by an assumption that birds ought to provide an abundance of food for *all* humans, not just the privileged.

Amid this panorama of male-dominated avian exploitation, the Game Reform Act of 1831 is a significant context for the Brontës' fiction. This Act, which applied specifically to the hunting of four species of birds – red grouse, black grouse, pheasant, and partridge – made it illegal to shoot game birds outside of the official hunting season. This began, depending on the particular species of bird, on a specific date in autumn and ended at some point the following spring.[73] Legislated between the years in which the action of the Brontë novels is set and their dates of publication, the Act is both explicitly and implicitly evoked in their novels, haunting them with hindsight. For example, Helen Graham's narrative in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* begins on 1 June 1821. Her diary entry, opening with 'to-day is the first of September; but my uncle has ordered the gamekeeper to spare the partridges till the gentlemen come' (*TWH*, 129), refers to the practise of preserving stocks of game to ensure an abundance of shooting targets during the autumn-winter season. This apparent aside implies that Anne Brontë was aware of the hunting fraternity's interests which would later be sanctioned by the Game Act: they were concerned with preserving avian prey during the hunting season, not with preserving the lives of birds.

While huntsmen were protecting their assumed right to kill birds for 'sport', and naturalists and ornithologists complicit in bird murder were considered 'men of science', establishing the British Ornithologists' Union in 1858 to ratify their project

[71] Uglow, *NE*, p. 245.
[72] Uglow, *NE*, p. 257.
[73] See <www.legislation.gov.uk>, accessed 30 March 2020.

of avian exploitation in the name of 'scientific progress' and the 'pursuit of knowledge', women instigated efforts to preserve avian and other nonhuman lives.[74] Male-led cultures of avian violence were being combated by predominantly women-led anti-cruelty organisations. The National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) was founded by Frances Power Cobbe in 1895. In 1889, a group of women founded the Society for the Protection of Birds and enlisted Queen Victoria in their campaign to prevent the extinction of egrets, whose feathers had become highly prized commodities.[75] Plumage adornment engendered a complex political debate that implicated capitalist cultures of violence and commodification, with women and birds as its victims, in a network of exploitation, consumerism, gender, species, and class – interrelated issues grappled with in the Brontës' novels and later in du Maurier's fiction. Unchaperoned women engaging in outdoor pursuits were depicted as hybrid bird-women in popular press illustrations satirising a growing interest in fashion that relied on the commodification of dead birds' body parts.[76]

As Birds' Feathers and Train Dresses are all the go, Miss Swellington adopts one of Nature's own Designs.

Fig. 8. Linley Sambourne, *Nature's Own Designs*, 1867.

[74] John Gould, the British ornithologist who began publishing his highly successful *The Birds of Australia* in serial form in 1840, completed in 1848, was referred to as one such 'man of science'. See Jonathan Smith, 'Gender, Royalty, and Sexuality in John Gould's *Birds of Australia*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35 (2007), pp. 569-87, p. 579. The British Ornithologists' Union was founded by Professor Alfred Newton.

[75] See Gates, 'Victorian Natural History', p. 544. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was founded by Emily Williamson, Margaretta Louisa Lemon, and Eliza Philips.

[76] Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11 are taken from *Punch*. Du Maurier's grandfather, George du Maurier, was a *Punch* illustrator. In family memoirs, she writes proudly about her grandfather's prominent role as a *Punch* illustrator during the height of its popularity. See, for example, du Maurier, *RN*, p. 54.

Fig. 9. Linley Sambourne, *Mr Punch's Designs After Nature*, 1871.

Fig. 10. Linley Sambourne, *Would I Were a Bird*, 1870.

A BIRD OF PREY.

[Despite the laudable endeavours of "The Society for the Protection of Birds," the harpy Fashion appears still, and even increasingly, to make endless holocausts of small fowl for the furnishing forth of "feather trimmings" for the fair sex. We are told that to obtain the delicate and beautiful spiral plume called the "Osprey," the old birds "are killed off in scores, while employed in feeding their young, who are left to starve to death in their nests by hundreds. Their dying cries are described as "heart-rending." But they evidently do not rend the hearts of our fashionable ladies, or induce them to rend their much-beplumed garments. Thirty thousand black partridges have been killed in certain Indian provinces in a few days' time to supply the European demand for their skins. One dealer in London is said to have received, as a single consignment, 32,000 dead humming-birds, 80,000 aquatic birds, and 800,000 pairs of wings. We are told too that often "after the birds are shot down, the wings are wrenched off during life, and the mangled bird is left to die slowly of wounds, thirst, and starvation."]

Fig. 11. Linley Sambourne, *A Bird of Prey*, 1892.

As women of a certain class moved beyond the confines of the home, adorned in avian wing and feather, they became the embodiment of their fellow avian prisoners. This is a precarious 'freedom'; in order to take flight, women mimic the beings with whom they are metaphorically co-imprisoned. Furthermore, the bird must be murdered for the plumage, so the woman becomes complicit in the very exploitation that she herself seems to be transcending. Thus, women's seeming freedom from domestic captivity comes at the cost of the commodification of the dead birds' body. The gendered implications of this interspecies power dynamic are further compounded by the conspicuous male voyeur, depicted in figure 8; the misogyny captured by these *Punch* images is inextricable from their speciesist bias. They cast the 'liberated' New Woman as a spectacle, subject to ridicule, obscuring the male dominated industry of avian commodification. This is made explicit in figure 11 in which a woman with bird's wings is depicted as the avian predator of real birds. The Brontës anticipate this flourishing of speciesist bird-women imagery and the concurrent woman-led animal welfare movements. The avian issues that surface in their novels bear crucial witness

to a burgeoning consciousness of troubling human-avian relationships that will resurface in du Maurier's writings.

Narrative Strategies of Feminist-Vegetarian Interruption

Amid this climate of interspecies awareness, building upon a long and persistent history of vegetarian discourse dating back to Pythagoras, the nineteenth century saw a flourishing of resistance to the consumption of other animals.[77] At the beginning of the century, the radical Romantic vegetarianism of Lord Byron and Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley, produced, amongst other anti-flesh eating statements embedded within their writings, the latter's polemic, 'A Vindication of Natural Diet' (1813).[78] This text's lineage can be traced back to Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).[79] This, in turn, influenced Thomas Taylor's *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* (1792), which parodied Wollstonecraft's work by extending her claims regarding women to nonhuman animals.[80] In this intertextual dialogue, connections between women's and other animals' lack of liberty emerge. As I shall demonstrate throughout this thesis, subsequent writers have rendered Henry Salt's claim regarding Taylor's treatise true: 'the mockery of one generation become[s] the reality of the next'.[81] Indeed, the year 1847, when *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Agnes Grey* were published, was an important year in the history of both vegetarianism and feminism. In Britain, the Vegetarian Society was established and the term 'vegetarian' was authorised, suggesting that the historic debate about abstinence from animal flesh was seeing a renewed interest as the Brontës published their novels.[82] The

[77] For a study of the nineteenth-century vegetarian movement, see James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Taurus, 2007).

[78] This essay, which condemns the practice of eating other animals, is embedded as a note to Shelley's poem, *Queen Mab; A Philosophical Poem with Notes*. See Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Major Works*, eds. Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 10-88. Shelley also translated Plutarch's influential, formative essays 'On Flesh-Eating'. See Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 144. First published in 1990. Henceforward *SPM*. Shelley's vegetarianism, although purported to have been inspired by Byron, preceded their acquaintance: 'by 1813 it can be linked to his radical thought and resistance to oppressive practices'. See 'P. B. Shelley's A Vindication of the Natural Diet', *British Library*, <www.bl.uk>, accessed 27 February 2020. Corroborating Adams's identification of the tradition of 'ignoring vegetarian texts' (*SPM*, 136), Shelley's vegetarianism receives a mere three sentences in a recent book on Shelley as a radical thinker. See Jacqueline Mulhallen, *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet and Revolutionary* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), p. 59.

[79] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[80] Thomas Taylor, *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* (London: Cornhill, 1792).

[81] Henry Salt, *Seventy Years Among Savages* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1921), p. 64. Salt was a nineteenth-century animal rights reformer and vegetarian.

[82] Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, p. 1. The word 'vegetarian' replaces 'Pythagorean' to denote one who abstains from eating animal flesh. See Adams, *SPM*, 110. 'The general use of the word

following year, when Anne Brontë published *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, a novel centred around a woman trapped in a marriage to a bird hunting, abusive husband, 'American Women's rights were outlined' in a meeting at Seneca Falls. [83]

The Brontës were publishing novels in the context of a fervent feminist-vegetarian insurgence in Western culture that grew out of the previous generation's radical vegetarian politics.[84] The influence of the Romantic poets on the Brontës is well documented, but little has been made of the suggestion that the Brontës, like the Shelleys before them, may have been vegetarian. Patricia Ingham reports that, during the 1840s,

> the lower down the social scale a person came, the less likely they were to eat meat. There may be implications as to social class in the rumour after Charlotte's death that the Brontë children had been brought up on a meatless diet – not eating meat would imply poverty and a working-class household.[85]

Emily Brontë's numerous references in her diary papers to Tabby's insistence that Anne 'pilloputete', meaning 'peel the potatoes', certainly does nothing to refute this suggestion of the Brontë family's possible vegetarianism.[86] In the period during which the Brontës were publishing their novels, a vegetarian-feminist dialogue had already emerged in both Britain and America that recognised the interconnected nature of women and other animals' subjugated position. One commentator, writing in the *American Vegetarian and Health Journal* in 1853, declared that 'women are slaves to fashion – slaves to appetite – slaves to man – and more especially slaves to physicians' (*SPM*, 207).[87] This comment encapsulates the issues at stake in public debate, as explored above, and bears witness to an implicit understanding of the interconnected oppressions surfacing at precisely the moment when Victorian vegetarianism makes a

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[vegetarian] appears to have been largely due to the formation of the Vegetarian Society at Ramsgate in 1847.' 'Vegetarian', *OED*, accessed 21 April 2020.

[83] Adams, *SPM*, p. 222.

[84] 'Patrick [Brontë] did not prevent [his daughters] from reading the dangerous poems of the dashingly wicked Byron or those of the equally disreputable and atheistic Shelley'. See Patricia Ingham, *The Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 8. It is likely that the Brontë sisters had encountered Shelley's 'A Vindication of Natural Diet' because Alexander and Sellars point out that *Queen Mab* was an influence on their early writings. See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, p. 20. As du Maurier was nearing completion of her first novel, the Emily Brontë inspired *The Loving Spirit*, she quipped 'I rather fancy myself […] and try to look like Shelley', whom she read as a girl. See Forster, *Daphne du Maurier*, pp. 15 and 72.

[85] Ingham, *The Brontës*, p. 46.

[86] Apart from one reference to 'Boiled Beef', all other references to meals in the Brontë household are plant-based, including – in addition to the seeming abundant staple of peeled potatoes – nuts, apples, and blackcurrants. See Alexander, ed., 'Appendix A', in The Brontës, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal*, pp. 485-93.

[87] Quoted in *SPM*, p. 207.

decisive interruption in public discourse – the establishment, in Britain, of 'the first vegetarian society in the modern western world in 1847'.[88]

In Carol J. Adams's seminal study on the sexual politics of meat eating, she identifies that

> novels appear […] to employ the same literary technique for summoning these connections – a technique I call *interruption*. Interruption provides the gestalt shift by which vegetarianism can be heard. Technically, it occurs when the movement of the novel is suddenly arrested, and attention is given to the issues of vegetarianism in an enclosed section of the novel. The author provides signs that an interruption has occurred. Dots or dashes; the use of the word 'interruption'; stammering, pauses, inarticulateness, or confusion in those who are usually in control; the deflection of the story to a focus on food and eating habits; or the reference to significant earlier figures or events from vegetarian history:[89] all become means for establishing an interruption, a gap in the narrative in which vegetarianism can be entertained. Although the interruption is set apart, the meaning it contains speaks to central themes of the novel, unifying the interruption and the interrupted text through acute critical comments about the social order and meat eating. (*SPM*, 182, original italics)

Adams's conceptualisation of narrative interruptions draws attention to overlooked textual incidents in which women interact with the bodies of dead nonhuman animals in ways that reveal the nature of exploitative power in interspecies relations. For this reason, I refine Adams's concept of narrative 'interruption' as 'feminist-vegetarian interruption'. Women writers are particularly prone to inserting feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions that include the image of a dead bird.[90] In a feminist-vegetarian interruption, attention is drawn to a commodified bird's body in such a way that it is recognised for what it is: the murdered corpse of a once living being on the protagonist's plate. A feminist-vegetarian interruption is a moment in the narrative when the question of eating animals raises questions about the interconnected oppressions of women and birds.

While Adams asserts that 'novelists and individuals inscribe profound feminist statements within a vegetarian context' (*SPM*, 217), she identifies 'the failure among literary critics to remark on this sensitivity' (*SPM* 186) and 'the tendency of many

[88] Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, p. 1.
[89] Shelley's influence on the Brontës' writing, and du Maurier's revealing reference to her desire to impersonate Shelley, as quoted in footnote 84, are cases in point.
[90] Adams recognises the prevalence of the dead bird in selected women's fiction, citing the following twentieth-century novels as examples of avian vegetarian narratives: Colette's *Break of Day* (1928); Anne Tyler's *The Clock Winder* (1972); Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) and *Cat's Eye* (1988); Isabel Colegate's *The Shooting Party* (1980); and Alice Thomas Ellis's *The Birds of the Air* (1980) and *Unexplained Laughter* (1985). See Adams, *SPM*, pp. 233-35.

scholars to ignore the signs of alliance between feminism and vegetarianism' (*SPM*, 192).[91] The seeming invisibility of vegetarian moments in literary criticism is symptomatic of vegetarianism itself: boldarised by the dominant discourse that favours androcentric meat eating, it is marginalised, suppressed, deemed a private, inconsequential matter, a faddish act. Vegetarian moments in women's fiction resist this dominant tradition. If meat is a trope of women's (and other animals') oppression, then vegetarianism becomes an act of dissent that breaks the silence. When a restless bird-heroine realises that she is 'a trapped animal eating a dead animal', she can be said to gain a consciousness that birds' and women's oppressions are linked.[92] Once she 'intuits her link to other [oppressed] animals', 'her body take[s] an ethical stand' (*SPM*, 175). This feminist-vegetarian consciousness is manifest in a rejection of meat and a revulsion towards consuming dead flesh which often sees the protagonist experience nausea and sickness. This correlates with Julia Kristeva's observation that '*food becomes abject* only if it is a border between two distinct entities or territories. A boundary between nature and culture, *between the human and the non-human*'.[93] Similarly, Jean Paul Sartre theorises nausea as a physical reaction to existential crises – in this case the consciousness of complicity in the consumption of a shared exploitation.[94] Sartre's notions of nausea – which, like du Maurier's tale of nausea, 'The Blue Lenses', includes interspecies metamorphosis – are evocative of Friedrich Nietzsche's life-long interest in nausea, whom du Maurier quotes in her novel, *The Flight of the Falcon* (1965).[95] This thesis draws upon philosophies of nausea and vegetarian theory to analyse narrative interruptions involving avian corpse consumption.[96]

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[91] The above instance of Muhallen's book on Shelley (see footnote 78) and an *In Our Time* episode on Pythagoras, which omits his vegetarianism despite this being a highly influential aspect of his legacy, are two cases in point. Followers of Pythagorus during the Fifth Century BC consisted of a large membership of women. A contributor to the *In Our Time* episode, John O'Connor, remarks that they 'had a lot of rather strange practices […] about eating beans I don't think I particularly want to go into'. Thus, Pythagoras's vegetarianism is silenced. 'Pythagorus', *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 10 December 2009.

[92] Marge Piercy, *Small Changes* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), p. 41.

[93] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Céline Louis-Ferdinand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 75, my italics. First published in 1980.

[94] Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1965).

[95] See Daphne du Maurier, *The Flight of the Falcon* (London: Virago, 2005), p. 292. For a study of Nietzsche's philosophy of nausea, see Gudrun von Tevenar, 'Nietzsche on Nausea', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 50 (2019), pp. 58-77. Du Maurier's fiction, beyond the novels and stories examined in this thesis, is permeated with nausea induced by consumption and rejection.

[96] Adams refers to the *human* consumption of other animals as 'the institution of corpse-eating'. See Carol J. Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (New York: Lantern, 2015), p, 15. First published in 1995.

These approaches, by Adams and others, enable the recognition of recurring avian tropes embedded within the Brontë and du Maurier oeuvres that articulate a shared oppression between women and birds. I employ Adams's theory of the feminist-vegetarian interruption as a tool to read scenes that relate to the question of consuming (or refusing to eat) birds. I extend this framework to encompass narrative incidents that draw attention to birds as victims of human violence and exploitation in its myriad forms. Thus, in addition to scenes in which the question of avian consumption arises, this thesis focuses on scenes concerned with the following four strands of human-avian interactions, occurring across the texts under consideration in this thesis: bird hunting; plumage wearing; avian-specific speciesist language; and reverse avian anthropomorphism – the practise of endowing humans with qualities associated with birds – in the depiction of heroines as benign birds and their male counterparts as predatory birds.[97]

Anne Brontë's two novels, *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, are deeply concerned with the avian issues outlined above. An examination of the full extent of the avian-human issues in these novels is beyond the scope of this thesis with its necessary focus on the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë with which du Maurier was most interested. The episodes I select here are thus indicative of the central and pervasive status of troubling human-avian encounters in Anne Brontë's fiction.[98] The practise of bird hunting and shooting makes its presence felt in both the Brontë and du Maurier canons. The Brontë sisters and du Maurier found themselves culturally ensconced in the politics of the hunt, and both implicitly attributed to it a sexual politics that finds expression in their fiction. The Game Act of 1831, outlined above, is mobilised in Anne Brontë's novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, to comment upon fraught sexual politics. The novel's primary perpetrator of marital abuse, aptly named Arthur *Hunt*ingdon, penetrates Helen's life during a gentlemen's shooting party. Whilst the gentlemen 'sailed forth with their guns', 'on their expedition against the hapless partridges' (*TWH*, 134), Helen sets to work on a painting depicting 'an amorous pair of turtle doves' next to a girl in 'earnest contemplation of those feathered

[97] Emily Roberson Wallace's 'reverse anthropomorphism' is a useful term, and I refine her definition as reverse *avian* anthropomorphism to refer specifically to the ways in which humans in the novel are characterised by comparison to traits thought to be embodied by a myriad of bird species. See Emily Roberson Wallace, 'Caged Eagles, Songsters and Carrion-Seekers: Birds in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 41 (2016), pp. 249-60, p. 249.

[98] Maggie Berg's article on *Agnes Grey* goes some way towards addressing this. See Maggie Berg, '"Hapless Dependents": Women and Animals in Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*', *Studies in the Novel*, 34 (2002), pp. 177-97.

lovers' (*TWH*, 135). In the midst of this occupation, Helen notes the sportsmen passing by the window before Arthur appears, who makes conceited comments about her avian image. After humiliating Helen, and receiving her terse rebuke, he stalks off in a sulk, declaring 'I'll go and shoot now' and he 'took up his gun and walked away' (*TWH*, 137). On his return, he is 'all spattered and splashed […] and stained with the blood of his prey' (*TWH*, 137) – a foreshadowing of his impending mistreatment of his soon-to-be-wife, Helen. Violence against birds is highlighted and a retrograde sexual politics is implicated. Brontë makes clear the interconnections between entrapped wives and hunted birds that twentieth and twenty-first century ecofeminists explicitly articulate. Marti Kheel, recognising the hunt as 'a standard rite of passage […] into the masculine realm', posits that 'sexual overtones, both subtle and explicit, can be found throughout many' hunting narratives; this is 'predicated on the notion of restraining […] aggressive, sexual energy'.[99] Kheel goes on to assert that 'hunting itself is seen as an appropriate means of directing this erotic, aggressive drive, toward an acceptable target – namely, a nonhuman animal – rather than a human being'.[100] Thus, hunting narratives display masculinity as dependent upon sexual violence against women and the torturing and murdering of birds.

As Shelley ardently posited, 'it is only the wealthy that can, to any degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh'.[101] Shelley was also critical of alcohol abuse, arguing that, like flesh consumption, it was a significant contributor to the ills of man. Pondering the depravity of man, including his ill treatment of other animals, and 'the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being', Shelley declares: 'I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question'.[102] Connections between (privileged) human depravity and animal exploitation are exemplified in the dissipated life of the Brontë sisters' brother, Branwell, generally thought to be a source of inspiration for the character of Arthur Huntingdon. His alcohol abuse is surely connected to aspirations of social mobility

[99] Marti Kheel, 'License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters' Discourse', in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 85-125, pp. 90, 91, and 106.
[100] Kheel, 'License to Kill', p. 91.
[101] Shelley, *Major Works*, p. 87.
[102] Shelley, *Major Works*, p. 85. In his essay, 'A Vindication of Natural Diet', Shelley anticipates interconnected oppressions and the political as personal when he claims that abstinence from dead flesh 'strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals'. See Shelley, *Major Works*, p. 86. Shelley specifically recognises the interconnections between speciesism, sexism, and colonialism.

evident in the display of bird hunting depicted in *The Gun Group*, seen below in figure 12. [103]

Fig. 12. Unknown, *The Gun Group*, 1879.

It is remarkable that the image of Emily Brontë (far right) was severed from this picture – a symbolic disassociation from the image of the dead bird and its implied murderer, Branwell.[104] Also noteworthy is the fact that it is Branwell alone who faces the viewer; the presence of his three sisters seems at variance with the focal subject of the image – the bird hunting prowess of their brother. This image reveals to us that Charlotte, Emily, and Anne were, with their gazes averted from the scene of avian annihilation before them, at odds with their close proximity to the 'spoils' of the hunt.

Another key component of the shared status of women and birds in the Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction is the prominence of speciesist language with gendered implications. My analysis of these episodes is informed by Joan Dunayer's premise that 'symbolically associating women with "animal" assists in their oppression. Applying images of denigrated nonhuman species to women labels women inferior

[103] This image is an engraving made for Joseph Horsfall Turner's *Haworth – Past and Present: A History of Haworth, Stanbury and Oxenhope*. It is copied from a photograph (made before 1879) of an original group portrait by Branwell Brontë, now lost, known as 'The Gun Group'. Branwell's famous portrait of Emily is a fragment taken from this painting. See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, pp. 307-10.

[104] See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, p. 307-10. Berg has observed of this image that Branwell's persona is strongly delineated through his hunting accoutrements. See Berg, '"Hapless Dependents"', p. 181-82.

and available for abuse'.[105] As Dunayer argues, 'speciesist practices underlie nonhuman-animal metaphors that disparage women. Most such metaphors […] refer to domesticated animals like the chicken […] those bred for service to humans'.[106] Misogynistic metaphors that conflate women with exploited birds

> derive from speciesist attitudes and practices [inflicted upon birds]. Without speciesism, domesticated [birds] would not be regarded as [deserving of derogatory labels, such as 'mindless' and 'servile']; without speciesism, they would not be forced into servitude.[107]

Dunayer concludes that 'when human society moves beyond speciesism […] "animal" imagery will no longer demean women or assist in their oppression'.[108] The pervading presence of this avian trope suggests the extent to which the Brontës and du Maurier conceptualise gendered power dynamics in relation to speciesism. Critical appraisals such as those espoused by Adams, Kheel, and Dunayer are rooted in a recognition of the intersection between gendered oppression and speciesism, a central tenet of ecofeminism. Speciesism, the humancentric fallacy of human superiority over other animals, invoked as justification for exploitation, has subsequently become a central concept in animal studies. Whereas animal studies is concerned with challenging speciesism as a discrete phenomenon, ecofeminism identifies that the hierarchy of beings that ratifies humans' subjugation of animals is that which also subjugates women (and other oppressed groups). Speciesism and sexism are thus two sides of the same coin. The intersection between these two spheres of critical discourse, and the tensions that exist between them, inform the central questions I pose throughout this thesis.

These gendered avian issues are explored in Anne Brontë's novel, *Agnes Grey*. At the beginning of the novel, Agnes is depicted in a manner reminiscent of a Walter Howell Deverell bird-woman – confined to the home and in commune with her fellow domesticated avian companions.[109] Agnes is 'the pet of the family' (*AG*, 6), and she

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[105] Joan Dunayer, 'Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots', in *Animals and Women*, eds. Adams and Donovan, pp. 11-31, p. 11.
[106] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p. 12.
[107] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p.15.
[108] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p. 23.
[109] Women and birds in the mid-to-late nineteenth century developed a close relationship within the domestic sphere. In addition to their proximity to domesticated birds, such as pigeons and chickens, middle and upper-class women were increasingly acquiring various species of birds as caged pets. In paintings by Howell Deverell, for example, women confined to the home are displayed in affectionate commune with caged birds. In the Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction, entrapped canaries frequently

demonstrates her affinity with her 'pet pigeons' by bestowing 'a farewell stroke to all their silky backs as they crowded in my lap' (*AG*, 13). The attention she bestows upon each bird marks them as individual beings. The detail of 'their silky backs' (*AG*, 13) observes and restores beauty and dignity in a species often dismissed and abused. From the outset, the heroine of the novel is associated with the exploited, domesticated bird. The fact that Agnes and her family 'had tamed them to peck their food from our hands' suggests the nature of domesticated subservience inflicted upon 'pretty creatures' (*AG*, 13), which is not unlike Agnes's own situation. For Agnes is restless; in a declaration akin to Jane Eyre's call, on the leads of Thornfield Hall, for stimulation and freedom from relatively comfortable, but stifling confinement, she becomes, like the other Brontë and du Maurier heroines considered in this thesis, a restless bird-woman.[110] As the 'pet' of the family, Agnes's freedom is curtailed as long as she continues to submit to the role of 'the helpless, thoughtless being [her parents] supposed' (*AG*, 12). In a speciesist claim that resembles opposition to women's liberation in the nineteenth century, J. Baird Collicott asserts that domesticated birds 'have been bred to docility, tractability, stupidity, and dependency. It is literally meaningless to suggest that they be liberated'.[111] If Agnes is like a domesticated 'pet' pigeon, rendered docile, 'helpless […] thoughtless' (*AG*, 12), she intends to assert agency and freedom from the limits imposed upon her.

At Wellwood, where Agnes works as governess for the Bloomfield family, bird cruelty and misogyny are intrinsically connected. Tom Bloomfield asserts his dominance over women and nonhuman animals simultaneously, striking terror in his sister by 'lift[ing] his fist with a menacing gesture' (*AG*, 19) as he simulates the maltreatment that he will subject his horse to. When Tom, who sets traps for birds, threatens to roast his next avian victim alive, 'to see what it will taste like' (*AG*, 22), Agnes sets in motion a feminist-vegetarian intervention by attempting to impress upon him the birds' sentience. In a syntactical sleight of hand, Brontë covertly suggests a capacity long-contested in Enlightenment accounts of human superiority – that what

make an appearance. I explore the caged bird more fully in chapter one, as it relates to *Jane Eyre*, with reference to Howell Deverell's images of women and caged birds.

[110] 'How delightful it would be […] to go out into the world; to enter upon a new life; to act for myself; to exercise my unused faculties; to try my unknown powers; to earn my own maintenance […] to convince mama and [my sister] Mary that I was not quite the helpless, thoughtless being they supposed' (*AG*, 12). The sentiments in this passage are similarly expressed by Jane Eyre as she contemplates venturing beyond Lowood School and, later, when she sets her sights beyond the limits of Thornfield Hall: 'having reached the leads […] I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit' (*JE*, 125).

[111] J. Baird Collicott, 'Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair', *Environmental Ethics*, 2 (1980), pp. 311-38, p. 330.

distinguishes humans from other animals is his (and it is always *his*, since women, like other non-male human animals, were not considered to possess this faculty) ability to reason: 'remember, the birds can feel as well as you, *and think*, how would you like it yourself?' (*AG*, 20, my italics). The ambiguity of this sentence creates a narrative space in which to contemplate the possibility of a bird's capacity for thinking as well as feeling.[112] Although Brontë seems to support the long-held humancentric assumption that humans are the only animal with the ability to 'think', her syntax and use of commas nonetheless allows for the covert suggestion that undermines this without categorically committing to such a controversial notion. Agnes is either urging Tom to re-'think' his cruel intentions, or asserting that, contrary to Tom's speciesist behaviour, birds can think as well as feel. Either way, it is useful to read this scene as a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption since it contains a challenge to speciesist assumptions about nonhuman animals while it makes explicit the interconnected subjugations imposed upon women and birds. Another remarkable aspect of this exchange is the focus on bird consumption. Tom, after he has tortured the bird, intends to discover 'what it will taste like' (*AG*, 20) when roasted alive. Agnes's feminist-vegetarian narrative intervention is juxtaposed, with jarring effect, in the following scene, in which Tom's father, a prototype of his son, demands to know from his wife, whom he proceeds to verbally abuse, what will be served for dinner: '"Turkey and grouse" was the concise reply' (*AG*, 25).

Connections between women and birds are brought into sharp focus with the arrival of 'The Uncle', Mr Robson, 'the scorner of the female sex' (*AG*, 41), whose primary project is to train his nephew, Tom, to become a misogynist, speciesist aficionado in his own image. This programme relies chiefly on the exploitation of birds, namely hunting and shooting, and 'a-bird-nesting with the children' (*AG*, 42). Agnes's continued efforts to impede this curriculum of avian cruelty amounts to a sustained feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption, which reaches a shocking climax when she crushes a nest of birds to avert the prolonged torture threatened by Tom. Agnes's defiant act of agency, her 'daring outrage' (*AG*, 43), must come, as it does in *Jane Eyre* (which I shall demonstrate in chapter one), at the cost of the birds' life and

[112] It is now accepted that, as with other nonhuman animals, birds, contrary to Enlightenment thinkers, most notably René Descartes, do indeed possess complex reasoning faculties, the ability to 'think'. The multidisciplinary journal, *Animal Sentience*, founded in 2016, is testament to the mounting evidence that contests the Cartesian tradition of disregarding nonhuman animals' faculty for feeling. Anne Brontë engages with this debate, pitting Agnes, with her Benthamite recognition of 'sentient creatures' (*AG*, 44), against Mr Bloomfield's Cartesian disregard for the 'welfare of a soulless brute' (*AG*, 44).

liberty; she 'dropped the stone upon [Tom's] intended victims, and crushed them flat beneath it' (*AG*, 43). Agnes knows that this will likely result in her own nausea – 'making myself sick' (*AG*, 43) – a reaction to the spectacle of the dead bird common to the bird-woman heroines considered in this thesis. Agnes's act of bird murder is a form of feminist-vegetarian interruption since her purpose in doing so is to interrupt, and thereby prevent, the prolonged suffering that the birds would endure at the hands of Tom, whose graphic, violent threats are vocalised as Agnes deals a swift deliverance. This explicit and problematic account of avian cruelty jolts the reader into contemplating the novel's implicit concern for the interconnected oppressions of women and birds.

It is important to note that feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions are – as the above examples from *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* demonstrate – often fraught with ambivalent implications regarding the humancentric concerns that underpin such incidents. While Agnes is keen to prevent the suffering that the birds endure at the hands of Tom and his adult bird-murdering role-models, her primary concern is located in her ambition to educate the child to a moral standard that would 'humanise' an otherwise 'brutish' (*AG*, 78) child, who was 'as rough as a young bear' (*AG*, 60).[113] This project is in turn a means by which Agnes can assert a level of agency that she lacks at the beginning of the novel when she sets up her affinity with the pigeons. Although Agnes and the birds' status are aligned at the beginning of the novel, the birds do not achieve liberation from their subjugation. As Agnes achieves a relative agency, she leaves the impotent pigeons behind. A key question posed throughout this thesis is the extent to which instances of bird cruelty function as vehicles through which to comment on the oppressive consequences of a violent, masculinist culture on women, rather than on birds.

Such feminist-vegetarian interruptions, which reveal an exploitative relationship with animals, likewise abound in du Maurier's corpus a century later. When du Maurier moved from Menabilly to Kilmarth in 1969, she found herself the

[113] Agnes often states her project 'to bring [the children in her charge] to some general sense of justice and humanity' (*AG*, 42). Her intention is that the children will 'become more humanized' (*AG*, 31). In *Agnes Grey*, as Sally Shuttleworth posits, abstinence from animal cruelty is an indicator of a humans' moral training; animal welfare or suffering are mere by-products. See Sally Shuttleworth, 'Introduction', in Brontë, *AG*, pp. ix-xxviii. For a consideration of the connections between animals and women in *Agnes Grey*, see Berg, '"Hapless Dependents"', pp. 177-97. For further studies on the ways in which Victorians' 'fundamentally anthropomorphic idea that the treatment of animals served to predict social responsibility in human relationships', see Lisa Surridge, 'Animals and Violence in *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 24 (1999), pp. 161-73, p. 161, and Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

'sole tenant of sporting rights' (*RN*, 159). In contemplation of what this might entail, she wrote

> my lease [of Kilmarth] made mention of certain 'sporting rights,' […] I am not sure what I had in mind when the lease was signed. Possibly sons-in-law wearing tweeds, armed with Purdy guns and calling 'Over' as pheasants swerved above their heads, the same pheasants gracing the dinner table at a later date. Or, on a less ambitious note, the more doubtful pleasure of lunching on pigeon pie (I read once that pigeon eaten on three consecutive days brought certain death). Be that as it may, the pheasant's call and the pigeon's flutter are absent this afternoon; the only thing to stir except the trees is a ragged crow, who launches himself from a dead branch at my approach and croaks his way to Passchendaele. (*RN*, 159)

Du Maurier's ambivalence about hunting and eating birds sits uneasily against the backdrop of her continual observation of birds, such as the 'ragged crow' (*RN*, 159), clamouring in and around her grounds. When she stumbles upon 'an elderly man leaning against a tree, a gun at the ready' (*RN*, 159-60), du Maurier's tacit remark regarding the lack of avian game belies her seeming nonchalance: 'Well, don't shoot yourself instead of the absent birds' (*RN*, 160). Although admitting that she affected a swagger at the thought of her sporting rights, she has no intention of actioning them. Musings on her sporting rights reveal more about du Maurier's satisfaction with becoming the master of her own realm than they do about aspirations to shoot birds. This narrative detour relating to her hunting rights functions as a feminist-vegetarian interruption on numerous levels: the hunting man is now figured as du Maurier's 'easy game' (*NR*, 159) – a defiant destabilisation of traditional gender positions; whilst abstaining from shooting birds, du Maurier also draws attention to the lack of birds – an eerie absence that speaks perhaps of impending extinction; the question of nausea arises in her suggestion in parenthesis that avian consumption brings 'certain death' (*RN*, 159); this is followed by her preference for 'reliev[ing] her sporting inclinations' (*RN*, 159) by pruning a clump of unruly bamboos (*RN*, 160), thus cultivating plants over annihilating birds. Finally, du Maurier aligns herself with 'the ragged crow' (*RN*, 159) with whom she countenances an interspecies relationship that respects the bird's beyond-human autonomy. This multi-faceted feminist-vegetarian interruption is followed by du Maurier's musing on the previous tenant of Kilmarth, a formidable Edwardian lady 'flanked by her peacocks' (*RN*, 163) and a parrot. Living alone towards the end of her life, du Maurier relates how she is haunted by the presence of this bird-woman's spirit. This bird-woman memory also becomes a feminist-

vegetarian interruption, one that encapsulates du Maurier's enduring interest in the bird-heroine who, as for the Brontës, populates her fiction.

This thesis examines the gendered ramifications of the myriad manifestations of avian consumption, commodification, and subjugation embedded within the Brontë sisters' and du Maurier's fiction. Given the connections already established above between the exploitation of women and nonhuman animals, and the ways in which capitalist culture is predicated upon the subjugation of other animals, I read feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions for their potential 'as a political act of resistance' (*SPM*, 19) against dominant narratives and interpretations. In addition to identifying narrative incidents of feminist dissent, I examine the extent to which abstentions from avian consumption are concerned with the exploitation of the birds themselves. In doing so, I engage with underlying tensions between ecofeminism and animal studies. Animal studies, which post-dates ecofeminism, focuses on only one aspect of ecofeminism's interconnected concerns – speciesism.[114] Whilst insights into speciesism are crucial to our understanding of human's damaging, dominating relationship to other animals, this approach fails to address the intersectional power affecting all oppressed groups. I read scenes in which women encounter, counter, and become complicit in, bird consumption, hunting, plumage wearing, and speciest language as potential feminist-vegetarian interruptions because they demonstrate the extent to which interspecies relationships of cruelty are culturally embedded and co-dependent upon other forms of exploitative power. I do not claim that the Brontë sisters or du Maurier were vegetarian, or that they were consciously writing for or against animal welfare. Analysis of feminist-vegetarian incidents in their fiction reveals the extent to which women writers intuit these connected subjugations and comment on them in ambivalent, and sometimes critical, ways.

This thesis's sustained examination of avian specific feminist-vegetarian interruption keeps the following critical questions in play. What do interspecies encounters in the Brontë novels look like when read in the context of ecofeminist and animal studies debates? What long-held assumptions about these texts are challenged or complicated? In what ways do the questions central to ecofeminism and animal

[114] Contemporary ecofeminists urge that 'an atomized approach to injustice will not be effective'. See Mary Philips and Nick Rumens, 'Introducing Contemporary Ecofeminism', in *Contemporary Perspectives on Ecofeminism*, eds. Mary Phillips and Nick Rumens (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-16, p. 2. For a cogent account of the history of ecofeminism, its receptions, charges of essentialism, and unacknowledged influences upon later theoretical frameworks, such as animal studies, see Greta Gaard, 'Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism', *Feminist Formations*, 23 (2011), pp. 26-53.

studies enable a more nuanced appreciation of an author, like du Maurier, whose oeuvre is largely excluded from academic study? What can an analysis of the interspecies relationships within the Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction tell us about cultures of avian exploitation and their connections with other forms of oppression? What are the implications when a heroine depicted as a restless bird refuses to eat the dead bird on her plate; alternatively, what can be deduced from the nausea that results when a bird-woman partakes in bird consumption? Whilst the approach I adopt brings the bird to the forefront of analysis, the narrative instances I engage with are inextricably connected to the status of the bird-women who encounter, witness, interact with, and sometimes narrate these feminist-vegetarian interruptions. Central questions I pose when exploring such scenes are as follows: to what extent is avian exploitation co-opted as a metaphor for the plight of women, thus rendering birds absent referents in the depiction of their sufferings? When, if at all, does the suffering of the birds become the focus of a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption? Can feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions serve both women and bird-centred concerns, or do they inevitably perpetuate a humancentric, speciesist ideology? In other words, what are the implications of aligning subjugated women with exploited birds; and what becomes of the birds if women move beyond their own entrapment?

Chapters one and two of this thesis argue for an intricate system of bird imagery in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* respectively and demonstrate the as yet overlooked interplay between avian-human relationships of exploitation and issues of gendered power. Chapters three to five investigate unchartered territory – the ways in which du Maurier's fiction is haunted by this legacy of Brontëan avian-related restlessness, exploring the ways in which the two bodies of work are in dialogue with each other. Finally, the coda turns to the tale that inspired the 2018 sculpture honouring du Maurier – 'The Birds' – and reads this tale of avian restlessness in a new way in light of the exploitative human-bird relationships established across the thesis.

This thesis foregrounds avian encounters with restless bird-women and is concerned with the establishment of avian afterlives. Its central aim is to examine the extent to which the Brontë and du Maurier canons are engaged in a hitherto unexplored dialogue with each other regarding the interconnected issues of gender politics and exploitative human-bird relationships. My interrogation of these interspecies issues will be informed by an interplay between ecofeminism and animal studies. Engaging with these recent and prescient debates reveals tensions and complexities within novels and short fiction that have gone unremarked in the critical traditions of both oeuvres.

This approach opens up new perspectives on the two Brontë novels under consideration, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Furthermore, this assessment of du Maurier's fiction contributes to emerging scholarship that seeks to reappraise her work and argue that she is a writer worthy of serious academic consideration.[115] This thesis is timely in three ways: it responds to Jesse Oak Taylor's call for further research in the emerging field of Victorian ecocriticism;[116] it demonstrates the value of du Maurier's fiction beyond *Rebecca*; and it addresses a lacuna in the field of adaptation studies – namely, the remarked upon yet under-analysed intertextuality of the Brontë and du Maurier canons. With regards to the first point – Taylor's call for further Victorian ecocriticism – this thesis engages, in particular, with current debates in ecofeminism and animal studies with a specific focus on the relatively neglected nonhuman animals within this emerging area of scholarship: birds. I also respond to Adams's call to address vegetarian narrative interruptions, and engage with the tensions that arise between ecofeminism and animal studies (debates which include the historical phenomenon of, and recent resurgence in, vegetarian theory).[117]

Placing Victorian novels and later, twentieth-century fiction under the lens of critical debates that recognise the destructive role of humans within a wider ecosystem which we have systematically sought to gain mastery over is beneficial from two standpoints. First, the insights of ecofeminism and animal studies enable new perspectives on well-known novels, such as those by the Brontës, as well as providing

[115] See, for example, Gina Wisker, 'Starting Your Journey in the Past, Speculating on Time and Place: Daphne du Maurier's *The House on the Strand*, "Split Second", and the Engaged Fiction of Time Travel', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 24 (2013), pp. 467-82; and Setara Pracha, 'Apples and Pears: Symbolism and Influence in Daphne du Maurier's "The Apple Tree" and Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, eds. Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 172-86. I give further examples elsewhere in relevant chapters.

[116] In this recent article, Taylor remarks that 'the most striking thing about reviewing the field of Victorian ecocriticism is that there is so little of it'. See Jesse Oak Taylor, 'Where is Victorian Ecocriticism?', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 43 (2015), pp. 877-94, p. 877. My claim here is that 'eco' criticism must necessarily concern itself with the overlapping debates in both ecofeminism and animal studies.

[117] As touched upon above, the history of Western vegetarian philosophy goes at least as far back as Pythagoras, through to countless subsequent prominent thinkers, such as Plutarch (A.D. 40-120), Bernard De Mandeville (1670-1733), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and Shelley, arriving at more recent ecofeminist and animal studies interventions such as those by Adams and others. For a survey of vegetarian philosophy, see Howard Williams, *The Ethics of Diet: An Anthology of Vegetarian Thought* (Guildford: White Crow Books, 2009). First published in 1883. Some of vegetarian theory's most recent manifestations, within the field of EcoGothic criticism for example, examine anxieties about the slaughterhouse industry in the nineteenth century, relationships between carnivorism, cannibalism, and vampirism, and issues of consumption central to zombie literature and film. See, for example, David Del Principe, '(M)eating Dracula: Food and Death in Stoker's Novel', *Gothic Studies*, 16 (2014), pp. 24-38. Del Principe uses the term 'Vegetarian Theory' in 'Introduction: The EcoGothic in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Gothic Studies*, 16 (2014), pp. 1-8, p. 3.

a critical framework through which to reassess the cultural value of under-estimated fiction such as du Maurier's. Ecofeminism and animal studies present challenging new questions that foreground hitherto unrecognised facets of literary texts. Secondly, eco-literary analysis exposes the cultural and historical contexts of humans' exploitative use of other animals. As non-esoteric humans become cognizant of the long-known catastrophic consequences of our subjugation of other animals, criticism that spotlights these cultures of exploitation holds the potential of crucial consciousness raising. Confronting the human propensity for planetary exploitation through literary analysis makes an important contribution to the, now awkwardly named, *human*ities' contemplation of a world beyond the Anthropocene.

Chapter One: *Jane Eyre*

Fig. 13. Paula Rego, *Loving Bewick*, 2001.

It is well known that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) abounds with bird imagery; its heroine's epithet 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me' is arguably one of the

novel's most iconic quotes.[1] Birds are present in thirty-one of the thirty-eight chapters comprising *Jane Eyre*.[2] In many, they make frequent appearances; in some, they dominate the physical and psychological reality of the protagonists. Yet scholarship addressing Brontë's rich and diverse bird symbolism is comparatively sparse. It is widely noted, in often illuminating ways, yet insubstantial and fragmentary in scope.[3] However, in 2015 and 2016, two journal articles foregrounding the significance of Brontë's bird imagery emerged. In the 2016 article, Emily Roberson Wallace offers insights into Brontë's bird symbolism in terms of the ways in which reverse avian anthropomorphism is influenced by Thomas Bewick's textual anthropomorphism as well as the bird symbolism of folklore and myth.[4] Wallace critiques a tendency in animal studies scholarship, with its focus on foregrounding the depiction of literal birds, to discount symbolic interpretations of birds. Wallace suggests that animal studies readings should benefit from the insights offered by symbolic readings. Given

[1] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 284. Henceforward *JE*.
[2] Birds appear in all but two of the fifteen chapters comprising volume one, all but two of the eleven chapters of volume two, and all but three of the twelve chapters of volume three.
[3] Stevie Davies's introduction to the 2006 Penguin Classics edition of Brontë's novel is indicative of the status of bird-related *Jane Eyre* scholarship: her text notes a number of key bird scenes that are summoned to support her broader argument concerned with humancentric concerns regarding political and social angst. For example, in a section sub-titled 'Jane and the Self', Davies mentions in parenthesis that there is a 'sublime pattern of bird imagery'. Likewise, Davies briefly mentions a 'delicate imagery of caged birds' and birdsong but neither observations are elaborated upon. See Stevie Davies, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Stevie Davies (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. xvii, xxii, and xxvii. Similarly, Lisa Sternlieb gestures towards Jane's contradictory connections with birds by likening her to 'a docile carrier pigeon [who] "flew thither and back"' in order to draw attention to 'Jane's description of herself in this scene [as] a textbook example of Victorian woman – silent, obedient, content to know nothing'. This reading relies on a speciesist assumption that pigeons are 'docile'. See Lisa Sternlieb, '*Jane Eyre*: Hazarding Confidences', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53 (1999) pp. 452-79, p. 469. Melodie Monahan dedicates a paragraph to the novel's employment of bird metaphor in relation to women characters. See Melodie Monahan, 'Heading Out is Not Going Home: *Jane Eyre*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 28 (1988), pp. 589-608. Jean Wyatt makes a fleeting reference to Rochester's comparison to the eagle in her examination of the sexual politics between him and Jane. See Jean Wyatt, 'A Patriarch of One's Own: *Jane Eyre* and Romantic Love', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 4 (1985), pp. 199-216. Paul Marchbanks examines the trope of the caged bird in *Jane Eyre*, arguing that Brontë innovates this otherwise 'restricting metaphor into a liberating one'. In this chapter, I will challenge Marchbanks's assumption that this is a liberating metaphor for the bird. See Paul Marchbanks, 'Jane Air: The Heroine as Caged Bird in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca*', *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, 4 (2006), pp. 118-30, p. 119. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar refer to 'Rochester, "caged eagle" that he seems' who has his overmastering 'full falcon-eye' (*JE*, 305) plucked out by the angry Bertha in Jane. The power dynamic between Rochester as the maimed bird of prey and Jane as a selection of smaller, benign birds that an eagle might prey upon is not explored further. See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 368. First published in 1979.
[4] As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, Wallace's application of 'reverse anthropomorphism' is a useful term, and I refine her definition as reverse *avian* anthropomorphism to refer specifically to the ways in which humans in the novel are repeatedly characterised by comparison to traits thought to be embodied by a myriad of bird species. See Emily Roberson Wallace, 'Caged Eagles, Songsters and Carrion-Seekers: Birds in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 41 (2016), pp. 249-60, p. 249.

Brontë's symbolic uses of birds, my approach is awake to the ways in which these significant metaphorical tropes relate to contemporary attitudes about real birds and what this can reveal about interspecies relationships. Notwithstanding this, I hold that a symbolic-only reading, which ignores the imperative to read depictions of animal exploitation literally, as Carol J. Adams urges, fails to engender an understanding of the speciesism that underpins the novel.[5]

In the 2015 article on *Jane Eyre*'s birds, Kathleen Anderson and Heather R. Lawrence summarise existing scholarship that acknowledges, yet does not make a primary focus of, 'the significance of avian imagery as a paradigm of power' in *Jane Eyre*.[6] They recognise that 'these interpretations collectively underscore the significance and ambiguity of the avian references in *Jane Eyre* as an intricate symbology of the protagonist's identity and level of agency' and insist that 'what is lacking in critical discourse on the novel is a detailed explication of this versatile trope as an indicator of' Jane's oppression.[7] This humancentric approach ignores the oppression of the birds upon whom *Jane Eyre*'s avian metaphors are based. Like Wallace, Anderson and Lawrence read the birds of *Jane Eyre* symbolically rather than literally. In doing so, they fail to detect the speciesist premise of Jane's most celebrated feminist declaration that they quote in their article's title – 'no net ensnares me' (*JE*, 284) – which I will examine in this chapter. Both studies gesture towards defining a broader bird symbolism at work in the novel, indicating the need for a sustained study of *Jane Eyre*'s birds. It is my aim in this chapter to address this lacuna by examining the novel's avian imagery in detail whilst contextualising this within the literal suffering of birds that underpins much of this symbolism. My approach thus departs from Wallace's, and Anderson and Lawrence's, humancentric studies by reading the novel's bird imagery through the critical lens of ecofeminism and animal studies.

Consuming Bewick: Jane's Feminist-Vegetarian Narrative Interruptions

Like the avian artworks that pay homage to the fiction of Emily Brontë and du Maurier – *Rook with a Book* and *Wings of Desire* – Paula Rego's lithograph, *Loving Bewick*,

[5] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2010). First published in 1990.
[6] Kathleen Anderson and Heather R. Lawrence, '"No net ensnares me": Bird Imagery and the Dynamics of Dominance and Submission in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*', *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), pp. 240-51, p. 241.
[7] Anderson and Lawrence, '"No net ensnares me"', p. 241.

shown in figure 13, intuits the importance of birds in *Jane Eyre*.[8] Rego's image also speaks to the numerous and complex ways in which Brontë employs Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds* – ways that remain unacknowledged by scholars who have written on Bewick's role in *Jane Eyre* thus far.[9] In Rego's image, 'loving' Bewick is signified by 'loving' a pelican, who sits on Jane's lap as she leans back provocatively with her mouth open, receiving the bird's beak.[10] In this evocative image, sexual politics and the suggestion of bird consumption converge in an ambivalent interspecies power dynamic. Jane is simultaneously communing with and consuming the bird. Marina Warner also detects the centrality of consumption in the image, stating that 'Rego has introduced a note of true sustenance: it is through the mind food offered by books and pictures that Jane Eyre survives', but she does not see the consumed bird as problematic.[11] Although the pelican appears to be physically dominant, Jane's hand

[8] Rego's image forms part of a series of twenty-four lithographs illustrating *Jane Eyre*. The images are striking in their discernment of the intense and violent psychological disturbances that Jane endures. In 2005, six of the images were issued as postage stamps in the UK to mark 150 years since Brontë's death.

[9] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume One: Containing the History and Description of Land Birds* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015) and *A History of British Birds Volume Two: Containing the History and Description of Water Birds* (Menston: Scholar Press, 1972). First published in 1797. Henceforward *HBB* I and *HBB* II. Critics have identified a multiplicity of meanings appertaining to the vignettes in Bewick's bird book that Jane peruses. None acknowledge the exploitation that Bewick's bird project was predicated upon. Scholarship concerned with the significance of Bewick's bird volumes in *Jane Eyre* focusses on analysis of the vignettes mentioned in the novel rather than the naturalist's anthropomorphic descriptions of birds. My enquiry encompasses both the visual and textual interconnections between Brontë and Bewick's works. Critics have only tentatively and sporadically gestured towards this remarkable intertextuality. Wallace, for example, recalls three Bewick bird descriptions in her journal article. See Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', pp. 252 and 254. Jane W. Stedman considers the influence of Bewick's natural history volumes on the Brontës and is perhaps the first scholar to identify Jane's descriptions of Bewick's images with particular vignettes. Stedman conjectures that these images form 'suggestions' of Jane's later portfolio pictures, particularly the first depicting the cormorant. See Jane W. Stedman, 'Charlotte Brontë and Bewick's *British Birds*', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1966), pp. 36-40. Jane Kromm considers the vignettes' capacity for enabling imaginative liberation from constraining male-dominated visual fields. See Jane Kromm, 'Visual Culture and Scopic Custom in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 26 (1998), pp. 369-94, p. 370. Alison Hoddinott discusses both Branwell and Charlotte Brontë's use of the Bewick vignettes described in the first chapter of *Jane Eyre* as facilitating the development of an artistic sensibility: 'contemplating Bewick's illustrations, [Jane's] imagination is liberated from its uncongenial prison'. See Alison Hoddinott, 'Reading Books and Looking at Pictures in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë', *Brontë Studies*, 32 (2007), pp. 1-10, p. 4. Catherine Lanone reads these vignettes as emblematic of isolation and emptiness that nonetheless signify Jane's capacity for transgression. See Catherine Lanone, 'Arctic Spectacles in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*', *Brontë Studies*, 34 (2009), pp. 117-26, pp. 119-20. Susan B. Taylor considers Jane's cormorant picture in order to draw out connections between Bewick and Milton. See Susan B. Taylor, 'Image and Text in *Jane Eyre*'s Avian Vignettes and Bewick's *History of British Birds*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 101 (2002), pp. 5-12.

[10] Pelicans are not included in Bewick's *Birds* because they do not inhabit Britain. In vol. II, *Water Birds*, Bewick states that the genus 'of the pelican', which comprises thirty distinct species, amongst them, 'the pelican, Man of War Bird, Cormorant, Shag, Gannet, and Booby' (*HBB* II, 377), only four of them are British birds. It is interesting to note that Rego chose not to depict a cormorant, a British bird catalogued by Bewick, which forms the subject of one of Jane's portfolio pictures.

[11] Marina Warner, 'Introduction', in Paula Rego, *Jane Eyre* (London: Enitharmon Editions, 2005), p. 10.

resting on his or her back suggests a rather more human-centred nexus of power.[12] Warner recognises the sexual potency of the image, but suggests that the bird is the aggressor by recalling the myth of Leda and the swan.[13] Considering Rego's lithograph with this mythic avian connection in mind, with the myth's suggestion of rape rather than bestiality, rather mitigates Jane's complicity in her act of avian exploitation. Rego's *Loving Bewick* recalls nineteenth-century paintings and illustrations, examples of which are shown in figures 14, 15, and 16, that depict women feeding their 'pet' bird a seed held between their lips so that while feeding the bird they simultaneously kiss the bird.[14] Elaine Shefer points out that 'the intimate relationship between the [woman and the bird] represents the idea that a bird will love its owner [and] submit to its cage […] if it is petted' – 'the caged bird, happily receiving the attention of its owner, is thus symbolic of the woman's acceptance of her position'.[15] Shefer goes on to state that this pictorial motif 'makes the bird's willing acceptance of its cage synonymous with the woman's acceptance of her role'.[16]

[12] Pelicans are typically as tall as 5.8 feet and would thus dwarf the 'little' (*JE*, 284), sparrow-like Jane Eyre. See <www.nationalgeographic.com>, accessed 14 April 2020.
[13] Warner observes that 'Jane kisses the pelican's beak with an expression of eucharistic rapture' and suggests that it 'harks back to a Renaissance Leda'. In the myth of Leda and the Swan, Zeus embodies a swan in order to rape Leda. See Warner, 'Introduction', in Rego, *Jane Eyre*, p. 10.
[14] For a further image, a Punch illustration titled 'Resource for Young Ladies', which depicts a woman holding a seed between her lips to a caged bird, see Elaine Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal, and "The Bird in the Cage"', *The Art Bulletin*, 67 (1985), pp. 437-48, p.438.
[15] Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal', p. 437.
[16] Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal', p. 437.

Fig. 14. Walter Howell Deverell, *The Grey Parrot*, 1852-3.

Fig. 15. Walter Howell Deverell, *A Pet*, 1853.

Fig. 16. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beauty and the Bird*, 1858.

While the women themselves are arguably confined by domesticity, they are complicit in their 'pet' birds' commodification and entrapment. Like the women in these images, Jane Eyre, as depicted in Rego's *Loving Bewick*, shares a similarly intimate moment with a bird and, as already noted, the suggestion of consumption and female sexuality persists.[17] The profile of both bird and woman in Rego's picture forms a striking echo to these nineteenth-century precursors. However, in Rego's image, the power dynamic has shifted. The woman feeding the bird a seed is subverted such that Jane seems to be eating the bird, rather than feeding her or him a seed. Rego's image thus aptly reflects the way in which *Jane Eyre* foregrounds the intersection between the oppression of women and the oppression of birds while 'seizing the function of the absent referent [the bird] only to forward women's issues, not animals''.[18] *Loving Bewick* foregrounds the tensions between Jane's 'loving' birds – exemplified by the latter's association with a range of restless and exploited birds – and her complicity in both speciesist ideology and gendered oppression. Rego's lithograph connects Jane and the bird in their shared subjugation even while it depicts

[17] Shefer emphasises the erotic undertones of these images which depict affection, intimacy, and flirtation between woman and bird. With regards to the Rossetti image in figure 16, Shefer describes how the woman in the picture 'coaxes with a seed from her tongue while at the same time presenting an alluring profile to the spectator'. See Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, and Siddal', pp. 439, 440, and 447.
[18] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 90.

the consuming Jane as complicit in male cultures of avian exploitation. Depicting Jane as 'loving' the pelican, in both a gastronomic and a sexual sense, *Loving Bewick* intuits the interconnections between women, birds, sexual politics, and consumption found in Brontë's novel.

Furthermore, the image depicts an interspecies relationship that chimes with the dark side of avian consumption embedded in Bewick's *Birds*. In light of the discussion of Bewick in my introduction, in which I position Bewick's bird book as a document that bears witness to avian exploitation while it parades as a work of scientific progress, Jane's 'loving Bewick' is also an endorsement of the avian oppression that his ornithology is predicated upon. A central aim of this chapter is to ascertain the extent to which this is born out in the novel. To what extent, for example, is Jane's natural history – 'with Bewick on my knee' (*JE*, 15) – speciesist? How should we read the avian gendered power dynamics between Jane, Rochester, and Bertha in light of these insights? Finally, to what extent does Jane's complicity in avian consumption at Rochester's hunting lodge at the end of the novel belie the seeming egalitarian idyll between the eagle and the skylark at the close of the novel? *Jane Eyre* is a novel consistently committed to connecting women's and birds' exploitation, but how far does Brontë's approach perpetuate gendered oppression and speciesism? Compounding these issues, Brontë's novel is interspersed with instances of feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption. In this chapter, I examine the extent to which these pervading elements of the novel work for and against the depiction of women *and* birds.

By introducing Bewick at the beginning of the novel, Brontë gives an early indication of Jane's ambivalent associations with birds. The avian politics of the novel is established from the outset when Jane declares that 'with Bewick on my knee, I was then happy' (*JE*, 15). Her modification – 'happy at least in my way' (*JE*, 15) – speaks of Jane's oppressive existence. Of all the birds in Bewick's book, Jane is drawn in particular to the passages 'which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of "the solitary rocks and promontories" by them only inhabited' (*JE*, 14). Amidst Bewick's catalogue of dead birds – a document of hu*man* tyranny over avian life – Jane tellingly singles out an avian habitat devoid of human corruption. When John Reed discovers Jane's immersion in this scene, he hurls the book at her as punishment for flouting his mastery. He harnesses the Bewick volume as a means of exercising patriarchal ownership and dominance over Jane, thus highlighting Jane's shared status with the

dead birds in the book.[19] Bewick's book of dead birds becomes the bully's brutal instrument to punish Jane's imaginings beyond the cage of patriarchal tyranny. Jane's association with Bewick's free Arctic birds is literally knocked out of her by Bewick's catalogue of avian cruelty, hurled by the boy who twists the necks of pigeons and kills little pea-chicks.[20] Bewick's catalogue of avian corpses is a fitting book for a bird-torturer such as Jane's cousin to claim ownership of and use as an instrument of tyranny that upholds an anthropocentric, androcentric hierarchy of beings. Bewick's *Birds* is doubled as a document of avian exploitation and an instrument of patriarchal control over Jane. Its appearance on the second page of *Jane Eyre* foregrounds the interconnected oppression of women and birds as a central concern in Brontë's novel from the outset. This metaphoric conjoining of Jane's and birds' oppression is problematised in the novel since it serves feminist interests while it perpetuates speciesism. Thus, Rego's illustration encapsulates the interconnected oppression that enforces women's complicity in their own, and birds', exploitation.

Jane describes cousin John's tyranny in terms that figure her as an exploited, consumable animal:

> He bullied and punished me: not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every *morsel of flesh on my bones* shrank when he came near. There were moments when I was bewildered by the terror he inspired; because *I had no appeal* whatever against his menaces or his inflictions: the servants did not like to offend their master by taking my part against him, and Mrs. Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me; though he did both now and then in her very presence: more frequently however behind her back. (*JE*, 16, my italics)

John's habitual cruelty renders Jane's being a 'morsel of flesh' (*JE*, 16). The connection to consumption central to the meaning of 'morsel' equates Jane's flesh to that of a consumed bird. Jane's terror mirrors that of the birds whose flesh is consumed in morsels by the Brontës' bird murdering patriarchs – John Reed, Tom Bloomfield, Arthur Huntingdon, Mr Lockwood, and Heathcliff. Like nonhuman animals habitually

[19] Aubrey L. Mishou alternately interprets Jane's solitary reading pursuits behind the scarlet window drapery of Gateshead Hall as 'retreats to an academic sphere of her own creation'. See Aubrey L. Mishou, 'Surviving Thornfield: *Jane Eyre* and Nineteenth-Century Evolutionary Theory', *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*, 66 (2014), pp. 255-72, p. 262.

[20] Sally Shuttleworth notes that 'the beloved Bewick is turned from an agent of freedom into an instrument of violence'. See Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. x. Kromm considers this scene in the light of the gendered power dynamics of the gaze. See Kromm 'Visual Culture', p. 370.

tortured and exploited by flesh-eating humans, Jane has no recourse to 'appeal' (*JE*, 16) her subjugated position or to assert her desire to exist free of cruelty. This focus on a lack of voice to rebel against one's subjugated status finds coded avian expression throughout the novel in the recurring imagery of restless, raucous birds. Witnesses to Jane's oppression maintain silence and are thus complicit in her suffering. The cognitive dissonance that supports this complicity enables those who would otherwise be morally outraged by cruelty to become complicit in, and even beneficiaries of, exploitative systems. Women who share birds' subjugated status, such as the servants at Gateshead, know the value of siding with the perpetrators of violent exploitation. Mrs Reed, who 'was blind and deaf on the subject' (*JE*, 16), is content with her part in the exploitative culture that her son's abuse of Jane is but one manifestation of. Like John, this culture takes efforts to conceal the extent of the cruelty that pervades. When Jane points out that Mrs Reed 'never saw' (*JE*, 16) the habitual abuse, one is reminded of the insidious lengths the meat industry goes to to torture animals out of public sight in sequestered houses of slaughter.[21]

When John wounds Jane with Bewick's book of dead birds, Jane breaks her silent suffering and becomes a Fury – an ancient Greek bird-woman known for avenging the wrongs of man – 'What a fury to fly at master John!' (*JE*, 18).[22] As a Fury, Jane 'declared aloud' (*JE*, 17) the nature of her oppressor, calling him a 'tyrant' (*JE*, 17), 'slave-driver' (*JE*, 17), and twice a 'murderer' (*JE*, 17). Jane's winged

[21] These were becoming increasingly prevalent during the nineteenth century. David Del Principe posits that 'the nineteenth century was obsessed with hiding the act of slaughter'. See David Del Principe, '(M)eating *Dracula*: Food and Death in Stoker's Novel', *Gothic Studies*, 16 (2014), pp. 24-38, p. 27. For histories of the slaughterhouse, which is rooted in the early nineteenth century, see Paula Lee Young, ed. *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse* (Durham, NC: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008), and Ian MacLachlan, 'A Bloody Offal Nuisance: The Persistence of Private Slaughter-Houses in Nineteenth-Century London', *Urban History*, 34 (2007), pp. 227-54. By the mid-nineteenth century, the horrors of the slaughterhouse were a matter of public debate. In 1847, the year *Jane Eyre* was published, *Howitt's Journal* charted a 'revulsion to animal food since witnessing Newgate Market and a slaughterhouse'. Cited in James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Tauris, 2007), p. 222. In *Great Expectations* (1861), Charles Dickens alluded to the slaughterhouse as 'a shameful place'. Cited in Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*, p. 90.

[22] Mary Daly, a founding ecofeminist, wrote that oppressed women 'must melt these masses of "knowledge" [of which Bewick's ornithological documents of avian death can be counted] with the fire of Female Fury'. Daly further states that women 'who live in the tradition of the Furies refuse to be tricked into setting aside [their] anger', and that 'Furious women – can kick off'. In a remarkable echoing of the noises emitted by 'furious' bird-women Furies in *Jane Eyre* – namely, Jane and Bertha, as I shall explore in due course – Daly insists that there will be 'a cacophony of cackles [when] Harpies harp; Hags haggle; Spinsters sputter; Crones croon; Furies fume. […] Some attempt to imitate/learn from the language of "dumb" animals, whose nonverbal communication seems so superior to androcratic speech. Thus, in the midst of the cackling there can be detected meowing, purring, roaring, barking, snorting, twittering, growling, howling […] old crows screech'. See Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), pp. 8, 42, 414, and 423.

retaliation voices her heightened consciousness to John-the-bird-murderer's oppressive objectification of both Jane and birds. John frequently refers to Jane as either an object or a nonhuman animal commonly despised by humans and takes every opportunity to impress upon her his notion of her inferior position in a hierarchy of beings. By his estimation, she is alternately 'a dependent' (*JE*, 17), a 'rat' (*JE*, 17), and Jane, succumbing to these circumstances, refers to herself as 'a desperate thing' (*JE*, 17). However, once transformed into a Fury, Jane adopts the appropriate language of radical revolt: she becomes a 'rebel' (*JE*, 19) intent on 'mutiny' (*JE*, 19), 'resist[ance]' (*JE*, 19), and 'insurrection' (*JE*, 23). Amidst this, Jane refers explicitly to the avian victims of John's tyranny, relating that 'he twisted the necks of pigeons, killed little pea-chicks' (*JE*, 22). Jane – now a bird-woman Fury – 'turned against [John] to avert farther irrational violence, I was loaded with general approbrium', declaring 'Unjust! – Unjust!' (*JE*, 22). A feminist-vegetarian interruption can now be discerned. Immediately following this radical reaction to 'all John Reed's violent tyrannies' (*JE*, 22), in order to 'escape from insupportable oppression' (*JE*, 22), and to 'avenge the oppressed' (*JE*, 24), Jane considers 'never eating […] more' (*JE*, 22), and 'conceiv[es] of starving myself to death' (*JE*, 23). This is a radical protest indeed, given that Jane normally ate the same meals as the Reeds, as John condescendingly points out – meals which would presumably consist of the consumption of dead birds, given Eliza Reed's predilection for 'her poultry', 'eggs and chickens' (*JE*, 38), a further aspect of the Reed family's avian objectification that I shall revisit in due course.

In the red room, described by Jane as a prison of blood red and death (not unlike the interior of a nineteenth-century slaughterhouse), Jane experiences a supernatural avian presence: 'a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings' (*JE*, 24). Leonard Lutwack identifies that 'there is something preternaturally terrifying about the wild beating of wings about the heads of people'.[23] During this avian encounter, Jane's ability to articulate her outrage reaches a new level of 'frantic anguish and wild sobs' (*JE*, 25): 'I uttered a wild, involuntary cry' (*JE*, 24) that the housemates of Gateshead deem 'a dreadful noise' (*JE*, 25). This avian red room incident demonstrates the interconnectedness of bird imagery with Jane's psychic

[23] Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 242. Lutwack is not referring to the *Jane Eyre* scene, but his comment resonates with Brontë's supernatural wings.

journey towards liberation from oppressive doctrine.[24] Although the narrating Jane is able to confer a more mundane explanation than the ten-year-old Jane, the penetrating noise of the beating wings is not merely a symptom of abject fear; these beating wings represent an awakening of the yearning to soar beyond submissive compliance to authoritarianism which is, throughout the novel, conceived of in terms of a persistent avian presence.[25]

Jane's red room incarceration renders her unconscious, and she wakes up to another kind of nightmare, one that suggests that Mrs Reed's threat – that she will liberate Jane 'on condition of perfect submission and stillness' (*JE*, 25) – has come true: Jane wakes with the impression that she is trapped in a bird cage, 'crossed with thick black bars' (*JE*, 26). Henceforward, Jane evokes the language of nausea and abstention from consumption. The inhabitants of Gateshead, who have incarcerated Jane after her Fury-esque rebellion, are 'obnoxious' (*JE*, 26), a word that evokes the repugnance and disgust characteristic of both physiological nausea (which relates to the consumption of abject material, such as animal corpse flesh) and existential nausea (of which a heightened feminist-vegetarian consciousness is akin), outlined by Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre, and Julia Kristeva as considered in the introduction of this thesis. When asked 'could you eat anything?' (*JE*, 27), Jane refuses and wonders whether she is ill. Bessie affirms that Jane 'fell sick' (*JE*, 27) in the red room. Upon reflection, Jane realises the profound impact of this formative avian incident in her life:

> No severe or prolonged bodily illness followed this incident of the red-room: it only gave my nerves a shock; of which I feel the reverberation to this day. Yes, Mrs. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering.
>
> […] I felt physically weak and broken down; but my worst ailment was an unutterable wretchedness of mind: a wretchedness that kept drawing from

[24] Du Maurier's short story, 'The Pool' (1959), published as part of the collection containing 'The Blue Lenses' and 'The Chamois', examined in chapter five of this thesis, charts the coming-of-age of her prepubescent protagonist, Deborah, who is, like Jane Eyre in the red room, a ten-to-eleven-year old girl. Also like Jane, Deborah undergoes an avian supernatural experience described as a 'surge of feeling, like wings about her in the air […] and the beating of wings'. See Daphne du Maurier, 'The Pool', *The Breaking Point: Short Stories* (London: Virago, 2009), pp. 140-41. In similar fashion, du Maurier's protagonist in the novel *The Flight of the Falcon* (1965) experiences 'the fluttering of innumerable wings'. See Daphne du Maurier, *The Flight of the Falcon* (London: Virago, 2006), p. 291. Linking Jane's bird-like encounter to Bertha Rochester, Gilbert and Gubar surmise that the rushing wings indicate Jane's 'dangerous double conscious', Jane's suppressed self. See Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 343.

[25] The adult Jane admits that she 'can now conjecture readily' a more rational interpretation of the events – 'this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern, carried by someone across the lawn' (*JE*, 24) – yet it is the symbolic capacity of the beating wings that persists in the reader's impression of the scene.

> me silent tears […] my wracked nerves were in such a state that no calm could soothe. (*JE*, 27-8)

Jane's assertion that she experienced 'no severe or prolonged bodily illness' (*JE*, 27) confirms that she experienced some degree of bodily illness or physiological nausea. Her subsequent statement establishes that the long-term effects of this nausea was an existential shock from which she has never recovered.

Under this nausea-induced malaise, arising from avian-related oppression, bird imagery and resistance to consumption converge in another feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption. Jane can no longer bear to eat the food served on a china plate depicting 'a bird of paradise, nesting in a wreath' (*JE*, 28) that had once

> been wont to stir in me a most enthusiastic sense of admiration; and which plate I had petitioned to be allowed to take in my hand in order to examine it more closely, but had always been hitherto deemed unworthy of such a privilege. This precious vessel was now placed on my knee, and I was cordially invited to eat the circlet of delicate pastry upon it. Vain favour! […] I could not eat the tart; and the plumage of the bird […] seemed strangely faded: I put both plate and tart away. (*JE*, 28)

When the nurse asks if Jane would like a book instead, the orphan does not request the once coveted Bewick book of bird death. In the alternative book that she ends up with, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Jane remarks that the contents, including 'birds of the one realm' (*JE*, 29), which had previously delighted her, were rendered 'eerie and dreary […] malevolent and fearful', and Gulliver, like Jane, is now 'a most desolate wanderer in most dread and dangerous regions' (*JE*, 29). Jane is effectively recounting an existential crisis which is manifest in a physiological rejection of avian-related consumption. Reiterating these connections, Jane continues: 'I closed the book, which I dared no longer peruse, and put it on the table, beside the untasted tart' (*JE*, 29). Jane is now encumbered with 'an indescribable sadness' (*JE*, 29), 'the morbid suffering to which I was *prey*' (*JE*, 30, my italics) – a melancholy resulting from a heightened consciousness to her shared oppression with birds. Concurring with Adams's conception of the vegetarian narrative interruption, often characterised by 'stammering, pauses, inarticulateness, or confusion in those who are usually in control', Jane oscillates between regretting that she 'knew not how to express the result of the process in words' (*JE*, 31) and being stirred, once again, to vociferate her heightened consciousness to the Reeds' warped hierarchy of beings: 'I cried out suddenly', in 'an audacious declaration', that the Reeds 'are not fit to associate with

me'; 'it seemed as if my tongue pronounced words without my will consenting to their utterance: something spoke out of me over which I had no control' (*JE*, 36).[26] Jane confronts her oppressors with the heinous nature of their crimes in a manner that evokes the maltreatment of birds destined for human consumption: 'how you shut me up all day long, and how you wish me dead' (*JE*, 36).

Jane's final days at Gateshead are characterised by further vociferation in the vicinity of consumption and related nausea:

> A passion of resentment fermented now within me.
> […]
> *Speak* I must: I had been trodden on severely and *must* turn: but how? What strength had I to dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence:
> […]
> The very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty.
> […]
> You think I have no feelings […] I cannot live so […] I shall remember how you thrust me back – roughly and violently […] locked me up […] though I was in agony: though I cried out, while suffocating with distress. (*JE*, 45-6, original italics)

Jane reiterates her nauseous reaction to cruelty – 'the very thought of you makes me sick' (*JE*, 45) – and her reference to the Reeds' perception of Jane as an insentient object – 'You think I have no feelings' (*JE*, 45) – aligns the Reeds with the Cartesian speciesist insistence upon nonhuman animal insentience as justification for human depravity. In this, her struggle 'for liberty', from this Cartesian nightmare, Jane owns that she 'cried out in a savage, high voice' (*JE*, 46). Jane herself enlists the word 'savage', which is usually employed as a derogative term that demarcates humans as more 'animal' than 'human' and thus of lower status in the speciesist hierarchy of beings. Jane's self-proclaimed 'savage' (*JE*, 46) outcry subverts this usage. Furthermore, Jane's 'fierce speaking' against her 'hated and hating position' is couched in the language of consumption and nausea: 'something of vengeance I had tasted'; 'swallowing'; 'flavour'; 'gave me a sensation as if I had been poisoned' (*JE*, 47).

As with Anne Brontë's depiction of bird-murderers in *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Charlotte Brontë similarly employs the ill-use and

[26] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 182.

commodification of birds as illustrative of the inferior character of the Reed children. While John tortures chicks and pigeons, his sister, Eliza, relishes profiteering from her 'poultry' (*JE*, 38) and demonstrates a 'marked propensity for […] the vending of eggs and chickens' (*JE*, 38). Meanwhile, John and Eliza's sister, Georgina, adorns herself with 'faded feathers' (*JE*, 38). Plumage is a recurring motif in the novel that ostensibly communicates Jane's disgust at a bourgeoisie moral hypocrisy. At Lowood school, Mr Brocklehurst's daughters appear in 'grey beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes' (*JE*, 76), creating the effect of 'a cloud of silvery plumage' (*JE*, 77). Plumes once again prevail at Thornfield when Rochester's guests arrive, reiterating the correspondence between the commodification of birds and aristocratic moral decay. This dubious entourage announces its arrival at Thornfield amid a conspicuous profusion of birds' feathers, of 'fluttering veils and waving plumes' (*JE*, 189); and, 'as they flocked in' (*JE*, 194), they remind Jane 'of a flock of white plumy birds' (*JE*, 194). Blanche Ingram is described as 'infatuatedly pluming herself on success' (*JE*, 211). Furthermore, Lady Lynn's 'dark hair shone glossily under the shade of an azure plume' (*JE*, 195). Like the *Punch* images discussed in the introduction of this thesis, women metamorphose into the birds whose dead bodies they wear. These women are 'lively as larks' (*JE*, 199) and one of them 'chatters like a wren' (*JE*, 199). Rochester condescendingly bids two of them to 'return to your nest like a pair of doves, as you are' (*JE*, 233). These connections made between women and birds at Thornfield are fitting given the mansion's status as both a bird cage and rookery of avian restlessness. Furthermore, Jane's critique of plumage adorned women is not bird-centred. Brontë's project of employing plumage imagery is rather more concerned with foregrounding the injustices of class privilege than it is of protesting the loss of avian life. The novel's critique of plumage articulates Jane's sense of disenfranchisement and her distaste for ostentation and vulgarity; she does not register the avian victims of the plumage craze amidst her own plight. This is reiterated later at Thornfield when Jane refuses to accept elaborate clothing from Rochester, claiming that she would loath to become 'a jay in borrowed plumes' (*JE*, 291). 'Borrowing' plumes from murdered birds is not what Jane takes issue with. Rather, she refuses to share their cage.

In a further suggestion of the avian speciesism that underpins *Jane Eyre*, its heroine's humancentric distaste for profusions of plumage indicates Brontë's indebtedness to another famous avian naturalist – Bewick's near contemporary, John James Audubon, whose exploitative use of birds appears to surpass Bewick's. As outlined in a letter to her friend, Ellen Nussey, Brontë's curriculum of necessary

reading includes 'for natural history, […] Bewick, and Audubon'.[27] As Ronald Berman points out, the Brontë family owned a copy of all five volumes of Audubon's *Ornithological Biography* (1831-9) – a lesser remarked upon avian influence on the Brontës than Bewick.[28] In Audubon's introductory address to this series, he unabashedly charts his obsession with bird murder. Audubon, who consistently refers to birds as objects, relates the 'pleasure', 'enjoyment', and 'ecstasy' with which he 'ransacked the woods, the lakes, the prairies, and the shores of the Atlantic'.[29] He boasts that almost all of the thousands of birds he illustrated 'were killed by myself'.[30] For these so-called scientific endeavours, Audubon was revered by members of the literati, including Brontë's idol, Sir Walter Scott, who 'enrolled [Audubon] among their members'.[31] Audubon's lust for avian destruction is borne out by the countless portraits depicting him, very much the hunter, proudly wielding his instrument of bird annihilation in a manner that recalls Branwell Brontë as depicted in figure 12.[32]

[27] Letter dated 4 July 1834. See Charlotte Brontë, *Selected Letters*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5.
[28] Ronald Berman, 'Charlotte Brontë's Natural History', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 18 (1984), pp. 271-78, p. 272.
[29] John James Audubon, *Ornithological Biography*. See <www.gutenberg.org>, accessed 14 April 2020.
[30] Audubon, *Ornithological Biography*.
[31] Audubon, *Ornithological Biography*.
[32] Figures 17 and 18 are two examples among many portraits depicting Audubon with his hunting gun. It is interesting to note that these portraits span the adult life of Audubon, from the youthful Byronic 'hero' in figure 17, to the penetrative gaze of the jaded older man in figure 18. The Audubon brand clearly carries cache, a phenomenon that the National Audubon Society, founded in 1905, capitalises upon. However, in recent times, the society has attempted to rectify the incongruity between Audubon's destructive practises and the society's claim to ecological conservation. The society positions itself rather awkwardly as reparation for their hero, Audubon's, massacre. The Audubon Society claim that their 'mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds […] for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity', an endeavour they admit is at odds with the character of Audubon's life's work. Under the heading, 'The Audubon Ethic', it is acknowledged that he was 'in blood up to his elbows', 'trigger-happy', 'obsessed with shooting; far more birds fell to his gun than he needed for drawing or research or for food. He once said that it was not a really good day unless he shot a hundred birds'. See Roger Tory Peterson and Virginia Marie Peterson, *Audubon's Birds of America: The Audubon Society Baby Elephant Folio* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2005), p. 1. The instances of cruelty and destruction that Audubon inflicted upon birds on a large scale throughout his life are in league with the most deplorable acts of avian torture committed by characters in the three Brontë sisters' novels: Tom Bloomfield and his uncle, Arthur Huntingdon, John Reed, Heathcliff and Lockwood.

Fig. 17. John Syme, *John James Audubon*, 1826.

Fig. 18. George Peter Alexander Healy, *Portrait of John James Audubon*, 1838.

These images corroborate the connections, outlined in the introduction to this thesis, between the ornithologist's avarice for avian death-dealing in pursuit of furthering their status in learned circles. Berman detects Audubon's influence on the bird imagery of *Jane Eyre* with particular reference to Brontë's Thornfield plumage scene quoted above. Berman notes that

> in glancing back over Audubon, we see his evocative and semi-fictional passage on the lonely artist 'silently sitting in the corner of a crowded apartment, gazing on the flutterings of gaudy fans and the wavings of flowing plumes' (IV, p. 37). We recall Jane [Eyre] is the type of that silent, hidden artist: 'I sit in the shade – if any shade there be in this brilliantly lit apartment; the window-curtain half hides me'.[33]

Berman goes on to recognise that Brontë's account 'is in fact about the fluttering of many plumes'.[34] As with Brontë's use of Bewick, her apparent interest in Audubon aligns her critique of plumage with that of an obsessive bird-murderer.

Notwithstanding this seeming allegiance to Bewick and Audubon, Jane distinguishes her relationship to birds by feeding a starving robin with her own breakfast, insisting that she 'wanted the bird to be secure of its bread' (*JE,* 39). Whereas the Reeds consume birds, Jane feeds them. At one level, this incident serves Brontë's humancentric interest in demonstrating her heroine's moral superiority, a strategy employed by Anne Brontë in her depiction of Agnes Grey as discussed in the introduction. At another level, Jane's care for the hungry robin, a seemingly inconsequential detail in her life at Gateshead, is a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption because it creates a space in which to contemplate interspecies co-existence free from human tyranny. This latter element also correlates with the novel's alignment of Jane's oppression with that of birds.

At Lowood school, Jane acquires a new oppressor, Mr Brocklehurst, with his plume-adorned daughters, and the question of consumption in proximity to bird imagery continues to intervene. Journeying from Gateshead to Lowood, Jane maintains a loss of appetite, insisting that, in her distressing circumstances, 'few children can eat' (*JE,* 50), 'I had no appetite' (*JE,* 51), and that she was 'incapable of eating' (*JE,* 54). Upon arrival at Lowood, Jane begins to eat but this is associated with sickness and nausea: 'how glad I was to behold a prospect of getting something to eat! I was now nearly sick from inanition, having taken so little the day before' (*JE,* 57).

[33] Berman, 'Natural History', p. 217.
[34] Berman, 'Natural History', p. 276.

Describing her first meal at Lowood, Jane recalls that she was 'ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured a spoonful or two of my portion without thinking of its taste; but the first edge of hunger blunted, I perceived I had got in hand a nauseous mess' (*JE*, 55-6). Meals at Lowood, such as the mess of meat the pupils receive at church on Sundays, render Jane under nourished and compound her misery: 'nothing sustained me […] here I lay again crushed and trodden on' (*JE*, 80). When Jane's friend, Helen Burns, brings her food and coffee, and urges her to eat, Jane 'put both away from me, feeling as if a drop or a crumb would have choked me in my present condition' (*JE*, 80). Jane feels 'inexpressible sadness' and is overwhelmed by 'the impression of woe' (*JE*, 81).

Once the kindly teacher, Miss Temple, acknowledges Jane's 'grief' (*JE*, 82), the orphan's appetite returns. In a vegetarian tea-party with Helen and Miss Temple, Jane feasts on seed cake. Reference to seeds gives the impression that Miss Temple is feeding a hungry bird, and Jane's 'I nestled close to her' (*JE*, 94) certainly corroborates this suggestion of avian nourishment, aligning Jane with the starving robin whom she fed at the casement at Gateshead. This tea-party can be considered a feminist-vegetarian meal. Jane compares the seed cake to 'nectar and ambrosia' (*JE*, 85) – spiritually potent plant-based food revered by the goddesses of Greek mythology.[35] Of this vegetarian fare, Jane rejoices, 'we satisfied our famished appetites' with 'the refreshing meal' (*JE*, 85). With this vegetarian feast, the women interrupt Brocklehurst's disease-inducing dietary regimen. In so doing, the trio of women create a feminist-vegetarian utopian space, enacting the 'heresy of bodily self-culture' that characterised the nineteenth-century vegetarian movement.[36] Although this is merely a fleeting subversion of Brocklehurst's menu of suffering, it nonetheless provides a narrative space in which to imagine life beyond patriarchal oppression and gives rise, once more, to Jane's imaginative capacity for emancipation. During this feminist-vegetarian gathering, Jane's soul is awakened to 'the secrets of nature', 'of books', and 'stores of knowledge' (*JE*, 85). She reports that, 'on going to bed, I forgot to prepare in imagination the [illusory] supper of hot roast potatoes [and] feasted instead on the spectacle of ideal drawings' (*JE*, 87). She is subsequently able to imagine 'birds picking up ripe cherries, of wrens' nests enclosing pearl-like eggs' (*JE*, 87). Rather than dead birds and hungry robins, birds are now imagined in a state of natural

[35] Aphrodite consumed ambrosia and nectar 'to restore her strength, and to cleanse her wounds, after she was injured by Diomedes. In an interesting avian connection, ambrosia and nectar 'were delivered to Mount Olympus each morning by doves'. See *Greek Legends and Myths*, <greeklegendandmyths.com>, accessed 15 June 2020.
[36] Gregory, *On Victorians and Vegetarians*, p. 1.

abundance, feeding on ‘ripe cherries’ (*JE*, 87), and the comfortable nests contain ‘pearl-like eggs’ (*JE*, 87). In her final statement on the seed feast interruption, Jane makes an unequivocal vegetarian pronouncement: ‘better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith’ (*JE*, 87). Following this vegetarian interruption of Brocklehurst’s patriarchal tyranny, Jane’s capacity for radical revolt against pervading oppression persists. She is still, at Lowood, a Fury: ‘the fury of which [Helen] was incapable had been burning in my soul all day’ (*JE*, 86). Although at Lowood Jane is relatively verbally inconspicuous, expression of her restlessness is simply displaced since she admits that, ‘reckless and feverous, I wished the wind to howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamour’ (*JE*, 65).

Restless Rooks, Cawing Crows, and the Shrieking Condor: Articulating a Feminist-Vegetarian Consciousness

Upon Jane’s arrival, Thornfield Hall is marked as a sight of avian restlessness. Brontë’s description of Thornfield’s facade resembles Bewick’s engraving of ‘The Rook’, shown in figure 19, in which the bird stands in front of a substantial house set against ‘its woods and dark rookery’ (*JE*, 127). Surveying the hall’s facade, Jane notices that, ‘its grey front stood out well from the background of a rookery, whose cawing tenants were now on the wing: they flew over the lawn and grounds to alight in a great meadow’ (*JE*, 114).

Fig. 19. Thomas Bewick, *The Rook*, 1797.

With this, Brontë foregrounds the birds' clamouring, their potential for vehement expression of dissatisfaction. This, as Brontë wastes no time in establishing, is inextricably bound up with Bertha Rochester's proximity to the rookery. When Jane is led on a tour of the mansion's third storey and attics, she realises that she 'was now on a level with the crow-colony, and could see into their nests' (*JE*, 122).[37] It is in the vicinity of the cawing crow-colony, which is also associated with Thornfield's Bluebeard-esque corridor of incarceration, that Jane first unwittingly hears Bertha's cry:

> While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear. It was a curious laugh; distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped: the sound ceased, only for an instant; it began again, louder: for at first, though distinct, it was very low. It passed off in a clamorous peal that seemed to wake an echo in every lonely chamber; though it originated but in one. (*JE*, 122)

Jane's curiosity regarding the clamour is ignited, and she lingers over further vivid description, revealing its importance: 'the laugh was repeated in its low, syllabic tone, and terminated in an odd murmur […] the laugh was as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard' (*JE*, 123). Mrs Fairfax, who deceitfully attributes the noise to the servants, posits that, like the inhabitants of the rookery, 'they are frequently noisy together' (*JE*, 123). Bewick notes that 'birds of the crow kind' (*HBB* I, 70), such as rooks, are 'restless and noisy' (*HBB* I, 70). Thornfield's rookery is thus an avian site

[37] According to Wallace's symbolic reading, Jane's sighting of Thornfield's rookery implies that she has unwittingly glimpsed the Rochesters' 'marriage nest'. See 'Caged Eagles', p. 251. According to Bewick, birds of the crow family are, 'during the breeding time', 'jealous and watchful, and will rob each other when they can' (*HBB* I, 79). Furthermore, 'on the approach of an enemy, or of a stranger, they […] drive him away with repeated attacks' (*HBB* I, 70). Bewick's text is remarkably evocative of Bertha and Jane's relationship and this symbiosis is given added weight in light of Bertha's proximity to the level of the rookery as well as the fact that Jane first hears Bertha in the presence of the birds. Thornfield's crow-colony provides a range of symbolic meanings for Brontë's novel. Folkloric traditions relating to the rook and other 'birds of the crow kind' (*HBB* I, 70) employed by Brontë – ravens, crows, and jays – provide a rich symbolism correlating with their frequent appearances in the novel. This bird symbolism is clearly a significant aspect of Brontë's avian schema. Wallace notes that 'an occupied rookery was considered good luck when located near a large estate'. See Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 251. Thus, Jane's arrival at Thornfield is coded as auspicious. Rochester's later remark, that he appreciates Thornfield's 'old crow-trees' (*JE*, 162), certainly corroborates this symbolism. It is also, as Wallace suggests, symbolically plausible to associate the vociferous inhabitants of the rookery with the presence of Bertha, especially in light of Bewick's rookery description, which, he notes, 'are often the scenes of bitter contests; the new-comers are frequently driven away by the old inhabitants, their half-built nests torn in pieces, and the unfortunate couple forced to begin their work anew, in some more undisturbed situation' (*HBB* I, 79-80). This could not be a more accurate distillation of Jane's narrative.

of retaliation against subjugation. It is in the presence of these restless birds that Jane imagines emancipation and makes her feminist declaration:

> I climbed the three staircases, raised the trap-door of the attic, and having reached the leads, looked out afar over sequestered field and hill, and along dim skyline: that then I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit […]
>
> Who blames me? Many no doubt; and I shall be called discontented. I could not help it: the *restlessness* was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story, backwards and forwards. (*JE*, 125, my italics)

Jane's restlessness is articulated in the vicinity of the rookery, on the leads of the attics, and is further articulated on the third story corridor from whence, it later transpires, Bertha sounds her condor-esque wailings of despair. According to Bewick, birds of the crow family are 'easily tamed, and capable of being taught to […] obey their master' (*HBB* I, 70), a danger that both Jane and Bertha fall prey to in their relationship with Rochester to varying degrees.

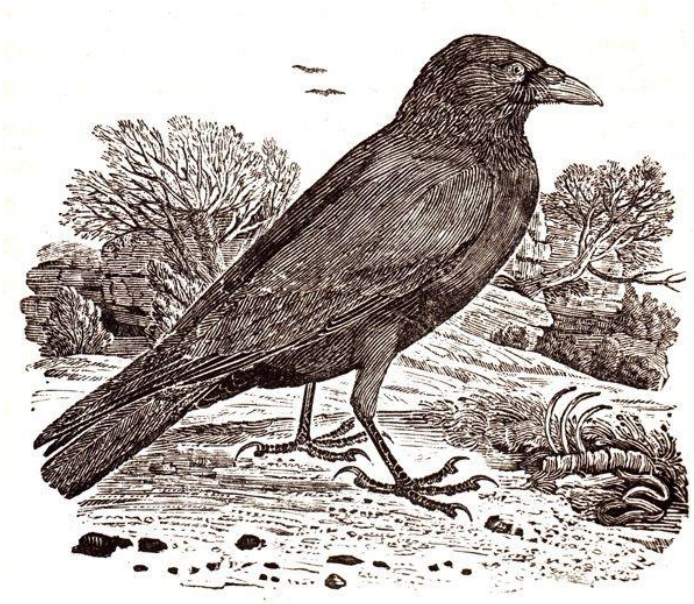

Fig. 20. Thomas Bewick, *The Crow*, 1797.

Following Jane's feminist yearnings by the crow-colony, her first unwitting encounter with Rochester occurs. In the moments preceding his appearance, Jane once again looks towards Thornfield's facade and notes that 'the grey and battlemented hall was the principal object in the vale below me; its woods and dark rookery rose against the west' (*JE*, 127). Even as Jane and Rochester meet, the crow-colony is

conspicuously present, foregrounding the central role of avian restlessness in their relationship. As Jane and Rochester's liaison develops, the vociferous inhabitants of the colony intervene at moments when Jane is most vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. During Rochester's bigamous proposal, for example, 'the rooks cawed, and blither birds sang' (*JE*, 289) and a crow is seen 'wheeling round the steeple' (*JE*, 322) on the morning of their wedding day. Resolved to leave Rochester upon her discovery of his marriage, birds of the crow family are present once again during Jane's departure from Thornfield. Upon fleeing, Jane decides that it is

> far better that crows and ravens - if any ravens there be in these regions - should pick my flesh from my bones, than that they should be prisoned in a workhouse coffin and moulder in a pauper's grave. (*JE*, 370)

In a reversal of the humancentric hierarchy of human-avian consumption, Jane would rather submit to being consumed by birds than become a consumed bird incarcerated in Rochester's gilded cage. Likewise, on her return to Thornfield, Jane notices the rookery:

> At last the woods rose; the rookery clustered dark; a loud cawing broke the morning stillness. Strange delight inspired me: on I hastened. […] and there were the court-yard walls - the back-offices: the house itself, the rookery still hid. (*JE*, 471)

Even as it is hidden, Jane is aware of the rookery. With the rooks' 'loud cawing' a 'strange delight inspired' (*JE*, 471) Jane. Furthermore, Jane fancies that the birds watch and judge her:

> the crows sailing overhead perhaps watched me while I took this survey. I wonder what they thought: they must have considered I was very careful and timid at first, and that gradually I grew very bold and reckless. […] 'What affectation of diffidence at first?' they might have demanded, 'What stupid regardlessness now?' (*JE*, 471)

Jane is compelled to wonder what the birds of the crow-colony are thinking. In this moment, the rooks shift from symbolic representations of Bertha's and Jane's restless yearnings proclaiming their angst to sentient birds. This imagining of a subjectivity for the crows is suggestive of the shared subjugated positions of Jane and Bertha. However, these rooks are imagined to reason within a humancentric framework – of Jane's perilous position as a woman in danger of falling prey to an oppressive system.

On the evening of Jane's encounter with the gypsy, in which the disguised Rochester instigates an increased intimacy with her, Bertha's restlessness reaches a new and intense peak that Jane interprets in avian terms:

> Good God! What a cry!
>
> The night – its silence – its rest, was rent in twain by a savage, a sharp, a shrilly sound that ran from end to end of Thornfield Hall.
>
> My pulse stopped: my heart stood still; my stretched arm was paralysed. The cry died, and was not renewed. Indeed, whatever uttered that fearful shriek could not soon repeat it: not the widest-winged condor on the Andes could, twice in succession, send out such a yell from the cloud shrouding his eyrie. The thing delivering such utterance must rest ere it could repeat the effort. (*JE*, 232)

Bertha's condor-like shrieking communicates unrest. Her condor's cry punctures the silence of Jane's own restlessness 'in the dead of night' (*JE*, 232) following Rochester's disguise as a gypsy. Jane's description of Bertha's avian outrage is remarkably similar to Jane's own Fury-esque revolt at Gateshead. Both are couched in bird imagery, both detail the auditory power of their respective outbursts with remarkably similar language; Bertha's condor utterance mirrors Jane's outbursts at Gateshead – during which she 'cried out in a savage, high voice' (*JE*, 46) – quoted above. As with Jane's outburst at Gateshead, Bertha's avian shriek is a retaliation against incarceration. This vociferous avian simpatico between Bertha and Jane intensifies as Jane's potential entrapment in Rochester's Bluebeard chamber increases.

Upon hearing Bertha's condor shrieking, Jane recognises in Bertha a fellow Fury. Jane's questioning of Bertha's behaviour – 'why had the Fury flown at him?' (*JE*, 237) – is reminiscent of the former's outburst when she flies at cousin John: 'What a fury to fly at Master John!' (*JE*, 18). Furies, as noted above, are winged goddesses who avenge the wrongs committed by man. The word 'fury' also refers to 'fierce passion, disorder or tumult of mind approaching madness; *esp.* wild anger, frenzied rage; also, a fit or access of such passion', 'a ferociously angry or malignant woman'.[38] Furies enjoy a literary tradition of startling noise; the shriek is most associated with a Bertha-esque laugh.[39] Thus, both Jane and Bertha are figured as bird women who, by their fury, articulate the wrongs of their patriarchal subjugation. As Lutwack points out, winged Furies 'killed men with their brazen beaks and claws, and from the sky

[38] 'Fury', *OED*, accessed 12 May 2020.
[39] 'Fury', *OED*, accessed 12 May 2020. 'So the poor Fury-haunted Wretch still seems to hear The dying Shrieks'. W. Somervile, *Chace*, iii, 468 (1735), cited in *OED*.

they rained down death with sharp feathers'.[40] Both Bertha and Jane use their claws to avenge their oppressors. The former attacks Richard Mason, inflicting a wound of torn flesh. Similarly, Jane admits

> I instantly turned against [cousin John], roused by the same sentiment of deep ire and desperate revolt which had stirred my corruption before, he thought better to desist, and ran from me uttering execrations and vowing I had burst his nose. I had indeed levelled at that prominent feature as hard a blow as my knuckles could inflict. (*JE*, 35)

Tellingly, John responds to Jane's Fury-like vengeance by claiming 'that nasty Jane Eyre had flown at him' (*JE*, 35-6). This mirrors Jane and Rochester's response to Bertha's restless bird retaliation: Jane sees her as a fellow Fury, whereas Rochester, her oppressor, emphasises her flight. In a hypothetical imagining of how he would treat Jane if she, like Bertha in his estimation, did prove 'mad', Rochester claims that 'if you flew at me as wildly as that woman did this morning, I would receive you in an embrace, at least as fond as it would be restrictive' (*JE*, 339), to which Elaine Showalter surmises that he would not treat her any differently than he does his current wife.[41] Rochester's insinuation of Jane's potential to become a Fury suggests his recognition of her shared status with Bertha as a vengeful bird-woman.[42] Bertha's seeming embodiment of this state haunts Jane and demonstrates the mirrored restlessness of the two disenfranchised women isolated in the patriarchal mansion. Bertha's persistent avian voice ignites Jane's curiosity, stirring her to question the hidden oppression at Thornfield: 'What creature was it, that, masked in an ordinary woman's face and shape, uttered the voice […] of a carrion-seeking bird of prey?' (*JE*, 237). Crucially, this leads Jane to question what lies behind Bertha's rage: 'why had the Fury flown at him?' This is one amongst nine questions that Jane asks herself regarding the secrets of oppression at Thornfield. Thus, Bertha's persistent avian cries awaken Jane's curiosity to decipher the mysteries of Rochester's Bluebeard chamber beside the rookery.

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[40] Lutwack, *Birds in Literature*, p. 242.

[41] Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago, 2009), p. 100. First published in 1978. Rochester's continued obsession with Jane and flight will be explored further in the chapter.

[42] For many readers, based on Showalter's, and Gilbert and Gubar's, influential scholarship of the late 1970s, Bertha represents Jane's repressed passions and sexuality, functioning as a double that warns of the fine line between honouring a passionate self and the self-preservation necessary to ward off subjection in nineteenth-century England.

When Rochester physically restrains Bertha on his and Jane's illegal wedding day, Jane witnesses how 'he mastered her arms […] he pinioned them behind her' (*JE*, 328). The double meaning of 'pinion' is indicative of the interrelationship between bird imagery and the gendered power dynamics at play throughout the novel. As a noun, 'pinion' is 'a bird's wing; esp. (chiefly poet. and rhetorical) the wing of a bird in flight. Also: the terminal segment of a bird's wing, bearing the primary flight feathers'.[43] As a verb, it means 'to bind or secure together the arms or legs of (a person); to restrain (a person), prevent the use of (the arms) with a tight hold; to shackle' as well as 'to prevent (a bird) from flying'.[44] This word, with its conflation of hindered bird flight and violent mastery, aligns Bertha with the entrapped bird whose constant attempts at flight are restricted by masculinist dominance. Thus, Bertha the 'carrion-seeking bird of prey' (*JE*, 237) is rather more prey than predator.

Stray and Inarticulate Birds

Bertha's various associations with noisy and vengeful birds is in contrast to Brontë's depiction of Jane as various species of benign birds. Whereas Jane figures Bertha as a bird agitating against disenfranchisement, Rochester likens Jane to a submissive dove: 'when I think of the thing which flew at my throat this morning, hanging its black and scarlet visage over the nest of my dove' (*JE*, 348). Rochester figures Bertha's Fury as a threat to Jane's livelihood rather than as a warning of shared oppression. These troubling avian personas surface when Jane is most susceptible to Rochester's mastery at Thornfield and in danger of following Bertha's fate. As Jane becomes ever more susceptible to Rochester's subjugation, her avian persona intensifies. From the vociferous birds of the cawing crow-colony and the shrieking condor, Thornfield gradually becomes an aviary of caged and mute birds. When Jane first arrives at Thornfield, she is stirred to feminist consciousness in the vicinity of the restless cawing tenants of the rookery and Bertha – the shrieking condor retaliating against oppression. Under Rochester's mastery, Jane is alternately figured as a stray, starving bird, a restless, caged bird, a mute nightingale, a dependent dove, and a docile linnet.

After attending the death of her aunt Reed, Jane conceives of her return to Thornfield as if she is a submissive bird reliant on Rochester's kindness:

[43] 'Pinion', *OED*, accessed 17 January 2017.
[44] 'Pinion', *OED*, accessed 17 January 2017.

> I knew there would be pleasure in meeting my master again; even though broken by […] the knowledge that I was nothing to him: but there was ever in Mr Rochester (so at least I thought) such a wealth of the power of communicating happiness, that to taste but of the crumbs he scattered to stray and stranger birds like me, was to feast genially. (*JE*, 275)

Jane's identification as a stray and strange bird subject to mastery and dependent on Rochester for sustenance accurately reflects the precarious position that Jane returns to at Thornfield. Coinciding with Jane's submissive position as a dependent at Thornfield, Bewick's dependent robin:

> haunts the dwelling of [man], and partakes in his humble fare; when the frost grows severe, and snow covers the ground [the robin] approaches the house, taps at the window with [its] bill, as if to entreat an asylum, […] and with a simplicity most delightful, hops round the house, picks up crumbs, and seems to make [herself] one of the family. (*HBB* I, 157)

Jane's reference to scattered crumbs is a coded re-invoking of the hungry robin whom she feeds as a child at Gateshead, only now Jane is the sustenance-seeking robin. Reference to the robin's haunting presence and her seeking of 'asylum' are strikingly evocative of Jane's shared status with the incarcerated Bertha. Allusions to Bewick's robin also suggest Jane's capacity to challenge this unequal dynamic: 'as soon as the young birds have attained their full plumage, they prepare for their departure […] thus changing their situation [they] perform their journey singly' (*HBB* I, 157-8).

Fig. 21. Thomas Bewick, *The Redbreast*, 1797.

This anticipates Jane's later departure from Thornfield. Before she is compelled to take flight, the dominating tendencies of Rochester intensify, and this is figured through Jane's association with other birds characterised as mute and submissive.

When Rochester relates, in a veiled manner, his maltreatment of Bertha, Jane's loss of voice is made explicit and is figured in avian terms:

> [Rochester] paused for an answer: and what was I to say? Oh, for some good spirit to suggest a judicious and satisfactory response! Vain aspiration! The west wind whispered in the ivy round me; but no gentle Ariel burrowed its breath as a medium of speech: the birds sang in the tree-tops; but their song, however sweet, was inarticulate. (*JE*, 246)

As Jane is rendered speechless, the inarticulate birds are in marked contrast to the cawing crows and shrieking condor that protest against restlessness and entrapment. This foreshadows Jane's diminishing voice under Rochester's dominion. Birdsong, and the suspension of it, comes to play a significant role in the representation of Jane's diminishing power during her liaison with Rochester. Jane hears 'a nightingale warbling in a wood half a mile off' (*JE*, 279) and Rochester mirrors back: 'Jane, do you hear that nightingale singing in the wood? Listen!' (*JE*, 283). In the moments before Rochester's proposal, Jane remarks 'the nightingale's song was then the only voice of the hour: in listening to it, I again wept' (*JE*, 285). In nature, the nightingale is 'noted for the melodious song of the male', but the female is mute.[45] Encapsulating the unequal terms of their relationship, in which Rochester has the power of speech and Jane is increasingly silenced, the male bird continues to sing and the female remains mute. In between Jane and Rochester's references to the nightingale, she relates: 'though my tongue is sometimes prompt enough to answer, there are times when it sadly fails me' (*JE*, 280). Jane's staccato speech, occurring alongside the 'inarticulate' (*JE*, 246) birds, corresponds with Adams's conception of the narrative vegetarian interruption, often characterised by 'stammering, pauses, inarticulateness, or confusion in those who are usually in control'.[46]

Immediately after Jane's stunted speech, Rochester points out the song of the nightingale, the emblem of the Philomela rendered silent. Brontë's nightingale recalls the tale of why the nightingale sings and the Greek myth of Tereus's rape of Philomela

[45] 'Nightingale', *OED*, accessed 23 January 2017.
[46] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 182.

as told by Ovid.[47] Wallace confirms that 'Charlotte Brontë was familiar with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as we know by her letters'.[48] The myth of Philomela recounts Tereus's rape of his wife's sister, Philomela. When she refuses to be silenced, and vows, Fury-like, to avenge herself, Tereus severs her tongue and abandons her. Philomela sends her sister Procne, Tereus's wife, a tapestry in which she has woven the narrative of his wrongdoing, and the two sisters convene to exact revenge: Procne murders and boils her and Tereus's son, Itys, tricking her husband into feasting on the boy, then presenting Itys's severed head as proof of Tereus's familial cannibalism. Enraged, Tereus pursues the sisters, who escape by transforming into a nightingale and a swallow. This avian-related myth, as with that of the Furies discussed above, mirrors Jane and Bertha's shared exploited avian status under Rochester's roof. Various versions of the Philomela myth have depicted Philomela and Procne alternately as the nightingale, although Ovid's rendering figures Philomela as the nightingale. Although the nightingale's song has become a literary icon, it is rooted in Ovid's tale of an exploited, silenced bird-woman.[49] Bewick refers to Milton's Philomela in his poem, 'Il Penseroso'. Brontë was no doubt familiar with this poem through her reading of both Bewick and Milton. In his bird book, Bewick quotes the following stanzas from Milton:

> And the mute silence hist along,
> 'Lest Philomel will deign a song,
> In her sweetest, saddest plight,
> Soothing the rugged brow of night,
> […]
> Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
> Most musical, most melancholy!
> Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
> I woo to hear thy even song.[50]

[47] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. David Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004), Book VI, pp. 230-43. Wallace recognises this connection. See Wallace, 'Caged Birds', pp. 253-54.
[48] Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 254. Wallace may be referring to Brontë's allusion to 'Pygmalion's Statue', in a letter to Hartley Coleridge, dated 10 December 1840. See Brontë, *Selected Letters*, p. 26.
[49] The literary nightingale's song is synonymous with a sorrowful lament in the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Thackeray, all of whom Brontë was familiar with, further suggesting a likelihood that she was aware of the Greek myth that these authors transform. Brontë's letter to Ellen Nussey, dated 4 July 1834, evidences Brontë's reading of Shakespeare, Milton, and Thackeray. See Brontë, *Selected Letters*, pp. 4-5.
[50] John Milton's 'Il Penseroso' (1654), quoted in Bewick, *HBB* I, p. 144.

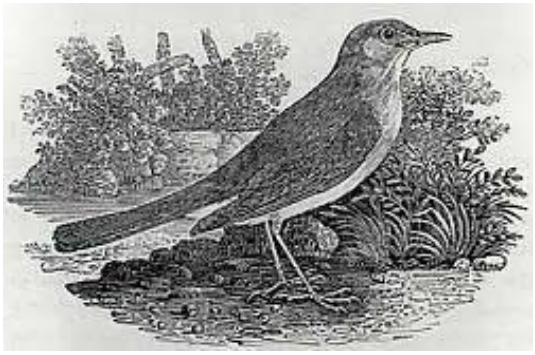

Fig. 22. Thomas Bewick, *The Nightingale*, 1797.

The song of the nightingale that accompanies Rochester's proposal alludes to a silenced woman with a mutilated tongue, wronged by man. If Jane acquiesces to Rochester now, she would hardly be able to affect the avian protests made by his other victim, Bertha. Jane would be rendered a caged bird rather than an avenging Fury or a consciousness-raising cawing crow. The myth of Philomela also associates the nightingale with adultery, so the presence of the bird during Rochester's proposal is an indication of Bertha's exploitation.[51] The nightingale is indicative of the gendered power dynamic that threatens to render Jane mute; it reflects the adulterous nature of Rochester's marriage proposal which imperils both Jane and Bertha.

The Caged Bird, the Linnet, and the Dove: Speciesist Metaphors?

The caged bird metaphor employed by Brontë betokens the interdependence between the oppression of women and the oppression of birds. Rochester's declaration – that he sees in Jane 'the glance of a curious sort of bird through the close-set bars of a cage: a vivid, restless, resolute captive is there; were it but free, it would soar cloud-high' (*JE*, 158) – is predicated upon this bird-woman intersection. Rochester reiterates this caged bird metaphor four times throughout the novel, admitting that he sees in Jane 'an eager bird' who makes 'every now and then a restless movement' (*JE*, 349), later urging 'Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation' (*JE*, 284). The reiteration of restlessness keeps Jane's shared status with Bertha and the restless rooks in play. The suggestion of Jane's 'wild, frantic' 'desperation' (*JE*, 284) echoes Shefer's observation that 'the term "volatile bird" as applied to women has a long tradition in English Literature'.[52] Shefer gives

[51] Tereus's rape of his wife's sister is adulterous. Wallace also notes the nightingale's association with adultery. See Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 254.
[52] Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal', p. 437.

an example from Samuel Richardson's novel, *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* (1747), in which Lovelace describes the woman he has entrapped as an 'ensnared volatile'.[53] We know that Brontë read Richardson – in fact, his novel, *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) is mentioned in chapter one of *Jane Eyre* (*JE*, 14) amidst Jane's descriptions of the contents of Bewick's *Birds* – and it is plausible that Lovelace's metaphor of avian entrapment is a precursor to Rochester and Jane's exchanges that figure Jane as a caged, netted, and ensnared bird.

Shefer's research on eighteenth-and nineteenth-century visual culture identifies the trope of the woman with the caged bird as a symbol relating to sexuality: 'let the bird escape [from the cage] and you have the loss of virginity'.[54] In light of Shefer's insights, Rochester's speciesist appraisal of Jane's oppression speaks to sexual repression, which in this novel is difficult to disentangle from Jane's status as a potential mistress – a position that she forcefully rejects. The suggestion of sexual violation is furthered in another of Rochester's bird cage metaphors, in which he insists

> Whatever I do with its cage, I cannot get at it – the savage, beautiful creature! If I tear, if I rend the slight prison, my outrage will only let the captive loose. Conquerer I might be of the house, but the inmate would escape to heaven before I could call myself posessor of its clay dwelling-place. (*JE*, 357).

With Rochester's declaration, Brontë reiterates the double standard that renders Jane's imprisonment in the patriarchal house a state at once vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual repression. Whereas Rochester urges Jane to emerge from the cage – indicating his project of coaxing her into a sinful existence as his mistress – Jane renounces the caged bird association: 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you' (*JE*, 284). Whilst an empowering declaration that circumvents the sexual exploitation suggested by the caged bird metaphor, Jane's famous proto-feminist retort perpetuates the speciesism underpinning Rochester's symbolism. When Jane asserts her freedom from bondage, the literal bird in the cage, whose entrapment the metaphor is predicated upon, remains an absent referent in the terms employed by Adams.

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[53] Cited in Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal', p. 437. Remarkably, as Shefer also points out in another article, Lovelace explains that 'the capturing of a woman and bringing her into submission is for him the same as when he as a boy engaged his energies in bird catching: "We begin, when boys, with birds and when grown up, go on to women."'. See Elaine Shefer, 'The "Bird in the Cage" in the History of Sexuality: Sir John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1 (1991), pp. 446-80, p. 468. This echoes the Brontë sisters' bird-trapping boys who grow up to become abusers of women.

[54] Shefer, 'The "Bird in the Cage"', p. 448.

As Jane's voice diminishes during her month-long courtship with Rochester, she begins to associate her fiancé with a bird of prey. As she witnesses 'his full falcon-eye flashing', Jane stands 'in peril' (*JE*, 305). This is the first time Jane mirrors back bird imagery to Rochester, and it foreshadows his later dishevelled avian appearance at Ferndean.[55] Jane's reverse anthropomorphic description of Rochester as a predatory bird appears as she becomes ever more evasive during their courtship. Rochester's attempts at counteraction also revert to reverse avian anthropomorphism. Under these changing conditions, Jane relinquishes her 'submission and turtle-dove sensibility' (*JE*, 307). Rochester refers to Jane as 'my dove' (*JE*, 348), a bird that he previously enlists as a reference to the Eshton girls when dismissively bidding them to retreat back to their rooms 'like the doves that you are' (*JE*, 233), shielding them from the realities of female subjugation at Thornfield. In conjunction with this use of the dove, Bewick's doves are thought to be 'the willing attendants on man, and depend on his bounty, seldom leaving the dwellings provided for them, and only roaming abroad to […] procure subsistence (*HBB* I, 314). This characterisation corresponds with the 'angel in the house' as conceived by Brontë's contemporary, Coventry Patmore, and reveals the kind of relationship that Rochester seeks to establish with Jane. Contrarily, Brontë's use of the dove is also suggestive of Jane's capacity and determination to reach beyond the confines imposed upon her at Thornfield, as Bewick further states:

> but when we consider the lightness of their bodies, the great strength of their wings, and the amazing rapidity of their flight, it is a matter of wonder that they should submit even to a partial domestication, or occupy those tenements fitted up for the purpose of breeding and rearing their young. It must be observed, however, that in these they live rather as voluntary captives, or transient guests, than as permanent or settled inhabitants, enjoying a considerable portion of that liberty they so much delight in on the slightest molestation they will sometimes abandon their mansion with all its conveniences, and seek a solitary lodgement […] and some ornithologists assert, that they will even take refuge in the woods, where, impelled by instinct, they resume their native manners. (*HBB* I, 314).

Bewick's stipulation that his dependent dove delights in liberty and is prepared, if molested, to eschew the benefits of voluntary captivity correspond with Jane's impending flight from Thornfield.

[55] Apart from one other instance, in which she compares him to, in contrast to Richard Mason's 'sleek gander', 'a fierce falcon' (*JE*, 215).

Fig. 23. Thomas Bewick, *Rock Dove*, 1797.

Rochester also likens Jane to 'a linnet [that] had hopped to my foot and proposed to bear me on its tiny wing' (*JE*, 351). Significantly, this comparison occurs when Rochester senses Jane's resolve to flee. Of the linnet Bewick notes that 'its manners are gentle, and its disposition docile' (*HBB* I, 255-6). This corresponds with the possibility that Jane will bend to Rochester's capacity to dominate. In contrast, Bewick's linnet also reflects Jane and Bertha's vocal avian simpatico and the former's potential to resist compliance to Rochester's scheme. Bewick posits that the linnet 'easily adopts the song of other birds, when confined with them, and in some instances it has been taught to pronounce words with great distinctness' (*HBB* I, 255). This speaks of Jane's potential to mirror Bertha's vocal retaliation, to maintain a distinct voice, rather than to capitulate to a silenced bird woman status and become instead a Philomela. Furthermore, Bewick's characterisation of the linnet also speaks to the issue of entrapment and freedom that determine the strained nature of Jane and Bertha's vocal output:

> but this substitution of imperfect and forced accents, which have neither charms nor beauty, in the room of the free and varied modulations of uninstructed nature, is a perversion of its talents. (*HBB* I, 255-56)

Bewick continues, 'their assemblage with other kinds of […] birds is a sure presage of the coming storm' (*HBB* I, 256).

Fig. 24. Thomas Bewick, *The Mountain Linnet*, 1797.

Rochester likens Jane to a bird with a yielding nature, yet when rendered pliable, the bird is likely to forfeit her charm. This is particularly related to the linnet's 'imperfect […] accents' (*HBB* I, 255-56). This is the very sentiment that Rochester grapples with when he admits that Jane must fly to him of her own free will in the caged bird metaphors quoted above. As soon as she leaves Thornfield, Jane begins to question her avian persona, stating that 'birds began singing in brake and copse: birds were faithful to their mates; birds were emblems of love. What was I?' (*JE*, 360). She affirms: 'I was a human being, and had a human being's wants: I must not linger where there was nothing to supply them' (*JE*, 364-65). As with her earlier denouncement of a caged bird status, Jane asserts her humanness by denouncing an avian persona, but this is complicated when she deems herself 'impotent as a bird with both wings broken', who 'still quivered its shattered pinions in vain attempts to seek' (*JE*, 364) Rochester. While the recurrence of the avian word 'pinion' recalls Rochester's physical restraining of Bertha, flight for both Jane and Bertha is a necessary escape from entrapment that renders them avian-like.[56]

The Hunting Lodge

After her stint at Morton and Moor House, where she is likened to 'a half-frozen bird' (*JE*, 391), Jane is 'once more on the road to Thornfield […] like a messenger-pigeon flying home' (*JE*, 470). Jane recalls the precarious avian power dynamics at Thornfield from which she fled full of 'revengeful fury' (*JE*, 471). As she does so, Thornfield's 'woods rose; the rookery clustered dark; a loud cawing broke the morning stillness […] and there [was] the house itself, the rookery' (*JE*, 471). The rookery regains its

[56] Jane's 'flight' leads to near death by starvation. Bertha's 'flight' leaves her 'smashed on the pavement […] dead as the stones on which her brains and blood were scattered' (*JE*, 476).

former prominence in Jane's imagination as the avian inhabitants resume their conspicuous cawing. Thus, the reader is reminded that Jane returns to a site of uproarious avian restlessness. Although Jane does not know it yet, Rochester's continual efforts to still Bertha's and Jane's collective avian clamour is achieved with Bertha's suicidal plummet during which she makes her final shriek.

At Ferndean, Jane encounters Rochester in bird form whose

> hair was still raven-black […] but in his countenance I saw a change: that looked desperate and brooding – that reminded me of some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson. (*JE*, 479)[57]

Later, Jane observes 'your hair reminds me of eagles' feathers; whether your nails are grown like birds' claws or not, I have not yet noticed' (*JE*, 484-85). Following this, Jane declares that 'it is time some one undertook to rehumanize you' (*JE*, 484). This focus on denouncing animality plays into the Enlightenment conception of human supremacy, specifically the Kantian notion 'that the human becomes truly human [and therefore superior] by rising above its animality'.[58] Brontë follows this Kantian premise by 'judging animality to be something that must be overcome in order to enter a distinctly human realm'.[59] Rochester's animality expresses a diminished power, a slippage on the hierarchy of beings. As an 'independent woman' (*JE*, 483), Jane's humanity is affirmed when Rochester equates Jane with the human rather than the avian: 'you are altogether a human being, Jane? You are certain of that?', to which Jane answers: 'I conscientiously believe so, Mr Rochester' (*JE*, 486). Their shared interest in establishing humanity is fleeting as the couple gradually resume their reverse avian anthropomorphic characteristics, albeit in a revised form that reflects their new power dynamic. Whereas Jane attempts to re-assume her former subservient avian persona, Rochester's avian reverse anthropomorphic appraisals of Jane affirm her independence. Jane figures herself as a sparrow, subservient to the eagle: 'the water stood in my eyes to hear this avowal of his dependence: just as a royal eagle, chained to a perch, should be forced to entreat a sparrow to become its purveyor' (*JE*, 488).

[57] Wallace acknowledges Rochester's connection to birds of prey, especially the falcon and eagle, and draws the comparison between Brontë's Rochester and Bewick's birds of prey. Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 254.
[58] Derek Ryan, *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 50.
[59] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 51.

Bewick's sparrow is 'subservient', 'eminently serviceable' (*HBB* I, 246) and is a creature 'inferior in rank' compared with the 'superior intelligence […] of man' (*HHB* I, 247). Particularly pertinent to Jane's usefulness as a sparrow to Rochester is the birds' capacity, according to Bewick, to uplift a man's soul towards God: 'let [man] endeavor to imitate [the sparrow's] cheerfulness, and lift up his heart in grateful effusions to HIM' (*HBB* I, 247).[60] By imitating Bewick's sparrow, Jane is once again submitting to Rochester's mastery.

Fig. 25. Thomas Bewick, *The Sparrow*, 1797.

Despite Jane's willing avian submission, Brontë demonstrates Rochester's capacity to respect Jane's newfound status as 'an independent woman' (*JE*, 483). Curiously, this is communicated through bird imagery. In a reversal of the Bluebeard tradition, in which the husband departs on unknown business, much like the earlier Rochester, while his wife remains housebound and ignorant of her husband's whereabouts, Rochester now worries over Jane's possible flight – 'you will fly, too; as your sisters have all fled before you' (*JE*, 482). Rochester continues to associate Jane's wanderings with flight, as when referring to her departure: 'you had fled from Thornfield' (*JE*, 488). Flight is now reformulated as liberating for Jane, while representing uncertainty and diminished control for Rochester.

Furthermore, Rochester likens Jane to a bird with a conspicuous voice:

> Oh, you are indeed there, my sky-lark! […] I heard one of your kind an hour ago, singing high over the wood: but its song had no music for me […] All the

[60] Rochester declares 'I began to see and acknowledge God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconcilement to my Maker' (*JE*, 495).

> melody on earth is concentrated in my Jane's tongue to my ear (I am glad it is not naturally a silent one). (*JE*, 488)

The skylark foregrounds Jane's voice as she becomes a re-voiced Philomela. Jane is now the skylark, with a more strident voice than the sparrow, cooing dove, and hungry robin. Bewick's skylark is

> eminently conspicuous […] instead of retiring to woods and deep recesses, or lurking in thickets, where it may be heard without being seen, they are generally seen abroad in the fields; it is the only bird that chaunts on the wing, and while it soars […] pours forth the most melodious strains, which may be distinctly heard at an amazing distance. (*HBB* I, 194)

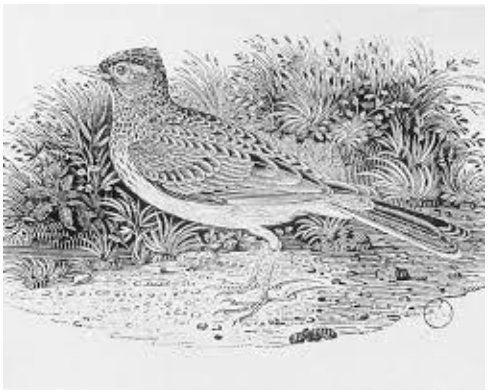

Fig. 26. Thomas Bewick, *The Lark*, 1797.

In contrast to Jane's earlier association with the linnet, whose song is compromised by enforced entrapment, the skylark figures as a symbol of liberation in its conspicuous, insistent voice and soaring flight. This denotes the value of Jane's voice in their relationship as Rochester eventually embraces her metamorphosis from the 'docile' (*HBB* I, 255) linnet to the vigorous skylark. Notwithstanding this, Bewick articulates a caveat regarding the skylark's flight, relating that

> it rises in the air almost perpendicularly and by successive height; its decent, on the contrary, is in an oblique direction, unless it is threatened by birds of prey, or attracted by its mate, and on these occasions it drops like a stone. (*HBB* I, 196)

This warning reflects Jane's situation at Ferndean: Rochester recognises her empowered voice and flight, yet his characterisation as the bird of prey that both

threatens and attracts Jane the skylark is surely indicative of her perilous position at Ferndean and insinuates the persistent threat to her newfound emancipation.

Of the eagle, Bewick notes that

> their dispositions are fierce, and their nature is untractable; cruel and unsociable, they avoid the haunts of civilization, and retire to the most gloomy and wild recesses, where they can enjoy, in solitude, the fruits of their depredations. (*HBB* I, 1)

Fig. 27. Thomas Bewick, *The Golden Eagle*, 1797.

Bewick goes on to describe 'the magnanimity, the strength and the forbearance […] hence the Eagle is said to extend his dominion over the birds' (*HBB* I, 6-7). Furthermore, eagles prey on smaller birds, and, of their mate, Bewick notes, they 'are always seen close together, or at a short distance from each other' (*HBB* I, 7). In his physical description, Bewick, in terms reminiscent of Jane's earlier physiognomic descriptions of Rochester, describes eagles as possessing 'eyes large, deep sunk, and covered by a projecting brow; the iris […] sparkles with uncommon lustre' (*HBB* I, 22). The significance of Rochester's diminished sight is further drawn out in light of Wallace's assertion that 'in nature, birds of prey rely on their sharp eyesight to hunt,

and therefore, a blinded eagle is little better than a dead eagle'.[61] Bewick also describes the eagle's 'penetrating eye' (*HBB* I, 1) which corresponds with Rochester's 'full falcon-eye' (*JE*, 305). Although Rochester's diminished sight suggests a taming of the formidable characteristics that Bewick identifies with the eagle's reputation, the suggestion that he feeds on the eggs of smaller birds and that Jane, who is herself characterised as numerous small birds, offers to bring him 'an egg at the least' (*JE*, 487), rather complicates his portrayal as a redeemed and humbled figure in the closing section of the novel. Bird imagery reveals that, despite Jane's assertions of marital contentment, the subtle complexities of their gendered power dynamic remain unresolved and unstable. In his disheveled, psychologically and financially damaged state, there nonetheless lurks the suggestion that Rochester might yet embody the predatory nature of the eagle. After all, despite the redemptive capacity of the misfortunes he endures, he remains a bird of prey – a particular threat to Jane's new avian association with the skylark. With little Jane 'perched', albeit 'pertinaciously on his knee' (*JE*, 492), Rochester devours, on her insistence, the eggs of the smaller birds associated with her. Furthermore, his eyesight, so crucial to the bird of prey's successful 'dominion over the other birds' (*HBB* I, 7), is eventually restored.

Finally, Ferndean, in which Jane and Rochester live out their married life, is a hunting lodge and site of avian consumption. One of the first things Brontë tells us about Ferndean is that Rochester's 'father had purchased the estate for the sake of the game covers', that it had 'some two or three rooms fitted up for the accommodation of the squire when he went there in the season to shoot. To this house [Jane] came' (*JE*, 478). This is surely no safe marriage 'nest' for a small bird like Jane. Compounding this, as mentioned above, Jane, as Rochester's 'purveyor' (*JE*, 488), insists on bringing 'an egg at the least' (*JE*, 487) to him who resembles the eagle, known to feed on smaller birds such as those whom Jane is likened to. With the egg's Bluebeard connotation, this re-invokes Jane's submission to her 'master'. On their wedding day, Jane and Rochester commence their married life at Ferndean by partaking in avian consumption. Jane makes three separate references to the 'the pair of chickens roasting at the fire' (*JE*, 498) that Mary, their servant, prepared for them. *Jane Eyre* ends with the heroine, Jane, now a skylark, settled in a hunting lodge, with a bird of prey as her mate, complicit in her own precarious position. Jane's complicity in bird consumption and exploitation belies her egalitarian marriage. Thus, through bird symbolism, there

[61] Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 254.

is the suggestion that the power dynamic existing between the couple remains unresolved. The novel is framed by the presence of dead, consumed birds; it begins with the avian corpses in Bewick's book and ends amidst avian death in the hunting lodge, Ferndean.

Conclusion

No animal is more frequently evoked or more fundamentally integral to the depictions of human power and oppression in *Jane Eyre* than the wide array of bird species that permeate the whole text. In particular, the novel's three predominant figures – Jane, Rochester, and Bertha – come to embody the Bewickian anthropomorphic qualities of the birds they are likened to. When the intertextual parallels between Bewick and Brontë are drawn out, we come to see how Brontë's revisionary Bewickian avian reverse anthropomorphism encodes her text with a complex gender politics that is both demonstrative of a yearning restlessness while it re-codifies gendered oppression and speciesist ideology.

Brontë's bird imagery is central to Jane's capacity to agitate against her own oppression in a society that works against women. Bird imagery ratifies her indomitable will to confront injustices and discrimination and enables her to articulate her retaliation. Avian imagery articulates the vulnerable position of women in Victorian culture. It reveals the male-assumed supremacy of John Reed, Mr Brocklehurst, and Rochester, and provides a symbolic means by which Bertha and Jane can articulate their restlessness and their yearning for retaliation against their confinement in a cage. The pervading theme of restless bird-women, whose plights are expressed through conspicuously cacophonous birds, is a haunting presence throughout *Jane Eyre* that is alternately sounded and silenced. Brontë's avian schema demonstrates a recognition of a shared exploited status between women and birds. It comments on gendered power dynamics, much of which addresses Bertha and Jane's subjugation under an exploitative patriarchal dominance. At moments, particularly during scenes at Gateshead and Lowood, Brontë includes what I read here as feminist-vegetarian interruptions. However, despite Brontë's and her protagonist's evident interest in avian life, *Jane Eyre* does not concern itself with the plight of the birds themselves. Rather, the novel reveals a degree of complicity in the exploitation of birds that Jane, as a child and a woman, endeavours to seek freedom from. Bewick's and Audubon's natural histories, both sources for Brontë, are documents of avian death. They generate symbolic meanings about human protagonists to produce

anthropocentric, anthropomorphic depictions of nonhuman animals that perpetuate humancentric speciesist ideology while they obscure the literal birds being depicted. Notwithstanding this, *Jane Eyre* demonstrates a keen perception of an interconnection between gendered oppression and avian exploitation that will continue to reverberate throughout the Brontës' and du Maurier's cannons with their persistent avian restlessness.

Chapter Two: *Wuthering Heights*

Like *Jane Eyre* (1847), birds pervade Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).[1] The novel lays out a complex mesh of bird symbolism and literal avian suffering under humans' assumed dominion. Humans are revealed to share the beastliness of other animals yet surpass all other creatures in their capacity for excessive and arbitrary cruelty and violence. Brontë's consistent associations between marriageable women characters and the literal birds habitually annihilated by the novel's male suitors uncovers the intersections between an entrenched and systematic disregard for avian life and the objectification and oppression of women. *Wuthering Heights* presents all of the suitors of bird-loving restless women as perpetrators of bird cruelty. Aspects of the novel's richness and intensity are achieved through the interplay between the principal protagonists' symbolic associations with birds and their annihilation of literal birds. From the beginning of Nelly Dean's tale, we are told that this is the story of a 'cuckoo' (*WH*, 64), Heathcliff, and 'an unfledged dunnock' (*WH*, 64), Hareton Earnshaw, both of whom are themselves bird murderers.[2] As a restless bird-woman, Catherine Earnshaw's marriage to Edgar Linton ends in premature death amidst a profusion of 'game' birds' feathers, and her sister-in-law, Isabella Linton, is likened to an array of exploited birds during her disastrous marriage to Heathcliff. As Catherine Linton inherits her mother, Catherine's, affinity with birds, we come to see how both avian imagery and the depiction of male cultures of avian violence are fundamental to the presentation of interspecies relationships and gendered power dynamics.[3]

In this chapter, I will examine Brontë's interest in the male violence inflicted upon birds in conjunction with the depiction of bird-women's radical dissent. I do this by foregrounding successive narrative interruptions that signal a feminist-vegetarian consciousness awake to the restoral of the avian absent referent. I will consider the extent to which the exploited birds in Brontë's novel are signifiers of their own oppression as well as that of bird-women protagonists. My analysis is concerned with the extraordinary lengths the novel goes to, like *Jane Eyre*, in reimagining, without fully resolving, gender relations while it destabilises interspecies power dynamics

[1] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996). Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Toronto: Broadview, 2007). Henceforward *WH*.
[2] Newman notes that the dunnock is a 'hedge-sparrow, a small black bird'. See Newman, ed., Brontë, *WH*, p. 64.
[3] Henceforward the older Catherine will be referred to as Catherine and the younger as Cathy.

predicated upon hu*man*s' assumed supremacy. To begin with, I consider the interconnected nature of homosocial cultures of cruelty and dominance over birds and women espoused by the novel's men – Mr Lockwood, Heathcliff, Edgar, Linton Heathcliff, and Hareton. I then turn to analysis of the novel's three bird-loving women – Catherine, Isabella, and Cathy – and determine the extent to which their shared status with birds as victims of cultures of cruelty perpetuated by the men who ensnare them activates a feminist-vegetarian consciousness and a restoral of the avian absent referent.

A cluster of journal articles examine the significance of animals, animality, and animal cruelty in *Wuthering Heights*, in which the dog and horse receive a fair coverage. Significantly, birds are marginalised despite their arguably greater role in the novel. Nonetheless, this growing field of criticism provides insightful approaches for reading and understanding the significance of birds, particularly those which acknowledge the 'literal' animal. Lisa Surridge's study of animals and violence in *Wuthering Heights* argues that Brontë refutes nineteenth-century humancentric assumptions about nonhuman animals, revealing cultures of ownership and control over property and humans.[4] Although Graeme Tytler views dogs, cats, and horses as the most important animals in *Wuthering Heights*, his argument for the essential humanism of the novel briefly alludes to some of its more critically neglected bird scenes.[5] Conversely, Stevie Davies argues that Brontë 'was an anti-humanist, or post-humanist in an anthropocentric world'.[6] In a study that outlines the emerging animal rights movement in conjunction with *Wuthering Heights*, Ivan Kreilkamp offers readings of numerous bird episodes involving Heathcliff as a 'test case for the human treatment of animals'.[7] Focusing on notions of antipathy, Isabella Cooper's study gestures towards a range of avian episodes.[8] However, read within the broader context of animality, their avian specificity is not considered. Ivonne Defant situates the role of nature in the novel in its pre-Darwinian, pre-Industrial context.[9] Defant includes biographical evidence for Brontë's avian encounters, as well as an analysis of

[4] Lisa Surridge, 'Animals and Violence in *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 24 (1999), pp. 161-73.
[5] Graeme Tytler, 'Animals in *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 27 (2002), pp. 121-30.
[6] Stevie Davies, *Emily Brontë: Heretic* (London: Women's Press, 1994; 1999), p. 111.
[7] Ivan Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18 (2005), pp. 87-110, p. 97.
[8] Isabella Cooper, 'The Sinister Menagerie: Animality and Antipathy in *Wuthering Heights*, 40 (2015), pp. 252-62.
[9] Ivonne Defant, 'Inhabiting Nature in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 42 (2017), pp. 37-47, p. 42.

'Catherine's scene of the pillow', which departs from previous, human-centred, readings. This bird feathered pillow scene has attracted much attention – the critical history of which will be engaged with as the arguments become relevant to the main body of the argument. It suffices to say at this point that this chapter diverges from typically humancentric, non-avian specific readings offered thus far.

Maggie Berg's examination of gender in her study of 1996, *The Writing in the Margin,* frequently draws upon the novel's bird symbolism, particularly the motif of the plundered nest.[10] Similarly, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's chapter dedicated to *Wuthering Heights* in *The Madwoman in the Attic,* briefly alludes to numerous avian-related scenes.[11] Two more recent studies dedicated to bird imagery restrict analysis to one aspect of the novel's myriad avian symbolism: Steve Lutkis examines the recurring motif of the devastated nest, in conjunction with Sophocles's *Antigone,* as a signifier of a dissenting feminist response to a 'constraining social order';[12] and Joseph Carroll explores the cuckoo metaphor within the framework of Darwinian literary theory.[13] Birds in *Wuthering Heights* are widely acknowledged as integral to readings of the novel. However, as Kathleen Anderson and Heather R. Lawrence identify in relation to *Jane Eyre,* these extensive, yet disparate commentaries, while confirming the significance of birds, reveal the need for a holistic, sustained analysis of its avian symbolism in tandem with the novel's interest in human cruelty towards literal birds.[14] This chapter addresses the relative absence of sustained scholarship on this subject.

Departing from existing scholarship, this chapter foregrounds the numerous avian episodes in *Wuthering Heights* that are concerned with eating, or refusing to eat, birds. Heathcliff gifts Lockwood a brace of grouse; Catherine refuses to eat the wing of a goose; Edgar renders his wife, Catherine, a 'bird half eaten' (*WH,* 95); Isabella is figured as an edible dove at risk of being devoured by Heathcliff; and Cathy fashions bird-shaped meals from root vegetables. Birds in *Wuthering Heights* are thus

[10] Maggie Berg, *Wuthering Heights: The Writing in the Margin* (New York: Twayne, 1996).
[11] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). First published in 1979.
[12] Steve Lutkis, 'The Devastated Nest: Crises of Identity in *Wuthering Heights* and *Antigone*', *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 41 (2008), pp. 103-16, p. 103.
[13] Joseph Carroll, 'The Cuckoo's History: Human Nature in *Wuthering Heights*', *Philosophy and Literature*, 32 (2008), pp. 241-57.
[14] Kathleen Anderson and Heather R. Lawrence, '"No net ensnares me": Bird Imagery and the Dynamics of Dominance and Submission in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*', *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), pp. 240-51, p. 241.

connected to 'imagery of devouring [and] the all-pervasive motif of self-starvation'.[15] This chapter reads scenes involving birds and consumption as feminist-vegetarian interruptions and examines the extent to which Brontë restores the avian absent referent. The chapter analyses avian episodes involving tortured, murdered, and consumed birds as critiques of masculinist cultures of bird cruelty and its connections to the oppression of women. It analyses the extent to which the attempt of women protagonists to destablise this pervading androcentric, speciesist violence is successful.

'A brace of grouse': Homosocial Bird Consumption

Like *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* begins and ends with dead birds. Shortly after Lockwood's arrival at Thrushcross Grange, he receives a 'brace of grouse' (*WH*, 110) from his landlord, Heathcliff. As Lockwood brings his diary narrative to a close, he relates his 'devastat[ing] the moors' on a hunting escapade (*WH*, 284). The novel is thus framed by Lockwood's violent consumption of birds. In between these avian instances, *Wuthering Heights* depicts a pervasive culture of bird cruelty. Cooper lays bare the stark reality of Lockwood's speciesist practice when she observes that

> Lockwood's hunting – his 'devastat[ing] the moors' […] shows a selfish disregard for life which is itself brutal or worse – since its purpose, as rarely in nature, is mere sport. This instance comes the closest of any in the novel to being a conventional example of specifically human power and wasteful cruelty to animals.[16]

Through her presentation of Lockwood, Brontë is clearly interested in signaling to the reader that man 'for his amusement […] will kill'.[17] Brontë goes on to note, in her essay of 1842, 'The Butterfly, that man 'tortures, he kills, he devours […] man leaves so much misery behind'.[18] Brontë's presentation of Lockwood is entirely consistent with her essay and with the novel's depiction of bird hunting as a despicable practice. Lockwood's devastation of the moors is compounded by the fact that he is a city dweller come to sport with its women as well as its birds. In light of his perceived

[15] Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 282.
[16] Cooper, 'Sinister Menagerie', p. 257.
[17] Emily Brontë, 'The Butterfly', trans. Davies, *Heretic*, pp. 249-51, p. 250. In this essay, written in Brussels in 1842, Brontë makes her critique of masculine violence clear: 'I almost doubted the goodness of God, for not annihilating man on the day of his first sin'. The implication is that man's sin is arbitrary cruelty – for sport and consumption – towards fellow living beings. See Brontë, 'The Butterfly', pp. 250-51.
[18] Brontë, 'The Butterfly', p. 250.

'eligibility' for Cathy, as well as his appropriation of Catherine's diary and subsequent dream encounter with her ghost, Lockwood must also be read as one of the novel's, albeit preposterous, suitors. His incompatibility with the two Catherines, either for marriage to Cathy, as he self-indulgently fantasises, or penetration of Catherine, whether psychic or sexual, is illuminated by his annihilation of birds and women. Lockwood's encounter with Catherine's ghost, during which he brutally rubs her arm against broken glass, exemplifies his capacity to commit extreme acts of violence against women. Tytler recognises that Lockwood's abhorrent treatment of nonhuman animals is related to his inability to establish relationships with women.[19] Lockwood's co-existing misogyny and persistent bird-murdering reveals that both women and birds are the targets of his killer instinct.

Brontë's novel reveals the sexual politics of meat through the presentation of two sexually stifled, violent, bird hunting men, Lockwood and Heathcliff, conversing over 'a brace of grouse' (*WH,* 110). The insertion of this seemingly incongruous, critically neglected avian episode, which depicts two misanthropic yet disparate figures bonding over a pair of murdered birds, demonstrates the connection between the objectification of birds and women.[20] This is a feminist-vegetarian interruption because it draws attention to the interconnections between the disenfranchisement of birds and women. When Heathcliff becomes a landed 'gentleman', he begins to partake in activities that indicate his assumed position of superiority, not only over men deemed lower class, but over women and other animals, particularly birds. In conjunction with his newfound landowning-status, Heathcliff 'goes on to the moors frequently, since the shooting season commenced' (*WH,* 231). Heathcliff has clearly bought into the Bewickian approach to human-avian relations that views grouse as little more than 'useful birds [that] stock our waste and barren moors with a rich fund of delicate and wholesome food'.[21] In light of this, it may not seem so inconsequential that Heathcliff the landlord should visit a convalescing tenant after sending him 'a brace of grouse' (*WH,* 110). As Lockwood recalls, Heathcliff reveals himself to be 'a man charitable enough to sit by my bedside a good hour and talk on some other subject than pills and draughts, blisters and leeches' (*WH,* 111). If Heathcliff and Lockwood

[19] Tytler, 'Animals', p. 127.
[20] This is seemingly incongruous to what we know about Heathcliff's aversion to sociable interactions with other humans – as Lockwood points out.
[21] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume One: Containing the History and Description of Land Birds* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), p. 351. Originally published in 1797. Henceforward *HBB* I.

do not talk of medicinal matters, what, then, might Brontë intend the reader to imagine they discuss? It would be reasonable to conjecture that, if Lockwood and Heathcliff were to hold a prolonged interview, their mutual penchant for bird-hunting might comprise its subject. Heathcliff sends the dead birds to Lockwood three weeks into his tenant's malady, then pays him a visit the following week, by which time, it is presumed, Lockwood would have consumed most, if not all, of the grouse. It is therefore likely that comments regarding the consumed birds might form a more general conversation on the status of hunting on Heathcliff's land. This apparent homosocial bonding between Lockwood and Heathcliff is based on the premise of mutual mastery, through sport and consumption, of birds.

Brontë engages with the sexual politics of nonhuman animal consumption by using meat as a symbol of masculine violence. In doing so, Brontë anticipates Carol J. Adams's conjecture that 'because "real" men eat meat, batterers have a cultural icon to draw upon as they deflect attention from their need to control'.[22] The brace of grouse is an indicator of Heathcliff's acquired status and wealth, his entry into the landed gentry, and his successful usurpation of Earnshaw and Linton property, which includes control over the women and birds inhabiting both estates. Both Lockwood and Heathcliff enjoy hunting, and it is a display of his status that Heathcliff has the means to offer a brace from his own land. Surridge observes the novel's atomisation of human practices of mastery over animals as a conscious revealing of a 'mechanism for enacting power – the power of owner over property, and by extension, of ownership or control in the human sphere'.[23] Heathcliff is participating in 'the violence with which the gentry class supports its luxury, authority and cultivation'.[24] It is, after all, only once Heathcliff has achieved this status that his appeals to the dead Catherine intensify: he exhumes her grave, and he calls on her to return after Lockwood's sadistic nightmare reignites hopes that her presence still inhabits the Heights and moors. Both of the novel's 'gentlemen' bird murderers, Heathcliff and Lockwood, form a conglomeration in committing violent acts against women. Brontë's unfavourable depiction of this sexist, speciesist pair leaves no doubt as to the way in which the reader is intended to view Lockwood and Heathcliff's bird hunting and eating practices. Subsequent avian episodes will substitute the novel's women as hunted and devoured

[22] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 62-63. First published in 1990.
[23] Surridge, 'Animals and Violence', p. 163.
[24] Davies, *Heretic*, p. 117.

birds before they attempt to address their own oppression while simultaneously restoring the avian absent referent denied subjectivity in Lockwood and Heathcliff's 'brace of grouse' (*WH*, 110).

'The wing of a goose': Catherine's Feminist-Vegetarian Interruption

All three eligible women in the novel – Catherine, Isabella, and Cathy – undergo commodification when initiated into the marriage market. The grooming programmes they are subjected to as Edgar's, Heathcliff's, and Linton's prospective wives, as well as the marriages that follow, occur in the conspicuous presence of the men's exploitation of birds. In light of the novel's conflation of bird cruelty with male dominance, the presentation of bird-loving female counterparts in avian terms – Catherine is associated with game birds and lapwings, Isabella with doves, pheasants, pigeons, and canaries, and Cathy with game birds and doves – further reveals the novel's interest in interconnected oppression. Where Heathcliff and Lockwood have been shown to exemplify a homosocial enterprise that betokens domination over land, women, and birds, women in the novel are at once victims-in-common with literal birds and bird women who are characterised through bird symbolism.

During Catherine and Edgar's courtship, the presence of commodified birds' feathers and flesh signifies a shared objectification when Catherine is coerced and cultivated into a marriageable commodity. During her convalescence at Thrushcross Grange, old Mr Linton wastes no time in journeying across the other side of the moor to the Heights to lecture Hindley on how best to manage his women dependents. This signals that Catherine is a going concern; as the likely wife of Mr Linton's son and heir, she must, like the grouse for sport, be appropriately managed. Thus, 'Mrs. Earnshaw undertook to keep her sister-in-law [Catherine] in due restraint when she returned home' (*WH*, 77), demonstrating that men employ women to prepare for and perpetuate the commodification of each other. One man (of socially 'superior' rank) dictates to another man how to train the woman marked as the provider of the next generation of Lintons. Old Mr Linton's interest in Catherine's upbringing, when compared with his ambivalence to Heathcliff's, marks the beginning of Catherine's grooming into a valuable body of exchange, who, adorned in feathers, resembles the brace of dead birds passed from one paying man to another.

After over a month of grooming at the Grange, during which time Mrs Earnshaw implements the recommended 'plan of reform' (*WH*, 78), Catherine emerges 'a very dignified person with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a

feathered beaver' (*WH*, 78). Catherine is transformed from 'a wild, hatless little savage' (*WH*, 78) to a participant in the culture of bird cruelty. Her feathered beaver hat simultaneously signifies her subjugation within the marriage market which entails complicity in the commodification of birds. Catherine now wears the feathers as a mark of her shared status with the murdered birds of the Linton estate; she has become an objectified commodity who should ensure the enduring wealth, power, and dominance of the Linton dynasty. To begin with, Catherine is seduced and coerced by feathered 'fine clothes and flattery' (*WH*, 78), but soon realises the folly of suppressing her 'wild, hatless' (*WH*, 78) self, a self who did not wear a beaver made of dead birds. Arriving back at the Heights adorned in feathers, Catherine initially appears as a co-conspirator in the culture of bird cruelty and consumption. Nelly observes:

> I waited behind [Catherine's] chair, and was pained to behold Catherine, with dry eyes and an indifferent air, commence cutting up the wing of a goose before her.
>
> 'An unfeeling child,' I thought to myself; 'how lightly she dismisses her old playmate's troubles. I could not have imagined her to be so selfish.' (*WH*, 84)

However, what follows is a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption; Catherine

> lifted a mouthful to her lips; then, she sat it down again: her cheeks flushed, and the tears gushed over them. She slipped her fork to the floor, and hastily dived under the cloth to conceal her emotion. (*WH*, 84)

Catherine's consciousness of her own entrapment is expressed in her refusal to eat the dead bird on her plate. In this moment of renunciation, we learn that Catherine's initiation into objecthood is underpinned by emotional disturbance despite her outward contrivance of malleability. Her refusal to eat the murdered goose signifies an ensuing discord with her shared status with the dead birds she is expected to wear and eat. This is a key moment in Catherine's resistance to her oppression. Preceding this, Catherine announces 'I can't eat my dinner' (*WH*, 83), and, shortly after, she declares 'I'll cry myself sick' (*WH*, 95), suggesting the nausea that typically accompanies moments of narrative feminist-vegetarian interruptions. As Adams argues,

> just as revulsion to meat eating acts as a trope for feelings about male dominance, in women's novels and women's lives, vegetarianism signals women's independence […] it is a rebellion against dominant cultures […] It

> resists the structure of the absent referent, which renders both women and animals as objects.[25]

Catherine's abstention from bird corpse consumption signals a refusal to conform to an androcentric speciesism that renders the bird absent in his or her own death and suffering. Furthermore, Catherine's refusal to comply with speciesist ideology coincides with her rejection of her own oppression. It follows, Adams continues, that since 'meat eating is an integral part of male dominance; vegetarianism acts as a sign of dis-ease with patriarchal culture'.[26] In Giuliana Giobbi's work on literary representations of anorexia nervosa, she considers Catherine's rejection of the goose, alongside her self-starvation during the subsequent feathered deathbed episode, as 'a self-destructive response of the – female – individual to the frustration caused by external reality'.[27] It follows, Giobbi posits, that Catherine's rejection of the food might be read 'as a sign of depression, and as a form of rebellion [and is indicative of] the girl's need to be emancipated and independent'.[28] Catherine's necessary self-repression enabling her to qualify as Edgar's property affects a spiritual hunger that is expressed in 'the symbolic force of anorexia – meant as rebellion'.[29] Giobbi's analysis makes the connection between refusing food and feminist consciousness, but the humancentric bias of this reading fails to acknowledge the dead bird who also suffers in this scenario. As insightful as scholarship on anorexia nervosa is, it misses the opportunity to recognise the connections between the objectification of women and birds when the meal an oppressed woman rejects also bears witness to a nonhuman animal's trauma.[30]

'Cat uh Linton' and the 'bird half eaten': Consuming Catherine

As Catherine grapples with her awakened feminist-vegetarian consciousness in the lead up to her impending marriage to Edgar, she is increasingly associated with consumed birds. Alongside this, the bird imagery of her courtship with Edgar depicts

[25] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, pp. 216-17.
[26] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, pp. 216-17.
[27] Giuliana Giobbi, '"No bread will feed my hungry soul": Anorexic Heroines in Female Fiction – from the Example of Emily Brontë as Mirrored by Anita Brookner, Gianna Schelotto and Alessandra Arachi', *European Studies*, 27 (1997), pp. 73-92, p. 75.
[28] Giobbi, '"No bread"', p. 75.
[29] Giobbi, '"No bread"', p. 89.
[30] Other critics have read Catherine's refusal to eat as relating to 'anorexia nervosa'. See Berg, *Margin*, p. 77, and Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, pp. 275, 282, 284-87, 292, 298, and 301-2. Such readings do not take note of the bird present on the plate that Catherine refuses to consume, nor do they read such scenes as feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions.

the would-be husband as increasingly cat-like.[31] Nelly observes that Edgar 'possessed the power to depart [from Catherine] as much as a cat possesses the power to leave […] a bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95). Although this episode is more often read as confirmation of Edgar's inability to resist Catherine's charms, the imagery clearly positions Catherine as avian prey to Edgar's predatory cat.[32] The depiction of Catherine as 'a bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95) aligns her with the avian spoils of masculinist dominance and the cruelty that adorned her courtship beaver hat and dinner plate. That very night, Nelly deems it necessary to remove 'the shot out of the master's fowling piece' (*WH*, 95). Although Nelly refers to Hindley Earnshaw's, rather than Edgar's, hunting gun, the presence of the weapon of avian destruction, particularly at this moment of Catherine's avian vulnerability, nonetheless provides a reminder of the ever-present danger of violence that threaten the livelihood of women and birds. Furthermore, it soon transpires, as Catherine later finds out, that Edgar is in possession of his own 'brace of pistols' (*WH*, 132). In this violent environment, Catherine's increasing association with the avian victims of the gaming weapon, as she succumbs to this coupling with Edgar, insists that we read her position as akin to men's avian prey.

The feline imagery associated with Edgar during his courtship with Catherine rather complicates his seeming paternal benevolence. Edgar has invariably been read as an insipid and passive suitor whose attractions for Catherine reside in his social status rather than in personal affinity.[33] Berg recognises that Heathcliff is 'in some ways less insidious than the disguised misogynist', Edgar.[34] His likening to a cat certainly confirms this. As Joseph the servant reveals, Edgar pursues Catherine with

[31] Tytler states that 'cats seem to have some symbolic relevance to the characterisation of Heathcliff and Lockwood', but does not mention Edgar's feline associations. See Tytler, 'Animals', p. 121.
[32] Gilbert and Gubar identify Catherine as 'a bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95). They see this avian metaphor as 'perhaps Nelly's most puzzling remark about the relationship between Edgar and Catherine'. Gilbert and Gubar admit that this cat and bird metaphor seems to contradict what the reader thinks they know about these two characters at this point in the narrative – 'is not headstrong Catherine the hungry cat, and "soft" Edgar the half-eaten mouse?'. Foregrounding the issue of consumption at the centre of this avian metaphor, the critics posit that, having read the whole novel, one can see that it is 'Edgar all along [who] represents the devouring force that will gnaw and worry Catherine to death, consuming flesh and spirit together'. Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 282.
[33] Berg points out this critical tradition relating to Edgar. See Berg, *Margin*, p. 67. This simplistic view of Edgar might be attributed to Catherine and Heathcliff's descriptions of him as 'that insipid, paltry creature' (*WH*, 164), 'that apathetic being' (*WH*, 136). However, others do acknowledge a degree of complexity in the presentation of Edgar. Gilbert and Gubar, for example, refer to him as 'the hated master – this *apparently* effeminate, "milk-blooded coward"'. See Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 281, my italics. Kristin Brady, in her review of Berg's *Margin*, considers the latter's challenging response to the hackneyed view 'that Edgar Linton is entirely benevolent' as a strength of the study. See Kristen Brady, review of '*Wuthering Heights: The Writing in the Margin* by Maggie Berg (review)', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 68 (1998/99), pp. 487-89, p. 488.
[34] Berg, *Margin*, p. 68.

the ardency of a predatory cat. In fact, 'never a day ut yah're off, but yon cat uh Linton comes sneaking hither […] and as yah're in at one door, he's aht at t'other' (*WH*, 107-8). Edgar's feline cruelty distinguishes him from other 'gentlemanly' figures in the novel who visibly advocate cultures of bird cruelty, namely Heathcliff, Lockwood, and Hareton. This 'cat uh Linton' (*WH*, 107) enacts a more sophisticated method of ensnarement and control. While Heathcliff is direct in his violent conduct, Edgar conducts his 'mischief' (*WH*, 84) and 'meddling' (*WH*, 83) in a rather more underhand manner. His violent childhood squabble with Isabella, in which a dog is almost ripped apart, reveals the cruelty that Edgar is capable of when he thinks no-one is watching. This boyhood brutality approaches the same malicious cruelty towards nonhuman animals perpetuated by other Brontëan bird-torturing boys – Tom Bloomfield, John Reed, and, as I shall come to in due course, Heathcliff.

In an essay titled 'The Cat', Brontë identifies characteristics of cats with the very worst traits in humans. She declares that 'the cat is an animal which has more human feelings than almost any other being' and 'is extremely like us in disposition'.[35] Although Brontë posits that this 'encompasses everyone', she makes a particular point of incriminating the genteel husband who 'really loves the hunt'.[36] Brontë goes further with her conflation of the hunting husband and the predatory cat. In a passage that seems to parody Bewick's concerns regarding the preservation of hunting game, quoted on page ninety-nine of this chapter, Brontë points out that the hunter

> will not have means to pursue his amusement often, if he does not conserve his stock. Thus, when he has run down an animal to its last gasp, he takes it from the jaws of the dogs and preserves it to suffer again two or three times the same assault, ending finally in death.[37]

Here is another suggestion that the politics of the hunt, and related contemporary reform debates, were of interest to the Brontë family. Davies notes that Brontë's cat 'exposes the random killer-instinct operative in mankind whose "humanity" is skin deep'.[38] Edgar's figuring as a bird-devouring cat thus signals his killer-instinct in relation to his wife. Brontë's description of the cat and his victim is also that of Edgar and Catherine's marriage.

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[35] Emily Brontë, 'The Cat', trans. Davies, *Heretic*, pp. 248-49, p. 248. As with Brontë's essay, 'The Butterfly', quoted above, 'The Cat' was also composed in Brussels in 1842.
[36] Brontë, 'The Cat', p. 249.
[37] Brontë, 'The Cat', p. 249.
[38] Davies, *Heretic*, p. 123.

The above passage from Brontë's cat essay also introduces the third element to this cat-and-bird dynamic: Heathcliff, the dog.[39] When Edgar's position of superiority is in jeopardy during the episode in chapter eleven, in which he encounters his wife in a tete-à-tete with his rival, Heathcliff, he seems visibly shaken and the cat is mistaken for a mouse.[40] Edgar also becomes a 'sucking leveret' (*WH*, 132). Momentarily, Edgar becomes prey-like – a mouse and a hare – to Heathcliff the hunter. Indeed, the hare is commonly associated with the hunt, usually chased by a dog. But when Edgar is physically attacked, he reacts, bare-fisted. As Edgar re-establishes his sophisticated, predatory cat-like characteristics, Catherine fears that 'he'll return with a brace of pistols' (*WH*, 132). Edgar draws upon the characteristics of the killer-cat, but he also has the 'gentlemanly' bird hunting culture at his disposal, courtesy of his superior status, which lends 'half-a-dozen assistants' (*WH*, 132) to carry out an uncouth job on his behalf. This deadly cat-and-dog tussle over a bird-woman is a

[39] Hindley admonishes the boy Heathcliff with 'Off, dog!' (*WH*, 67) and Nelly warns him against adopting 'the expression of a vicious cur that appears to know the kicks it gets are its just dessert' (*WH*, 82). The cur, according to the *OED*, is both a 'contemptuous […] worthless, low-bred, or snappish dog' and 'a surly, ill-bred, low, or cowardly fellow'. See *OED*, accessed 1 November 2017. As Tytler points out, Heathcliff refers to Skulker, the Grange dog who attacks Catherine, as 'he', suggesting a non-conventional interspecies dynamic that is confounded by his referring to a human as 'a beast of a servant' in the same breath. See Tytler, 'Animals', p. 127-28 for further consideration of Heathcliff's complex relationship with animals in general, and the dog in particular. Kreilkamp reads Heathcliff as akin to the Victorian 'trope of the lost dog as a signifier of the dangerousness and cruelty of urban life and of modernity itself', 'a feral pet, a resistant animal brought into the family circle who rebels against the hypocrisy of the boundary lines drawn to separate [human and non-human life]'. In addition, Kreilkamp attributes Heathcliff's loyalty (towards Catherine) to his associations with another Victorian phenomenon, 'the mourning dog'. See Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things', pp. 98-103. Relatedly, but not explored by Kreilkamp, canine imagery accompanies Heathcliff's second return to Catherine, when he appears at her deathbed: 'As [Nelly] spoke [she] observed a large dog, lying in the sunny grass beneath, raise its ears as if about to bark; then smoothing them back, announce by a wag of the tail that some one approached whom it did not consider a stranger' (*WH*, 167).

Alongside this juxtaposition of the feral dog-turned-loyal-pet, Heathcliff is described (by Catherine) as a 'wolfish man' (*WH*, 121) – with all the connotations of the feared, feral canine predator that refuses to be managed or tamed. The wolf, that most prominent of literary wild dogs, is feared throughout folkloric tradition, and carries a particular threat to semi-domestic livestock, such as the pheasant that his wife Isabella is associated with, and the game birds he later terrorises once he gains control over the Grange and Heights estates. On first encountering his character, the reader is struck by his unsentimental approach to his house dogs. When witnessing Edgar and Isabella's tussle over a pet dog, Heathcliff is more concerned for the selfishness displayed by the brother towards the sister than he is for the well-being of the tortured dog. Later on, in a violent act that seems as pointless as his entrapment of the lapwing nest, he hangs Isabella's puppy. Heathcliff's relationship to the dog across the novel is remarkably ambivalent. Viewed, and treated, as a wild, feral dog by others, Heathcliff is tamed or 'petted' by Catherine, the only person to accept him for who he is. Only to Catherine, therefore, does he display that most prized canine characteristic: loyalty. To all others, he remains the wolf, and his cruel approach to both pet and working domestic dogs correlates with what might be expected of the yeoman customs by which he has been socialised. In relation to Edgar the cat, and Catherine the bird, Heathcliff's canine-status seems fitting; dogs are not known to attack birds but are known to have a fraught relationship with the house cat in which the balance of power is always under negotiation. The dominant physical bulk of the dog is brought into conflict by the sophistication of the predatory cat.

[40] Catherine claims that 'Heathcliff would soon lift a finger at [Edgar] as a king would march an army against a colony of mice' (*WH*, 132).

precursor, and major impetus to, Catherine's imminent illness. Brontë's biting critique of the happy hunter's wife in 'The Cat' – 'you spare yourself a bloody spectacle because it wounds your feeble nerves' – recalls feline Edgar, who, instead of tending to his sick, 'bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95) wife, is curled up contentedly in his library oblivious to the sufferings of others.

In a bold and damning critique of the human male predator, Brontë declares that cats 'owe all their miseries and all their bad qualities to the great sin of the human race'.[41] If Edgar is a cat, then Brontë undoubtedly intended him to be read as a most despicable specimen. Reading Brontë's cat essay alongside her novel, we begin to uncover the extent of her interest in exploring the miseries that humans inflict on other animals whilst deeming themselves superior.[42] A charge of reverse anthropomorphism against Brontë is rendered redundant here due to the radical clarity with which she views the animal nature of human and nonhuman animal alike.[43] Brontë's use of nonhuman animals, whom she carefully and critically observes, is not simply humancentric. Animals in *Wuthering Heights*, both human and nonhuman, are literary devices that probe and radically destabilise the dominant Enlightenment narrative that insists that men are themselves beyond animal.

Naming Feathers: Restoring the Avian Absent Referent

Catherine's feather-filled soliloquy in chapter twelve is crucial to the presentation of her heightened feminist-vegetarian consciousness. It is also one of the most analysed scenes in the novel.[44] Notwithstanding this critical interest, no one has read Catherine's

[41] Brontë, 'The Cat', p. 249.

[42] Davies reads the cat essay as Brontë's response 'to this institutionalism of sadism', as 'a violent act of retaliation against the repulsive lies polite society hands out about human and animal nature', 'bursting through the hypocrisies of conditioning to shock us into seeing more clearly'. See Davies, *Heretic*, pp. 104 and 123.

[43] Davies points out that the cat in Brontë's essay is 'far from being anthropomorphised'. See Davies, *Heretic*, p. 104.

[44] William H. Scheuerle, followed by Gilbert and Gubar, are the earliest critics to draw attention to this scene. See William H. Scheuerle, 'Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*', *The Explicator*, 33 (1975), pp. 143-45, and Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, pp. 254-84. In a marked departure from their typically humancentric analyses, Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation of Catherine's act of 'liberating feathers from the prison where they had been reduced to objects of social utility' argues that Catherine 'imagines [the feathers] reborn as the birds they once were, whole and free, and pictures them […] trying to get back to their nests'. See Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 284. Subsequent critics who have interpreted this scene have focused on Catherine's 'madness'; the broader connections between the heroine and birds in this and other scenes remain neglected. Critics who do acknowledge the significance of the birds in the scene focus on the lapwing; the omission of the full range of game bird species is a marked void in readings of this important avian episode. Davies considers the lapwing in her chapter, 'Baby-work: The Myth of Rebirth in *Wuthering Heights*', in *Emily Brontë: The Artist as a Free Woman* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1983), pp. 99-101. Margaret Homans also considers the lapwing as a catalyst for evoking childhood memories. See Margaret Homans, *Bearing the Word: Language and Female*

feathers speech as a feminist-vegetarian interruption or a restoral of the avian absent referent. The presence of birds during this pivotal moment in Catherine's life indicates that Brontë's birds are central to the novel's interest in the interconnected status of birds and women. Specifically, this avian presence furthers the connection between Catherine's downfall and the ill-use of birds. If *Wuthering Heights* presents the tensions between a violent culture that renders women and birds consumable on the one hand, and bird-women enacting feminist-vegetarian interruptions on the other, then Catherine's second attempt to destabilise the man-bird-woman power dynamic is also arguably the novel's most dramatic set piece. This indicates Brontë's desire to foreground the oppression of women and birds simultaneously and thus to affirm the interlinkage that she set up in her poem, known as 'The Caged Bird' (1841), discussed in the introduction to this thesis.[45] Remembering Catherine's feather-filled reverie, Nelly relates that Catherine,

> seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had made, and ranging them on the sheet according to their different species: her mind had strayed to other associations.
>
> 'That's a turkey's,' she murmured to herself; 'and this is a wild-duck's; and this is a pigeon's. Ah, they put pigeons' feathers in the pillows – no wonder I couldn't die! Let me take care to throw it on the floor when I lie down. And here is a moor-cock's. (*WH*, 135)

Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 78-79. Berg draws attention to the significance of Catherine's identification with the lapwing and her memory of Heathcliff's nest trap. See Berg, *Margin*, p. 83. According to Brady, 'no one has made better sense […] of the lapwing image in Catherine's dying words'. See Brady, review of 'Maggie Berg', p. 488. Within a year of this review, Surridge gestures towards Catherine's association with 'the wild lapwing banned from its nest' but does not elaborate. See Surridge, 'Animals and Violence', p. 167. Tytler refers briefly to Catherine's deathbed tale of Heathcliff's bird-cruelty, but only as an example of 'Heathcliff's essential misanthropy'. See Tytler, 'Animals', p. 127. Five years later, Lukits draws attention to the scene in his study of the 'devastated nest' metaphor in both *Wuthering Heights* and *Antigone*. He recognises that the 'nest metaphor' exerts a 'powerfully memorable presence in the novel'. See Lutkis, 'The Devastated Nest', p. 104. Although he rightly points out that it is the lapwing and the pigeon feathers that have attracted critical attention, Lukits perpetuates this imbalance by neglecting to consider the other bird species that populate the scene. See Lukits, 'The Devastated Nest', pp. 103-16. Similarly, Cooper, who mentions the feather scene briefly, only refers to the lapwing. See Cooper, 'Sinister Menagerie', p. 257. Emily Roberson Wallace also singles out the lapwing, although she does argue that the other bird species are of equal importance. This leads to a consideration of the atypical game feathers in Catherine's pillow and the superstition related to this that Scheuerle first points out but fails to examine. See Emily Roberson Wallace, 'Caged Eagles, Songsters and Carrion-Seekers: Birds in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 41 (2016), pp. 249-60. Similarly, in her reading of the scene, Defant considers briefly only the lapwing and pigeon. See Defant, 'Inhabiting Nature', pp. 37-47.

[45] Emily Brontë, 'And like myself lone wholly lone', *The Complete Poems*, ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 192.

By naming each one of the birds' feathers, Catherine draws attention to the literal birds whose dead bodies are defiled for human use. Whereas Nelly sees 'a mess!', maintaining the absent referent with her simile, 'the down is flying about like snow!' (*WH*, 138), Catherine insists on reinstating the presence of each and every one of the murdered birds – 'that's a turkey's', 'this is a wild-duck's', (*WH*, 135), and so forth. Thus, Catherine restores the avian absent referent.

Bewick's descriptions of these birds gives a sense of the human tyranny inflicted upon them contemporaneously to the novel's setting. One of the 'gallinaceous kind' (*HBB* I, 323), the turkey belongs to the 'useful order of birds' (*HBB* I, 323), 'subservient to [man's] purpose […], subject to his controlling power, and are the objects of his keenest pursuit' (*HBB* I, 323). Whether wild game bird or 'domesticated', the turkey has historically fallen prey to subjugation; their history is linked to colonial exploitation.[46] Taken from their native land by Europeans, the turkey has been brought to England for the purposes of meat and sport. Bewick explains that 'they are driven to the London markets in flocks of several hundreds [during which time] the drivers manage them with facility' (*HBB* I, 331). Much like Catherine, these birds have been brought into the 'civilising' realm of man in order to be exploited, their liberty denied. Due to their mass murder for the purposes of the Christmas-day feast, turkeys became a national cultural icon in the nineteenth century and remain a symbol of conservative traditions, including the dominant narrative of carnivorous consumption.[47] Re-conceived in terms of vegetarian discourse, it is telling that a slaughtered bird's corpse should become an established national icon of a culture that prizes itself on the sadistic exploitation of vulnerable beings. Regarding this, one might borrow the nineteenth-century vegetarian advocate, Howard Williams's, words to ask whether this be 'the most conspicuous iniquity of Christian and of English society!'.[48]

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[46] Wild turkeys have inhabited North America for over 10 million years, as bones found in the La Brea tar pits of Los Angeles attest. There is no evidence to suggest that humans had ever exploited these birds until Europeans arrived and exported them to Spain around 1500, 'from whence a consignment was sent to England about 1524'. European colonisers stole turkeys from America and subjected them to hunting, domestication, and consumption. See John Martin, 'The Commercialisation of British Turkey Production', *Rural History*, 20 (2009), pp. 209-28, p. 210. See also A. W. Brant, 'A Brief History of the Turkey', *World's Poultry Science Journal*, 54 (1998), pp. 365-73.

[47] 'The credit for the introduction of turkeys into Britain has been widely attributed to a Yorkshire man, William Strickland, who acquired six birds from […] traders [in the Americas] and sold them for two pence on his return to Bristol. His family crest, granted in 1550, depicts a turkey cock. The sixteenth century saw a rapid expansion in the number of turkeys and by the seventeenth century the birds were common throughout the country and rapidly becoming the traditional Christmas dish for the wealthier sections of society.' See Martin, 'The Commercialisation of British Turkey Production', p. 210.

[48] Howard Williams, *The Ethics of Diet: An Anthology of Vegetarian Thought* (Guildford: White Crow Books, 2009), p. 7. Originally published in 1883.

Berg equates Catherine's feather-infused contemplations with 'a critique of […] a society which depends for its existence on the circulation of women's bodies'.[49] Reiterating this link between man's misuse of both women and birds, Defant draws a parallel 'between Catherine's vulnerable body and the endangered bodies of birds'.[50] Like the turkey, Catherine must endure displacement in order to preserve the hunter's top spot on the hierarchy of beings.

Fig. 28. Thomas Bewick, *The Turkey*, 1797.

Similarly, Bewick euphemistically posits that the wild-duck is 're-claimed from a state of nature, [lives] dependent on man, [and is] extremely useful to him' – 'their flesh is accounted delicious and nourishing'.[51] According to Bewick, the wild-duck, also known as the mallard, uses 'the same wily stratagems to mislead the sportsman and his dog' (*HBB* II, 326) as the partridge, who lets out a 'signal of alarm by a peculiar cry of distress' (*HBB* I, 359). Bewick details the lengths humans, 'both ancient and modern' (*HBB* II, 327), have gone to to encroach on the wild duck. Like Catherine's marriage, this 'business of destruction' (*HBB* II, 325-33) is sanctioned by law. Bewick also details how man's entrapment of the bird takes full advantage of their inability to fly during the moulting season. Catherine's longing to escape the Grange and return to her original habitat, Wuthering Heights, is similarly impeded by a biological phenomenon – her 'season' of pregnancy. The liberty of both birds and

[49] Berg, *Margin*, p. 77.
[50] Defant, 'Inhabiting Nature', p. 42.
[51] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume Two: Containing the History and Description of Water Birds* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1972), pp. 263-64. Originally published in 1797. Henceforward *HBB* II.

women is exploited when corporal circumstances necessary to the success of the species increase vulnerability to predation. The fact that Catherine carries the Linton heir further entraps her in a captive state, rendering her desired return to the Heights as highly implausible as the wild duck, with her 'cry of distress' (*HBB* I, 359), attempting to defend herself without the use of her wings.

THE MALLARD,

COMMON WILD DUCK,

(*Anas Boschas*, Linn.—*Le Canard Sauvage*, Buff.)

Fig. 29. Thomas Bewick, *The Mallard*, 1797.

The moor cock, also known as the red grouse, is similarly associated with the 'brace of grouse' (*WH*, 110) that Heathcliff delivers to Lockwood. Bewick relates that 'these useful birds' (*HBB* I, 351) 'stock our waste and barren moors with a rich fund of delicate and wholesome food' (*HBB* I, 351). Writing before the 1831 Game Act, Bewick laments that 'there hardly remains a single hope for the preservation of such birds' (*HBB* I, 351). Given the prevalent hunting activity carried out by the novel's men, the implication is that Catherine is a 'dying breed' – a delicacy of sorts.

Fig. 30. Thomas Bewick, *Red Grouse*, 1797.

It is significant that the birds associated with Catherine and Edgar's courtship are the same birds targeted by the bird hunting culture outlined above, further impressing the interlinkage between Catherine's and the birds' status as consumable commodities. As Wallace notes, game bird feathers are an unusual pillow stuffing for the time.[52] She points out that only fine goose down would have been used to fill the pillows of a luxurious household such as the Lintons' with its extensive library and sumptuous interior. [53] Wallace makes the crucial point that 'the author had to choose which birds to pick for the passage'.[54] She surmises that Brontë chose to populate Catherine's pillow at Thrushcross with atypical game birds due to their folkloric associations. This is likely correct, given what we know about Brontë's interest in and use of folklore. Peter Tate relates that

> pigeon or game bird feathers in the pillow or mattress of an invalid […] were regarded with great trepidation and, if discovered, were removed for fear that they would lead to a long-drawn-out and painful death.[55]

[52] Wallace 'Caged Eagles', p. 259.
[53] Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 259.
[54] Wallace, 'Caged Eagles', p. 259.
[55] Peter Tate, *Flights of Fancy: Birds in Myth, Legend, and Superstition* (London: Random House, 2009), p. 146. Scheuerle draws attention to Brontë's employment of the Yorkshire superstition about the pigeon feather. Scheuerle's humancentric interpretation sees the presence of the feathers as 'underlin[ing] Catherine's suffering and torment for her unforgivable sin of marrying Edgar Linton'. See Scheuerle, 'Wuthering Heights', p. 143.

Tate is not referring to *Wuthering Heights*, but his insight provides a remarkable testament to Brontë's strategic use of bird folklore to evoke a sense of Catherine's desperation. The pigeon feather that Catherine declares as the impediment to her willed-for death certainly coincides with this Yorkshire superstition. Notwithstanding this, the importance of bird hunting and consumption throughout the novel, and its key part in Catherine's objectification – the reason for her will to die – must also be considered as an important factor in Brontë's choice of game birds over the default goose. Brontë has chosen to depict Catherine in a bed of dead birds, birds that are, like Catherine herself, habitually killed and eaten by men. It turns out that Catherine's deathbed is not only her own – but that of tens, if not hundreds of birds. Brontë marks the slaughterhouse and Catherine's 'hated sick-chamber' (*WH*, 148), her 'chamber of death' (*WH,* 173), as specular sites of entrapment and death. Just before she dies 'on the pillow' (*WH*, 172), Catherine specifies what lies at the core of her ruin: 'the thing that irks me the most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. I'm weary to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there' (*WH,* 169). Evoking the plight of the caged bird in Brontë's poem, mentioned above, Catherine conjures the imagery of the caged bird as the reason for her demise. Heathcliff recognises this and, recalling Rochester's recognition of Jane Eyre's caged bird entrapment, sees that she is restless: 'You say that she is often restless and anxious-looking […] you talk of her mind being unsettled – how the devil could it be otherwise, in her frightful isolation?' (*WH,* 164).

In a fascinating conjecture, Wallace introduces the possibility that Catherine's pillow is actually filled with the more typical 'luxurious' goose down and Catherine *imagines* them to be pigeon and game feathers. This is a reasonable suggestion for a number of reasons. Nelly, as quoted above, refers to the feathers as 'down' (*WH,* 138), which is a term most often applied to goose feathers rather than game birds' feathers. Immediately after she names the game bird feathers, Catherine 'dreamily' (*WH,* 138) details another imagined vision, in which Nelly has turned into 'an aged woman' and 'this bed is the fairy cave under Penistone Crag' (*WH,* 138). Catherine endeavours to convince Nelly that 'I'm not wandering, you're mistaken, or else I should believe you really *were* that withered hag, and I should think I really *was* under Penistone Crag' (*WH,* 138, original italics). The italics stress the point that Catherine is consciously contriving these visions and does not claim that they are other than fancies of her imagination. In light of this, Catherine's game bird feathers might likewise be a vision that Catherine knowingly conjures from her vivid imagination. But in the following

breathe, Catherine claims that she sees a black press despite Nelly's insistence that 'there is no black press in the room, and never was' (*WH*, 138). At this point, Catherine is no longer *imagining*; rather, she is seeing something that is not really there – she is now hallucinating. Now, the question is not whether or not Catherine imagines the game feathers – since it is clear from the analysis above that Catherine knowingly conjures these alternative feathers *before* she slips into hallucinatory delirium. The crucial question is: if Catherine knowingly labels goose down as game bird feathers, then what are the implications of this in terms of restoring the avian absent referent? Brontë, through her heroine, makes the deliberate choice to subvert the traditional pillow stuffing. This explicit focus on the novel's exploited game birds at the point during which Catherine's ruination becomes manifest makes a political statement about the interlinked oppression of women and birds. In her naming of each individual bird's feather, Brontë restores the absent referent in the bird-murdering culture that Catherine has fallen prey to.

'Never Shoot a Lapwing': Catherine's Feminist-Vegetarian Intervention

Liberating the feathers of dead birds from her pillow, Catherine also foregrounds the lapwing:

> and this – I should know it among a thousand – it's a lapwing's. Bonny birds; wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds had touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath; the bird was not shot – we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dare not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing, after that, and he didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look. (*WH*, 135)

In the lapwing scene, Catherine's phrase, 'the old ones' (*WH*, 135), is the exact phrase found in Bewick's description of the lapwing (*HBB* II, 80), providing further evidence that Brontë's bird imagery is influenced by Bewick's text. In this case, in contrast to Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë uses Bewick's text as a basis for foregrounding the suffering of literal birds at the hands of humans. Complicating this, Emily Brontë also employs Bewick's anthropocentric text to enhance characterisation, as in the following example. The lapwing, according to Bewick, is noted for her

> loud and incessant cries […] a lively, active bird, almost continually in motion; it sports and frolics in the air in all directions, and assumes a variety of

> attitudes; it remains long upon the wing, and sometimes rises to a considerable height; it runs along the ground very nimbly, and springs and bounds from spot to spot with great agility. (*HBB* II, 80)

The 'loud and incessant cries' (*HBB* II, 80) of the lapwing recall the cawing rooks and shrieking condor associated with Bertha Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. It is thus remarkable that Catherine's connection to the lapwing intervenes in the narrative when her entrapment reaches crisis point. Bewick's lapwing conjures the high-spirited Catherine before she is enlisted as Edgar's legal property. Even the bird's capacity for reaching 'a considerable height' (*HBB* II, 80) reflects the heroine's passionate nature; and the agile springing and bounding mirrors, with remarkable accuracy, Heathcliff's account of how Catherine runs barefoot with him across the moors towards Thrushcross Grange.

Fig. 31. Thomas Bewick, *The Lapwing*, 1797.

Like Catherine, the lapwing of Bewick's anecdote 'makes no nest' (*HBB* II, 80), but adopts the comparatively 'civilised' human dwelling as its home, which mirrors Catherine's move from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange. In this artificial habitat, that Bewick deems a 'confinement' (*HBB* II, 82), the lapwing displays 'insolence' (*HBB* II, 82) and 'indignation' (*HBB* II, 82) if the inhabitants presume to challenge the bird's inconvenient revolt.[56] Inevitably, like Catherine, the lapwing 'died in the asylum [it] had chosen' (*HBB* II, 82).[57] It is surely no coincidence that this is the

[56] Like Catherine, the bird was also known to associate both with the cat and the dog, 'whose friendship the Lapwing at length conciliated so entirely' (*HBB* II, 81).

[57] The dwelling to which Catherine moves, and in which she suffers her demise, is itself named after a bird: *Thrush*cross Grange. Reflecting the anguish that Catherine nurses there, Bewick's thrush is known

bird that Catherine aligns herself with since she has become Edgar's 'bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95). Her objectification is deflected in the shift of her self-association with the free, vociferous lapwing – who is nonetheless annihilated by Heathcliff – rather than the ensnared, commodified, and exploited birds that she is fed when she is groomed for entrapment and that subsequently dominate her death bed.

Lapwings are not typically harassed by humans for 'sport' or 'food'. They are, however, prey to bird-torturing boys, such as Heathcliff, who grow into bird-hunting 'gentlemen'. It is lapwings that Catherine recalls Heathcliff terrorising. Margaret Homans suggests that the memory of the lapwings might form part of Catherine and Heathcliff's 'scamper on the moors' (*WH*, 53) that the former records in her diary as a girl at the Heights. Homans surmises that Catherine's omission of details of their outdoor escapades might in part be due to the fact that 'the episode reveals vividly that Heathcliff was as sadistic in his relatively happy childhood as he is as an adult [and Catherine] implicates herself to some degree in the violence she recounts'.[58] The narrative problem of revealing Heathcliff's bird cruelty, and Catherine's complicity in it, at this early stage in the novel, before they are both 'exiled' from their childhood idyll, might account for this seeming omission. However, far from omitting Heathcliff's boyhood bird cruelty, Catherine draws explicit attention to it during this pivotal point in the narrative – her feathers soliloquy – suggesting that Brontë meant to condemn Heathcliff's bird cruelty precisely at the point when Catherine's ruination is narrated. Furthermore, far from implicating Catherine in his avian cruelty, Brontë inserts a feminist-vegetarian narrative intervention revealing Catherine's endeavour to prevent Heathcliff's avian cruelty – 'I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing, after that, and he didn't' (*WH*, 135). Catherine declares that she was initially successful in impeding Heathcliff's speciesist depravity but her failure, in the long run, is correspondent with her own demise and avian infused death. Catherine's drawing attention to the murdered lapwings makes it clear that, facing her own death-by-entrapment, she does not approve of bird murder.

Heathcliff's annihilation of the lapwings is no less reprehensible than that of Tom Bloomfield or John Reed. Like Agnes Grey's and Jane Eyre's endeavours to intervene and prevent the tyranny of these bird torturing boys, Catherine's feminist-vegetarian interruption is a revolt against homosocial violence that oppresses birds

for 'its note of anger [which] is very loud and harsh, between a chatter and a shriek, which accounts for some of its names' (*HBB* I, 123), one of which is the *storm*cock.

[58] Homans, *Bearing the Word*, p. 78.

then women. Put another way, Catherine protests against the boyhood rite of passage that sees bird torturing children become men with guns who kill birds and batter women. Heathcliff's boyhood bird cruelty aligns him with John Reed and Tom Bloomfield and his early act of avian destruction anticipates, and is characteristic of, his subsequent membership of the adult bird-murdering, woman battering gentry. Yet Heathcliff's disregard for the lapwings' life precedes his plan to join the bird hunting culture of the landed gentry. This capacity for cruelty is revealed by Catherine at a time divorced from the other narrations of Heathcliff's formative years when the depiction of him is still morally ambiguous. It is only after he has become a fully-fledged wife-beating, bird-murdering husband that we learn of his history of infliction of cruelty on a bird species whose life Catherine values. Catherine's obvious affinity with this wild, unbounded bird suggests that Heathcliff's association with her is destructive, stifling, and ultimately as deadly as her union with Edgar-the-cat.

Heathcliff's transformation from bird-torturing abused orphan to abusing 'gentleman' is presented in a manner reminiscent of William Hogarth's engraving, *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751).

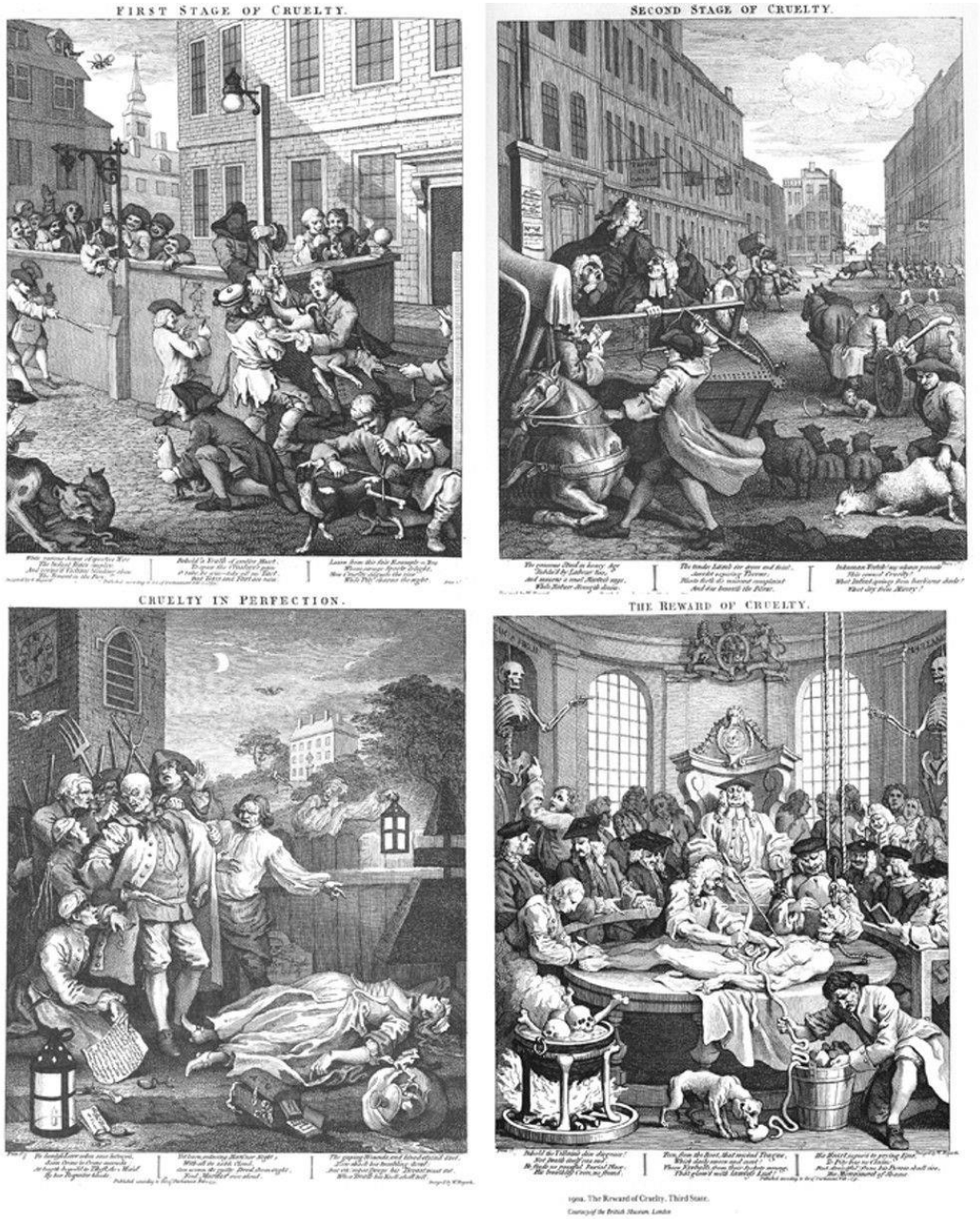

Fig. 32. William Hogarth, *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, 1751.

In it, Hogarth warns that animal abuse in childhood – note the boy holding down the bird to be shot in the foreground of the 'First Stage of Cruelty' (top left) – is the inevitable precursor to the normalisation of animal misuse and cruelty endorsed by adult society, which in turn leads to a disregard for women. Heathcliff embarks first on adolescent bird cruelty when he pointlessly traps the fledgling lapwings, then displays the propensity for further animal cruelty (by hanging Isabella's puppy), which foreshadows the physical and emotional abuse he inflicts on his wife. Reflecting the dark side of the hierarchy of beings explored in Hogarth's engraving, bird cruelty is perceived as a starting point, giving way to the abuse of larger domestic animals and

women. As with Heathcliff and Lockwood, this is the inevitable precursor to the violent abuse of women, who are often presented in the novel as sharing affinities and qualities with avian beings. By focusing on the figuring of Heathcliff as various nonhuman animals, critics obscure his distinctly human proclivity for cruelty towards nonhuman species. Heathcliff displays behaviours characteristic of a human animal, rather than a nonhuman animal, when committing his inter-related acts of violence towards women and birds. It is his humanness that accounts for and is symptomatic of his exploitative relationship with birds. His boyhood starving of the lapwings is no less cruel than his adult grouse hunting. Cultures of avian exploitation are 'civilised', culturally endorsed versions of childhood cruelties. It is not Heathcliff the wolf, dog, of even werewolf or vampire, who commits these acts of interspecies murder. Even as Heathcliff acquires 'culture', his bird murdering intensifies. This is foregrounded by Brontë in her cat essay when she repudiates the mother of the 'angel' boy who brings her 'crushed' animals with his 'cruel little fingers'.[59] The pervading presence of the bird-torturing boy in all three of the Brontë sisters' novels indicates that the hypocrisy of human cruelty held resonance within their moral and imaginative approach to the human-nonhuman animal dynamic.

Stealing Pheasants, Devouring Isabella

Much like Catherine's downfall as she is groomed into doomed wifedom, Isabella's 'courtship' with Heathcliff is conveyed through bird metaphor. In light of Catherine's avian associations throughout her own doomed courtship and marriage, it is telling that she employs three bird metaphors – involving canaries, crushed sparrows' eggs, and doves – to warn Isabella against falling prey to the same fate. As the 'bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95), Catherine speaks from first-hand experience when she warns her sister-in-law:

> I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! […] he'd crush you, like a sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge. (*WH*, 121)

Catherine makes it clear that marriage to Heathcliff would render Isabella a dead bird. To convey this, Catherine evokes Heathcliff's cruelty towards the lapwings as an analogy; a crushed 'sparrow's egg' (*WH*, 121) parallels the trapped skeletal lapwings

[59] Brontë, 'The Cat', p. 249.

of Catherine's vivid memory. The parallel between the nest of trapped lapwings and the imagined crushed sparrow's egg further impresses upon the reader the sense that Catherine and Isabella are both 'ruined' by Heathcliff. With this crushed egg imagery, the direct linkage between boyhood bird cruelty and wife battery is reiterated. Heathcliff signals his wife battering capacity with the promise that his marriage to Isabella would entail 'turning the blue eyes black', to which Catherine responds by furthering Isabella's avian connection, insisting that those Heathcliff threatens to brutalise 'are dove's eyes' (*WH*, 125). This is a seemingly straightforward metaphor, but with its co-opting of dove-ness, Catherine's symbolism suggests that doves, like women, are vulnerable targets of human male predation. Isabella's avian-infused matrimonial encounter with Heathcliff testifies to the trajectory that sees bird-torturing boys become bird-hunting, wife beating men and, in doing so, bears witness to the intersection between gendered oppression and speciesism.

The avian imagery relating to Isabella and Heathcliff's relationship, which associates the former with other, typically exploited birds – pheasants and pigeons – is set in motion the moment Isabella first encounters Heathcliff as a boy – 'He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller that stole my tame pheasant. Isn't he, Edgar?' (*WH*, 76). While Isabella's comment is more often read as an indicator of social snobbery, it is also an accurate reflection of her future husband's maltreatment of birds and a presentiment of the manner in which he will treat her as his wife. As Adams points out, 'batterers harm or kill a companion animal as a warning to their partners that she could be next'.[60] This avian foreshadowing of Heathcliff's later treatment of Isabella provides an omen of their later marital roles. Heathcliff, despite his later fortune, fulfils Isabella's unwitting prophesy; he will indeed steal Isabella, the 'tame pheasant' (*WH*, 76). Isabella's accusation of Heathcliff's avian appropriation is at once a reflection of his boyhood bird cruelty and a foreshadowing of his adult tyranny, for he will steal both birds (as hunter) and Isabella the bird woman (as husband).

In addition to stealing, Heathcliff also consumes both his stolen birds and his stolen wife. When Catherine claims 'I like her too well, my dear Heathcliff, to let you absolutely seize and *devour her up*' (*WH*, 125, my italics), Brontë reinforces the novel's insistence that, like a brace of grouse, women are to be 'devoured' – Catherine is 'a bird half eaten' (*WH*, 95) by Edgar, while Isabella is devoured by Heathcliff the bird stealer and murderer. When Nelly reminds Isabella that her abusive husband is 'a

[60] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 71. This also accurately corresponds with Heathcliff's hanging of Isabella's puppy as he abducts his bird-woman victim.

human being' (*WH*, 179), Isabella notes his 'sharp cannibal teeth' (*WH*, 182); this flesh-eating, wife devouring human being's modes of consumption 'destabilise the carnal borderland between the species and [reveals that] the distinction between carnivorism and cannibalism' is not as distinct as humans tell themselves.[61] Thus, Brontë blurs the boundary that euphemises animal flesh eating as carnivorism rather than cannibalistic. Nelly's later remark, that in Heathcliff's presence she 'did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species' (*WH*, 170), further belies the artificiality of the perceived gulf between humans and all other animals, and thus reformulates the eating of fellow-animals as a kind of cannibalism.

Nelly's response to Isabella's later infatuation with Heathcliff – 'He's a bird of bad omen; no mate for you' (*WH*, 121-22) – reveals that the system of bird imagery related to this couple is woven into the text from the outset.[62] Reiterating this narrative looping, Isabella 'chanced to be feeding some pigeons in the court' (*WH*, 128) as Heathcliff deviously instigates their courtship on his return as a 'gentleman' of fortune. Isabella's other avian association, with the canary, is also consistent with her exploited bird-woman status in relation to Heathcliff. The canary, like Isabella, is a captive bird exploited for the benefit of man. Bewick relates that they are 'not voluntary visitors' (*HBB* I, 263), adding that 'the importation of Canaries forms a small article of commerce' (*HBB* I, 264) and that, carried on their captor's backs for many miles, their worth as a commodity is great. This scenario resembles the manner in which Isabella is reduced to stolen property as she is carried off by Heathcliff on horseback. Like the canary, Isabella is not valued in and of herself, but for the trade value she represents.

Bird-shaped Turnips: Cathy's Feminist-Vegetarian Utopia

After the death of the lapwing and the ruination of the canary-dove, a new bird-woman emerges. In Nelly's introduction to her latest charge, Cathy, the latter's avian connections with her foremothers – her deceased mother, Catherine (with whom she shares an affinity with birds), and her aunt Isabella – are established through bird imagery. Catherine's death is attended by the silent larks, and her daughter, Cathy's, sixteenth birthday is marked by singing larks. Nelly relates that Cathy's 'capacity for intense attachments reminded me of her mother; still she did not resemble her; for she

[61] David Del Principe, '(M)eating Dracula: Food and Death in Stoker's Novel', *Gothic Studies*, 16 (2014), pp. 24-38, p. 24.
[62] This demonstrates that, contrary to Tytler's claim that Brontë's animal symbolism is inconsistent, the novel's bird imagery, like that of *Jane Eyre*, appears to be a carefully and consistently worked out system. See Tytler, 'Animals', p. 126.

could be soft and mild as a dove' (*WH*, 192). Catherine, as established already, had likened Isabella to a dove, suggesting that Cathy inherits the avian qualities from the matrilineal lines of both her mother's and father's side. Since Cathy inherits Catherine and Isabella's avian qualities and affinities, Cathy also inherits the same precarious position that their status as bird-women condemned them to: a vulnerability to objectification and consumption. Cathy becomes the latest bird-woman of the novel to fall prey to the tyranny of Heathcliff and other bird-murdering men in the novel. Heathcliff's increased involvement in the practice of avian slaughter – Linton reports that his father 'goes on the moors frequently, since the shooting season commenced' (*WH*, 231) – runs parallel to his project of enmeshing his niece, Cathy, in his trap. As the second-generation chapters of the novel unfold, birds continue to abound at crucial moments concerned with Cathy's displacement.

When Cathy-the-dove becomes embroiled in the dangerous, male-dominated world of the Heights, she must navigate her way through threatening liaisons with a host of avian-adversaries: her uncle, the 'cuckoo' (*WH*, 64) and 'bird of bad omen' (*WH*, 121-22), and her two cousins, Linton, the 'puling chicken' (*WH*, 207), and Hareton, the 'magpie' (*WH*, 281). How can the depiction of these women and bird-abusers be reconciled with Brontë's likening the latter to birds? In the final chapter of *Jane Eyre*, Jane's insistence upon 'rehumanising' a wild eagle-like Rochester conforms to the Kantian notion that 'the human becomes truly human by rising above animality'.[63] In *Wuthering Heights*, and elsewhere in essays that probe the precarious categories of being human and being animal – 'The Cat' and 'The Butterfly' – Emily Brontë anticipates Nietzschian thinking about the animality of humans.[64] Like Nietzsche, Brontë insists that animality is not an inferior mode of being that humanity must strive to transcend through the acquisition of culture. Rather, culture is a corrupting force that permits humans' killer-instinct. The arbitrary and excessive abuse perpetrated by humans against other animals distinguishes the former from the latter. Heathcliff may act like a cuckoo and usurp the other birds from their birth nests, or, in human terms, their 'rightful' inheritance, but a cuckoo does this by the necessity of survival.[65] Heathcliff, although undoubtedly miserably wronged as a child, usurps nest

[63] Derek Ryan, *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 50. Ryan is not referring to the Brontës' novels.
[64] For an account of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'radical break' from Enlightenment thinking about a hierarchical model of the human-nonhuman animal relationship, see Ryan, *Animal Theory*, pp. 50-59.
[65] Cuckoos are parasitic; they deposit their eggs in the nests of birds of other species. The host parent bird will care for the cuckoo egg thinking that it is one of their own. Once the cuckoo's egg hatches, the

dwellers – both human and avian – for reasons beyond necessity. When Isabella recounts to Nelly the very worst treatment she receives from her husband, Heathcliff, she calls him 'Monster!' (*WH*, 179), to which Nelly revealingly adds: 'He's a human being' (*WH*, 179).

Both Cathy's suitors are likened to birds, and the precarious relationships she develops with them are negotiated through bird imagery. Like her mother and aunt before her, Cathy is rendered a commodity whose body, like the brace of grouse before her, is passed from one estate to the other, and her capacity for 'flight' must be managed by enforcers of patrilineal tradition. Nelly, employed by Cathy's father, Edgar, that 'cat uh Linton' (*WH*, 107), must ensure that Cathy complies. It is therefore no surprise that Nelly designates Cathy as dove-like when one recalls that Bewickian doves are 'the willing attendants on man, and depend on his bounty, seldom leaving the dwellings provided for them' (*HBB* I, 314). However, like the Bewickian dove, a 'soft and mild' (*WH*, 129) nature and seemingly submissive disposition is accompanied by an independent spirit and tendency to challenge boundaries. In a remarkable mirroring of Brontë's Cathy, Bewick notes the dove's partiality to

> roaming abroad to seek amusement […] but when we consider the lightness of their bodies, the great strength of their wings, and the amazing rapidity of their flight, it is a matter of wonder that they should submit even to a partial domestication, or occupy those tenements fitted up for the purpose of breeding and rearing their young. It must be observed, however, that in these they live rather as voluntary captives, or transient guests, than as permanent or settled inhabitants, enjoying a considerable portion of that liberty they so much delight in on the slightest molestation they will sometimes abandon their mansion with all its conveniences, and seek a solitary lodgement in the holes of old walls or unfrequented towers. (*HBB* I, 314)

Furthermore, the dove is noted for 'having a powerful wing, [thus] they are enabled to perform very distant journeys' (*HBB* I, 315). Cathy is seen to be in her greatest element when recalling that 'I went flying home as light as air' (*WH*, 239), revealing a tension between the desire for freedom to roam or fly, and the convenience of returning to a domestic base at will. The interchange between Bewick's and Brontë's texts is such that the former uses the human verb 'roaming' (*HBB* I, 314) in relation to his bird whereas the latter enlists the avian verb 'flying' (*WH*, 239) to denote the movement of her character. Where the naturalist anthropomorphises his birds, the novelist reverse

cuckoo chick will destroy the other eggs in the nest by pushing them out. When the cuckoo chick is left alone in the nest, the host parent feeds the cuckoo until she or he can fly off.

avian anthropomorphises her women, resulting in a symbiotic textual interplay that reveals itself as a consistent pattern of imagery across the novel. The fact that the language employed by Bewick can so readily be applied to Brontëan female characters is not only indicative of the presence of his writings in the sisters' texts but is also testament to the ways in which women and birds are conflated in the wider consciousness of the time. Indeed, as numerous instances have illustrated thus far, the language of Bewick's and Charlotte and Emily Brontës' texts can quite often seem interchangeable in their preoccupations with the capacity for flight that is so often impinged upon by man for the purposes of domestic enslavement.

In the novel, Cathy's dove-like yearning for freedom to transgress domestic limitations is presented as a dangerous, yet necessary, and desirable ambition. But Cathy's relation to the dove that links her to her aunt is only one aspect of her avian lineage. Like her mother, Catherine, she is also associated with the avian victims of the hunt. Cathy's connection to game birds – those who populate both her mother's pillow and the moorland hunting grounds of the Grange and Heights that the men of the novel prey upon and consume – further nuances the way we read the novel's interlinked presentation of women's yearning for freedom and the hu*man* proclivity for inflicting violence upon birds. Cathy forebodingly declares: 'I know where I wish to go, where a colony of moor game are settled; I want to see whether they have made their nests yet' (*WH*, 211). Cathy's interest in the birds leads her to Heathcliff's deadly matrimonial trap. Like her mother and aunt before her, Cathy undergoes a similar fate to the hunted and commodified birds of her affections. Cathy's violent-free interest in the moor-game is in contrast to her cousin, Hareton's, who is seen 'lounging among the moors after rabbits and game' (*WH*, 198). Hareton's previous connection to gaming earlier in the novel leaves no doubt that his 'lounging' '*after*' (*WH*, 198, my italics) alludes to predation. Whereas Cathy wishes to observe and admire the game bird nests, Hareton is engaged in hunting and trapping them for food. The word 'lounging' (*WH*, 198) suggests an element of leisurely pleasure as opposed to the so-called necessity of bird murder that critics, such as Q.D. Leavis, have commented on.[66] Nelly, who is clearly accustomed to this human mode of avian exploitation, assumes

[66] Leavis defines the yeoman animal killing traditions espoused at the Heights as '"natural" […] and quite compatible with good-humour and a generous humanity [that nonetheless required] eking out subsistence farming by hunting'. See Q. D. Leavis, 'A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*', in *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë*, ed. Patsy Stoneman (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), pp. 24-38, p. 32. Hareton's culling of the puppies is interpreted by Isabella as a pointless act of cruelty, thus connecting Hareton's boyhood animal cruelty to Heathcliff's, which rather challenges the notion that Hareton merely partakes in harmless yeomanry.

that Cathy's interest in the birds' nests is similarly malevolent. But as Nelly's charge corrects her, the benevolent nature of Cathy's relationship to birds is revealed. Nelly presumes that 'Cathy had been caught in the fact of plundering, or, at least, hunting out the nests of the grouse' (*WH*, 211). The word 'plundering' implies the robbing and despoiling carried out by Lockwood, Heathcliff, Edgar's servants, and Hareton, who is known for 'robbing our woods of pheasants' (*WH*, 238). Nelly's presumption bears witness to the prevalence of hunting between Thrushcross and the Heights. Nelly moderates this with 'or, at least, hunting out the nests of the grouse' (*WH*, 211). Although the use of the word 'hunting' would seem to suggest the practice carried out by the novel's bird-hunting men, the term used here seems to be employed more with its searching aspect in mind, rather than its violent, murdering connotation. This is confirmed by Cathy when she asserts: 'I didn't mean to take them; but papa told me there were quantities up here, and I wished to see the eggs' (*WH*, 212). Unlike Heathcliff, whose interest in birds' nests is needlessly cruel and murderous, Cathy wishes to observe and admire them without encroaching on their wellbeing. This benevolence is corroborated in several subsequent episodes that illustrate the depth of Cathy's affinity and respect for feathered beings.

Cathy's interest in the moor-game is also a foil for her desire to reach beyond the confines of her father's estate. Her apparent search for the birds leads her quite deliberately to the vicinity of the Heights. Heathcliff, by now the owner of its lands, commences his first encounter with this latest bird-woman by 'reproving [Cathy,] the poacher' (*WH*, 211). Like her dove-aunt Isabella, this new-generation-dove's first encounter with the pheasant stealer occurs amidst bird imagery. Cathy is even associated, like her mother and aunt before her, with the victims of Heathcliff's bird-murdering antics, the lapwings, when Nelly recounts of her:

> never did any bird flying back to a plundered nest which it had left brim-ful of chirping young ones express more complete despair in its anguished cries and flutterings, than she. (*WH*, 222)

All three of the novel's bird-women are at different points connected to Heathcliff's crushed lapwings. The recurring theme of the plundered nest, the Heights, also reminds the reader that it is the site of a double pillaging. First, Heathcliff-the-cuckoo usurps the position of his adoptive sibling, Hindley, before disinheriting a new generation of 'chirping young ones': Linton, the 'puling chicken' (*WH*, 207); Hareton, the 'unfledged dunnock' (*WH*, 64); and Cathy, the 'dove' (*WH*, 192). Secondly, Heathcliff

annihilates the literal lapwing nest. Cathy's entanglement with the cuckoo exposes her to her 'puling chicken' cousin, Linton, the bate in a trap set by Heathcliff. This scenario reflects with uncanny accuracy the latter's act of trapping three young fledgling birds – the chicken, dunnock, and dove – a fate that will result in the actual death of the former and the (temporary) metaphorical deaths of the latter two.

Bird imagery also plays a crucial role in Cathy and Linton's relationship. In the same way that she warns Isabella against the 'bird of bad omen' (*WH*, 121-22), Nelly advises Cathy to 'think […] twice, before she takes the cockatrice' (*WH*, 261) – a fabulous creature, allegedly hatched from a serpent or a bird's egg, that is associated with repellent, even fatal qualities. In medieval heraldic traditions, the cockatrice figures as a hybrid creature with the head, wings, and feet of a bird, and the tail of a snake. If Heathcliff is a devil-snake then his son, Linton, is the putrid offspring of a bird-woman, Isabella, and a snake. Indeed, upon first encountering his son, Heathcliff is impelled to wonder 'where is my share in you, puling chicken?' (*WH*, 207) – an enquiry that foregrounds the avian qualities that Linton inherits from his mother. Once she is married to Heathcliff, Linton's mother, Isabella, is likewise impelled to wonder of her son's father, 'is he a devil?' (*WH*, 149), corroborating Linton's serpent-bird heritage. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cockatrice became a by-word for a prostitute: not an entirely inappropriate association when considering the uses Linton is put to by his scheming father.[67] Both avian terms associated with Linton rely on the interlinkage between sexist and speciesist language. A 'puling chicken' (*WH*, 207) is feeble because he has been rendered so by exploitative humans through generations of modification and habitual maltreatment. Cockatrice suggests that women objectified as sexual commodities – like the female chicken – can be labelled as a bird. A human prostitute would not be called a 'bird' if birds were not likewise exploited.

Brontë uses bird imagery to convey the dangers of an alliance with Linton-the-cockatrice, who boasts of assuming ownership of Cathy's birds. He declares that 'all her nice books are mine – she offered to give me them, and her pretty birds, and her pony Minny, if I would get the key of our room, and let her out: but I told her she had nothing to give, they were all, all mine' (*WH*, 265). Like his father, Heathcliff, the pheasant stealer, Linton is an unashamed bird thief. His threat of avian theft is inextricably connected to the gendered power dynamic that threatens Cathy's yearning

[67] 'Cockatrice', *OED*, accessed 2 February 2018.

for freedom through homosocial control over women and their property. Linton's threat seems a cruel parody of the patriarchal property rights a husband gains over a wife. His petty recourse to patrilineal ownership also recalls the other Brontë boy, John Reed's, warning that Bewick's bird book is his property, not Jane's.

Cathy encapsulates her incompatibility with Linton through bird imagery when she recalls their different notions of happiness. Linton's features 'the larks singing high up overhead' (*WH*, 239), whereas Cathy's is populated with 'not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side' (*WH*, 239). Cathy's utopia consists of an abundance of free birds. This avian vision is in stark contrast to the torture, murder, and consumption that her forefathers have revelled in and her cousins, Hareton and Linton, continue to practice. Although Cathy's vision includes the cuckoo, now he lives in harmony with other species and seems to pose no threat. Cathy's avian utopia disrupts the culture of homosocial bird cruelty espoused by her would-be captor, Heathcliff, her ill-fated husband, Linton, her would-be suitor, Lockwood, and her soon-to-be mate, Hareton. Cathy's avian declaration is a radical stance that destabilises her two cousins' continual bird-woman cruelty. In the midst of this culture of constant threat to women and birds, Cathy establishes a feminist-vegetarian utopia in which bird-shaped plants replace bird flesh consumption and garden plant cultivation replaces animal husbandry. In defiance of Heathcliff, who 'has taken all my land' (*WH*, 297), Cathy begins 'to dig and arrange her little garden' (*WH*, 303) of flowers. Cathy's garden of one's own is a bold endeavour that signals her opposition to the masculinist culture under which she has suffered disenfranchisement. Cathy's avian benevolence is reflected in her act of 'carving figures of birds and beasts out of the turnip parings in her lap' (*WH*, 280). Cathy is ahead of her time in producing plant-based alternatives to animal flesh.[68] Her avian activities encompass a respect for birds as fellow beings, rather than a reliance on their maltreatment. Whereas Hareton and his forefathers would consume dead birds, Cathy makes birds out of plants – a vegetarian alternative to the brace of grouse eaten by Heathcliff and Lockwood and the wing of the goose given to and refused by her mother, Catherine. Cathy is a cultivator of plants, not an annihilator of birds. Thus,

[68] James Gregory gives a sense of early nineteenth-century attempts to develop animal flesh-free food and other products: 'a radical vegetarian in the 1830s commissioned boots made of "some vegetable" [and] Luke Hansard discussed artificial fur, parchment and leather in 1843'. By the late nineteenth century, 'a range of vegetarian substitutes was commercially available'. See James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Tauris, 2007), pp. 92 and 131.

'the abattoir-world of Emily Brontë's vision' is, by the end of the novel, rendered a feminist-vegetarian utopia for Cathy and the birds.[69]

The emergence of a new culture of benevolence towards birds that Cathy ushers in becomes the environment in which the bird-hunting Hareton is transformed into a mate potentially compatible with Cathy the bird lover. Hareton, the 'unfledged dunnock' (*WH*, 64), becomes the self-preserving, aspirational 'magpie' (*WH*, 281). According to Bewick, magpies,

> make their nest with great art, leaving a hole in the side for admittance, and covering the whole upper part with an interweaving of thorny twigs, closely entangled, thereby *securing a retreat from the rude attacks of other birds*: the inside is furnished with a sort of mattress, composed of wool and other soft materials. (*HBB* I, 84, my italics)

Just like Hareton, this species is noted for their practical skills in providing an ordered and hospitable habitat. The magpie's many protective provisions for his mate are also evident in Hareton's long undiscovered commitment to shielding Cathy from the very worst abuses inflicted by that 'rude' cuckoo (*HBB* I, 84), Heathcliff. With this suggestion of Hareton's potential proclivity for 'securing a retreat from the rude attacks of other birds' (*HBB* I, 84), namely, the bird murdering, women battering men of the novel, Hareton's magpie qualities bode well for the implied future success of his match with Cathy.

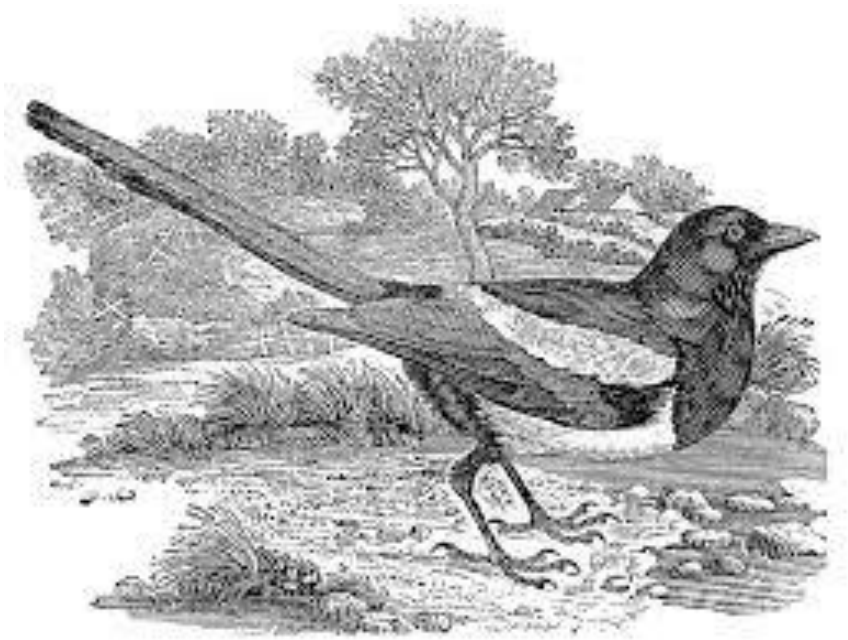

Fig. 33. Thomas Bewick, *The Magpie*, 1797.

[69] Davies, *Heretic*, p. 108.

Tate relates that many beliefs about the significance of the magpie were widely held in Yorkshire. One such tale reflects on Cathy's engendering of Hareton's reformed relationship to birds. As Tate shows, 'it was believed that the [magpie] was induced to do good by a kindly white fairy, or evil by a malignant black being.[70] It does not take a great leap of imagination to substitute the 'white fairy' for Cathy, inspiring the magpie to 'do good', and the role of the 'malignant black being' for Heathcliff, Hareton's bird-murdering role-model. Cathy, the white dove, does indeed inspire a shift in Hareton's interspecies encounters as an antidote to the tyrannising influence of Heathcliff. Reflecting Hareton's potential reformation under Cathy's influence, Bewick posits that a magpie 'may be easily tamed, and taught to pronounce words, and even short sentences, and will imitate any particular noise' (*HBB* I, 84). A crucial moment in Hareton's evolution from the bird hunter to the magpie occurs when he begins to articulate affectionate feelings towards his dove-cousin: 'at last, he proceeded from staring to touching; he put out his hand and stroked one curl, as gently as if it were a bird' (*WH*, 278). Cathy's vegetarian intervention has effectively transformed a bird murderer into a human capable of benevolent interaction with birds and women.

Despite the avian harmony implied by Cathy's vegetarian displacement of bird consumption, Hareton is, after all, a bred bird hunter. The word 'robbing' reveals Cathy's skewed perception of Hareton as the usurped Earnshaw: the woods and its avian inhabitants will, in human terms, become his inheritance. By the end of the novel, Hareton is a land-owning bird hunter like Edgar and Heathcliff before him. Bewick's magpie also accurately mirrors Hareton's coveting of Cathy's books, for the bird 'is addicted, like other birds of its kind, to stealing and hoarding' (*HBB* I, 84). This is remarkably reminiscent of Cathy's unwitting discovery of Hareton's yearning for his own liberty through self-betterment when she reveals: 'and once, Hareton, I came upon a secret stock in your room – some Latin and Greek, and some tales and poetry; all old friends – I brought the last here – and you gathered them, as a magpie gathers silver spoons, for the mere love of stealing!' (*WH*, 281). On the one hand, Hareton's earlier participation in homosocial bird-hunting is now being replaced by the pursuit of books and learning – a symbolic enlightening towards a more harmonious relationship between birds and humans, women and men. However, this sounds potentially like a naturalist, such as Bewick or John James Audubon, bird-

[70] Tate, *Flights of Fancy*, p. 79.

murderers considered men of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, Hareton's magpie book thieving recalls Linton's determination to procure Cathy's property – including her books and birds – for himself as well as Jane Eyre's cousin, John Reed's, patriarchal insistence that bird books are his, not Jane's.

Conclusion

Catherine, the lapwing, who is remarkably free-spirited, is forced to become nothing short of a game bird in order to survive as she is captured, consumed, and dies amid a profusion of dead birds. Isabella, the canary, is stolen, devoured, and ruined in abusive captivity. Cathy, who embodies the harmonious, yet freedom-loving qualities of the dove, also demonstrates an affinity and benevolence towards wild species, and espouses a vegetarian utopia. Cathy inherits her mother, Catherine's, proclivity to revolt against and destablilise avian exploitation through feminist-vegetarian interventions. Cathy, who establishes a kind of feminist-vegetarian utopia, is arguably more successful than her mother, but there nonetheless persists the threat that her bird-murdering partner, Hareton, will continue in the tradition of speciesist exploitation to which he is habituated. As with Jane Eyre inhabiting the hunting lodge that is her marital home, Cathy, despite her visionary vegetarian project, ends nonetheless partnered with a bird-murderer and consumer.

The novel's final avian image reveals Lockwood 'devastat[ing] the moors' (*WH*, 284) on a bird-murdering escapade, suggesting that Cathy's avian utopia is but an oasis in a world in which bird exploitation and women's oppression persevere. Indeed, by the time he writes his diary at the turn of the nineteenth century, the callous human treatment of birds that Lockwood typifies will only gain a firmer grip as butcheries and abattoirs proliferate as the century unfolds, becoming 'the most conspicuous iniquity of […] English civilization!'.[71] As Lockwood brings his reflection on the tale to an end, he offers one of his gravest misunderstandings in the novel. Unlike Hareton, who reveals a potential avian simpatico with Cathy-the-dove when he touches her 'as gently as if she were a bird' (*WH*, 278), Lockwood grossly underestimates the dove-like capacity for liberty that she shares when he surmises 'perhaps she had no temptation to transgress' (*WH*, 284). If the novel ends with Lockwood, then Cathy's is not a happy ending, for, through Brontë's misogynist,

[71] Williams, *The Ethics of Diet*, p. 7.

speciesist framing narrator, the oppression and exploitation of both women and birds persists.

With her presentation of Heathcliff, Brontë anticipates Nietzsche's damning appraisal of humanity's unique capacity, within the animal kingdom, for degradation:

> Man, at the finest height of his powers, is all nature and carries nature's uncanny dual characters in himself. His dreadful capabilities and those counting as unhuman are perhaps, indeed, the fertile soil from which alone all humanity, in feelings, deeds and works, can grow forth.[72]

Brontë is, as Nietzsche would go on to articulate almost half a century later, and with the hindsight of Darwinian evolutionary theory, 'critiquing the "techniques of domination" promoted in the name of civilisation'.[73] Brontë destablises human 'techniques of domination' through feminist-vegetarian interruptions; both Catherine and her daughter, Cathy, exert significant gestalt shifts in consciousness to the literal birds whose oppression mirrors their own as objectified consumables. Through the depiction of masculine predation aimed at women and birds, *Wuthering Heights* bears witness to the sexual politics of meat. Brontë's confrontation with human depravity as it is inflicted upon nonhuman animals disturbs the Enlightenment dualism that posits nonhuman animals as 'other' and inferior to humans. Whilst restoring the absent referent of the literal birds, whose sufferings and deaths at the hands of human men permeate the novel, Brontë repeatedly foregrounds 'the ways in which the objectification and redefinition of women and [birds] as consumable commodities are interlinked'.[74]

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[72] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Homer's Contest', in *On the Genealogy of Morality and Other Writings*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 174-82, p. 174.
[73] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 51.
[74] Stewart Lockie, Jen Hayward, and Nell Salem, review of 'Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*', *Agriculture and Human Values*, 19 (2002), pp. 361-63, p. 361.

Chapter Three: *Jamaica Inn*

> Something was scraping gently at the kitchen window … tapping lightly, softly, scratching furtively at the pane of glass.
>
> It was like the sound made by a branch of ivy when it has broken loose from the trunk and, bending downwards, teases a window or a porch, disturbed and *restless* with every breath of wind. But there was no ivy on the slate walls of Jamaica Inn, and the shutters were bare.
>
> The scraping continued, persuasive and undaunted, tap … tap … like *the drumming of a beak*: tap … tap … like the four fingers of a hand.[1]

The seasoned reader might experience a sense of déjà vu upon reading this scene from Daphne du Maurier's fourth novel, *Jamaica Inn* (1936). Evocative of Lockwood's dream in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), it is also a precursor to du Maurier's later tale, 'The Birds' (1952).[2] In its simultaneous looking-back and looking forwards, as well as its reference to restlessness and the bird beak, this passage illustrates some of the myriad connections between du Maurier, the Brontës, and bird imagery.[3]

Like the Brontë novels discussed in previous chapters, *Jamaica Inn* is haunted by a pervading avian presence. Birds function as symbols of male depravity and predation, and, in their roles as subjugated beings who share the abused status of women, birds signify women's forbidden longings and yearning for freedom from entrapment. Despite this, the birds of *Jamaica Inn* remain largely unacknowledged by the few scholars who have considered the novel. As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, contributors to du Maurier scholarship on *Jamaica Inn* – Jane S. Bakerman, Richard Kelly, Philip Dodd, June M. Frazer, Nina Auerbach, and Michael Titlestad – do not note the prevalence of birds in the novel.[4] Alison Light unwittingly reveals the importance of avian imagery in *Jamaica Inn* with her two fleeting references to birds,

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[1] Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (London: Virago, 2015), p. 201, my italics. Henceforward *JI*.

[2] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Toronto: Broadview, 2007). Daphne du Maurier, 'The Birds', *The Birds and Other Stories* (London: Virago, 2013).

[3] Du Maurier further demonstrates her interest in this scene from *Wuthering Heights* in her biography of Branwell Brontë where she quotes the whole passage relating to Lockwood's window dream. See Daphne du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë* (London: Virago, 2006), p. 95. First published 1960.

[4] Jane S. Bakerman, 'Daphne du Maurier', in *And Then There Were Nine… More Women of Mystery*, ed. Jane S. Bakerman (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1985), pp. 10-29; Richard Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier* (Boston: Twayne, 1987); Philip Dodd, 'Gender and Cornwall: Charles Kingsley to Daphne du Maurier', in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1990*, ed. K. D. M. Snell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 119-35; June M. Frazer, 'Daphne du Maurier', in *Mystery and Suspense Writers: The Literature of Crime, Detection, and Espionage*, ed. Robin W. Winks (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1998), pp. 331-43; Nina Auerbach, *Daphne du Maurier, Haunted Heiress* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); and Michael Titlestad, 'The Wrecking Light in the Literary Imaginary', *Cleo*, 43 (2013), pp. 77-96.

but their significance is not drawn out.[5] Similarly, Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik allude to the central role of birds in *Jamaica Inn* with two brief references to the bird imagery relating to the vicar of Altarnun, but again, these are not elaborated upon.[6] Neither Light, nor Horner and Zlosnik, explicitly acknowledge a system of avian imagery or avian gender politics at work in *Jamaica Inn*. In this chapter, I address this lacuna by examining the ways in which *Jamaica Inn* revisits and transforms the avian gender politics of *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Wuthering Heights*.[7] In doing so, the chapter extends the consideration of du Maurier's writing beyond the romance genre with which it has been dismissively associated, exploring, rather, the ways in which the novel presents gender roles in uncompromising, bleak, and often brutal ways, refusing to gloss relationships between men and women with a romantic dénouement. The pervading presence of birds is central to this project but, as in chapters one and two, I also examine the extent to which du Maurier is awake to birds as subjects in and of themselves while they provide metaphors for women's suffering and yearning for freedom.

Orphaned at the age of twenty-three, Mary Yellan is obliged to live with her Aunt Patience and uncle, Joss Merlyn. Joss is the landlord of the notorious Jamaica Inn situated in the wild, remote moorland of Bodmin in Cornwall. On arrival, Mary discovers that her uncle is a tyrant deeply feared by her aunt who is a shadow of her once vibrant self. Forced into domestic servitude at her uncle's derelict inn and expected to act as barmaid to his drunken associates, Mary's instinct is to run away but she feels compelled to remain and protect her aunt from Joss's violent dominion. As the horrific realities of the inn and her uncle's murderous activities unfold, Mary begins to realise the necessity of escape and determines to seek justice for Joss's crimes.

Later in the novel, du Maurier revisits and reworks her highly symbolic Brontëan window scenario in which Jem Merlyn, Joss's younger brother,

> cursed aloud, and, reaching forward, smashed the pane of glass with his fist, careless of the splitting sound of glass and the blood that spouted immediately from his hand. The gap in the window was wide enough now for entrance, and

[5] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 165 and 174.
[6] Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 83.
[7] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996). Henceforward *JE*.

> he had climbed into the room and was beside [Mary] before she realised what he had done. (*JI*, 217)[8]

Du Maurier employs this window scenario twice in *Jamaica Inn*, and then revisits it in her tale, 'The Birds', sixteen years later. This indicates that, as with *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, du Maurier's writing is concerned with an interplay between bird imagery and gendered power dynamics. Furthermore, this recurring window scene bears witness to du Maurier's process of Brontëan narrative transformation. Like Lockwood's dream in the passage's literary precursor, du Maurier's window scene involving Jem and Mary seems to give expression to a repressed, violent sexuality. There is the phallic smashing of the window's membrane and a preoccupation with a gap, an entrance, resulting in a bloody aftermath. Like Lockwood's dream, du Maurier's window episode can be read as a symbolic sexual encounter, even as a rape, in which Mary, like the first Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, is the victim. What was in the first du Maurier window passage, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, evocative of a restless bird tapping at the window, is now a bird-man, the hawk-like Jem Merlyn. The symbolism of the latter window scene juxtaposes the entrapment that Mary experiences within the oppressive dwelling of the inn, 'like a bird in a net' (*JI*, 27), with the freedom and danger that is associated with the moors and its avian beings: 'she waited for a repetition of the sound that had woken her. It came again in an instant – a shower of earth flung against the pane of glass from the yard outside' (*JI*, 213). Jem flings the earth, the product of the moors, against the barrier that keeps Mary from realising her freedom – the bird net of Jamaica Inn – enticing her to take flight. At the same time, both Jem and Harry the pedlar's 'furtive', 'restless', bird-like window tapping, 'like the drumming of a beak' (*JI*, 201), is indicative of the constant threat of sexual exploitation by various bird-men that menaces Mary throughout the novel.

Windows, as explored more fully by du Maurier in 'The Birds', form the barrier to birds' entry into the confined domestic interior, a space that also becomes a site of sexual conflict and gendered malaise across her fiction. In *Jamaica Inn*, windows are sites in which the boundaries of desire and freedom are confronted. Joss is concerned with the restraining potential of the closed window – 'fasten that window,

[8] Horner and Zlosnik also recognise this scene as 'an image redolent of *Wuthering Heights*', but they do not go further. Nor do they mention the earlier avian window scene that I quote in the epigraph to this chapter, which is surely just as 'Brontëan' with its restless branch of ivy and appearance of the ominous hand. See Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 77. Dorothy van Ghent explores Emily Brontë's symbolic windows. See Dorothy van Ghent, 'The Window Figure and the Two-Children Figure in *Wuthering Heights*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 7 (1952), pp. 189-97.

Patience […] and put the bar across the shutter' (*JI*, 210). Patience follows his instructions whereas Mary waits by the door, the entrance to the moors. Although Mary is 'strangely thankful that her uncle had decided to make a prisoner of her as well' (*JI*, 210-11), she is later compelled to follow him beyond the barriers of the window and into the domain of the moor birds.

This chapter considers the gender politics of *Jamaica Inn* in relation to these two avian domains: the domesticated 'bird'-women within the inn, and the moor birds without. An examination of *Jamaica Inn*'s multifaceted avian symbolism reveals the ways in which language relating to commodified birds (such as farm birds, like the chicken) is employed by male protagonists to oppress women, by modifying their speech and behaviour, and how moor bird imagery is employed to confront, but not necessarily resolve sexual oppression. Complicating this is du Maurier's depiction of male predators as hawk-like. The key avian elements that I examine in this chapter include: the use of speciesist language with particular reference to domesticated birds and women; caged and netted bird imagery to delineate the entrapment of women; the recurrence of reverse avian anthropomorphism that depicts predatory men as hawks; the employment of protesting ravens and curlews to voice the heroine's restlessness and rage; the articulation of a pervading fear of domestic servitude and sexual exploitation which mirrors the lives of the 'domesticated' birds who populate the novel; and, finally, the prevalence of bird hunting and consumption. My analysis of these aspects of the novel's avian schema questions the extent to which du Maurier can be said to implement a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption. Throughout the chapter, I also evaluate the ways in which du Maurier is responding to the avian imagery of the Brontë sisters, examined in chapters one and two, through 'the performance of textual echo and allusion', and I consider the ways in which narrative transformations enrich 'the potential for the production of meaning' across the Brontës' and du Maurier's avian-infused oeuvres.[9]

Clacking and Squarking: Sexist Speciesism

Jamaica Inn, and the violent, degenerative culture that dominates there, represents the very worst outcomes of patriarchal privilege. Its owner, Mary's uncle by marriage, is a predatory bird by name: Joss Merlyn. The merlin hawk, a bird described by Thomas Bewick as a violent predator residing in 'wild moory districts', preys on smaller birds,

[9] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 6 and 8.

often killing them 'by one blow, striking them on the breast, head, or neck'.[10] Bewick's description of a merlin hawk's means of attack mirrors Joss's chilling account of his own murderous methods as a wrecker.[11] These associations of nomenclature also evoke the themes of avian predation and entrapment associated with Emily Brontë's moorland merlin hawk, Nero, pictured in figure 3.

Joss's wife's name, too, is significant: Patience Merlyn has perfected 'the calm, uncomplaining endurance of pain, affliction, inconvenience, […] Forbearance or long-suffering under provocation; *esp.* tolerance of the faults or limitations of other people' that marriage to a predatory hawk requires.[12] Patience's synonym, temperance, extends further in illustrating its incapacitating outcomes: 'self-restraint and moderation in action of any kind, in the expression of opinion, etc.; suppression of any tendency to passionate action; […] esp. self-control, restraint, or forbearance, when provoked to anger or impatience'.[13] This effectively describes Patience's failure to challenge her bullying predatory husband as well as behaviours observed in chickens enduring lives as commodified beings.[14] The best situation Patience can aspire to as a chicken-woman married to a predatory hawk is to become the feathered signifier of her husband's longed for wealth and status: 'You shall drive in your own coach yet, Patience […] and wear feathers in your bonnet […] we'll live like fighting-cocks' (*JI*, 201). For Joss, an indicator of his success would include a wife adorned in dead birds. This aspiration is at once a dark parody of the plumage-wearing lady, Mrs Bassat, in *Jamaica Inn*, who I will discuss in due course, and an echo of Catherine Earnshaw's feathered beaver hat in *Wuthering Heights*.

Since assuming her avian marital name, Mary's aunt has become so bound to the chicken run 'behind the inn' (*JI*, 38) that she is barely distinguishable from its domesticated avian captives.[15] Patience, whose depleted spirit has resulted in her having 'no wish to stir beyond the chicken-run' (*JI*, 38) – where she is consistently found throughout the novel – is reduced to a pathetic bird-woman who embodies

[10] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume One: Containing the History and Description of Land Birds* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), p. 16. First published in 1797.
[11] On p. 129 of the novel, Joss describes with chilling details how he kills shipwrecked victims by smashing their faces with rocks.
[12] 'Patience', *OED*, accessed 5 March 2018.
[13] 'Temperance', *OED*, accessed 5 March 2018.
[14] Karen Davies explores the ill-treatment and consequent depleted behaviours of farm birds living in enforced, unnatural, torturous confinement. See Karen Davis, 'Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection', in *Women and Animals: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 192-212.
[15] The term 'chicken run', despite its deceptive allusion to running, is nonetheless an enclosure that entraps and enslaves chickens destined for sexual exploitation and slaughter.

Mary's greatest fears of giving way to heterosexual attraction.[16] This aligns Patience with Isabella Linton in *Wuthering Heights*. Like Patience, Isabella is also associated with domesticated birds and is similarly exploited and ruined by her destructive relationship with Heathcliff, who is clearly a prototype for du Maurier's depraved Joss Merlyn. Aunt Patience's association with the chicken run is incorporated into the 2014 BBC television adaptation of *Jamaica Inn*, revealing a responsiveness to du Maurier's avian imagery.[17] In the adaptation, Mary places an ornamental egg displaying a chicken in Patience's hands, who is lying in her coffin. Patience's assimilation with the subjugated chicken is clearly presented as her death warrant.

When Mary arrives at Jamaica Inn, its prominence as an avian habitat and the conjoining of sexist and speciesist language demarcates her new abode as a site in which exploitative, gendered power has taken hold. In contrast to her aunt, Mary *Yell*an becomes a whistleblower; her insistent 'yelling' is what ultimately overthrows her uncle's abusive power, as well as that of the novel's other, more powerful hawk, the vicar of Altarnun. Mary's yelling, which is connected to avian imagery, aligns her with the restless, avian caws and shrieks of Bertha Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. From the outset, Joss is eager to discern whether Mary will conform to her aunt Patience's submissive avian demeanour. His use of bird imagery to castigate the communication between the two women hinders womanly comradery, weakening their ability to unite against him. The majority of the bird language that Joss employs to this end is related to his presumptive control over Mary and Patience's potential verbal power, an attempt to deny Mary's vocal namesake, *Yell*an.

Joss's initial response to Mary and her aunt's first encounter is to quash conversation and encourage instead silent domestic servitude: 'What have you got to squark about, you damned fool? Can't you see the girl wants her supper? Get her out to the kitchen and give her some bacon and a drink' (*JI*, 18). Joss's use of the avian-related verb, 'to squark', reveals the nature of his bullying abuse of power; it demonstrates early on that he views women as occupying the same position as the exploited birds on his farm – existing, not as 'bodies that matter', but as bodies that exist for the benefit of those whose bodies seemingly do matter.[18] When Joss discovers the two women conversing and existing in a mode superfluous to his needs, he conveys

[16] For further examples of Patience's connection to the chicken run, see du Maurier, *JI*, pp. 29, 38, 67, and 88.
[17] *Jamaica Inn*, dir. Philippa Lowthorpe, with Jessica Brown Findlay and Matthew McNulty (Origin, 2014).
[18] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 2011). First published in 1993.

his misogyny through speciesist language: 'So the hens are clacking already? […] I heard you, you blathering fool – gobble, gobble, gobble, like a turkey-hen' (*JI*, 20). Joss's attempt to undermine the validity of Mary and Patience's voices relies on the assumption that the life of hens – also domesticated and sexually exploited females – have no value in and of themselves. Joss's conflation of hens, fools, and women is a tactic of the oppressor, but recourse to this method reveals the danger he perceives in women's articulation of their oppression. It also confirms the shared status of birds and women in Joss's exploitative hierarchy of beings.

Joan Dunayer articulates the interconnected oppressions between birds and women embedded in such comparisons:

> speciesist practices underlie nonhuman-animal metaphors that disparage women. Most such metaphors […] refer to domesticated animals like the chicken […] – those bred for service to humans.[19]

She further states that:

> comparing women to hens communicates scorn because hens are exploited as mere bodies – for their egg-laying capacity or flesh. […] The hen's exploiter values only her physical service, dismissing her experiential world as unimportant or nonexistent. […] Like hens, women have no worth apart from their functions within the exploiter's world. […] If hens were not held captive and treated as nothing more than bodies, their lives would not supply symbols for the lives of stifled and physically exploited women.[20]

Having read *Jamaica Inn*, one might easily substitute 'hens' in Dunayer's passage with 'the women living under Joss's roof'. Like Patience, 'the imprisoned hen cannot develop social bonds'.[21] Also like Patience, 'the hen's defaced image derives from her victimization'.[22] Mary, who is enforced into domestic serfdom upon arrival at Jamaica Inn, is at risk of becoming an imprisoned, sexually exploited hen.

Attempting to define Mary in the same oppressive avian language as his wife, Joss warns:

> I'm master of this house, and I'll have you know it. You'll do as you're told, and help in the house and serve my customers, and I'll not lay a finger on you.

[19] Joan Dunayer, 'Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots', in *Animals and Women*, eds. Adams and Donovan, pp. 11-31, p. 12.
[20] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', pp. 12-13.
[21] Dunayer, Sexist Words', p. 13.
[22] Dunayer, Sexist Words', p. 13.

> But, by God, if you open your mouth and *squark*, I'll break you until you eat out of my hand the same as your aunt yonder. (*JI*, 22, my italics)

Deeming that Mary will also 'squark' (*JI*, 22) like a bird, Joss threatens to apply his violent dominion over her through a politics of consumption in which man achieves mastery over women and birds by determining who eats who – I'll break you until you eat out of my hand' (*JI*, 22). Conforming to this, Joss later posits that 'starvation is good for women and beasts; it brings 'em to heel. She'll be humble enough in the morning' (*JI*, 210). With this, Joss confirms that, in *Jamaica Inn*, the politics of consumption is inextricably connected to the conflation of women and birds as exploited beings. Mary responds to this with nausea: 'she felt eerie suddenly, chilled, and rather sick' (*JI*, 23). Conversely, her aunt, whose spirit is defeated by Joss, appears with 'new-laid eggs in her apron' (*JI*, 29), intent on boiling Mary an egg. Although there is no explicit narrative feminist-vegetarian interruption, the narrator omits to confirm whether Mary ate the egg and her nausea, which is a recurring theme in the novel, is instructive.[23] Not only has Patience become complicit in avian exploitation, her attempt at female homosocial bonding over the consumption of an egg, a symbol of the bird's sexual exploitation, indicates her annihilated agency.

After Mary retaliates, Joss realises that his niece will not conform to the submissive, abused chicken-status of her aunt. He subsequently acknowledges her to be more akin to a cat than a bird: 'Now we know just what sort of lodger we have. Scratch her, and she shows her claws' (*JI*, 23). Dunayer demonstrates how 'the exploitation of domesticated animals, such as chickens, also leads to negative images of *other* animals – predators who threaten that exploitation'.[24] Dunayer cites the fox as her example, but her insight can likewise be applied to the cat, the predator of birds, associated with the perpetrators of speciesist doctrine in *Jamaica Inn*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Jane Eyre* – Joss Merlyn, Edgar Linton, and John Reed. Dunayer explains that a woman termed as the inverse of the chicken, such as the cat, is

> resented, and somewhat feared, as scolding, malicious, or domineering, especially toward a man. She threatens a man's self-esteem and sense of security, intruding into his perceived domain.[25]

[23] Forced to serve Joss and his associates, Mary 'felt a physical disgust rise up in her' (*JI*, 43) and later reiterates that 'she felt very sick' (*JI*, 46). When Mary witnesses Joss's violent actions, 'a surge of sickness rose inside her' (*JI*, 55).
[24] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p. 15.
[25] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p. 15.

Unlike the domesticated bird, the cat is considered alert, self-reliant, and able to evade the oppressive captor. When used in relation to a man – as in the depiction of Edgar the cat in *Wuthering Heights* – it indicates his killer instinct and his dominance over women and birds. When employed by a male oppressor to denigrate a woman who threatens his power over her, the cat metaphor communicates the fear that his hierarchy of beings might be challenged. Mary defies this oppressive ideology by circumventing the avian mode of vociferation associated with Jane and Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. Not unlike John Reed's regard for Jane Eyre, once Joss detects Mary's non-avian character, he reveals a degree of fear of Mary and her 'yelling' potential. Thus, he begins to covet her oral account of events over his wife's: 'Come on! [..] Out with it. What's your side of the story? I get nothing but a string of words from your aunt; a magpie makes more sense than she' (*JI*, 88). Joss begins to distinguish Mary from the bird associations he employs to subjugate his wife. This indicates Mary's potential to disrupt the speciesist hierarchy of power at Jamaica Inn.

The Caged and Netted Bird: A Narrative Transformation

Other men encountering Mary for the first time associate the inn with avian gendered power and presume that Mary will follow her aunt's exploited avian-like demeanour. The vicar of Altarnun refers to Mary's new family home as 'your uncle's little nest at Jamaica Inn' (*JI*, 102), wrongly deeming her, like her uncle Joss to begin with, 'nothing but a chicken with a broken shell still around' her (*JI*, 166). Even Mary's sympathiser, Jem, perpetuates a sense of avian inevitability for Mary, insisting that his brother 'has no right to keep you up in Jamaica Inn like a bird in a cage' (*JI*, 181). Momentarily, Mary acquiesces in this submissive position – 'she felt caught here now, like a bird in a net' (*JI*, 27). But, unlike Brontë heroines before her, Mary is not identified as a bird, although she clearly shares an affinity with the avian life of the moors. The men who dominate Mary may cast her as a bird and attempt to imprison her in a bird-cage, but the narrator does not compare Mary to a bird or endow her with a bird-like persona. Du Maurier evokes Charlotte Brontë's bird net and cage metaphors but, unlike her literary predecessor, she resists endowing her heroine with an avian persona. Unlike Jane, Mary is not associated with bird species, nor does she explicitly enact avian characteristics. In doing so, du Maurier avoids the pitfall of perpetuating speciesism, a problem that advocates of ecofeminism warn against – namely, that women

> mirror patriarchal oppressors when they too participate in other species' denigration. Women who avoid acknowledging that they are animals closely resemble men who prefer to ignore that women are human.[26]

Thus, Mary avoids the kind of speciesist declaration made by Jane Eyre – 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will' (*JE*, 284) – with its complicity in a hierarchy that ensures men oppress and that women and nonhuman animals, such as birds, are available for oppression. Mary does not make such a claim but rather counters oppression by other means, by calling out the corruption that oppresses women and birds.

Du Maurier subverts the Brontëan tradition of associating the heroine with birds. In this way, du Maurier's heroine is distinct from Patience and the bird-men who menace her. Although du Maurier avoids an avian persona her heroine, she nonetheless follows Charlotte Brontë's reverse avian anthropomorphic depiction of male protagonists as predatory hawks. This subversion of an anthropocentric ideology that is 'founded on the assumption that man is distinct from the animals and superior to' them, suggests a departure from traditional uses of avian symbolism in relation to issues of gender and sexuality.[27] Du Maurier might be seen to appropriate a speciesist discourse to characterise the oppressors. However, while displacing 'the historical association of women and animals' by shifting this to male protagonists, du Maurier continues to 'concede to an insidious anthropocentricism while trying to dislodge it'.[28] Thus, while exposing patriarchal menace, du Maurier potentially perpetuates the speciesism that has historically been used to denigrate women and birds, as the following section will now consider.

A Habitat of Hawk-Men and a Protesting Raven

The place Mary goes to in her repeated attempts to escape the oppressive bird 'net' (*JI*, 27) of Jamaica Inn, the vast moorland that surrounds her uncle's 'little nest' (*JI*, 102), is, like that of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, at once a place of freedom and danger; a site of transgression and ominous avian encounters. Like Jane, who escapes the bird net of Thornfield, and the adolescent, second generation Cathy, impelled to dally from her paternal prison, Thrushcross Grange, Mary wanders onto the moors in

[26] Dunayer, 'Sexist Words', p. 19.
[27] Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: On Women, Men, and Morals* (New York: Summit, 1985), p. 341.
[28] Adams and Donovan, eds., *Animals and Women*, p. 4. Adams and Donovan are not commenting on du Maurier's work; I apply their theory to *Jamaica Inn*.

her desire to move beyond the bird cage of her uncle's inn. All three heroines encounter a variety of bird species on the moors that are different in nature to those found in patriarchal pens. On the moors, 'there were ravens too, and buzzards; the hills were homing places for all solitary things' (*JI*, 39). Here, Mary also encounters the novel's predatory hawks: the three Merlyn brothers – Joss, Jem, and Matthew – and the insidious vicar of Altarnun. The moors are where du Maurier grapples with sexual awakenings as her heroine encounters these hawk-men. This is the place where Mary can transcend gendered confinement, but it is also a zone in which she becomes potential prey to sexual violence. It is also the place in which Mary confronts death in the form of Matthew Merlyn's avian-infused demise which haunts her throughout her moorland wanderings.

Unlike the Brontëan moors, which are ambivalently gendered spaces, du Maurier's moorland is a masculine topography even as it comes to embody her heroine's psychological map.[29] Contrary to Dodd's reading of *Jamaica Inn* as indicative of what 'distinguishes du Maurier […]: her attempt to […] feminise Cornwall', I argue that du Maurier masculinises the moorland.[30] By 'homing' (*JI*, 39) her heroine there, amongst the ravens, buzzards and predatory hawk men, du Maurier not only confronts the menacing 'masculinity' of the moors, but refutes the limitations of 'femininity'. At various points throughout the novel, hawk men comment upon the seeming inappropriateness of Mary's presence on the moors: 'A woman! What in the world are you doing out here?' (*JI*, 94), the vicar expostulates. Jem reminds Mary of the geographical limitations imposed upon her: 'The whole country belongs to me, Mary […] with the sky for a roof. […] You're a woman, your home is your kingdom' (*JI*, 299). Twelve Men's Moor, the area of moorland in which the Merlyn brothers

[29] The over-arching gender neutrality of the Brontëan moors nonetheless encompasses overtly 'feminine' and 'masculine' associations. For instance, of the moorland, Jane Eyre remarks: 'Nature seemed to me benign and good; I thought *she* loved me, outcast as I was; and I, who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to *her* with filial fondness. To-night, at least, I would be *her* guest – as I was *her* child: my *mother* would lodge me without money and without price' (*JE*, 363, my italics). Similarly, the second Cathy of *Wuthering Heights* has been noted by Maggie Berg and Thomas Moser as feminising the Heights and its surrounding landscape. See Maggie Berg, *Wuthering Heights: The Writing in the Margin* (New York: Twayne, 1996), p. 100, and Thomas Moser, 'What is the Matter with Emily Jane? Conflicting Impulses in *Wuthering Heights*', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 17 (1962), pp. 1-19. Conversely, the prevalence of bird-hunting, as discussed in chapter two of this thesis, marks the moors of *Wuthering Heights* as a 'masculine' domain.

[30] Although Dodd refers to the Cornish sea rather than the Cornish moors and gives more weight in his analysis to *Rebecca* than *Jamaica Inn*, his hypothesis nonetheless provides a point of departure when reading *Jamaica Inn*'s avian moorland scenes. Dodd moves beyond the project of defining du Maurier's fiction against the romance genre and is instead seeking to align her work with Modernist sensibilities – a surer way of securing a place in the literary canon. However, my thesis problematises his attempt to 'align the modern *and* the feminine'. See Dodd, 'Gender and Cornwall', p, 128, my italics.

were born, asserts by its name that this is a masculine location. Du Maurier's fascination with this real location, with its 'romantic-sounding' name, which is evoked in her fiction, is also evident in her geographical memoir, *Vanishing Cornwall* (1967).[31] In this book, du Maurier relishes the specifically 'male' qualities of the moor that the name conjures for her. In fact, the chapter du Maurier dedicates to the moorland, 'the whole of Cornwall's backbone' (*VC*, 141), reads like an excerpt from *Jamaica Inn* with autobiographical insertions that blur fiction and life, Mary and Daphne. Throughout the chapter, as in the novel, birds assume an ominous presence, and the dreadful fate of Matthew Merlyn is anticipated in a hyper-awareness of the perilous landscape. In its danger, even the moorland presents 'traps' (*VC*, 143), and is a place of potential 'imprison[ment]' (*VC*, 142), where perishing human bodies can be 'plucked from above by hawk and buzzard, until nothing remains but bones and skull' (*VC*, 143). This resonates with Mary's life-threatening encounters with hawk men that characterise her moorland escapades. It also echoes Jane Eyre's moorland conjecture 'that crows and ravens […] should pick my flesh from my bones' (*JE*, 370), a scene of imagined avian consumption that I will analyse in conjunction with du Maurier's novel in due course.

What initially lures Mary into the unknown territory of the moors is the pursuit of Joss, a figure of ambiguous sexual connotations. Curiosity about this predatory, sexually charged bird man leads Mary beyond the domain of the exploited hen and caged bird and into the territory of the free-roaming birds of the moors. But what she discovers there is not simply a liberation from the subjugation of the chicken. Here, Mary, like the Brontë sisters' Jane and the second-generation Cathy before her, encounters a rich array of avian life. On the Cornish moors, du Maurier conjures curlews, gulls, buzzards, crows, and ravens; collectively these birds problematise the notion of the moors as a remedy to the confinements of the chicken run. Du Maurier's moor birds are 'pensive' (*JI*, 111), 'solitary things' (*JI*, 39); they witness screams of terror as they flap their wings with a 'mournful cry' (*JI*, 40); they 'screamed' […] with harsh protesting cries' (*JI*, 92); they call with a 'plaintive note' (*JI*, 111); and frequently 'the scream that broke upon the silence would be the scream of a gull' (*JI*, 172), creatures who 'haunt the cliffs' (*JI*, 281). This avian clamour is in manner different to the clacking and squarking that emits from Joss's abused wife. Rather, the

[31] Daphne du Maurier, *Vanishing Cornwall: The Spirit and History of Cornwall* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1974), p. 147. Henceforward *VC*.

moor birds' 'harsh protesting cries' (*JI*, 92) echo the cawing of Thornfield's restless rooks and the shrieking condor that gives voice to Bertha's (and Jane's) curtailed freedom. Thus, the restless birds of du Maurier's moorland articulate Mary's restlessness and rage as birds do for Jane and Bertha in *Jane Eyre*.

In this environment, Mary enacts a self-abandonment not permissible at the inn; an unsettling sexual awakening occurs in the presence of a free, yet frantic raven. As Joss leads her further into the depths of the remote moorland to 'the foot of Brown Willy' (*JI*, 90), Mary 'lets down her hair' (*JI*, 90), and the two begin ascending 'the highest point on Bodmin Moor' (*JI*, 91). With the phallic connotations of both its name and formation, du Maurier is clearly writing of a distinctly 'masculine' moor in which Mary becomes sexually initiated. Now that the 'frost had thawed' (*JI*, 91), the language of the landscape evokes sexual arousal: 'the ground was now soggy' (*JI*, 91), 'damp oozed' (*JI*, 91), and with a

> clammy certainty […] the hem of her skirt was bespattered with bog and torn in places. Lifting it up higher, and hitching it round her waist with the ribbon from her hair, Mary plunged on in trail of her uncle […] she could just make out his figure amongst the black heather […] at the foot of Brown Willy. (*JI*, 91)

For a moment, Mary ponders 'why the landlord of Jamaica Inn thought it necessary to climb the highest point on Bodmin Moor' (*JI*, 91), thinking herself

> a fool to attempt it, she knew that, but a sort of stubborn stupidity made her continue […] nevertheless she set herself to climb Brown Willy, slipping and stumbling amongst the wet moss. (*JI*, 91)

Although Joss's sexual advances are unwanted and repugnant, they are not entirely repellent. Mary's reactions are ambiguous and redolent of desire: 'she put her fingers to her lips as he had done, and let them stray thence' (*JI*, 212). Du Maurier's depiction of provocative men as hawk-like speaks to Cyndy Hendershot's recognition that threatening, but desired, masculine sexuality is 'made Other', or 'animalized', 'in order to be represented'.[32] Hendershot discusses Charlotte Brontë's Rochester as an illustrative example, but her formulation also applies to the hawk men of *Jamaica Inn*, who, like Rochester, are delineated 'within a framework of an attraction/repulsion to

[32] Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 188 and 190.

the male subject'.[33] Recognising the similarity between the Merlyn brothers' hands, Mary is 'attracted' to Jem's and 'repelled' by Joss's, and the narrator reveals that Mary 'realised for the first time that aversion and attraction ran side by side; that the boundary-line was thin between them' (*JI*, 140).

Du Maurier ruminates on the dangerous aspect of this moorland location, Brown Willy, with which she is enamoured, in *Vanishing Cornwall*. In relation to Brown Willy, she writes of 'crags more menacing and bleak [that] loom before [one], barring progress, and instinct [which] can only lead to disaster. I know, for I have tried it' (*VC*, 143). The disaster du Maurier refers to is a biographical precursor to the fate of Matthew Merlyn, who is literally consumed by the boggy moorland, in *Jamaica Inn*. The use of the word 'menacing' in relation to the phallic Brown Willy is crucial here; a word employed by du Maurier and her family as code for sexually alluring or threatening behaviour, suggesting the ways in which the moorland and its avian life can function as a metaphor for the sexual perils that Mary must negotiate.[34] The moorland that du Maurier summons in her memories of adolescent dalliances in the vicinity of the real-life Jamaica Inn are related in a manner evoking sexual awakenings and encounters with the potential to entrap. On Bodmin moor, 'sense of orientation goes awry […] and there seems no way out, no means of escape from this fantastic world […]. No other answer but to follow blindly in its wake, no matter where it goes' (*VC*, 153).

Following her metaphorical sexual encounter on the moors, this avian climactic moment suggests Mary's feelings of despair; 'with Brown Willy safely descended' (*JI*, 93) and Joss 'long vanished' (*JI*, 92), she contemplates 'a winter's night upon the moors' (*JI*, 92). Reminiscent of Jane Eyre's avian-infused moorland exile after she experiences a similarly unsettling awakening in connection with the falcon eyed Rochester at Thornfield Hall, Mary is 'faced with the prospect of a winter's night upon the moors, with a dead-black heather for a pillow and no other shelter but frowning crags of granite' (*JI*, 92). This is strikingly similar to Jane's night on the moor, in which she also finds 'a moss-blackened granite crag in a hidden angle' (*JE*, 363). Jane tells of how she 'sat down under it. High banks or moor were about me; the crag protected my head: the sky was over that' (*JE*, 363). But it is not only black moss and granite crags that dominate Jane and Mary's moorland experiences;

[33] Hendershot, *The Animal Within*, p. 186.
[34] Daphne du Maurier, *Letters from Menabilly: Portrait of a Friendship*, ed. Oriel Malet (New York: M. Evans, 1992), p. x.

during these parallel moments, they both encounter avian life. Jane talks of a 'plover' (*JE*, 363), 'little birds' (*JE*, 364), and 'the vulture' (*JE*, 367); Mary is aware of curlews, buzzards, and gulls. Most crucially, they both encounter crows and ravens precisely at the moment when they face the prospect of spending a night destitute on their granite beds. Mary's raven, which appears following her sexually charged encounter with Joss on Brown Willy, 'rose up at her feet and screamed; he went away flapping his great black wings, swooping to the earth below with harsh protesting cries' (*JI*, 92). Jane reflects:

> far better that crows and ravens – if any ravens there be in these regions – should pick my flesh from my bones, than that they should be prisoned in a workhouse coffin and moulder in a pauper's grave. (*JE*, 370)

Jane's rejection of serfdom is also a return to a natural order that strips humans of their artificial dominion over other animals. If Jane is bound to die, as she believes she might be at this stage, then she prefers a death that espouses an ecological authenticity – one in which humans are not necessarily at the top of the food chain – one in which human tyranny over women and birds ceases to be. In this case, the power dynamic of consumption is reversed; birds are no longer the consumed – humans are. While Jane's ravens suggest that she will resist human-inflicted oppression at any cost, she nonetheless accepts that, like the domesticated bird reared for consumption, her flesh may be picked from her bones by predators. She thus prefigures her status as a consumed being by the end of the novel, in which Jane is rendered a consumable bird co-habiting with her predatory avian husband.

Conversely, Mary's screaming, crying raven, protests the exploitation she risks falling prey to when she admits a relationship with a predatory bird-man redolent of Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. Like Charlotte Brontë's birds of the 'restless and noisy' 'Crow kind', du Maurier's raven repeatedly makes his or her presence known when the heroine is most vulnerable to sexual exploitation.[35] Du Maurier's raven's 'harsh protesting cries' (*JI*, 92) voice Mary's angst, joining force with her *Yell*ing, in the same way that the conspicuous cawing of the rooks and the shriek of the condor articulate outrage at entrapment and a repressed sexuality in *Jane Eyre*. In du Maurier's transformation of the *Jane Eyre* scene, Mary's reaction to the remonstrating raven resists identification as a subjugated bird-like being.

[35] Bewick, *A History of British Birds*, p. 70.

The Threat of Consumption and the 'mournful cries' of the Curlew

The rage epitomised by the raven's protestations alternate with the appearance of the curlew associated with Matthew Merlyn's death (an incident that haunts Mary every time she ventures onto the moors). She is first told of Matthew's horrific death by Joss, who relates that

> he was drowned in Trewartha Marsh. We thought he'd gone for a sailor, and had no news of him, and then in the summer there was a drought, and no rain fell for seven months, and there was Matthew sticking up in the bog, with his hands above his head, and the curlews flying round him. (*JI*, 25)

Matthew is consumed by the moors, and this threat of consumption troubles Mary throughout the novel. When she traverses the terrain around Matthew's avian marshland grave, she relives his terrifying plight in morbid fancy. In her vivid imagining, the curlew assumes a prominent role as if embodying the 'reckless' (*JI*, 40), 'panic-stricken' (*JI*, 40) helplessness of Matthew himself:

> she heard [Matthew] scream in terror, and a curlew rose from the marsh in front of him, flapping his wings and whistling his mournful cry. When the curlew had flown from sight, disappearing behind a ridge of land, the marsh was still again; only a few stems of grass shivered in the wind, and there was silence. (*JI*, 40)

Inextricable from the obsessive fear of consumption is the presence of the restless, vociferous curlew whistling his or her 'mournful cry' (*JI*, 40) before silence ensues. Like the raven, the ominous curlew seems to give voice to Mary's psychological torment and fears relating to sexuality and consumption. The recurring presence of this hawk brother's avian death seems to signify Mary's anxieties about sexual exploitation and consumption. It is telling that Mary is confronted with Matthew's death, along with the curlew, a further two times during later encounters with the younger, moor-dwelling hawk brother, Jem, in which sexual anxieties resurface.

Whilst traversing the 'treacherous bog' (*JI*, 111), Mary dwells on fears of being consumed by them in a nightmarish drowning scenario. At this moment, the curlew appears again:

> a solitary curlew stood pensively beside the stream, watching his reflection in the water; and then his long beak darted with incredible swiftness into the

> reeds, stabbing at the soft mud, and, turning his head, he tucked his legs under him and rose into the air, calling his plaintive note, and streaking for the south.
>
> Something had disturbed him, and in a few minutes Mary saw what it was. […] It was Jem Merlyn. (*JI*, 111)

The narrator's detailing of the curlew's presence and behaviour preceding Jem's appearance reiterates the latter's connection to the avian gendered politics of the novel. The curlew emits a 'plaintive note' (*JI*, 111) when 'disturbed' (*JI*, 111) by Jem and flies away from the potential threat the Merlyn brother poses. When Jem relates his brother's death to Mary, he reiterates the presence of avian life as Matthew drowns, telling her that 'no one would hear you except a bird or two' (*JI*, 114). The persistent avian associations with Matthew's death, and the appearance of Jem during moments when Mary contemplates the moment he is consumed by the moors, suggests that Mary's fears of being consumed through her own sexual awakenings in relation to predatory men persist in her encounters with Jem. Amid such unsettling moorland scenarios, Jane Eyre feels as 'impotent as a bird with both wings broken, […] quiver[ing] its shattered pinions in vain attempts to seek [Mr Rochester]' (*JE*, 364), but Mary does not liken herself to a broken bird. Rather, she aborts her search for Joss and instead encounters another hawk, the vicar of Altarnun.

'Like a hawk in the air': A Critique of Predatory Masculinity

Whereas the Merlyn brothers represent Mary's haunting anxieties over sexual exploitation, and are evocative of Rochester and Heathcliff, the vicar, another hawk figure, can be read as a kind of St John Rivers, a 'religious' 'saviour' figure who attempts to trap the heroine in a disturbing relationship.[36] It is therefore remarkable that, as with Jane's first contact with St John, Mary's encounter with the vicar follows the passage detailing a night destitute on the moors.[37] St John incites Jane to become his companion in order to assist him on a 'religious', 'humanitarian' mission. Similarly, the vicar of Altarnun, following scenes of uncomfortable and ambiguous physical contact, proposes that Mary accompanies him on his foreign exile. Both figures are presented as seemingly protective accomplices, but inappropriate partners.

[36] Horner and Zlosnik observe that the vicar's 'attempt to induce [Mary] to travel the world with him […] is presented as a grotesque parody of St John Rivers' proposal to Jane Eyre'. See Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 84.

[37] Jane and Mary first encounter these dubious, quasi-religious figures parading as seeming saviours when the heroines are on the brink of death as a result of their perilous crossings on the moors. Jane and Mary both convalesce in these men's homes before being propositioned by them in ways that are rejected by the heroines.

Unlike St John, however, the vicar is presented as a predatory bird, another of the novel's hawk-esque male figures who is most often encountered on the moors. The first time Mary observes him, she notes that 'he looked like a bird. Crouched in his seat, with his black cape-coat blown out by the wind, his arms were like wings' (*JI*, 105). As she contemplates his strangeness, she imagines him surrounded by 'gulls flying inland from the sea' (*JI*, 110): 'she watched his profile in the half-light; sharp it was and clear, the prominent thin nose thrust downward like the curved beak of a bird' (*JI*, 161). Although his true identity is concealed from Mary during their first encounters, the bird imagery that denotes his character foreshadows his predatory hawk-like persona. Mary initially recognises his bird-ness, but the particular species is at first indecipherable. It is only once she becomes privy to the extent of his corruption and predatory masculinity that she is able to identify his bird species accurately. As they traverse the moors, Mary notes the way the vicar 'found his way like a hawk in the air, hovering an instant and brooding upon the grass beneath him, then swerving again and plunging to the hard ground' (*JI*, 281). This echoes Jane Eyre's detection of Rochester's 'full falcon-eye' (*JE*, 305) when the threat he poses to her becomes more readily discernible. Forced to spend the night on the moors alone with the vicar, Mary's fears of unwanted sexual advances by her hawk captor transform into diabolic hallucinations in which she envisages the landscape of the moors metamorphosing into a thousand predatory bird-men:

> their faces were inhuman […] and their hands and feet were curved like the claws of a bird […] they came towards her […] moving like blind things to her destruction; and she cried suddenly, and started to her feet, every nerve in her body throbbing and alive. (*JI*, 287)[38]

Mary's cry echoes the 'harsh protesting cries' (*JI*, 92) of the raven and the 'mournful cry' (*JI*, 40) of the curlew. The various hawk-men that Mary are menaced by become, in her nightmare vision, a mass of destructive bird-men everywhere. This striking avian image foreshadows bird-threats in du Maurier's later short stories – 'The Birds' (1952) and 'The Blue Lenses' (1959) – which I examine in subsequent chapters.[39]

Like previous moorland encounters with hawk-men, Mary confronts sexual anxieties. She learns that a seeming pillar of the community, one who represents the

[38] Although the vicar subsequently states 'I have neither the mind nor the desire to touch you' (*JI*, 287), Mary's anxieties are clearly related to the threat of sexual predation and her anticipation of 'menace' pervades their enforced night together on the moor.
[39] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Blue Lenses', *The Breaking Point: Short Stories* (London: Virago, 2009).

Church, can be a predatory hawk in disguise. Dodd recognises that 'this threatening masculinity is something persistent in du Maurier. It is just as visible in *Jamaica Inn* where the moors' become a landscape in which to 'imagine the power of the traditional male, identified with the untamed nature of the Cornish landscape, that has such a stranglehold over the modernising women who struggle within [her] novels'.[40] Dodd does not point out that all of these men are depicted as predatory birds. The vicar's avian death, in which 'he flung out his arms as a bird throws his wings for flight, and drooped suddenly and fell' (*JI*, 292), relates back to Matthew the hawk's avian death on the moors and Joss's eventual demise.[41] These menacing hawk men all die as a result of their corruption and predation, but one 'hawk' persists in his potential predatory 'destruction' (*JI*, 287).

'As wild as a hawk': The Persistence of Predatory Masculinity

Jem, who grew up 'as wild as a hawk' (*JI*, 115), lives up to his avian family namesake, Merlyn. As the ostensible object of Mary's burgeoning sexual desire throughout the novel and eventual implied life-partner, it is surprising that this predatory avian element has not been addressed by scholars. Like Jane Eyre, Mary's chosen partner is associated with a predatory bird. Also like Jane, who seeks to 'rehumanise' (*JE*, 484) Rochester's predatory avian qualities, Mary insists that 'she wished [Jem] were not a Merlyn' (*JI*, 71); 'she would have trusted him had his name been other than Merlyn' (*JI*, 74).

Both Merlyn brothers are open and unashamed about their own and their forefathers' maltreatment of women. Jem 'can remember my father beating my mother till she couldn't stand' (*JI*, 71). Jem may not be the perpetrator of threats of, or actual, bodily and emotional harm to women himself, but his misogyny is latent in both his unremorseful attitude to his forefathers' abusive tendencies, his ambivalence regarding the violence his mother suffered at the hands of his father – 'We Merlyns have never been good to our women' (*JI*, 71) – and in his attitudes to gender roles. Like his brother Joss, Jem sees Mary's function as fulfilling a man's sexual and domestic requirements: 'I thought Joss […] had brought you back here for his fancy lady' (*JI*, 70); 'you've come in good time to cook my dinner' (*JI*, 112); and 'I always say there's two things

[40] Dodd, 'Gender and Cornwall', p. 135.
[41] Horner and Zlosnik acknowledge the bird imagery of the vicar's death but fail to account for it. They note that 'the description of [the vicar's] death echoes the bird imagery of *Vanishing Cornwall*', although they do not expand on this promising observation. See Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 83.

women ought to do by instinct, and cooking's one of 'em' (*JI*, 114). He insists that walking on the moors is 'no pastime for a woman' (*JI*, 121) and when he realises that Mary does not conform to his expectations, he calls her 'a boy' (*JI*, 220), and wishes rather that she was 'sitting primly, [her] sewing on her lap, in a prim parlour somewhere, where you belong' (*JI*, 220).

It might be argued that Jem's apparent misogyny is mitigated by his ambivalence to Mary's fluid gender – 'if you must be a boy […]' (*JI*, 220) – and their eventual elopement hardly espouses traditional gender roles, the details of which I shall examine in due course. Du Maurier's 1930s depiction of her heroine's relationship with this hawk-like Byronic figure anticipates the dissatisfaction with rigid gender prescriptions articulated in the coming decades in seminal texts such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990).[42] Unlike the heterosexual relationship characteristic of the romance genre that *Jamaica Inn* is still mistakenly considered to belong to, du Maurier presents a more subversive gendered power dynamic than most romance novels could accommodate. In an avian musing on the laws of attraction in relation to Mary and Jem's eventual coupling, du Maurier confirms the novel's tendency towards anti-romanticism:

> … this was no choice made by the mind. Animals did not reason, neither did the birds in the air. Mary was no hypocrite; she was bred to the soil, and she had lived too long with the birds and beasts, had watched them mate, and bear their young, and die. There was precious little romance in nature, and she would not look for it in her own life. (*JI*, 136)

Although du Maurier reiterates the Cartesian denial of nonhuman animals' reasoning powers, she nonetheless destabilises the artificial boundary between human and nonhuman animals by positing that both are governed by forces other than reason in matters of mating. The statement, 'Mary was no hypocrite' (*JI*, 136), shows that du Maurier intended to distinguish herself from the humancentric hypocrisy of thinking

[42] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Vintage, 2011); Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 2010); and Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversive Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2007). *The Feminine Mystique* was originally published by du Maurier's long-standing publisher, Victor Gollancz, suggesting that, despite du Maurier's lamentations that Gollancz failed to appreciate the complexities and subversive nature of her fiction, he was nonetheless not averse to publishing polemic and controversial material on gender politics.

of the human as distinct from other animals (in this regard she can be aligned with Emily Brontë).

When Mary goes to the Christmas market with Jem, the exuberance of the festivities evokes a sense of relief from the oppressive atmosphere of Jamaica Inn and the perils of the moors. With its 'homely murmurs of the farm: the cluck of hens, the clarion screech of a cock, and the flustered rasp of geese' (*JI*, 294), the market bustle also reminds Mary of her childhood farming home at Helford. The recurrence of protesting birds in captivity for the purpose of consumption – 'cluck', 'clarion screech', and 'flustered rasp' (*JI*, 294) – are no mere 'murmurs' (*JI*, 294) but noises of distress and exasperation. As 'turkeys and geese scratched at the wooden barrier that penned them' (*JI*, 146), a threat of domestic servitude persists in the market's similarity with Mary's former 'homely' (*JI*, 294) life at Helford. What might first appear as a call to return to her domestic roots, the image of these caged birds is also a warning that Mary risks becoming an entrapped and abused chicken-woman like her aunt Patience. What she would return to at Helford would be a meagre subsistence that relied upon hard domestic labour and avian exploitation. Helford is where, 'with her hens and her eggs', 'the chickens and the ducklings they have reared', 'the little trail of dead things' (*JI*, 4), Mary's mother, who, after 'staring like a ghost' (*JI*, 5), 'turned restlessly in her bed, plucking at the sheets' (*JI*, 7-8) and died. This echoes the restless Catherine Earnshaw's feather plucking in the bed in which she will shortly die.

At the Christmas market, Mary observes Mrs Bassat, the 'lady in a feathered hat' (*JI*, 146), a suggestion that, regardless of social position, women are vulnerable to the same fate: to become reduced to a signifier of man's assumed dominance over woman and bird. Mr Bassat, a gentleman hunter described as being 'like a turkey-cock himself' (*JI*, 146), and his wife, who is invariably identified by her 'feathered hat' (*JI*, 146), are reminiscent of the bird-exploiting figures in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*: the plume-adorned Brocklehursts and Ingrams of the former, and the gentrified, be-feathered transformation of the older Catherine when she is groomed by the Lintons.[43] The Bassats offer a kind of protection to Mary; a way out of uncertainty and individual accountability in exchange for a life of subservience. If Mary chooses this option, she is no better than the birds that are murdered at Bassat's bidding. She would be reduced to another signifier, like his plume-adorned wife, of his seemingly

[43] Mrs Bassat's singular identifying marker is her avian adornment: she is first 'a lady in a feathered hat' (*JI*, 146), and is subsequently seen wearing 'the plumed hat' (*JI*, 149), and the 'feathered hat' (*JI*, 236).

benevolent power that assumes a shared inferiority between women and birds. Mary herself suggests an awareness of this power dynamic when she refers to Mr Bassat's other prized possession, the horse that Jem has stolen, in avian terms – 'Little sport if Mr Bassat finds that his bird has flown' (*JI*, 240). By referring to the family horse as a bird, du Maurier reiterates that avian imagery is an important symbol of the patriarchal assumption of ownership over women and animals.

Conclusion

The bird imagery of *Jamaica Inn* is as integral to the depiction of gendered power as it is in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Like the Brontë sisters, du Maurier is interested in exploring the psychological cost of living within narrow, rigidly defined gender roles. Du Maurier's system of bird imagery reveals the extent of her shared concerns with these issues. All three writers employ avian imagery to address predatory masculinities and their impact on women whose status as objectified beings aligns them with domesticated and consumed birds. Du Maurier is similarly concerned with exposing, and objecting to, hierarchical gender relations, which is demonstrated by Joss's use of speciesist language towards his wife and niece. Du Maurier mirrors Emily Brontë's depiction of Isabella Linton as an abused and commodified bird-woman in her presentation of Patience. In her depiction of the moors, du Maurier magnifies the kind of avian predatory masculinity that the Brontë heroines also encounter. A persistent threat of avian-related consumption is met with haunting avian cries and protestations that echo those of *Jane Eyre*. Mary's *yells* look to enable her to escape from the bird cage in which she is entrapped, but her relationship with Jem places this in jeopardy.

One of the plot-driving questions throughout the novel is whether or not Mary will conform to a traditional female role either through the brute force of her uncle or the powerful attraction she experiences towards him and his vagabond brother, Jem. The other possible outcomes for Mary condemn her as akin to a dead bird in ways that echo the avian gender politics of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*: she could become another aunt Patience, bound to the chicken run, and like Isabella Linton, a ruined, exploited bird woman; or Squire Bassat's plume adorned property like the first generation Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* until she dies restlessly, plucking at her bird feathered bed clothes; or a farmer at Helford exploiting birds; or Jem's partner. Mary decides to avoid perpetuating the avian-like exploited lives of Aunt Patience or Mrs Bassat in her bold attempt to reconcile heterosexual desire with a non-traditional

femininity. But Mary's decision to couple with a man 'as wild as a hawk' (*JI*, 115) by no means fully resolves the issues raised throughout the novel. Mary's union with Jem is not a feminist utopia. This is conveyed through the persistence of human maltreatment of birds. Jem reveals that the kind of partnership he can offer Mary is predicated upon bird consumption: 'I can't give you turkey, but I can always help myself to a goose from old Farmer Tuckett at North Hill' (*JI*, 144). Thus, Mary is yet another heroine whose 'happy' coupling at the end of the novel is belied through the persistence of bird consumption. Like Cathy's eventual partner, Hareton Earnshaw, in *Wuthering Heights*, Jem is a bird stealer who profits from the exploitation of birds kept for consumption. This suggestion of bird consumption anticipates the gendered power dynamics played out between du Maurier's subsequent heroines and their predatory bird partners.

The novel begins with Mary being offered an egg by her aunt, who has become as ruined and exploited as the chickens whose egg she collects, and ends with Mary being offered goose by a bird stealing hawk-man. Although the novel does not explicitly depict Mary consuming these offerings of dead birds – nor is she depicted as having a bird persona – her *yell*ing capacity, reiterated through the recurring protestations of both wild moorland ravens and curlews as well as exploited hens and other bird species commodified and sold at the market, implies her capacity for avian vegetarianism. Mary's haunting fear of consumption and recurring nausea certainly corroborate this. Mary's anxieties relating to the weakness she associates with heterosexual desire are to a degree discarded as she affirms her choice: 'because I want to; because I must' (*JI*, 302). Jem's insistence that it would be better if Mary was a boy, so that she could fully embrace moorland life, is simultaneously kept alive and rendered defunct by the close of the novel. Tellingly, Jem, who insists that Mary is 'not a man, you're only a woman' (*JI*, 300), 'gave her the reins' (*JI*, 302).

In a *Times Literary Supplement* review of 1936, it is noted that 'Mary found herself a kind of Jane Eyre with two Rochesters'.[44] Indeed, all three 'Rochesters' are presented as predatory birds, but du Maurier's departure from her precursors lies in the fact that Mary does not share the Brontë women's avian personas. Du Maurier's resistance to reverse avian anthropomorphise her heroine is a radical departure from the avian symbolism of the Brontë novels. Her presentation of Patience Merlyn through her abusive husband's speciesist language reveals the shared oppression of

[44] 'Romance in Cornwall', *Times Literary Supplement*, 33 (1936). Cited in Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 146.

birds and women, and Mary's non-avian persona dislodges this gender-biased, speciesist trope. What remains problematic is du Maurier's transposition of avian symbolism onto her male protagonists. Her presentation of 'menacing' masculinities through hawk-like imagery is a consequence of du Maurier's bold assertion of female sexuality and insistence on renegotiating rigid definitions of 'femininity' that endanger woman's psychological and sexual freedom. Writing some one hundred years after the Brontës' novels were published, the unravelling of women and birds' shared oppression persists as a prescient – and controversial – subject for a writer to confront. The avian gender politics of this early novel foreshadows a myriad of avian encounters and feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions in du Maurier's later fiction and a radical turn to birds as subjects whose cries of protestation represent their own, rather than women's, plight.

Chapter Four: *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General*

Mary Yellan of *Jamaica Inn* (1936) may have been a 'Jane with two Rochesters', ensnared as she was between two 'Merlyn' hawks, but the heroine of du Maurier's sixth novel, *Frenchman's Creek* (1941), is also akin to the first-generation Catherine of *Wuthering Heights* (1847): a bird woman contemplating an existential crisis in a feathered bed.[1] The heroine of du Maurier's eighth novel, *The King's General* (1946), rejects bird consumption in the presence of a hawking, predatory masculinity and, despite her aversion to avian-murder, is maimed for life in a bird-hunting accident.[2] Both of these consciousness-transforming episodes occur at the beginning of the narrative, framing from the outset du Maurier's enduring sense of the interconnections between gendered oppression and speciesism. Like the Brontë novels and *Jamaica Inn* examined in previous chapters, *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* – du Maurier's two heroine-centred novels of the 1940s – abound with avian encounters that articulate a progressive gender politics. Metaphorical birds co-habit with the birds who are hunted, eaten, and worn by human protagonists, usually by the restless heroines' male counterparts, and often by the women whose oppression is characterised as bird-like. As with the novels discussed so far, birds are employed to comment upon the complexities of women's repressed sexuality, stifling gender roles, and the dynamics of heterosexual relationships between restless bird-women and hawk-like male suitors.

In terms of the chronology of a heroine's life cycle, *Frenchman's Creek* picks up from where *Jamaica Inn* left off; Mary Yellan's denouement with Jem marks the beginning of a new chapter of gender-relations: marriage or a long-term heterosexual partnership. It is clear that Dona St Columb's relationship with her husband, Harry St Columb, is unsatisfactory, and her new relationship with the eponymous Frenchman, Jean-Benoit Aubéry, is likewise problematic.[3] Bird imagery throws light on the complexities that du Maurier grapples with in relation to this next stage of the heroine's life. To begin with, Dona attempts to alleviate her restlessness as a

[1] Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *JI*. 'Romance in Cornwall', *Times Literary Supplement*, 33 (1936). Cited in Richard Kelley, *Daphne du Maurier* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), p. 146. Daphne du Maurier, *Frenchman's Creek* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *FC*. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Plymouth: Broadview, 2007). Henceforward *WH*.
[2] Daphne du Maurier, *The King's General* (London: Virago, 2004). Henceforward *KG*.
[3] I use characters' first names subsequent to first mentions throughout, but I make an exception with Jean-Benoit Aubéry. This is because his surname chimes with that of the ornithologist, John James Audubon, whom I discussed in chapter one of this thesis and whom I relate to Aubéry in this chapter.

Restoration wife by participating in a life of bawdy dissipation that includes accompanying her husband and his entourage to brothels – 'which she had grown to detest' (*FC*, 10) – and masquerading as a highwayman who threatens rape to women in carriages. With 'that full sense of self-loathing and exasperation' (*FC*, 9), Dona decides to abandon her desultory life in London and takes her two small children to their deserted country house by the shores of the Cornish coast. Here, she meets Aubéry with whom she continues her predilection for gender crossing – this time, to exuberant effect – and experiences a transient fulfilment that transgresses the rigid parameters of 'femininity'. Much of the novel's frustrations at a gendered malaise are inextricable from its myriad avian encounters.

From the outset, Richard Grenvile, the eponymous anti-hero of *The King's General* (1946), characterises what has been identified by Marti Kheel as the bird hunter's 'erotic, aggressive drive'.[4] *The King's General*, a rare female-narrated du Maurier novel, is haunted by bird hunting and hawking, and the devastating consequences of these violent traditions for both women and birds.[5] The novel's heroine and narrator, Honor Harris, is associated with the 'dying heron' (*KG*, 51), the victim of the hunt. Like Catherine Earnshaw of *Wuthering Heights*, and the du Maurier heroines, Mary Yellan and Dona St Columb, Honor exhibits a conflicted relationship to birds which mirrors the relationship she develops with the hawking Richard. On her eighteenth birthday, before she meets Richard, Honor's spirits are 'soaring like a bird' (*KG*, 21). Once a mutual attraction is quickly established, Honor is violently sick after consuming swan during an illicit encounter with Richard. On what was meant to be their wedding day, Honor is rendered unable to walk by a hawking escapade that she reluctantly partakes in with her bird-murdering fiancé. Throughout the rest of the novel, Honor is haunted by the bird exploitation that the novel enlists as a symbol of the aggressive masculine culture that has destroyed her own life and that of birds. Set

[4] Marti Kheel, 'License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters' Discourse', in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 85-125, p. 91.

[5] Of her seventeen novels, du Maurier employed female narration in only three: the second Mrs de Winter of *Rebecca* (1938), Honor Harris of *The King's General*, and Sophie Duval of *The Glass-Blowers* (1963), whose narration is presented in epistolary form. The second Mrs de Winter is nameless, her identity only marked by marital status; Honor Harris is 'a cripple' (*KG*, 51), whose narrative purports to recover the lost histories of the Grenvile father and son; and Sophie Duval's letters tell an essentially male-centred story. As Nina Auerbach observes, du Maurier's female storytellers are 'immobile chronicler[s]' preserving and exposing the histories of destructive men. See Nina Auerbach, *Daphne du Maurier, Haunted Heiress* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2002), p. 59; Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (London: Virago, 2015); and Daphne du Maurier, *The Glass-Blowers* (London: Virago, 2004).

against the backdrop of Cornish warfare during the English Civil War, in which Royalist and Parliamentarian conflict threatened the stability of estates around the region, the first-person narrative of Honor reveals the untold 'history' of the prominent Royalist figure, Sir Richard Grenvile, the King's General in the West, and the Gothic mysteries surrounding his son, Dick. *The King's General* weaves together historical intrigues, such as the nineteenth-century discovery at Menabilly of a skeleton in a secret chamber dressed in Cavalier garb, with fictional imaginings.[6]

In both of these novels, du Maurier continues to engage – even more keenly – with the issue of women and birds' shared oppression. It is therefore surprising that, as with the critical tradition of *Jamaica Inn*, this pervasive element has been neglected by critics. Scholarship on *Frenchman's Creek*, happening occasionally upon avian anecdotes, fails to acknowledge the central role of its very conspicuous avian encounters. The early du Maurier critic, Jane S. Bakerman, does not mention birds in her brief discussion of *Frenchman's Creek*.[7] In his book-length treatment of du Maurier's oeuvre, Richard Kelly quotes an avian passage, in which a male protagonist (who advocates chicken consumption) suggests that women's 'primitiv[isim]' is akin to birds (*FC*, 147).[8] However, Kelly does not elaborate upon its significance. Alison Light mentions the same avian passage, but like Kelly, she does not read it in the context of du Maurier's broader bird symbolism.[9] In a similar fashion, Light alludes to another aspect of the novel's bird imagery: Dona's London haunt, the Swan.[10] Although Light's reading hints that it is related to perceptions of female desire, she does not specify the significance of the avian name. Given that Dona's London-based place of abandon is 'the Swan', and her Cornish site of abandon is '*La Mouette*', the French for 'Sea-gull' (*FC*, 49), this chapter will examine the significance of these two avian habitats in which gender politics and avian consumption intersect.

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[6] The Elizabethan mansion, Menabilly, was du Maurier's beloved home in Cornwall in which she lived between 1942 and 1969 after having trespassed upon its deserted grounds as a girl. The house became somewhat of a muse for du Maurier and provided a stimulus for her literary endeavours. For readers and scholars of du Maurier, Menabilly has taken on a potent symbolic status. Most famously, it is thought to be one of the principal inspirations for the haunting, and haunted, Gothic mansion, Manderley, in *Rebecca* (1938), a novel that begins with the memorable line, 'Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again'. See du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 1. In her postscript to *The King's General*, du Maurier relates the historical precedents of 'the skeleton of a young man […] dressed in the clothes of a Cavalier, as worn during the period of the Civil War' (*KG*, 373), discovered by Menabilly's owner in 1824, William Rashleigh, while making alterations to the house.

[7] Jane S. Bakerman, 'Daphne du Maurier', in *And Then There Were Nine… More Women of Mystery*, ed. Jane S. Bakerman (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1985), pp. 10-29.

[8] Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 76.

[9] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 179.

[10] Light, *Forever England*, p. 177.

Light reveals an unwitting awareness of the novel's pervasive avian presence when she employs her own bird metaphor to characterise Dona's position; she writes of the heroine 'clipping [her] own wings'.[11] Auerbach similarly enlists an avian metaphor to describe du Maurian heroines as 'women [who] clucked'.[12] This perpetuation of a woman-bird, speciesist language is not surprising given that Auerbach is scathing of du Maurier's 'romance' writing, condemning her as a writer 'so male-identified that she consigned women to dreary lives without a twinge of empathy'.[13] This is a stance that I will interrogate through analysis of the myriad avian encounters in *Frenchman's Creek*, revealing that, on the contrary, the novel is deeply committed to challenging this position. In light of Auerbach's reductive appraisal of du Maurier's gender politics, it is not surprising that she fails to perceive the significance of birds in the novels even in her eight-page section on the intertextuality of du Maurier's and the Brontës' fiction.[14]

In a more recent article, Josephine Dolan revisits the bird passage in *Frenchman's Creek* – relating to women's 'primitive' 'building of nests' and 'rearing of broods' (*FC*, 147) – that Kelly and Light had referred to previously.[15] Also like Kelly and Light, Dolan does not relate this to the broader system of avian gender politics in *Frenchman's Creek*. Rather, Dolan invokes the bird passage about Dona and the linnet to further her claim that, in *Frenchman's Creek*, 'the heroine's femininity is anchored as biological: as essential', perpetuating Kelly's earlier, conservative reading of the novel as confirming a 'biological interpretation of a woman's destiny'.[16] Dolan's article thus oversimplifies du Maurier's subversive writing. It is important to note that this oft-quoted bird passage, cherry-picked from the text and thereby isolated from the novel's extensive system of avian encounters, has become a go-to quote for those critics seeking to perpetuate the common misconception that du Maurier's writing is apolitical. By examining the linnet passage within the novel's broader system of avian-inflected gender politics, this chapter seeks to assert that du Maurier's so-called 'flimsiest' novel is far more nuanced and complex.[17]

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[11] Light, *Forever England*, p. 180.
[12] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 103.
[13] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 103.
[14] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, pp. 112-20.
[15] Josephine Dolan, 'Anchorage and Play in *Frenchman's Creek*: Children, Gender, and National Identity', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 32 (2002), pp. 95-109, p. 97.
[16] Dolan, 'Anchorage and Play', p. 96. Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 76.
[17] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 104. This suggests that Auerbach's reading of the novel is entrenched in the dismissive reception of du Maurier's contemporaneous reviewer, James Agee, who deemed the

Conversely, two studies have generated a more subtle approach to the gender politics at work in *Frenchman's Creek*. In their chapter on du Maurier's 'Cornish Gothic' novels, Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik acknowledge du Maurier's tendency to perceive caged birds as symbols of entrapment and potential freedom as they relate to Dona's identification with the linnet.[18] I will revisit this promising premise in my own analysis of *Frenchman's Creek*. In a more recent critical appraisal of *Frenchman's Creek*, Valentina Bold and Pauline Greenhill demonstrate a similar interest in the biographical and literary avian intersections that Horner and Zlosnik touch upon.[19] Bold and Greenhill's study is significant in its departure from Kelly and Dolan's assertion of du Maurier's conservative gender and sexual politics. The former evoke du Maurier's bird cage metaphor to support their progressive claims that, contrary to Kelly and Dolan's 'fixed, biologically essential femininity', 'du Maurier clearly pushed against the bars of propriety and class, as well as of sex and gender'.[20] Bold and Greenhill's article is dedicated to *Frenchman's Creek*; it is thus an opportunity missed that they do not note the central pervasion of avian encounters in the novel to further support their compelling analysis.

Since its conflicted reviews upon publication, *The King's General* has failed to attract critical attention.[21] The few exceptions include brief sub-sections in Kelly's, Horner and Zlosnik's, and Light's books.[22] Kelly, in his somewhat reductive reading of the novel, makes no attempt to address its subversive elements. His reading ultimately flattens, rather than opens up, the novel. Much like his readings of du Maurier's other heroine-centred novels, such as *Jamaica Inn* and *Frenchman's Creek*, Kelly's reader is left with the impression that the particularly 'female' issues that these novels engage with are in some ways frivolous or insignificant. Kelly mentions the bird hunt and the roast swan that are crucial to Honor's awakening consciousness, but these are not elaborated upon. In contrast, Horner and Zlosnik acknowledge the

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novel 'a little bathroom classic'. James Agee, 'Films', *Nation*, 159 (1944), p. 443. Cited in Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, p. 72.

[18] Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 66-67. See the introduction to this thesis for my discussion of du Maurier's biographical recollections of freeing caged birds.

[19] Valentina Bold and Pauline Greenhill, '*Frenchman's Creek* and the Female Sailor: Transgendering Daphne du Maurier', *Western Folklore*, 71 (2012), pp. 47-67.

[20] Bold and Greenhill, '*Frenchman's Creek*', pp. 52-53.

[21] Margaret Forster details contemporary objections to the novel, which, she adds, du Maurier found 'patronizing': its apparent 'teenage exuberance', predominance of romantic over historic fact, and anachronistic prose style. See Margaret Forster, *Daphne du Maurier* (London: Arrow, 1994), p. 199.

[22] Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier*, pp. 79-82; Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, pp. 86-98; and Light, *Forever England*, pp. 158-82.

subversive forces at work in *The King's General*. Horner and Zlosnik reappraise the central concerns of problematic masculinities in more complex ways than Kelly through their exploration of the novel's interplay between sexual anxiety and confinement, the novel's re-working of gothic tropes (such as the distorted body, which comes about, in this novel, during a bird-murdering accident). Horner and Zlosnik's *King's General* section makes astute observations and demonstrates that this novel is worthy of much greater critical attention than it has thus far received. However, as with their work on du Maurier's other novels, the remarkable and crucial role of birds in the novel is overlooked. The important role of hawking is not mentioned, even in relation to their consideration of an 'aggressive masculinity'.[23] Furthermore, Horner and Zlosnik read the important swan consumption scene as merely 'worthy of any historical romance'.[24] Thus, they fail to acknowledge its significance, which surely goes beyond a generic trope. Light mentions the problematic 'aggressive virility' of Richard, and gestures fleetingly to the gender politics of the novel, briefly drawing a comparison between the Brontës' and du Maurier's Byronic heroes, but interconnections with their avian symbolism go unremarked.[25]

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, critics have traditionally acknowledged an intertextual relationship between *Jamaica Inn*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Jane Eyre* (1847).[26] Despite remarkable echoes, particularly relating to avian encounters, *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* have thus far been exempt from sustained comparisons with the Brontës. These two novels are similarly and persistently haunted by an avian presence and the human exploitation of birds in conjunction with women. Dona's identification with the linnet, as well as her feathered bed scene, invites a reading that aligns her with both Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre and Emily Brontë's first-generation Catherine. The overwhelming presence of avian imagery throughout *Frenchman's Creek* permeates every chapter from the novel's first paragraph to its last page. A rich array of birds is encountered, including the gull, curlew, redshank, guillemot, puffin, oyster catcher, heron, rook, blackbird, swan, linnet, nightjar, chicken, cock, peacock, crow, hawk, and sanderling. Likewise, twenty-seven species of birds populate *The King's General*. This chapter will focus

[23] Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 90.
[24] Horner and Zlosnik, *Writing*, p. 91.
[25] Light, *Forever England*, pp. 171-72, pp. 180-81, and p. 172.
[26] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996). Henceforward *JE*.

on those avian elements most pertinent to the issues raised and explored in relation to the bird encounters examined in *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Jamaica Inn*, as discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis.

Frenchman's Creek and *The King's General* contain numerous avian episodes that resonate with the woman-bird associations explored in *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Jamaica Inn*: avian speciesist language with gendered implications; Dona's identification with the caged linnet; her plumed hat and feathered bed; a dubious ornithology that recalls the alluring, yet deeply problematic Byronic figure of John James Audubon as discussed in chapter one of this thesis; avian consumption followed by nausea and a vegetarian narrative interruption; the recurring presence of swans and an alternately voiced and silenced nightjar that recalls the nightingale in *Jane Eyre*; a critique of predatory, cat-like masculinity; and, finally, the re-establishment of a speciesist status quo, albeit informed by a heightened consciousness to women and birds' shared oppression. Swans resurface in *The King's General*, this time in the context of a feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption that occurs within the context of a conspicuous hawking and bird hunting culture. Throughout my analysis of these remarkable Brontëan avian resonances, I examine the ways in which birds in *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* articulate human, specifically women's, issues and consider the extent to which the avian absent referent is restored.

This chapter will also examine the ways in which *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* depart and, in many ways nuance, the issues that persist in du Maurier's oeuvre a decade on from the publication of *Jamaica Inn* and a century on from the publication of the Brontë novels. I argue that du Maurier's continued employment of birds is far more subversive and challenging than even her most sympathetic critics have thus far acknowledged. Rather than polarising du Maurier's writing as conventional or progressive, examination of the presence of birds woven into the fabric of her texts, in both explicit and subtle ways, complicates our understanding of this writer and her work.

'I set a linnet free' and 'the feathers became loose': Narrative Transformations in *Frenchman's Creek*

The caged bird metaphor of *Jane Eyre* is also a central metaphor in *Frenchman's Creek* that articulates Dona's stifled freedom and repressed sexuality. Echoing du Maurier's biographical account of setting caged birds free, as discussed in the introduction, Dona asks her husband:

> Do you remember my father's aviary in Hampshire […] and how the birds were all fed, and could fly about their cage? And one day I set a linnet free, and it flew straight out of my hands towards the sun? […] I feel like that. Like the linnet before it flew. (*FC*, 15)

Du Maurier's recurring use of the Brontë-esque caged bird metaphor in both her fiction and biographical writing suggests that the avian-inflected gender issues raised in *Jamaica Inn* are of continued interest to du Maurier a decade later. Despite the bird's and the heroine's seeming comfort within the cage as depicted in the quoted passage, Dona foregrounds the necessity of freedom from confinement. In addition to the linnet's Bewickian association with restricted freedom, docility, and a yielding nature, the naturalist observed that when rendered pliable, the bird is likely to forfeit her charm.[27] This coincides with Dona's dissatisfaction with her sense of restriction – her 'sudden boiling up of resentment against the futility of her life' (*FC*, 8). Dona's act of setting the bird free symbolises her desire to move beyond the confinement of the cage and foretells her endeavours, throughout the rest of the novel, to do so. Du Maurier's Dona sets the linnet free from her cage as she contemplates their shared confinement. This transformation of Brontë's bird symbolism admits a degree of consideration for the bird's suffering that is absent in *Jane Eyre* since Dona sets the bird free. But in the bird's role as a symbol of Dona's curtailed freedom, the bird is not set free in a metaphorical sense.

Furthermore, du Maurier's conjoining of the caged bird and the linnet recalls Brontë's avian schema since Jane and Dona are both associated with the linnet. As discussed in chapter one of this thesis, Charlotte Brontë's Rochester likens Jane to a linnet at the point when she asserts her independence from him. Whereas Jane eventually undergoes an avian metamorphosis, emerging as a conspicuous, soaring sky-lark with a *relatively* egalitarian relationship, *Frenchman's Creek* presents a bleaker outcome for Dona in the manner of Emily Brontë's presentation of the first-generation Catherine of *Wuthering Heights*. Although Dona eventually declares that 'the linnet found its way to the sky' (*FC*, 219), she is by no means a Janean sky-lark by the end of the novel. The novel ends with Dona returning to the bird-hunting husband with whom she is deeply unsatisfied. Resuming her unfulfilling life as the wife of a bird-murderer, Dona acknowledges that she 'will vigil sometimes in the

[27] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume One: Containing the History and Description of Land Birds* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), pp. 255-56. First published in 1797.

night, and tear [her] nails, and beat [her] pillow' (*FC*, 251) – an expression of desperation that the married Jane does not admit to but one that echoes the plight of Emily Brontë's first Catherine in her moment of desperation when she wrenches the dead birds' feathers from her pillow.

Both Catherine and Dona opt for lives as socially elevated, but spiritually depleted, wives despite their experiences of satisfying, if necessarily transient, alternative states of being in their relationships with the socially displaced Heathcliff and Aubéry respectively. Dona and Catherine share the same predicaments and ultimately make the same decisions. Rather than offering a potential vegetarian utopia for the heroine's daughter, as Brontë does with Cathy, du Maurier insists that the reader must face the wretched possibility that there is no satisfactory solution for a woman and so Dona's ending is Catherine's ending. Further echoing the latter's feathered bed scene, Dona recalls

> I had a feather mattress as a child […] and I remember the feathers became loose after a while, and one of them fluttered from the window of my bedroom and fell into the garden below. Of course, the window was a large one, not like the slit that gives light to this cell. (*FC*, 230)

This narrative transformation of *Wuthering Height*'s feathered deathbed episode foregrounds the shared plights of Catherine and Dona while an analysis of the two episodes together illuminates the precise ways in which du Maurier responds to and reworks this bird-woman encounter. The single loose feather evokes the potential for freedom and entrapment.

In response to Dona's Brontëan feather reminiscence quoted above, her prosaic husband, who is far from sensitive to the avian resonances of Dona's crisis – 'Damn it, she kept talking about a bird, saying she felt like a bird, what the devil did she mean?' (*FC*, 22) – wonders 'if she still had a touch of fever, for surely she sounded a little light in the head' (*FC*, 230). This episode echoes Catherine's feathered 'hysteria' in *Wuthering Heights*, examined in chapter two, in which it is inferred by Edgar Linton and Nelly Dean that the 'madness' she seemingly exhibits symptoms of resides in Catherine and not in her situation as a caged bird. Du Maurier's employment of the feather's Brontëan associations suggest the persistence of a traditional patriarchal response to repressed female sexuality as equated to 'madness'.

Mirroring the Catherine-Heathcliff strand of *Wuthering Heights*, Dona's soul mate is a French pirate outlaw and is thus a variation on the othered figure of the 'dark-

skinned gipsy [*sic*]' (*WH*, 39). As she becomes embroiled in Aubéry's lifestyle and affiliated with his ornithology, Dona herself acquires a 'gypsy tan, there was no concealing it' (*FC*, 177). Heathcliff's assumption about the married Catherine – 'I've no doubt she's in hell among you' (*WH*, 164) – might likewise be said about Dona as she endures the role of the sexually unfulfilled wife who languishes in the company of her husband and his degenerative, bird-hunting cronies. Unlike her husband, Aubéry, is, like Heathcliff with Catherine, finely tuned to her avian affiliations and afflictions. Aubéry's response to Dona's feather scene reveals an insightful understanding of her plight, recognising its connection to sexual oppression. When Aubéry asks Dona whether the feathers 'ever blow under the door?' (*FC*, 230), Dona boldly asserts her desire for sexual fulfilment and her wish that Aubéry would assist in achieving this longed for liberation:

> Ah, that I can't remember […] I think that even a feather would have difficulty in passing beneath a door . . . unless of course it was given assistance, like a strong breath of air, you know, say the draught from a barrel of a pistol. (*FC*, 230)

With the phallic connotations of the role of the pirate's pistol barrel in assisting the liberation of the feather, du Maurier revisits the metaphorical avian sexual encounters that she had explored in *Jamaica Inn*. With this liberated feather, du Maurier also narrates the consummation that was forbidden to Catherine and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's novel. One hundred years on, du Maurier is nonetheless compelled to frame the realisation of female desire as a temporary transgression encased within a framing dream narrative with the additional distance of remote temporality. Whereas Catherine languishes, then dies on her feathered bed of avian annihilation, du Maurier permits a single feather to escape the confines of the death-chamber to seek potential and transitory liberation. But this, as with the freed linnet, is a humancentric liberation – no literal avian freedom is envisaged.

Like the first-generation Catherine of *Wuthering Heights*, Dona's feather takes on a dual purpose. On the one hand, it gives expression to an awakened consciousness of her oppression. On the other, Dona's feather perpetuates her shared status with that of the objectified bird. In the following passage, Dona's feathers reveal further Brontëan avian echoes:

> and slowly, like a snowflake, a feather drifted down in the air towards her, a feather torn from the quill of a pen. She caught it, caring not a whit if Godolphin saw her from the steps of his house, and she waved her hand again, and rode out on to the high-road laughing, with the feather in her hat. (*FC*, 236)

The feather in Dona's hat recalls Catherine's plumed beaver and signals her entrapment even as she gallops off having seemingly broken free from the linnet cage. The fact that Aubéry draws birds with dead birds' body parts – 'a feather torn from the quill of a pen' (*FC*, 236) – recalls the way in which, as outlined in chapter one of this thesis, Audubon's avian artistry and ornithology is predicated upon the death and bodily objectification of birds. Thus, Dona's plumage belies a persistent problem. The quilled pen, another phallic emblem connected to Aubéry (in addition to the pistol barrel quoted above), suggests the double bind that Dona is caught in. A quill, 'a pen made from one of the quill feathers of a large bird', is what Aubéry uses to draw his birds.[28] He decides how to present the bird and he uses his or her commodified body part to do so. Like Dona's plumage, the quill remains an absent referent of the dead bird even as Aubéry uses it to draw 'free' birds. If Dona is the linnet, then Aubéry is the objectifying artist-come-ornithologist – a kind of Byronic Audubon figure. Aubéry, although not likened to predatory birds like other du Maurier men, is nonetheless the captain of *La Mouette*, or 'the Sea-gull' (*FC*, 49), and is thus a captain of the birds, who draws them, observes them, consumes them; Dona is the caged linnet who becomes complicit in avian objectification during her trysts with Aubéry, as I shall examine in due course.

Aubèry's ornithology rather complicates du Maurier's depiction of him as a sympathetic artist of avian life and object of sexual fantasy for Dona. Dona's first encounter with Aubéry is also an avian encounter in a number of ways since, 'from the first moment when she had walked into his cabin [Aubéry is] found […] sitting at the table drawing the heron' (*FC*, 102). There are a further twenty references to Aubéry drawing various species of birds throughout the novel. At one level, this keen observation and appreciation of 'free' birds, as opposed to the murdered birds that Bewick and Audubon depicted, quells Dona's initial impression that Aubéry might be the kind of man to mistreat a woman or bird. Indeed, her relationship with Aubèry does engender in Dona an awakened consciousness to her own subjugation that is connected with her burgeoning interest in birds. As she becomes ever more receptive

[28] 'Quill', *OED*, accessed 6 August 2018.

to Aubéry's sexual potency, Dona admits that she is 'becoming quite knowledgeable about birds' (*FC*, 78). She further divulges that she is

> beginning to recognise the many differences in song, and the variations in flight. […] Before I came to Navron I thought very little about birds […]. I suppose that – that the desire to know about these things was always present, but lying dormant, if you understand what I mean […]. It is difficult for a woman to acquire knowledge of birds. (*FC*, 78)

Dona's alertness to a new potential voice and flight are a departure from her previous affiliation with the caged linnet. Dona's burgeoning ornithology gives coded expression to her sexual awaking. Thus, the birds perform a humancentric function to express ideas about repressed female sexuality.

Dona's hesitation – 'that – that' (*FC*, 78) – when articulating her sexual awakening in veiled avian terms reflects her inability to speak her mind as a woman regarding matters of her own sexuality. It also speaks to Carol J. Adams's recognition of the stunted speech and punctuation, such as the dash employed here, that often appear in vegetarian narrative interruptions.[29] Although this is not a feminist-vegetarian interruption in the strictest sense, this passage is nonetheless an avian encounter that signals an awakened consciousness to oppression – triggered by observations of birds – that had been hitherto 'lying dormant' (*FC*, 78). Dona's 'knowledge of birds' (*FC*, 78) is thus a metaphor for her seeming sexual liberation. However, the fact that Aubéry and Dona share an avian affinity, like Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, does not mitigate problematic tensions that inevitably arise between an ornithologist and a bird-woman. Aubéry's incessant appetite for dead birds' flesh, the persistence of avian speciesist language, and the recurrence of bird symbolism that reduces women's sexuality to the arbitrary binary of 'whore' or 'mother', abound in the novel and suggest that Dona's seemingly liberating encounters with an Audubon-esque ornithologist are specious.

'I will roast your chicken': Dona's Narrative Feminist-Vegetarian Interruption

Dona's 'knowledge of birds' (*FC*, 78) is a knowledge of her shared status with murdered and consumed avian beings. Her first encounter with Aubéry makes this

[29] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2010). First published in 1990.

clear as she is kidnapped and smuggled onto his bird-named ship and Dona is compelled to feel what a bird destined for consumption might experience:

> a figure stepped out from behind her, from the woods, and throwing his coat over her head blinded her, pinning her hands to her sides, so that she could not move, could not struggle, and she fell down at his feet, suffocated, helpless, knowing she was lost.
>
> […]
>
> Her first feeling was one of anger, of blind unreasoning anger. How dare anyone treat her thus, she thought, *truss her up like a fowl* and carry her to the quay. She was thrown roughly on to the bottom boards of the boat, and the man who had knocked her down took the paddles and pushed out towards the ship. (*FC*, 42-43, my italics)

Dona's first encounter with Aubéry comprises another example of the way women and birds are conceived of as connected in their availability for abuse. The encounter demarcates women and birds as shared victims of male force. Malign avian imagery sets a misogynist, speciesist tone that mars Dona and Aubéry's seeming utopian liaison from the outset. As with *Jamaica Inn*, interconnections between sexism and speciesism are integral to du Maurier's depiction of gendered power dynamics between men perceived as sexually alluring and restless bird women. In this passage, Dona recognises that the rough treatment she is subjected to mirrors men's maltreatment of birds but her outrage is rooted in her own suffering; the recognition that birds are routinely treated in this way goes unchallenged.

Further avian encounters belie the idyll of Dona and Aubéry's dalliance. As they reflect on Aubéry's avian drawings, Dona and her partner fetishize the consumption of the same bird who she had initially compared herself to upon first being kidnapped on Aubéry's ship: the trussed-up fowl. Aubéry boasts to Dona that

> 'one day you shall taste my spring chicken, roasted on a spit.'
>
> 'I will not believe it,' she said, 'chickens were never roasted in that cabin of yours, like a hermit's cell. Cooking and philosophy do not go together.'
>
> 'On the contrary, they go very well,' he said, 'but I will not roast your chicken in my cell. We will build a wood fire in the open, on the shores of the creek, and I will roast your chicken for you there. But you must eat it with your fingers. And there will be no candle-light, only the light of the fire.'
>
> 'And perhaps the night-jar you told me about will not be silent,' she said.
>
> 'Perhaps!'

> […] good burnt smell of roasting chicken would come to their nostrils. The cooking would absorb him, even as his drawing of the heron absorbed him yesterday. (*FC*, 62)

This passage reveals a connection between three species of birds: the dead, soon-to-be-consumed fowl, or chicken, a non-vocal nightjar, and the heron captured in Aubéry's drawing. Aubéry recognises that bird consumption carries philosophical implications and, in du Maurier's novel, it becomes clear that those implications are to do with the status of women and the objectification of birds. In her naivety, Dona, the caged linnet and trussed-up fowl, imagines that a relationship founded on the annihilation of avian life will result in bird song. Dona anticipates that a voiced nightjar will accompany this seeming sexual liberation. She mistakenly believes that she can transgress her silenced bird-woman status by eating a dead bird with the Audubon-esque ornithologist who has kidnapped her. Aubéry's ambivalent 'perhaps!' (*FC*, 62) leaves the question of Dona's and the nightjar's voice unresolved. Aubéry may offer a temporary liaison, but an alliance with this bird flesh-eating man will not proffer a prolonged emancipation for Dona or the birds. The couple's preoccupation with bird consumption is at once an extended metaphor for their unspoken desire for consummation and a signifier of Dona's shared status with the trussed up, consumed fowl that Aubéry destroys. This double-fold avian metaphor indicates both a repressed desire and a sense of avian-like entrapment.

Later in the novel, Aubéry's proposition of avian death is fulfilled as the 'brown smell of roasting chicken, and the fragrance of it crept into the open port-hole of the cabin' (*FC*, 137). The narrative dwells on the details of Aubéry's post-coital annihilation of the bird's body, which is compounded by Dona's awkward state of undress:

> 'Can you eat a wing?' he asked.
> 'Yes,' she nodded, wondering how she could sit up without a stitch on her body
> […]
> He brought her a plate of chicken, looking her up and down as he did so.
> […]
> He sat down at the table, tearing off a drumstick from the chicken, and eating it in his hand. (*FC*, 139)

Eating the bird's wings surely marks an end to the possibility of flight. As Aubéry consumes the bird's corpse, Dona is subjected to his objectifying gaze. Thus, Dona

and the bird are simultaneously rendered objectified body parts – flightless, voiceless, and available for consumption. Dona is complicit in this when she mirrors her lover's consumption of the bird: 'she went on eating her chicken, seizing the wing in her hands as he was doing so […] throwing his drumstick out of the port-hole […] and they went on eating' (*FC*, 140). Aubéry's chicken consumption undermines his seeming attraction and illustrates Marian Scholtmeijer's recognition that 'many of the most pointed cruelties toward animals are authorized by asinine notions of virility'.[30] The dynamic between the lovers at this point reveals that Dona occupies a precarious avian-like position. Whereas Emily Brontë's bird-woman, Catherine, refuses to consume the wing of a goose at the moment she is coerced into a stifling gender role as Edgar Linton's wife, Dona, as quoted above, 'went on eating her chicken, seizing the wing in her hands' (*FC*, 140). Du Maurier's choice to depict these scenes of Dona's sexual encounters with Aubéry alongside conspicuously narrated chicken consumption speaks to the shared status of women and birds even as Dona is, at this stage, complicit in both her own and the birds' consumption by Aubéry.

Coinciding with Adams's notion of the vegetarian narrative interruption, du Maurier's focus on bird consumption is accompanied by sickness and an awakened consciousness. As Dona detects 'the warm brown smell of roasting chicken, and the fragrance of it crept into the open port-hole of the cabin […] the sickness that had overtaken her was gone, and above all she was hungry, hungrier than she had been in her life' (*FC*, 137). Here, the occurrence of nausea subsequent to bird consumption that typifies the feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions examined thus far is reversed. But with Dona's realisation of her own precarious position – triggered by her discovery 'that she was stark naked under the blanket, and there was no trace of her clothes upon the cabin floor' – comes 'full consciousness' (*FC*, 137). Henceforward, Dona and Aubéry share bird-free meals. By the time the couple face the necessity of parting, chicken consumption is conspicuously absent from their final meal together:

> 'once you told me you would cook chicken for me on a spit?'
>
> 'Yes,' he answered, 'but to-night I have no chicken, and I have no spit, and [you] must be content with burnt bread instead.' (*FC*, 249)

[30] Marian Scholtmeijer, 'The Power of Otherness: Animals in Women's Fiction', in *Animals and Women*, eds. Adams and Donovan, pp. 231-62, p. 232.

Although this vegetarian narrative interruption is imposed upon an otherwise bird-consuming Dona, this shift to a bird-free meal nonetheless coincides with the shift in their relationship as Dona and Aubéry settle on their mutual decision to cease their trysts. Dona reveals self-disapproval when she reflects on her complicity in avian exploitation that liaisons with Aubéry entail: 'this is absurd […] why am I doing this, it is not what I intended. […] here we are throwing bread to the seagulls, and I have forgotten to go on being angry' (*FC*, 49). Dona's realisation that she has 'forgotten to go on being angry' (*FC*, 49) speaks to Mary Daly's notion that 'those who live in the tradition of the Furies', as Dona potentially does through du Maurier's narrative transformations of Brontë-esque avian Fury-women, discussed in chapter one of this thesis, 'refuse to be tricked into setting aside [their] anger'.[31] Dona resents the fact that her attraction to Aubéry has side-tracked her feeling of resentment at reinforced entrapment. Before Dona becomes invested in Aubéry, there is a distinct lack of bird flesh on the menu; the first meal they share together is 'vegetable soup' (*FC*, 44). These vegetable soup and burnt bread interludes, together with the proximity to Dona's 'sickness' (*FC*, 137) and 'full consciousness' (*FC*, 137), presage much less ambiguous vegetarian incidents in du Maurier's later novels and tales, which I shall examine in due course.

Swans: Mistress or Mother?

Embedded within *Frenchman's Creek* is the recurring symbol of the swan representing two opposing conceptions of female sexuality as conceived within androcentric culture: the 'whore' and the 'mother'. It is significant that Aubéry, the captain of the Sea-gull, should be attracted to a dweller of the Swan. This avian-named public house, in which it is implied that prostitutes can be found, serves male interests whilst fostering misogyny. Dona makes this explicit in her knowledge that, despite their frequent visits, 'Harry and Rockingham despised the women at the Swan' (*FC*, 88). Furthermore, Dona's numerous reminiscences of her escapades there are blighted by feelings of humiliation, revealed when she recalls a supper at:

> the Swan, which she had grown to detest, her amusement at its novelty having ceased – for it was no longer a stimulant to be the only wife amongst a crowd of mistresses.

[31] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), p. 41.

> […] even at the beginning, she had felt a little prick of shame, a curious sense of degradation, as though she had dressed up for a masquerade and the clothes had not fitted her well. (*FC*, 10-11)

Dona is clearly not satisfied with her connection to the Swan and its associations of sexual exploitation. Du Maurier's use of the word 'masquerade' (*FC*, 11), and her insistence that it 'had not fitted her well' (*FC*, 11), highlights the artificiality of this role. Later, when Dona is dressed as Aubéry's cabin-boy, her shoes rub, giving her blisters, and her movements are restricted. Thus, the novel rejects the fate of sexually objectified women, represented by the Swan, as well as declaring a futility in attempting to escape a warped sense of 'femininity' by masquerading as 'male'. For Dona, crossdressing similarly induces 'a wave of shame and degradation' (*FC*, 19), 'self-loathing [and] tears of abasement' (*FC*, 19). Whenever mention of the Swan infiltrates Dona's and Aubéry's trysts, it produces an anti-climactic effect. Thus, in neither of these masquerades, or 'performances', is Dona satisfied.

In the way that mention of the Swan diminishes the elation that Dona experiences with Aubéry, the recurring presence of a pair of swans and their cygnets, sighted once Dona and Aubéry have consummated their relationship, also admits a similarly reflective note; this time upon issues relating to maternalism. As the lovers disembark *La Mouette* and make their way to the secluded beach where they spend another night together, there

> suddenly from nowhere came a swan and his mate, like two white barges sailing company, and following them three cygnets, soft and brown. They went away down the creek, leaving a wake behind them as a vessel would. (*FC*, 146)

Following this, *La Mouette* 'pulled down the creek where the swans had gone' (*FC*, 146). The appearance of the swan family punctures Dona's temporary reprieve from entrapment, as she believes her tryst with Aubéry to be. The swans haunt Dona, insisting that sexual abandon is, for her, impossible. The appearance of the swans at this moment is especially jarring since Dona banishes thoughts of her children whilst dwelling on the pleasures of her encounters with Aubéry. Aubéry's insistence on Dona's parental responsibilities penetrate the dream-like quality of the lovers' moonlit beach-tryst in the way that mention of the Swan had done during their earlier meetings.

In avian terms, Aubéry evokes a maternal bind:

> ‘You forget,’ he said, ‘that women are more primitive than men. For a time they will wander, yes, and play at love, and play at adventure. And then, like the birds, they must make their nest. Instinct is too strong for them. Birds build the home they crave, and settle down into it, warm and safe, and have their babies.’ (*FC*, 147)

Like the men of *Jamaica Inn*, Aubéry conceives of the heroine’s options in avian terms that reiterate gender norms that stifle women. In his notion that ‘instinct is too strong’ (*FC*, 147), Aubéry fails to accommodate a multi-faceted ‘femaleness’. His reductive account is revealed to be inadequate as Dona insists upon a diverse identity when she counters that ‘the babies grow up, […] and fly away, and then the parent birds fly away too, and are free once more’ (*FC*, 147). Aubéry, a figure who has himself rejected a restrictive identity as a land-bound aristocrat, can only envisage a one-dimensional possibility for Dona. He insists that parenthood must be the defining aspect of a woman’s existence as if ‘more building of nests, and more rearing of broods’ is its only manifestation (*FC*, 147). Thus, even the most liberal of the novel’s men – Aubéry, as well as his otherwise perceptive accomplice, William – fail to conceive of a ‘female’ identity beyond the reductive prescription that can only admit those opposing elements – the ‘whore’ for male sexual gratification and the ‘mother’ for the procurement of male heirs – most useful to a patriarchal cause.[32] Critics who condemned du Maurier’s gender politics are misled by taking Aubéry’s gender politics as standing for the novel’s stance. Dona’s retort speaks back to the presumed conservative outlook of the novel.[33]

Nevertheless, the novel does not reject maternalism as one of the many elements that might comprise a woman’s existence. Dona does not renounce her parenthood, but she is critical when maternalism functions simply as a means of procuring an heir, an approach espoused by Lord and Lady Godolphin. It is important to note that the novel does not present Dona’s motherhood as an aspect of her identity that she feels compelled to escape. She does, after all, take her children with her to Navron House and relishes the time she spends with them in the grounds. It is rather that she feels that it should not stifle her ability to express other aspects of herself in the way that she sees the men around her do – hence her adoption of a ‘boy persona’ every time she embarks on adventures that lie outside the bounds of traditional

[32] William concurs with his master, Aubéry: ‘women are apt to obey the laws of nature, my lady, and produce babies […] and women who produce babies have a liking for their own fireside, they no longer want to roam’ (*FC*, 57).
[33] See Catherine Belsey, ‘Popular Fiction and the Feminine Masquerade’, *European Journal of English Studies*, 2 (1998), pp. 343-58, and Dolan, ‘Anchorage and Play’, p. 98.

'femininity'. Dona's resentment regarding the limitations that hinder a fuller life are a central driving force in the novel.

The novel also demonstrates the way in which Dona is bound by these limitations, concluding that women must wrench at their feathered pillows rather than fly from their cages. The morning after her evening on the beach with Aubéry, Dona awakes with the imperative to ascertain whether 'all is well with the children' (*FC*, 148), and she glances across the misty water to see that 'the two swans were coming back up the creek like ghosts of the morning' (*FC*, 150). Abandoning the sleeping Aubéry on the beach in order to return to her children at Navron House, Dona observes 'the swans disappear into the mist' (*FC*, 150). On her return to the house, Dona is engaged with anxious thoughts of flushed faces and clenched fists. Her immediate dread is that her baby son, her husband's heir, is dead. But even as she resumes her role as guardian of patrilineal tradition, Dona imagines Aubéry 'looking down into the water, and perhaps the swans would come back, and he would throw bread to them' (*FC*, 155). Aubéry's interaction with the swans, in which he attempts to feed them, reveals that his intervention in Dona's life is twofold; the bread he throws is on the surface a benevolent act, reinvigorating Dona's sense of self as she feels under-nourished in her role as a Restoration wife. Dona herself reveals that she initially longs to receive this sustenance when she ponders: 'perhaps the swans would come back, and he would throw bread to them' (*FC*, 155). Yet the 'sustenance' that Aubéry offers does not provide a satisfactory solution; bread, a human-made food, is, after all, not easily digested by swans. Detrimental effects on the bird's health is the adverse outcome of Aubéry's 'assistance'.[34] The potential toxic effects of his act are hinted at in the covert way he is depicted feeding the birds 'as though he did not see her' (*FC*, 156).

The haunting quality of the swans' recurring, ghostly appearances captures the novel's problem of establishing a 'female' identity that encompasses freedom of action and expression in addition to maternalism. The novel's use of the swan in particular represents this duality since the bird is traditionally a symbol of seduction, wooing, and forbidden love as well as embodying associations with the familial bond. The swan's rich narrative tradition comprises, for instance, Tchaikovsky's ballet, *Swan Lake* (1877) and Wagner's opera, *Lohengrin* (1848), both of which depict tainted and

[34] 'Many people like feeding bread to swans, but when it's fed in large quantities, it can cause dietary problems, and is no substitute for the proper diet that the birds themselves will seek out.' See RSPB, <www.rspb.org.uk>, accessed 28 August 2018.

transgressive love. In ancient oral traditions worldwide, the swan is similarly and consistently associated with love that transgresses or threatens conventional familial units. These more often than not result in the transgressive human's metamorphosis into a swan. In the Greek myth of Leda and the Swan, synonymous with W. B. Yeats's poem of that name published in 1926, the swan is mimicked as a means of enticing a woman into illicit love. Irish and Siberian traditions enlist the swan to represent a woman's sexual awakening, whose feathered costume is temporarily removed by a male voyeur. In both traditions, the bird-woman eventually returns to her swan-self. In a striking resemblance to du Maurier's swans, one Irish tale depicts 'two swans, linked together by chains of gold about their necks, disappearing into the distance'.[35] Other traditions posit the swan as a mother goddess.

Thus, the swan is simultaneously connected with sexual expression (usually perceived as transgressive) and motherhood. Bewick reiterates that the swan is 'singularly social and attentive to those of [their] own family, which [they] protect […] from every insult'.[36] Bringing to mind the moment Dona kills Rockingham when she hears her son, James, shriek, Bewick warns that, 'while [swans] are employed with the cares of the young brood, it is not safe to approach near them, for they will fly upon any stranger, whom they often beat to the ground by repeated blows; and they have been known by a stroke of the wing to break a man's leg'.[37] At the same time, Bewick notes that 'the Swan will not thrive if kept out of water: confined in a court yard, [the bird] makes an awkward figure, and soon becomes dirty, tawdry, dull, and spiritless'.[38] Thus, the recurring family of swans comes to critique the rigid framework that hinders Dona's need for a complex and dynamic identity that encompasses both freedom of sexual expression and maternal responsibility.

Silent Nightjars

Like the swan, the nightjar haunts *Frenchman's Creek* in subtle and pervasive ways. The species makes an appearance eleven times throughout the novel; three of which occur in the opening chapter, when the enchantment of the creek and its by-gone inhabitants, Dona and Aubéry, is conjured by the yachtsman's narrative framing

[35] Peter Tate, *Flights of Fancy: Birds in Myth, Legend and Superstition* (Arrow: London, 2009), pp. 142-49.
[36] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds Volume Two: Containing the History and Description of Water Birds* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1972), p. 271. First published in 1797.
[37] Bewick, *British Birds Volume One*, p. 271-72.
[38] Bewick, *British Birds Volume Two*, p. 273.

dream. From the outset, the nightjars are alternately voiced and silenced. First, they 'call' (*FC*, 4) and 'churr' (*FC*, 5), and then they are 'silent' (*FC*, 5). Like the alternately voiced and silenced nightingale of *Jane Eyre* discussed in chapter one, the nightjar of *Frenchman's Creek* appears during Dona's burgeoning relationship with Aubéry, becoming a metaphor for their gendered power dynamics. Capturing a sense of the bird's symbolic potential for expressing melancholy, Bewick relates that 'sometimes [the nightjar] utters a small plaintive note'.[39] The next appearance of the nightjar occurs when Dona first meets Aubéry onboard his ship, *La Mouette*, when the latter announces that 'the night-jars have started now, in the evenings […] they crouch in the hillside, farther down the creek. They are so wary though, it's almost impossible to get really close' (*FC*, 48). The nightjar clearly functions as an indication of Dona's awakened sexuality as well as her initial reluctance to acquiesce to Aubéry's unspoken provocations. Tate relates that the nightjar

> is mostly nocturnal and so is rarely seen, though it is often heard. Its silent flight is light and buoyant with many twists and turns. Its song is long and churring, and rises and falls in pitch.[40]

Tate further remarks upon the nightjar's

> nocturnal activities and its silent, ghostlike, twisting flight […] As the bird is so well camouflaged, it often reveals itself only by its strange, almost disembodied song. This low churring rising and falling sometimes ceases suddenly, while at other times it appears to run down like a clockwork toy.[41]

His account of the nightjar's intermittent song that 'sometimes ceases suddenly', together with the suggestion of ghostliness and disembodiment, relate to Dona's own plight as she attempts to find a means of self-expression that will release her from her soul-destroying life.

The nightjar reappears during Dona and Aubéry's second meeting. When the latter suggests a further meeting on the shores of the creek, Dona re-evokes the previously timid bird in her suggestion – 'perhaps the night-jar you told me about will not be silent' (*FC*, 62). The bird functions as a promise that inhibitions will be eradicated. However, as the couple's relationship develops, further nightjar

[39] Bewick, *British Birds Volume One*, p. 313.
[40] Tate, *Flights of Fancy*, p. 88.
[41] Tate, *Flights of Fancy*, p. 88.

appearances suggest that the articulation of desire is tempered by social constraints. All around, various species of birds are heard – 'a solitary curlew [….] whistled softly' and 'a single blackbird […] sang his intermittent song, meditative and sweet' (*FC*, 86). Amongst this cacophony of avian voices, Dona struggles to express herself: 'her voice [is] small, rather subdued' (*FC*, 86). Similarly, Aubéry continues 'in his silent secret way' (*FC*, 88) and

> once, in mid-stream, he paused, and listened, and turning her head towards the shore she heard, for the first time, a curious churring sound, low and rather harsh, fascinating in its quiet monotony.
>
> 'Night-jar,' he said, looking at her an instant, and then away again, and she knew, at that moment, that he had read the message in her eyes a little while before, and he did not despise her for it, he knew and understood, because he felt as she did, the same flame, the same longing. But because she was a woman and he was a man these things would never be admitted to one another; they were both bound by a strange reserve […].
>
> He pushed on down stream without a word. (*FC*, 89)

Du Maurier's nightjar episodes are remarkably evocative of Brontë's nightingale scenes between Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre* in which courtship communication is mediated through the alternately voiced and silenced bird. In both novels, the nightjar or nightingale serves as a symbol for the couple's mutual desire and their inability to express it. But it also reveals the gendered power dynamics that positions the heroine as alternately voiced and silenced in matters of her own sexuality. As with Brontë's nightingale, the nightjar of *Frenchman's Creek* eventually admits an articulation of Dona and Aubéry's attachment to one another:

> 'Why do you want to stay?' he said at last, and there was something in his voice that made her heart beat afresh, but for another reason, and she remembered the evening he had said the word 'Night-jar' to her, in the same voice, with the same softness. (*FC*, 121)

What immediately follows is the pair's mutual confession of their passionate feelings for each other. Aubéry, like Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, employs the bird as a means of approaching the unsaid, but it is Dona, like her literary predecessor, Jane Eyre, who is the first to break the silence by explicitly voicing her romantic attraction.

As with Jane and Rochester's nightingale, the nightjar of *Frenchman's Creek* is also symbolic of adultery. Thus, the bird foregrounds the precarious position in which striving for sexual expression places a heroine. In the lead up to their

consummation, the couple stumble upon a taboo subject: the existence of Dona's children, and thereby the adulterous nature of their liaison. In response to Aubéry's enquiry, 'do you not want to see your children?' (*FC*, 141), Dona is mute, and so he appeals to the nightjar: 'perhaps the night-jar is still calling in the creek at midnight […] we could go and find him' (*FC*, 141). A silence ensues between them as their consummation commences. Thenceforward, the nightjar continues to play a crucial role in the articulation, and *in*articulation, of the couple's passion. Silence is now reformulated as 'a speaking without words' (*FC*, 144). As she anticipates the re-appearance, and re-voicing, of the nightjar – 'the night-jar would call as he had said' (*FC*, 145) – Dona muses on

> the little shyness and restraint between them then that could never come again, for love was a thing of such simplicity once it was shared, and admitted, and done, with all the joy intensified and all the fever gone. (*FC*, 145)

Then the bird disappears upon Dona's husband's arrival at Navron House, when 'the night-jars were silent and the sea-birds slept' (*FC*, 148). The nightjar does not reappear until towards the end of the novel when Dona visits the imprisoned Aubéry. In what will be their final encounter, the bird is once again evoked as a coded sexual communication between the lovers, who now must express mutual desire in the presence of jailers. When Aubéry asks 'what is your favourite bird, madam?' (*FC*, 229), Dona responds in the avian code that the couple have developed as a means of expressing forbidden sexuality:

> 'That,' answered Dona, 'is something I can never decide. Sometimes I think it is a night-jar.'
>
> 'I regret I cannot offer you a night-jar,' he said, rummaging amongst the papers on the table. 'You see, when I last heard one, I was so intent upon another occupation that I did not observe the night-jar as clearly as I might have done.' (*FC*, 229)

As well as alluding to transgressive sexual encounters, this scene, which precedes the couple's final farewell, reveals Aubéry's unwillingness to pursue the relationship at the cost of his piratic freedom. His admittance that he 'cannot offer [Dona] a night-jar' (*FC*, 229) confirms Dona's sexually barren future and suggests a resumption of silent submission.

'A bird between his claws': Hunting Birds, Hunting Women

The aristocratic men of the novel – Dona's husband, and his associates, Lord Godolphin and Lord Rockingham – are presented in a manner that positions Dona alongside their hunted avian prey. If Dona is 'feeling like [a] bird' (*FC*, 219), then her husband and his comrades' culture of violence towards avian beings is a powerful and pervasive metaphor for the speciesist, misogynist culture that they embody. It is in this culture that Dona is entrapped and must return to at the end of the novel. These men 'all typified a weary, *dying world* from which [Dona] must free herself and escape, before the sky fell in on her and she was trapped' (*FC*, 10, my italics). Following this narrative interjection, Dona recalls a memory of a hawker, making it clear that the aristocratic men she despises are associated with avian death.

At dinner with Godolphin's cronies, Dona endures talk of 'cock-fighting' (*FC*, 187), a practice that the violent outlaw, Joss Merlyn of *Jamaica Inn*, aspires to. When Dona thinks of the husband she has left behind, 'continuing his life in London' (*FC*, 97), she recalls 'his riding, his gaming' (*FC*, 97). As Kheel has identified in her analysis of hunting discourse, the killing of animals, including game birds, is deemed 'essential for the attainment of full manhood'.[42] Kheel goes on to state that, for the hunter, 'the animal is reduced to an object, a symbol against which the hunter seeks to establish his masculine selfhood and moral worth'.[43] Even as Dona returns to married life as a partially enlightened figure at the end of the novel, her husband, Harry, promises to perpetuate avian exploitation when he vows to 'teach young James [their baby son] to ride and to hawk' (*FC*, 210). Harry is following the status quo with his seeming benevolent patrilineal act of endowing upon his son the 'gift' of a violent 'masculinity'. Kheel goes further by identifying this practice as an integral step towards the male assumption of dominance over both nonhuman animals and non-male humans:

> the transition of the boy child to adult masculine status is celebrated in initiation rites throughout the world. Many of these rites entail acts of violence towards both women and the natural world. Hunting and killing animals is a standard rite of passage out of the world of women and nature into the masculine realm.[44]

Thus, Harry's insistence that their son continues this tradition amounts to a bleak persistence of the interconnected oppressions of women and birds. Jill Johnston

[42] Kheel, 'License to Kill', p. 90.
[43] Kheel, 'License to Kill', p. 110.
[44] Kheel, 'License to Kill', p. 106.

observes that 'male initiation *always* has to do with gender distinctions and the devaluation of women'.[45] Dona's son is thus to undergo the same process of interspecies contempt that begins with bird murders and ends in the condescension of women.

The novels' aristocratic men's failure to value the experiential world of birds, as evidenced by the bird hunting culture they espouse, mirrors their inability to empathise with the lived experience of their female counterparts. Harry's, Godolphin's, and Rockingham's disdain for women and birds is manifest in their visits to the Swan, as discussed above, and in their bird-hunting. Their dismissal of the lived experiences and plights of birds and women is further manifest in their refusal to comprehend Dona's interconnected oppression with the caged linnet: 'you said some nonsense or other about feeling like that bird in your father's aviary. I couldn't make head or tail of it, and I still can't. It sounded such gibberish, you know' (*FC*, 219). Much like the Bewickian linnet of *Jane Eyre*, the dissident voice is dismissed as 'nonsense' (*FC*, 219) and 'gibberish' (*FC*, 219), an echo of Joss Merlyn's speciesist appraisal of Aunt Patience's utterances in *Jamaica Inn*, as 'squark[ing]' (*JI*, 22), 'clacking' (*JI*, 20), 'blathering', and 'nothing but a string of words' (*JI*, 88). As a bird-hunting, cock-fighting man, it is hardly surprising that the comprehension of a shared oppression between his wife and birds is beyond Harry. Indeed, he is more at home 'discussing cock-fighting' (*FC*, 187) with his fellow bird-murderers than he is at understanding his wife's avian-inflected plight. He dismisses Dona's suffering in much the same way he dispatches a bird. Despite Dona's explicit articulation of her shared oppression with birds, Harry participates in its perpetuation with his determination to initiate their son into the practice of bird murder. Godolphin is similarly unable to decode Dona's avian connection: 'Your ladyship knows little of ornithology, […] For my part I have never heard of a sea-gull or any other bird picking up feathers' (*FC*, 230). Godolphin fails to comprehend Dona's superior knowledge of birds or the female sexuality that they come to signify; he devalues her observation with his insinuation that she offers either nonsense or unimportant information.

Giving way to what Kheel describes as the hunter's 'erotic, aggressive drive', Rockingham becomes a cat to Dona's bird.[46] Once Rockingham suspects that Dona has found a sexual fulfilment beyond the bounds of the aristocratic stronghold,

[45] Jill Johnston, 'Why Iron John is No Gift to Women', *New York Times Book Review*, 23 (1992), p. 1, original italics.
[46] Kheel, 'License to Kill', p. 91.

jealousy unleashes his aggressive drive; if he cannot dominate her sexually, then he must kill her like a bird. Thus, he becomes a cat – the predator of birds. On the prospect of seeing her at Navron House, Harry assures Dona that Rockingham will 'be as pleased as a cat with two tails' (*FC*, 159). Like the feline Edgar Linton of *Wuthering Heights*, Rockingham's version of 'masculine protection' (*FC*, 163) is not altogether benevolent. When she comes face to face with him, 'it seemed to her that he had the brooding watchfulness of a cat, crouching beneath a tree, and she was the bird, silent amongst the long grass, waiting her chance to escape' (*FC*, 167). While Dona is silent avian prey, the cat is presented as the symbol of male-predation, interchangeable with the male hunter: 'watchful still, like a sleek cat, his narrow eyes turned upon Dona in greed and curiosity' (*FC*, 171). In response, Dona declares: 'How I detest him […] those narrow cat-like eyes' (*FC*, 185). When his conduct becomes explicitly murderous,

> she saw him as she had seen him earlier in the day, a sleek cat crouching in the long grass, a bird between his claws, so padded, so soft, and she realised, her memory streaking back to the past, how she had always suspected in him some quality of deliberate and cruel depravity. (*FC*, 202)

The image of the cat, appearing as it does in the Brontë novels previously discussed and explored in Emily Brontë's essay, 'The Cat', is associated with the spurned male predator of the bird-woman as characterised by *Wuthering Height*'s Edgar and *Jane Eyre*'s John Reed.[47] Dona's suspicion that Rockingham had always harboured 'some quality of deliberate and cruel depravity' (*FC*, 202) speaks in unison with Emily Brontë's formulation of the arbitrary and superfluous cruelty that distinguishes human male predation. Specifically, the cat is employed by Brontë and du Maurier as the predator of the bird. Thus, Dona's recurring avian association leaves no doubt that man as the sexually predatory cat to woman's bird is synonymous with the predatory hunting man in pursuit of the 'game' bird. This Brontëan depiction of a heroine in conjunction with consumed birds continues to predominate in du Maurier's subsequent fiction, as I shall now demonstrate.

'Sickened of the swan': Honor Harris's Feminist-Vegetarian Narrative Interruption in *The King's General*

[47] Emily Brontë, 'The Cat', in Stevie Davies, trans., *Emily Brontë: Heretic* (London: Women's Press, 1999), pp. 248-49, p. 248.

As with the lovers of *Frenchman's Creek*, Honor Harris and Richard Grenvile's relationship in *The King's General* develops amid a conspicuous culture of bird murder and consumption. Their liaisons are characterised by a disregard for avian life. Whereas Dona and Aubéry consume chicken together, Honor and Richard's first shared meal consists of roast swan – a bird that du Maurier employs in *Frenchman's Creek* in association with the abuses of the female body: prostitution and the precuring of male heirs. Thus, Honor and Richard's swan consumption functions most obviously as a symbol of the potential sexual exploitation that Honor falls prey to during their bird feast. Her rejection of it also signifies the maternalism she is denied as a result of Richard's insistence that she join him on a bird-hunting escapade.

Honor encounters Richard on her eighteenth birthday, the evening of her 'first venture' (*KG*, 25). This is also the evening that Honor's family, along with other members of the local nobility, is invited to attend a lavish banquet at the Duke of Buckingham's castle on his return from an expedition in France. Honor's avian connection is established at the beginning of the evening – 'my spirits [were] soaring like a bird' (*KG*, 21). Prior to meeting Richard at the banquet, Honor's avian association represents her sense of liberation from her confinement in her paternal home. Once she encounters Richard, her avian associations take on a rather more sinister tone. Richard, a prominent and distinguished guest at the Duke's feast, entreats Honor to accompany him to a secluded area of the castle where his manner towards her is provocative – he both insults her and excites her. Coinciding with the simultaneous 'aversion and attraction' (*JI*, 140) experienced by Mary in *Jamaica Inn* in relation to the various hawk-men who menace her, Richard is both attractive and repulsive to Honor. Amid his flirtations with her, he admits his condonement of sexual violence with a flippant admittance that his army of soldiers may 'rape every woman in Plymouth, for all I care' (*KG*, 28). The specifically human nature of this conduct is foregrounded in his qualification – 'but let them do it like men and not like beasts' (*KG*, 28).

When the feasting commences, Richard, to Honor's consternation, insists that she joins him at the top table along with the Duke and his fellow dignitaries. Thus, the meal begins with Honor praying 'for death' and when 'it did not come to me […] Instead I took the roast swan that was heaped upon my platter' (*KG*, 29-30). Following this granting of Honor's wish for death – which comes in the form of the bird corpse served on her plate – Richard evokes the sexual associations of the swan by insinuating that Honor might be counted as one of the Duke's many mistresses. The dead bird and

the sexually exploited woman are thus explicitly connected. Whereas Richard devours the dead swan 'with evident enjoyment', Honor recalls: 'I tasted nothing of what I ate' (*KG*, 30). Instead, she sat 'bewildered' until 'the ordeal was over' (*KG*, 30). Following this, Honor has a 'shaming recollection […] where Nature took her toll of me, and the roast swan knew me no more' (*KG*, 30).

Honor's 'sicken[ing] of the swan' (*KG*, 43) would seem to foreshadow her sexually barren future and foreshadows the fact that she will never bear Richard an heir. Honor's rejection of swan also signals an awakening consciousness to her shared status with the bird. However, *The King's General*'s bird-eating scene complicates any straightforward symbolism. Honor's violent reaction to the consumption of the swan signals the novel's jarring shift away from a sexual liaison that might yield offspring. What emerges from this point is a critique of an aggressive masculinity and the cultures of bird cruelty it espouses. Honor's vomiting of the swan demonstrates the extent of du Maurier's continued defiance of a dominant and domineering culture that marginalises the lives of others, such as birds and women, even as it fetishizes the violent, war-faring, bird-slaughtering Richard.

Like the first Catherine of *Wuthering Heights*, who refuses to eat the wing of the goose as she is groomed to marry Edgar Linton, Honor's rejection of bird consumption signals a significant moment in the heroine's psychic and sexual awakening, a moment that reveals the struggles the heroine must negotiate within the limited confines of her existence. Honor's revulsion at the swan echoes Catherine Earnshaw's consumption of bird flesh. Like Catherine Earnshaw, Honor experiences a similarly agitated reaction to and revulsion of bird consumption, and the episode induces feelings of shame. This sense of shame relates back to Dona's bird-eating in *Frenchman's Creek*. Both occur when women are menaced by men who kill birds and objectify women. Furthermore, Honor is reduced to 'agony in the memory' (*KG*, 30) and recalls 'groaning again' (*KG*, 31) until the swan is entirely rejected by her body. Weeks later, Honor's prevailing recollection of the evening in which she first meets Richard is that 'I had sickened of the swan' (*KG*, 43). When Richard reappears a decade and a half later, mention of Honor's swan sickness is amongst his first utterances to her when they are alone together in her bedchamber: 'Are you still queasy when you eat roast swan?' (*KG*, 100). Honor goes a step further than Catherine Earnshaw by allowing the dead bird to pass her lips, but her insistence that she 'tasted nothing of what [she] ate' (*KG*, 30) makes it clear that Honor and bird consumption are at odds. This feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption dwells on Honor's resulting

nausea. Physical vomiting is the outcome of her shared dead swan meal with a bird murderer. Honor's associations with birds strengthen the sense that, a century after the publication of *Wuthering Heights*, the heroine's resistance to avian objectification continues to articulate the social and sexual limitations experienced by women.

The swan scene is complicated by a later episode in which Honor shares another bird meal with the King's general. The connection between her relationship with Richard and a rejection of bird cruelty is re-enacted once they become reacquainted fifteen years later. Honor,

> still weak with the shock of seeing him – toyed with the wishbone of a chicken. He started walking about the chamber before he had finished, a habit I remembered well, with the great bone in one hand […] He threw his drumstick out of the window, and tore the other from the carcase [*sic*]. (*KG*, 96-97)

Like Dona of *Frenchman's Creek*, and Catherine Earnshaw of *Wuthering Heights*, Honor's romantic involvement with a bird consuming culture renders her intermittently complicit in its acts of cruelty. When Richard re-enters Honor's life, she 'toyed with the wishbone' (*KG*, 96) – a suggestion that, with Richard's return, she is once again vulnerable to complicity in exploitative predation. Honor's memory of Richard wielding a disembodied bird is also Dona's witnessing of Aubéry 'tearing off a drumstick from the chicken, and eating it in his hand' (*FC*, 139), discussed above, as they enact the erotic connotations of their avian meal. In the later novel, Honor's recollection of her partner's bird-eating admits a brutality as the prose lingers on the jarring detail of the torn carcass. Like Jane Eyre's first-person perspective, Honor's narrative viewpoint admits a partially critical gaze of the hero's hyper-masculinity. It is thus clear, with *The King's General*, that du Maurer continues to explore a disregard for avian life as a manifestation of a simultaneous attraction to, and revulsion of, the aggressive masculinity that Richard embodies. Later in the novel, Honor 'ate roast duck with the general overhead' (*KG*, 204), compelling her relatives to misconstrue her eating habits as an indicator of sexual transgression. Honor's complex participation in Richard's culture of bird cruelty seems to function as a metaphor for an intermittent complicity with bird consumption arising from her *rendezvous* with him.

'Not for slaughter' – 'An end to hawking'?: Honor's Critique of Bird Murder

Honor's conflicted relationship to bird consumption must be read in conjunction with the novel's other pivotal bird exploitation episode: the hawking expedition that leads

to Honor being maimed and the heron – with whom she becomes associated – being murdered. Not long after her agitated reaction to swan consumption, Honor finds herself participating in a pre-nuptial hawking expedition with Richard and his sister, Gartred. Although Richard commits Honor to the realm of the women in the lead up to their wedding day, she is nonetheless entreated to join the bird hunt with her betrothed. Presentiments persist from the outset: Honor insists, in an unequivocal objection to bird murder, that she 'rode for pleasure, not for slaughter, and hawking was not [her] favourite pastime' (*KG*, 49). Furthermore, the prelude to the ill-fated bird hunt, Honor and Richard's affiance, is conceived in a manner that conjures an image of the victim caught in a hunt when Honor recalls feelings of 'powerless[ness]' and 'helpless[ness] before the onslaught' (*KG*, 46). This explicit likening of Honor's impending marriage to the 'onslaught', 'a fierce or destructive attack' that her fiancé inflicts upon the 'dying heron' (*KG*, 51) of the hunt that she will come to identify with, confirms the novel's interconnections between women and birds' shared status.[48] Furthermore, the word's meaning of 'a large quantity of people or things that are difficult to cope with; a flood, a deluge, an inundation' stresses that 'onslaught' is interchangeable with Honor's impending marriage, the bird hunt that maims her and kills the heron, and the backdrop of Civil War.[49] In this novel, the interrelationship between violent masculinity, women's oppression, and the destruction of avian life is brought to the fore.

Despite these presentiments, Honor recalls,

> we all proceeded to the falconry, for an afternoon of sport was to precede a banquet in the evening.
>
> There were the goshawks on their perches, preening their feathers and stretching their wings, the tamer of them permitting our approach; and further removed, solitary upon their blocks in the sand, their larger brethren, the wild-eyed peregrines.
>
> The falconers came to leash and jess the hawks, and hood them ready for the chase, and as they did this the stable men brought the horses for us, and the dogs who were to flush the game yelped and pranced about their heels. (*KG*, 47)

Amid this preparation, the falconer announces the unexpected arrival of Richard's sister, Gartred – Honor's 'childhood enemy' (*KG*, 48). The falconer wastes no time in connecting Gartred to the bird imagery of the impending hunt: 'It is Mrs Denys […]

[48] 'Onslaught', *OED*, accessed 1 December 2018.
[49] 'Onslaught', *OED*, accessed 1 December 2018.

from Orley Court. Now you can match your red hawk to her tiercel' (*KG*, 47). Thenceforward, the three hunting protagonists – Richard, Gartred, and the reluctant Honor – are assigned avian associations with the predatory red hawk and tiercel, and the hunted heron, respectfully:

> [Gartred] glanced at the falcon on [her brother's] wrist. 'A red hawk,' she said, one eyebrow lifted, 'not in her full plumage. Do you think to make anything of her?'
>
> 'She has taken kite and bustard, and I propose to put her to a heron today if we can flush one.'
>
> Gartred smiled. 'A red hawk at a heron,' she mocked. 'You will see her check at a magpie and nothing larger.'
>
> 'Will you match her with your tiercel?'
>
> 'My tiercel will destroy her, and the heron afterwards.' (*KG*, 48)

When Honor is challenged to engage in this hunting bravado against her better judgment, she reluctantly acquiesces to participate in the hunt that promises to destroy the heron: 'I will see you kill your heron' (*KG*, 49). Even before the bird hunt that maims her commences, Honor's power to determine her destiny is compromised; even before the disability that the hunt brings about, Honor is caught up in an avian power dynamic in which she is assigned the weakest position. Furthermore, since Honor is associated with the heron, Richard's insistence that she partakes in its annihilation suggests that her relationship with him necessitates a complicity in her own downfall. The heron that Aubéry draws in *Frenchman's Creek* is now the annihilated bird that represents Honor's shared position of powerlessness.

As 'Richard's falcon and Gartred's tiercel [anticipate their pursuit of] the heron's feeding ground' (*KG*, 49), Honor waits 'restlessly' (*KG,* 49) amid a flurry of avian transactions that sees

> Richard and Gartred racing neck to neck […] and in the sky the male and female falcons pitched and hovered. When suddenly […] rose a heron, his great grey wings unfolding, his legs trailing. I heard a shout from Richard, and an answering cry from Gartred, and in an instant it seemed the hawks had seen their quarry, for they both began to circle above the heron, climbing higher and still higher, swinging out in rings until they were like black dots against the sun. The watchful heron, rising too, but in a narrower circle, turned downwind, his queer, ungainly body strangely light and supple, and like a flash the first hawk dived to him – whether it was Richard's young falcon or Gartred's tiercel I could not tell – and missed the heron by a hair's breadth. At once, recovering himself, he began to soar again, in ever higher cycles, to recover his lost pitch, and the second hawk swooped, missing in like manner.
>
> […]

> silhouetted against the sun, I saw one of the falcons locked against the heron and the two come swinging down to earth not twenty yards ahead. (*KG*, 50-51)

Then Honor recalls

> the sun blinding my eyes, and out of the darkening sky fell the dying heron and the blood-bespattered falcon, straight into the yawning crevice that opened out before me. I heard Richard shout, and a thousand voices singing in my ears as I fell. (*KG*, 51)

As a woman bird hunter, Gartred is characterised as a detested figure, who is nonetheless, like her brother, a charismatic figure with whom the heroine is fascinated. Furthermore, like Edgar Linton, the cat-like husband of Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*, and Dona St Columb's feline adversary, Lord Rockingham, in *Frenchman's Creek*, Gartred, with 'her cat's eyes' (*KG*, 305), is also conceived of as a cat to Honor's bird, revealing that predatory threats to bird-women are not restricted to men, but can also be enacted by women who adopt masculinist cultures of cruelty.

In the aftermath of the hunting accident, Honor reiterates her association with the avian victim of the hunt when she laments that 'the Honor that was had died as surely as the heron that afternoon in May, when the falcon slew him' (*KG*, 53). Richard is the falcon and Honor, who objects to hunting and hawking, is the 'dying heron' (*KG*, 51). Later, as her maid-nurse, Matty, alleges, Honour is the 'poorest chick' (*KG*, 78). Honor is powerless to enact 'an end to hawking' (*KG*, 75). Her initial feminist-vegetarian narrative interruption is overridden by the falcon to whom she remains attracted despite his role as the agent of her demise. This disastrous hawking scene, while it signals a shared oppression between birds and women, allows the tragedy of Honor to overshadow that of the murdered bird who seems rather to become an absent referent for the plight of the heroine.

'Shoot[ing] duck instead of rebels': Sexism, Speciesism, and Warfare

The hawking scene of *The King's General* re-envisions avian gender politics in relation to the representation of troubling masculinities. In *The King's General*, bird hunting and hawking, the sexual exploitation of women, and the violence of warfare are inextricably linked as encapsulated by Richard's declaration to Honor that he will 'bide with [her] a week at Menabilly, and shoot duck instead of rebels' (*KG*, 252). This recalls Leonard Lutwack's appraisal of the 'Hemingway hero', as outlined in the

introduction to this thesis, for whom 'shooting ducks and making love to beautiful women serve a purpose […] to help keep him from thinking about war and his imminent death'.[50] Those active in war are themselves invariably bird hunters, hawkers, and hawk-like. Furthermore, war tactics are articulated in the language of avian exploitation. Men of war are heard 'discussing every move of the battle they had won like gamesters after a cock-fight' (*KG*, 62). This recalls Joss Merlyn's avian pretentions to a higher social class in *Jamaica Inn* and the exploits of Dona's male aristocratic adversaries in *Frenchman's Creek*. In *The King's General*, warfare is represented as an extension of the aggression that drives hawking culture – 'warfare to them consisted of a furious charge upon horses, dangerous and exciting, with more speed to it than a day's hawking' (*KG*, 214). Furthermore, while birds and rebels are interchangeable, spending time with Honor is apparently synonymous with the act of shooting ducks in Richard's estimation. When men are unable to enact violence on the battle ground, they are invariably found partaking in acts of bird-murder. The novel thereby reveals symbiotic criticisms of both the aggressive masculinities that warfare engenders and a rejection of the bird exploitation that signifies it.

The novel also depicts otherwise benevolent men involved in acts of bird murder: 'my dear John [is] grousing all the while that he cannot go fighting' (*KG*, 88). Even Honor's beloved brother, Robin, is customarily encountered riding in and out of 'battle with a hawk on his wrist' (*KG*, 2). The novel seems to suggest that this troubling aspect of masculinity is prolific; beloved brothers and alluring lovers are not immune to participation in aggressive avian power dynamics. Even in relation to her cherished brother, speciesist reverberations are not lost on Honor when she notes that Robin

> had just ridden in from hawking, and stood in the stable yard, his dear handsome face flushed and happy, the falcon on his wrist, and I remember drawing back, scared always by the bird's deep, venomous eyes and the blood on her beak. She would permit no one to touch her but Robin, and he was stroking her feathers.
>
> […] the bird watched me from beneath great hooded lids, and Robin smiled, and reached out his other hand to touch my curls, while the falcon ruffled in anger.
>
> […] placing the hood over his bird, [Robin] gave her to the keeper. When he picked me up in his arms he was smiling again. (*KG*, 11-12)

[50] Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 175.

Only men (or despised women, such as Gartred) are permitted to handle the predatory bird. This corroborates Karen Davis's estimation that 'animals summoning forth images of things that are "natural, wild, and free" [such as predatory birds like hawks] accord with the "masculine" spirit of adventure and conquest idolized by our culture'.[51] Du Maurier prefigures Davis's observation that 'men essentially give to themselves a new lease to run with the predators, not the prey, and to identify with the "wild" and not the "tame"'.[52] With one hand, Robin pets the bird, with his other, he strokes Honor as if she is his trained bird – clearly Honor and the bird occupy a shared status in this avian encounter. Honor's preoccupation with the bird of prey's watchful, 'deep, venomous eyes' (*KG*, 11) early on in the novel is significant. On the one hand, it looks back to the avian imagery relating to the menacing masculinity of Rochester with his 'full falcon-eye' (*JE*, 305) rendered temporarily blind in *Jane Eyre*. On the other hand, it anticipates du Maurier's own use of the bird of prey and the significance of sight as symbolic of gendered power in her short story, 'The Blue Lenses'. Thus, the hawk-like and hawking men of *Jamaica Inn* and *The King's General* are in dialogue with Jane Eyre's avian presentiments regarding Rochester's 'full falcon-eye flashing' (*JE*, 305), under which she 'stood in peril' (*JE*, 305), and inform du Maurier's later fiction, which I examine in the next chapter. Like the hawk-brothers, Joss, Jem, and Matthew Merlyn of *Jamaica Inn*, Richard shares a bird-of-prey genealogy in the male line that is located in his falcon eye; his grandfather, also called Richard, has 'eyes that looked down upon [Honor] from the portrait [that] were hawk's eyes, fearless and far-seeing' (*KG*, 335). This malevolent bird-of-prey gaze is a Brontëan avian theme that du Maurier re-works in numerous guises, not least in her short story, 'The Blue Lenses', which I will explore in chapter five.

Conclusion

The above analysis of *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* demonstrates that, as with the Brontë novels and *Jamaica Inn* already discussed, du Maurier continues to explore and confront the interconnected oppressions of women and birds in opposition to violent, predatory masculinities. Honor's feminist-vegetarian narrative interruptions, in conjunction with her association with exploited birds, signal an awakened consciousness that seeks to critique the agents of violence while the novel

[51] Karen Davis, 'Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection', in *Animals and Women*, eds. Adams and Donovan, pp. 192-212, p. 196.
[52] Davis, 'Thinking Like a Chicken', pp. 196-97.

also shows the problematic ways in which women can be complicit in their own and birds' continued status as consumed objects through their attraction to predatory masculinity. Whereas the Brontës' novels and *Jamaica Inn* approach *partially* satisfactory resolutions for their heroines, ones that are nonetheless undermined by the persistence of avian exploitation, *Frenchman's Creek* is remarkable in its depiction of an unequivocally desolate outlook for its heroine – a bold departure from the happily married ending associated with the romance genre. In *Frenchman's Creek*, du Maurier insists upon the persistence of women's entrapment in the context of continued avian oppression.

Like the Brontë bird heroines discussed in previous chapters, Dona does not achieve emancipation through a fulfilling relationship with a bird-man because, like Brontëan male counterparts, Aubéry's relationship to birds is problematic. Rather than feed her bird-man the eggs of smaller birds in the way that Jane Eyre does, Dona rejects the chicken consumption that had become such an integral ritual in her relationship with Aubéry. Aubéry, who represents a revolt against an oppressive aristocratic culture, exerts a force that can potentially mobilise Dona's emancipation. Despite this, his ornithology persists, revealing how ingrained woman-bird objectification is. Although *Frenchman's Creek* and *The King's General* are ostensibly heroine-centred, their respective identities are predicated upon the bird murdering men with whom the bird women become enamoured: the Frenchman and the General. This suggests that, even as the novels problematise the predatory masculinities that menace the novels' women and birds, du Maurier complicates this with a sense of fascination with the power and agency that these destructive men wield. It is this ambiguity over avian-related gendered power that du Maurer takes up again, with a greater degree of subtly, in her later short stories.

Chapter Five: 'The Chamois' and 'The Blue Lenses'

> what are we going to eat, though, that's the main thing [her husband asks]. I'd like – I'd like – by Jove, what would I like? Roast chicken? Any objection to roast chicken? No, passed, settled. Right we'll have roast chicken. It smells good, it smells damned good.[1]

In 'Fairy Tale' (pre-1931), one of du Maurier's earliest works of fiction, a 'gambler, a waster, a good-for-nothing' (FT, 88) husband, having stolen his wife's savings, suggests eating chicken as a diversion when she holds him to account. The ontological instability of this tale – it is impossible for the reader to determine whether or not the roast chicken is a 'fairy tale' or a 'reality' – confirms Mary Midgley's recognition that 'the symbolism of meat-eating is never neutral' and exemplifies her recognition of the unavoidable interconnected 'symbolic meaning of women and animals'.[2] The husband's employment of the murdered corpse of a bird to further his deception foreshadows a long writing career of literary bird meals. When couples share an avian meal, or one of the pair partakes in bird consumption in the presence of the other, we can be sure that du Maurier is signalling a shift in a woman's consciousness to her own oppression. As identified in preceding chapters, the extent to which scenes of avian consumption comment upon the oppression of the birds themselves varies. Notwithstanding this, the intersectionality of such scenes remains of interest. In addition to du Maurier's novels, three examples of which have been examined in previous chapters, dead birds and their eggs appear in her early tales, written before 1931, through to her final short story collection published in the 1970s.[3] Avian

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[1] Daphne du Maurier, 'Fairy Tale', *The Rendezvous and Other Stories* (London: Virago, 2006), p. 94. Henceforward FT. Originally written before du Maurier published her first novel, *The Loving Spirit* (1931), and published in a Bantam Books collection, titled *Early Stories*, in 1959. Daphne du Maurier, *The Loving Spirit* (London: Virago, 2008).

[2] Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), p. 78. Midgley is not referring to du Maurier's tale.

[3] Several of the tales contain scenes of bird consumption. In 'The Pool', Deborah, on the brink of a sexual rite of passage, ponders the consequences of human disregard for a disembodied bird. See Daphne du Maurier, 'The Pool', *The Breaking Point: Short Stories* (London: Virago, 2009). Originally published by Victor Gollancz in 1959. The narrator of 'Ganymede' imagines the object of his desire serving him 'a swan instead of coffee'. See du Maurier, 'Ganymede', *Breaking Point*, p. 111. In 'The Way of the Cross', a story from the last collection du Maurier published, bird flesh is similarly both relished and rejected in what is perhaps du Maurier's most derisive comment on avian gluttony. In fact, bird consumption is a recurring trope throughout fourteen of the short stories. See Daphne du Maurier, 'The Way of the Cross', *Don't Look Now and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 2006). Originally published by Victor Gollanzc in 1971 as *Not After Midnight*.

In the earlier tales, the consumption of bird flesh and eggs occurs amidst delusional protagonists' confrontations with awkward truths. Throughout the tales of the 1950s, scenes of bird consumption continue to appear during episodes of crises in the lives of men and moments of potential awakening in the lives of women. In the 1970s, du Maurier re-enlists this avian trope in a tale of

encounters pervade the short stories far beyond the eponymous 'The Birds' (1952).[4] The persistence of this gendered avian theme across both the long and short fiction, spanning a long writing life, indicates the importance of bird imagery as a vehicle for du Maurier's ongoing concern with the dysfunctional relationships between men and women, and between humans and birds. In particular, dead, commodified birds haunt all five of her short story collections to the extent that an entire study could be dedicated to an examination of bird consumption and avian narrative interruptions in the tales alone.

Much like all but one of her novels, du Maurier's short fiction remains relatively neglected by critics. In his memoir of his friendship with du Maurier, Martyn Shallcross recalls that she lamented the critical reception of her work as 'just romantic'.[5] He reveals that she would

> challenge interviewers: 'What about my short stories? They have murders and frightening themes, and deal with the supernatural.' 'The element of the macabre, which runs through many of my books, has – I think – grown stronger over the years, especially in my short stories'.[6]

Sadly, Shallcross does little to advance the reputation of his friend's short fiction. His chapter, titled 'Sinister Stories', is symptomatic of the tendency of critics of the time to allow consideration of the short fiction to be dominated by detailed and rapturous appraisals of film adaptations of two tales, 'The Birds' and 'Don't Look Now' (1971).[7]

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unwitting father-daughter incest, the perpetrators of which 'ate hard-boiled eggs and cold chicken seated side by side'. See du Maurier, 'A Border-Line Case', *Don't Look Now*, p. 138. Most are concerned with the power dynamics at play in sexual encounters; others probe the coming-to-terms with a stifled, yet threatening, sexual identity. In all of these tales, engagement with commodified birds' eggs and flesh always signals discontent.

[4] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Birds', *The Birds and Other Stories* (London: Virago, 2013). Originally published by Victor Gollacz in 1952 as *The Apple Tree: A Short Novel and Several Long Stories*.

[5] Martyn Shallcross, *The Private World of Daphne du Maurier* (London: Robson Books, 1993), p. 135.

[6] Shallcross, *Private World*, pp. 135-36.

[7] Du Maurier, 'Don't Look Now', *Don't Look Now*. Jane S. Bakerman does not mention the short stories in her chapter on du Maurier. See Jane S. Bakerman, 'Daphne du Maurier', in *And Then There Were Nine … More Women of Mystery*, ed. Jane S. Bakerman (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1985), pp. 10-29. Similarly, Alison Light omits the short stories apart from fleeting references to the 'The Birds' and 'Don't Look Now'. See Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 181 and 191. Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik offer a seven-page sub-section on 'Don't Look Now', but they do not offer significant readings of the other short stories in their book-length critical study of du Maurer's fiction. Although they lament that 'even her best-known short stories […], such as "The Birds" and "Don't Look Now", have received little attention from literary critics', their own book does little to address this. See Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 27. Nina Auerbach, in her book on du Maurier, restricts detailed consideration of the short fiction to discussion of film adaptions of 'The Birds' and 'Don't Look Now'. Her purpose in doing so seems primarily to lament Alfred Hitchcock's and Nicolas Roeg's romanticising revisions. See Nina Auerbach, *Daphne du Maurier, Haunted Heiress*

Whereas Shallcross and others approach these two tales through the lens of their subsequent film adaptations, my study moves beyond this tradition. Although Nina Auerbach acknowledges that 'the beauty and power of birds are dangerous in these tales', this comment is made in relation to only two of them – 'The Birds' and 'The Old Man'.[8] This promising observation is not elaborated upon and the bird imagery in the rest of the tales is not mentioned. Thus, the avian imagery permeating du Maurier's short stories is yet to be fully investigated.

In a short chapter on animal transformations in du Maurier's stories, Auerbach reads 'these tales of [animal] metamorphosis as the vehicles of an outrage the novels only hint at'.[9] Auerbach does not acknowledge the prevalence of birds nor does she comment on the abundance of birds in particular in her consideration of du Maurier's animal imagery. Nevertheless, Auerbach's consideration of tales beyond 'The Birds' and 'Don't Look Now' makes an important contribution to the reappraisal of du Maurier's oeuvre. Furthermore, her observation that the stories function 'as the vehicles of an outrage' makes a tentative step towards the necessary repositioning of du Maurier's fiction beyond the limiting mis-categorisation of her work as belonging to the romance and suspense genres.[10] By placing du Maurier's short stories at the forefront of critical investigation, I contend that these neglected works are worthy of investigation in their own right. Through the lens of bird imagery, this chapter addresses a critical lacuna and seeks to confirm du Maurier's insistence that her short fiction is not simply 'romantic'.

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 157. See *The Birds*, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock, with Tippi Hedren and Rod Taylor (Universal Pictures, 1963); *Don't Look Now*, dir. by Nicolas Roeg, with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland (British Lion Films, 1973).

From 1999 onwards, a few journal articles turn their attention to the short fiction, but consideration is limited to 'The Birds' and 'Don't Look Now'. See, for example, Gina Wisker, 'Don't Look Now! The Compulsions and Revelations of Daphne du Maurier's Horror Writing', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8 (1999), pp. 19-33; and Terence Patrick Murphy, 'Opening the Pathway: Plot Management and the Pivotal Seventh Character in Daphne du Maurier's "Don't Look Now"', *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 37 (2008), pp. 151-68.

From 2010 onwards, a few journal articles and book chapters consider a wider range of du Maurier's short fiction. See, for example, Maria Purves, '"Don't Look Now": Disguised Danger and Disabled Women in Daphne du Maurier's Macabre Tales', in *Demons of the Body and Mind: Essays on Disability in Gothic Literature*, ed. Ruth Bienstock Anolik (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2010), pp. 181-96; Gina Wisker, 'Starting Your Journey in the Past, Speculating on Time and Place: Daphne du Maurier's *The House on the Strand*, 'Split Second', and the Engaged Fiction of Time Travel', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 24 (2013), pp. 467-82; and Setara Pracha, 'Apples and Pears: Symbolism and Influence in Daphne du Maurier's "The Apple Tree" and Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, eds. Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Todd Martin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 172-86.

[8] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 42.

[9] Nina Auerbach, 'Tales of Awe and Arousal: Animals Invade', in *The Daphne du Maurier Companion*, ed. Helen Taylor (London: Virago, 2010), pp. 233-41, p. 239.

[10] Auerbach, 'Tales of Awe', p. 239.

In this chapter, I examine the significance of avian encounters with a particular focus on bird consumption and ensuing nausea in two of du Maurier's tales published together in the 1959 collection, titled *The Breaking Point*: 'The Chamois' and 'The Blue Lenses'.[11] As with the Brontës' and du Maurier's novels examined so far, the consumption of birds' flesh and eggs in these two tales continues to articulate a gendered malaise and troubling gendered power dynamics. The two tales under consideration here were written in the aftermath of the second world war, a time in which women's identities were subject to renewed scrutiny and anxiety. Endemic post-traumatic stress suffered by men returning from war combined with women newly accustomed to adjustments in domestic life. On the consequences of the second world war, and resonating with both tales discussed in this chapter, Light poses the provocative question: 'did the faces of men and women show so plain in each other's eyes that romance was killed?'.[12] Indeed, these tales involving avian consumption are testament to du Maurier's distinctly anti-romantic stance, which places the predatory husband under renewed critical analysis whilst the bird consumption-rejecting heroines are awakened to their status as prey with unnerving consequences. I will investigate the subversive implications of these scenes within the context of similar episodes in the novels already discussed.

As Auerbach has said of du Maurier's novel, *The Scapegoat* (1957), both of these tales 'anticipated *The Feminine Mystique* in [their] analysis of privileged women living useless, helpless lives [and] anticipated the sort of feminist analysis of gender and power that we now know so well'.[13] This is certainly true of the two tales under consideration here, but what critics have thus far failed to explore is the implications of these species boundary blurring tales of women's nausea in the context of the rejection of bird consumption that triggers it. Carol J. Adams proposes that

> our meals either embody or negate feminist principals by the food choices they enact. Novelists and individuals inscribe profound feminist statements within a vegetarian context. Just as revulsion to meat eating acts as a trope for feelings about male dominance, in women's novels and lives vegetarianism signals women's independence.[14]

[11] Du Maurier, 'The Chamois', *Breaking Point*; du Maurier, 'The Blue Lenses', *Breaking Point*.
[12] Light, *Forever England*, p. 2.
[13] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 13. Daphne du Maurier, *The Scapegoat* (London: Virago, 2004).
[14] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London: Continuum, 2015), p. 217. Henceforward *SPM*.

She goes on to insist that, since 'meat eating is an integral part of male dominance; vegetarianism acts as a sign of *disease* with patriarchal culture' (*SPM*, 217, my italics). Adams's use of the word 'disease' is revealing. With its dual meaning of 'uneasiness' on the one hand, and a 'morbid or unhealthy condition', causing 'sickness' on the other, the term is particularly pertinent to the interconnected psychic and bodily disturbances that more often than not occur when du Maurier's heroines partake in or contemplate bird consumption.[15] In common with the Brontë and du Maurier novels examined so far, these two tales chart the unease experienced by women trapped in marriages of hate and fear with violent and controlling men. The physical manifestation of women's consciousness to their oppression – nausea and sickness – signals that it is patriarchal culture itself that is the disease making women mentally and physically unwell. This challenges Auerbach's notion that du Maurier's women are

> sites of disease, [that] the overwrought idiom of love […] masks women's innate decay [and] to be a woman [in du Maurier's fictional world] is to be rotten or, at best, defective.[16]

Far from harbouring an 'innate disease', women are not defective – rather they respond to the ills of the society that engulfs them.

Adams's thinking on *dis*ease and dis*ease* exemplifies what Denise Gigante calls 'the modernist condition of nausea', articulated by Friedrich Nietzsche who connects a moment of heightened perception to nausea: 'conscious of the truth [he] has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence […] he is nauseated'.[17] When the narrator of 'The Chamois' confronts the absurdity of animal cruelty and witnesses the horror in the frying pan, she becomes conscious of the human capacity for exploitation, and she is nauseated. Similarly, when Marda West of 'The Blue Lenses' comes to see her own entrapment 'more clearly than ever before' (BL, 44), she likewise becomes cognizant of the absurdity of her life whilst eating a dead bird and experiences nausea as a result. Both 'The Chamois' and 'The Blue Lenses' exemplify an interconnection between acts of avian vegetarianism – such as expressions of disgust, nausea, and abstention from meals of bird flesh and eggs – and

[15] 'Disease', *OED*, accessed 13 June 2019.
[16] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 110.
[17] Denise Gigante, 'Keats's Nausea', *Studies in Romanticism*, 40 (2001), pp. 481-510, p. 483; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 60.

dissatisfaction with patriarchal cultures of dominance and violence that subjugate both women and other animals. With these issues in mind, I examine the extent to which du Maurier's avian-centred 'vegetarian incidents' (*SPM*, 163) and 'interruptions' (*SPM*, 163) disrupt male dominance over women and birds, or conceive that such disruption is achievable.

'The Chamois'

> 'an argument about animals […] and vagaries of the human race' (C, 243)

'The Chamois', like *Rebecca* (1938), is narrated by a nameless wife married to an aloof and emotionally guarded murderer.[18] Whereas Maxim de Winter kills his first wife, Stephen of 'The Chamois' has murdered the countless animals whose severed heads adorn his study. On a hunting expedition to the remote Pindus mountains in search of the rare and endangered chamois, husband and wife confront their deepest fears and desires. 'The Chamois' portrays 'the sportsman-fanatic' (C, 240), which turns out to be a euphemism for mass murderer. What ostensibly appears to be a tale about a woman's compliance in the perpetuation of male dominance and violence contains a moment of vegetarian rebellion when she refuses to eat the birds' eggs served at breakfast.

The narrator – Stephen's dissatisfied wife – tells the story from her perspective, detailing the psychological fragility of both herself and her animal murdering husband. The violence at the centre of the hunter's project is foregrounded through the narrator's restoral of the absent referent obliterated in her husband's 'mounted trophy' at home: the severed head of a chamois that he once murdered. Gazing in horror at one of Stephen's 'trophies', the narrator notes

> the eyes now dead that were once living, the tremulous nostrils stilled, the sensitive pricked ears closed to sound at the instant when the rifle-shot echoed from the naked rocks. (C, 240)

The narrator sees in this dead, disembodied deer the once living being. Her focus on the chamois's finely tuned, multi-sensory existence – 'living' eyes, 'tremulous nostrils', 'sensitive pricked' ears – metaphorically restores an inanimate object to the

[18] Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (London: Virago, 2003).

living being he or she once was. This vivid conjuring back to life is jolted by the narrator's imagining of the moment when Stephen's rifle shoots the chamois dead. This juxtaposition of the living with the murdered chamois ends with 'the rifle-shot that echoed from the naked rocks' (C, 240), the instrument of human destruction that renders a sensitive animal an object mounted on a man's wall. The word 'naked' (C, 240), seemingly unnecessary to a description of the rocks, introduces, subliminally, yet starkly, the theme of sexual shame that the tale interrogates in terms that reveal a connection between masculine violence, suppressed sexuality, and women's shared oppression with other animals, including birds.

The narrator goes on to stress that the motivation behind Stephen's act of annihilation is 'a desire […] to destroy' (C, 240). She also sites 'promiscuous shooting' (C, 241) and 'two world wars' (C, 241) as in large part responsible for the scarcity of the chamois. This acknowledgement of the nonhuman victims of war aligns the destructive violence of the hunt with the impetus to enact violence in large-scale warfare.[19] Du Maurier also holds consumerism to account for the 'trampling and desecration of land once sacred to the chamois' (C, 241). It is therefore no surprise that the chamois now 'shuns human beings [and is] always on the alert for anything that may threaten his safety' (C, 241). With its references to the aftermath of war and the destructive consequences of mass consumerism, 'The Chamois' speaks to the existential nausea articulated by Nietzsche and Jean Paul Sartre. Du Maurier complicates these accounts by intertwining disgust at the violence unleashed against humans and animals in the contexts of world war, industrialism, and consumerism with the specific concerns of women and other animals. In light of this, the vegetarian incidents, the nausea and sickness arising from the confrontation with the 'consumable' animal that du Maurier explicitly depicts, are, in essence, crises of meaning, in which female protagonists come to see male brutality towards animals with clarity and become nauseated.

Having said this, the narrator admits an ambivalence to her recognition of interspecies violence:

> I am being very frank about my husband. He attracted me at those times, and he repelled me too. This man, I told myself when I first met him […] has no compassion. (C, 241)

[19] Connections between warfare and carnivorous consumption have been explored in relation to *The King's General* (1946) in chapter four. See Daphne du Maurier, *The King's General* (London: Virago, 2007).

She goes on to elaborate upon this attraction-repulsion – experienced by du Maurier heroines discussed in previous chapters:

> after a few weeks in his company I shut my eyes to further judgement, because being with him gave me pleasure. It flattered my self-esteem […] Marriage was in every sense a *coup*. It was only afterwards that I knew myself deceived. (C, 242, original italics)

Her complicity is further enacted when, admitting that 'the sport meant nothing to me' (C, 242), cognitive dissonance allows her to enjoy 'my holiday' (C, 242) while her husband, 'armed with rifles' (C, 242), hunts the endangered chamois. In the same breath, she recalls the first time she visited her husband's house with 'the trophies on the wall' (C, 243). Her initial reaction is one of recognition at an inherent hypocrisy: 'I wondered straight away how he could sit at peace there, of an evening, with the row of heads staring down at him' (C, 243). Her subsequent preoccupation with her 'holiday' (C, 242) reflects the way in which animal objectification and the violence inflicted upon them, whilst abhorrent to her sensibility, is normalised to the extent that it goes unchallenged.

A missed opportunity to challenge Stephen's troubling treatment of animals reveals the interconnections of male violence and the sexual power dynamics between men and women:

> this [first encounter with Stephen's collection of severed chamois heads] might have led to an argument about animals in general, domestic, wild, and those which adapt themselves to the whims and vagaries of the human race; but instead he changed the subject abruptly […] and presently made love to me, intently but without emotion' (C, 243).

The narrator imagines a dialogue that addresses the question of nonhuman animals' subjection to the 'vagaries of the human race' (C, 243). Instead, her encounter with the severed chamois precipitates sex, not protest, suggesting at once her shared status with the chamois and her sexual attraction to a dominating, violent machismo. Her simultaneous fear and desire for Stephen is complicated by her awareness that alliance with him will compromise her integrity, a telling backward glance to Jane Eyre's moral dilemmas.[20] The malaise that characterises her subsequent union with this animal-

[20] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996). First published in 1848. Henceforward *JE*.

murdering man belies her seeming acquiescence to speciesist violence – 'I despised the bridge we made' (C, 243) – indicating that she resents her compromise. Her admittance, that she 'had been endeavouring for ten years to build for myself a ledge of safety' (C, 243), suggests her alignment with the hunted, crag-dwelling chamois. She maintains an intuitive recognition of the abhorrent nature of her husband's violence, recognising that 'this was a killer's smile, obeying an impulse deep within himself' (C, 244). Her early attempt to call him to account for his speciesist, psychopathic murderous obsession is swiftly followed by fears that he will turn violence on her:

> 'Snap out of it,' I said suddenly.
> He looked across at me, startled, as I was myself, by the curious note of urgency in my voice.
> 'Snap out of what?' he asked.
> 'This obsession with chamois,' I said. 'It isn't balanced.'
> I thought for a moment that he would hit me. The look of terror – and it was terror, swiftly and indecently unmasked – came and went at speed of thought, to be replaced by anger, the cold anger of a man caught off guard.
> […]
> He did not reply to my attack though. The answer was evasion. (C, 244-45)

Stephen is deeply troubled by his wife's challenge to his violent domination; his tactic is to evade discussion. This idea of the 'indecently unmasked' husband is also explored in 'The Blue Lenses', as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

'The smell of brewing eggs was nauseous': A Feminist-Vegetarian Narrative Interruption

As 'The Chamois' unfolds, and the narrator becomes further immersed in the natural home of the animal victim on a trip to the remote Pindus mountains, she gains a heightened sensitivity to the absent referent, finally signified by a feminist-vegetarian interruption. Upon stepping into the mountain-top shack in which they will spend the night before the chamois hunt, the presence of a dead bird permeates the atmosphere: she 'could smell food, something cooking in a pan' (C, 251). At this stage, she does not yet acknowledge that it is fried birds' eggs, but the fact that the smell it produces is her foremost observation is significant and anticipates the later vegetarian interlude. The cook who administers the eggs, a 'rat-faced man' (C, 251), 'made a pretence of crouching, animal fashion' (C, 251) in imitation of the soon-to-be slaughtered

chamois. This species boundary blurring foreshadows the tale's climax in which the goatherd, who acts as guide to Stephen and his wife, and the chamois become seemingly interchangeable. Amid the masculine bravado that this mocking disregard of the chamois evinces, she confronts the purpose of their presence there – 'had he come all this way to the top of the Pindus mountains only to destroy?' (C, 252). At this point, she becomes aware that the conspicuous smell emitted from the frying pan is that of avian eggs. Over this bird meal, in which 'we sat down to eggs fried in oil' (C, 252), she reports 'a wave of depression' (C, 254). Although her avian consumption bespeaks malaise, she remains mute at this point – 'I said nothing' (C, 254). Her suppressed reaction to this spectacle of violence against nonhuman animals is later unleashed when the smell of disembodied birds frying in a pan produces a nauseating reaction, reiterating that her original reaction to the sight of the murdered animals mounted on her husband's wall persists even as she complies with the patriarchal status quo that insists on its normalisation.

After an uneasy night spent cramped in a cupboard, she awakes on the morning of the hunt to 'the sight of Stephen, tackling fried eggs [which she now finds] unbearably irritating' (C, 256). When her bird consuming husband asks her 'how was the cupboard?' (C, 257), her response is revealing of what Adams insists is the interconnected oppression of women and birds:

> 'Little ease,' I told him, remembering Harrison Ainsworth's *Tower of London* and the torture-chamber, and I glanced with a queasy stomach at the egg-yolk on his oily plate. (C, 257)

The 'little ease' is a four-by-four-foot prison cell in the Tower of London. Mentioned in William Harrison Ainswoth's 1840 novel, *The Tower of London,* which du Maurier cites, the 'little ease' has become synonymous with

> a place or bodily position that is very uncomfortable to be held in; a narrow place of confinement; a prison cell too small for the occupant to assume a comfortable position; *spec.* the name of a dungeon in the Tower of London, and of an ancient place of punishment […] a device for holding a prisoner in a very uncomfortable position.[21]

[21] 'Little ease', *OED*, accessed 2 July 2019. Also synonymous with 'scavenger's daughter', 'an instrument of torture' which similarly 'compressed the body' into painful contortions – an 'engyne devysed by Mr Skavington, sometyme Lieutenant of the Tower, called Skavingtons daughters, or Little Ease'. 'Scavenger's Daughter', *OED*, accessed 8 July 2019.

The cell's paltry dimensions are such that the prisoner is condemned to suffer a prolonged agony in a cramped and debilitating position. This 'little ease' is not unlike the fate of factory-farmed hens, whose enforced imprisonment in cages too small to turn around in or freely move their bodies, results in the birds having to stamp over their cell-mates to reach food and fester in their own excreta.[22] The fact that du Maurier's narrator describes her own sense of bodily entrapment in the presence of the tortured avian victim aligns her sense of imprisonment with that of the bird. For du Maurier's protagonist, 'perception must pace within an iron cage'.[23] Du Maurier heightens the ensuing discord that follows her protagonist's feminist-vegetarian consciousness by juxtaposing the narrator's sleepless night with her husband's blissful ignorance – 'It was all very well for Stephen. He had slept' (C, 257). In response to this, the narrator declares 'I glanced with a queasy stomach at the egg-yolk […] the smell of brewing eggs was nauseous' (C, 257) – an avian vegetarian interlude that articulates the existential disturbance that accompanies her newly acquired consciousness to oppression.

The reference to 'little ease', with its connotations of suffering and pain inflicted on fellow human beings, heightens her reaction of disgust upon confrontation with the fried bird body parts. By contrast, as Adams notes in relation to other similar literary vegetarian incidents, the female protagonist makes a point of describing her plant-based alternative: bread with honey. She 'washed in the stream – the saucepanned water in the kitchen amongst the oil did not tempt me' (C, 258). Her later assertion, that 'I forgot the cupboard where I had spent the night, and the oily eggs' (C, 258-59), is, in fact, an extended vegetarian interruption; claiming to forget the eggs, and their recurring association with entrapment, is, by its very presence in the text, an act of remembrance revealing their centrality in her consciousness. Shortly after her vegetarian breakfast, she makes another telling statement: 'it was only ten o'clock [in the morning] but I was hungry' (C, 261). Contrary to John Keats's misconception that 'vegetable food [is] unable to sustain anyone with "Real" hunger', the narrator's hunger might rather be read in terms of the Nietzschean consciousness

[22] Ordinarily, caged hens would provide the eggs consumed by the couple when at home. Karen Davis details the nausea-inducing cruelty inflicted upon hens. See Karen Davies, 'Thinking Like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection', in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 192-212, p. 205. See footnote 27 regarding the development of factory farming in the 1950s.
[23] Carolyn Heilbrun and Catherine Stimpson, 'Theories of Feminist Criticism: A Dialogue', in *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory*, ed. Josephine Donovan, 2nd edn (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), pp. 61-73, p. 68.

of truth that 'keeps [her] in perpetual hunger'.[24] Later, she is 'quickly sick into a hole' (C, 265).

The fact that du Maurier employs the bird egg in particular as a catalyst for articulating Nietzschean nausea cannot be divorced from its symbolic status as the reproductive matter of a fellow female living being. Stephen's wife suffers nausea when faced with the prospect of eating the fried reproductive matter of a chicken. Disgust at the idea of frying the egg thus restores the absent referent of the bird. Her visceral reaction affects a protest against the consumption of a fellow objectified female being, which signals her awakening to the violence enacted by her patriarchal familiars – her animal hunting husband and 'brothers […] who shot [partridge]' (C, 244). As Adams's theorising implies, 'her body has taken an ethical stand […] she intuits her link with other animals [catalysing the] insight that meat eating and sexual oppression are linked' (*SPM*, 175). The elliptical nature of the tale – with an ontological instability that is heightened regarding the human-animal status of the murdered victim at the end – is reflected in the vegetarian interruption: the question of what is absent from her plate, or what she does not or will not eat, is as important as what is present or consumed. 'Elliptical' refers to that which is 'lacking a word or words which must be supplied to complete the sense'.[25] This ellipsis corresponds with Adams's observation that, often in literary vegetarian interruptions, 'the structure reiterates the theme' (*SPM*, 151), since the animal, and by association, the woman's subjectivity, are omitted in the way that the animal as absent referent is omitted. This plays on the other meaning of the word 'elliptical' relating to that which is egg-shaped, or oviform.[26] Having earlier stated the need for 'stock-taking for a woman who had not borne children' (C, 242) – a fact that she seems to regret – this act of destruction involving the reproductive matter of the bird is significant. Her husband's insistence that she eats the eggs – 'better get something inside you' (C, 157) – is therefore particularly sinister since it condemns her to participate in the eradication of (the birds') fertility.[27]

[24] Hyder Edward Rollins, ed., *The Keats Circle*, vol. II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 178. Gigante, 'Keats's Nausea', pp. 494-95.
[25] 'Elliptical', *OED*, accessed 8 July 2019.
[26] 'Elliptical', *OED*, accessed 8 July 2019.
[27] Birds' eggs, the stolen reproductive body parts of female birds, are a prevailing presence in du Maurier's 1950s stories of women's malaise. Adams points out that, 'since World War Two, a new way of treating animals has evolved that is named in euphemistic terms, "factory farming"'. Evolving from a legacy of animal hunting followed by domestication – as 'providing animals with the trappings of care and security while planning their execution' – she points out that 'for several decades in the mid-twentieth century, animalized protein [such as the flesh of dead nonhuman animals] and feminized protein [such as cows' milk and birds' eggs] made up two out of the four basic food groups [and this

Amongst a posse of jeering male oppressors, one of which the narrator recalls 'feigning the posture of one holding a gun, he said, "Bang … bang … bang …" rapidly [as] a chorus of approval came from his fellow-passengers' (C, 258), the narrator revisits the nauseating impact of the culture of cruelty in which she finds herself. At this point, the overarching theme of the story collection is brought into sharp focus – *The Breaking Point* – 'it was as though our last link with sanity had snapped' (C, 258). Now, animal cruelty is figured as a loss of sanity, realising the narrator's charge, at the beginning of the tale, that Stephen's obsession with hunting 'isn't balanced' (C, 245). This reverses the tradition of depicting women who rebel against confinement, such as Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*, as 'mad'. The narrator's visceral reactions to the culture of male violence, symbolised by her physical revulsion at the fried female bird's body parts, is central to the sense of male derangement which surrounds her. In Nietzschean terms, 'now no comfort avails any more'.[28] Her nausea is an expression of the devastating awareness of the nature of man. Far from the matrifocal, predominantly vegetarian pre-Zeus Greek period she earlier recalls, consciousness of an early 1950s culture dominated by male violence 'everywhere [evinces] the horror or absurdity of existence'.[29]

In the prefatory 'Note' to the short story collection to which 'The Chamois' and 'The Blue Lenses' belong, du Maurier outlines the centrality of this moment of clarity when the narrator registers the nature of human violence inflicted upon nonhuman animals. In her heightened consciousness, she becomes 'aware of the same things differently':[30]

> there comes a moment in the life of every individual when reality must be faced. When this happens, it is as though a link between emotion and reason is stretched to the limit of endurance, and sometimes snaps. In this collection of stories, men, women, children and a nation are brought to the breaking-point.[31]

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leads to] the increasing dependence of a culture on the structure of the absent referent'. Although this period pre-dates the exposure of the extent of the cruelty inflicted upon animals within the industry, du Maurier's vegetarian interludes nonetheless anticipate later objections to the violence inflicted upon industrialised animals. In environments in which eggs are consumed, du Maurier's narrating protagonist's vegetarian interruption draws attention to its incongruousness, restoring the absent referent. See Adams, *SPM*, pp. 113-14.

[28] Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, p. 60.

[29] Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, p. 60. Du Maurier's narrator muses on a time when 'the Greeks paid tribute to Gaia before the birth of Zeus' (C, 252). Marilyn French details evidence of pre-patriarchal, 'matrifocal' early humans in *Beyond Power: On Women, Men, and Morals* (New York: Summit Books, 1985), p. 27.

[30] Sandra Lee Bartky, 'Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness', *Social Theory and Practice*, 3 (1975), pp. 425-39, p. 429.

[31] Du Maurier, 'Note', *Breaking Point*, p. i.

This perception, or consciousness, is countered by her husband's lack thereof. Upon enquiring whether she is feeling sick, but without any notion of what has brought it on, the narrator laments, 'I could only conclude that, as always, my husband lacked perception' (C, 250). This recalls the similarly witless husbands, Edgar Linton of *Wuthering Heights* (1848) and Harry St Columb of *Frenchman's Creek* (1941).[32]

Once the process of feminist-vegetarian consciousness – 'seeing the same things differently' – is set in motion, and the narrator liberates herself from complicity in avian exploitation, she gains a shift in perspective that enables a new-found sense of power: 'now that I could breathe the sharp air and glimpse the great sky […] the unknown did not seem to hold much danger' (C, 257).[33] But this first stage of consciousness, allowing her to see the product of animal exploitation on her plate for what it really is, and thereby confront the nature of its perpetrators, is thwarted by her proximity to male violence. With her hunting husband's binoculars poised on his animal victim, she finds that her ability to articulate her new-found consciousness is stifled by entrenched behaviour patterns adapted by the victim in order to succeed in a patriarchal hierarchy of power: 'I knew better than to talk' (C, 259). This failure to speak about clearly perceived injustices is a common feature of literature in this period as acknowledged by Adams and Bartky and explored by du Maurier. This post-consciousness complicity is the result of what Bartky details as the positioning of the enlightened protagonist in a complex and conflicted moral minefield enforced by the need to negotiate from a position of weakness.

As the narrator embarks on the hunt with her husband, she gains a heightened sensitivity to nonhuman animals' disregard for the human, and the presence of birds is an important part of this. This inconsequentialness of humans in nature both destabilises man's assumed superiority whilst at the same time depicting his destructive rapacity. This is compounded by the narrator's sighting of an eagle 'lording it over our heads, dark and formidable' (C, 259). 'Lording' suggests a hierarchy of beings other than that of the humancentric which places 'man' above all. This eagle, although employed as a symbol conveying human-centred anxieties about human short-comings, is spared the fate of the sexually abused hen, or the chamois about to be shot, beheaded, and displayed in fragmented form as a symbol of man's violent

[32] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Toronto: Broadview, 2007). Daphne du Maurier, *Frenchman's Creek* (London: Virago, 2015).
[33] Bartky, 'Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness', p. 429.

domination, and thus flaunts nature's disregard for the human and undermines man's assumed superiority. It also restores the absent referent: this is a bird existing as she should – not as a 'domesticated' or 'farmed' commodity. With this vision of the 'free' bird comes the imagined freedom of the protagonist from the confines of her own entrapment. The narrator identifies malaise and the inner conflict arising from her newly developed feminist consciousness – 'the height, the solitude, the bright sun and scent of the air, these were things I loved; why, then, my seed of melancholy? The sense, hard to describe, of mutability?' (C, 261). Her awareness of her 'mutability' (C, 261), her alternating repulsion at and complicity in animal exploitation, is itself a source of anxiety as 'the eagle still soared above me in the sky' (C, 261). This haunting image of the bird confronts the human inability to transcend its own loathsomeness while it ravages its fellow living beings.

As she 'watched the eagle' (C, 262), this heightened sensitivity to the lived experience of nonhuman animals restores the absent referent and blurs the species boundaries necessary to man's assumed superiority. Hearing her husband's first shot at the chamois in the distance, she notes 'the dogs heard it too. They cocked their heads and stared. The goats rustled in the scrub, surprised, and one […] bleated his disapproval' (C, 262). This recognition of the perspective of the individual goat, as opposed to the objectification of the pluralised goats, marks a shift in her perception and sensitivity to other perspectives. She responds to every utterance of the dogs around her, now snarling, now whining. Amidst this inter-species exchange, she begins to imagine herself as the vulnerable species: 'marked by the dogs' (C, 262), she admits 'I did not fancy being torn to pieces' (C, 262). She implicitly aligns herself with the disembodied bird. Next moment, she 'crawled through the scrub' (C, 263), suggesting, by her altered physicality, a blurring of species boundaries also evoking Bertha Rochester's crawling 'on all fours' (*JE*, 327) in Jane Eyre's animalising description of her antecedent. Amid this immersive, beyond human-species encounter, du Maurier's narrator experiences euphoria and imagines independence from her husband and the other violent male figures she encounters. She recalls 'I could see no footprints in the snow […] I was at the summit of my world […] My husband was not with me, nor anyone at all, not even the eagle that had soared above at midday' (C, 263). A lack of footprints in the snow signals human absence from this, as yet, unravaged landscape; she attains her 'summit' only when separated from her husband and his band of animal hunters.

The phallocentricism at the core of male dominance and violence, symbolised by the phallic hunting weapon, is momentarily diminished by 'the loss of the rifle [which] had unmanned [Stephen]. All power, all confidence had gone, and with it, in some sickening way, his personality' (C, 265). This corroborates Adams's assertion that masculinity is predicated upon the assumption of dominance, and the enactment of violence, towards other beings. Her conceptualisation of the sexual politics of meat finds expression in du Maurier's story when this 'unmanning', in which the loss of the rifle is a symbolic castration, renders the chamois 'secure from human penetration' (C, 264). Du Maurier's likening of the hunt to a rape, explicit in the following interchange, resonates with Adams's recognition of the interconnections between rape and consumption.[34]

> 'Now do you understand?' said Stephen.
> […]
> 'Why I must shoot chamois.'
> He stood there, defenceless without his rifle […] he was somehow shrunken in stature.
> […]
> 'I dropped my rifle,' he said. 'I fired when I saw the brute, but it whistled at me instead of taking to its heels, and then the giddiness came, the giddiness that's part of fear.' (C, 265-66)

The chamois's rebuttal insults Stephen's sense of superiority, and when this power dynamic is upended, he is shaken to his core. On returning to the shack, neither Zus the guide, who is by now inextricable from the chamois in the eyes of the narrator and increasingly so for the reader, nor the dogs are attentive to their presence: 'He took no notice of us, and the dogs ignored us too' (C, 266). Here, du Maurier reiterates a sense of human inconsequentiality, which is at odds with Stephen's desperate attempt to maintain his position of power over the animal and his wife.

Stephen insists on his wife's muteness on the matter of his reduced 'manliness' and consequent re-positioning in the hierarchy of beings: 'You'll never tell anyone, will you?' (C, 266). Her response – 'of course I won't say anything' (C, 266) – seals her entrapment despite her new feminist-vegetarian perception. Although she acquiesces and resumes her wifely role of food preparation, it is not a dead bird that

[34] See Adams, *SPM,* pp. 81-82, for her approximation of 'being raped/violated/entered' to being consumed, subjected to 'a knife, implemental violence'. The poking and prodding of the female bird's reproductive organ with spatula, whisk, knife, etc., necessary to its preparation for human consumption, is thus a further rape.

she prepares but a meal of beans, which, she interjects, 'have never tasted more delicious' (C, 266). During this further vegetarian moment, Stephen asserts that he will go and find his rifle tomorrow, to which his wife responds: 'You'll never find it' (C, 267). Her vegetarian consciousness allows her to see her once attractive husband in a new light: she wonders how he will find it, 'knowing his limitations as I did now' (C, 267). While her vegetarian stance signifies a revolt against her husband's speciesist violence, her narration of the tale is testament to her broken silence regarding the frailty of her husband's 'masculinity', predicated as it is on the mass murder of other animals.

The narrator's subsequent dream, in which a 'stripped' (C, 267) Zus carries her in his arms, is at once sexually charged and species boundary-blurring: she recounts, 'I put out my hands to feel the shock of hair. It rose from his head like a black crest' (C, 268). She wakes to a 'swelling' (C, 268) moon and, 'silhouetted on the skyline […] stood a chamois buck' (C, 268). The goatherd 'has his lair. It's primitive' (C, 257), and he is referred to as 'our beast of burden' (C, 259). Du Maurier's focus on the power of Zus's (or the chamois's) gaze over the narrator suggests that Animal Magnetism is at work – a phenomenon which, in the nineteenth century, was understood to have 'threatened accepted boundaries between humans and other animals'.[35] With further species boundary-blurring implications, the chamois becomes the husband's 'bête noire', and Zus becomes the narrator's: 'a person or thing that is the bane of a person or his life; an insufferable person or thing; an object of aversion'.[36] In French literature, the bête noire often appears in the form of a 'black beast'; in du Maurier's tale, the chamois, who the narrator increasingly confuses with Zus, is described as 'the black stranger' (C, 241). The chamois and Zus's connection to the narrator's awakened sexuality is emphasised by a sexually charged language that details the mating habits of the chamois and 'the chemical change in his blood [that] drives him to the doe' (C, 241). This is mirrored by a recurring 'hissing' (C, 253) – a kind of 'cat call' that the narrator ambiguously associates with both Zus and the

[35] Kari Weil (Wesleyan University): 'Animal Magnetism and Moral Dressage: Horses and Their Humans in Nineteenth-Century France', Lecture given at the international conference, 'The Human-Animal Line: Interdisciplinary Approaches', CEFRES Prague. Youtube clip published 27 February 2017, accessed 6 July 2019.

[36] 'Bête noire', *OED*, accessed 6 July 2019. A more familiar example of the bête noire is found in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Green Tea' (1872), another short story that details the unsettling effects on a human similarly haunted by the presence of a 'bestial form' who mirrors back the human's behaviour whilst unsettling him with an unrelenting gaze. An existential crisis likewise ensues for Le Fanu's protagonist. See Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Green Tea', *In a Glass Darkly* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), pp. 12 and 19.

chamois. It is at this stage that the chamois and the goatherd become interchangeable and finally indistinguishable. Upon throwing off his burnous, she is struck by his 'shock of black hair' (C, 265); mesmerised by Zus's sexually charged species boundary-blurring, the narrator herself 'crawled' on all fours (C, 265).

That morning, she reflects that her dream 'was a curious thing' (C, 268), but her acquiescence in a suppressed sexuality is signalled in the conspicuously carnivorous breakfast that follows – 'spread cheese over pork-ham' (C, 268) – as, self-defeating, she admits that her and her husband are 'human after all, weak like the rest' (C, 268). Despite her vegetarian moment of heightened consciousness, she opts for complicity in a system that renders wives mute and birds dead. Negated, she concedes: 'I'll come with you today, when you look for your rifle' (C, 268). In doing so, she is reinstating the animal annihilator, who declares that there is 'no mist about, the bugbear of all stalkers' (C, 268). The 'mist' (C, 268) to which Stephen refers can be read as a revival of the patriarchal perspective that deems feminist consciousness not as 'seeing the same things differently', but as seeing the same things with a confused and muddied vision, confirming what Auerbach describes as 'a victim of a culture eager to patronize women and to dilute what they say and see'.[37] Notwithstanding this, it is, as it turns out, that very 'mist' of feminist consciousness – that cognitive dissonance – that constitutes the real 'bugbear of all stalkers' (C, 286). The tale's ending is all the more chilling because the narrator's complicity and participation in a violent, murderous culture occurs despite her new vision. The narrator and her husband's murder of the chamois (and Zus) is a symbolic act of killing, or repressing, her newly awakened sexuality. When she co-murders her bête noire, she condemns herself to a marriage in which she must endure, with full consciousness, the reality that her husband's 'masculinity' is predicated upon predatory destruction. To an extent, the narrator gains a new agency in her relationship with Stephen since she is proactive in her decision to kill the 'beast of burden' that haunts her dreams. However, the confusion over the chamois-Zus figure that persists even after the couple have murdered him is part of the elliptical nature of the tale, suggesting that a willed-for 'mist' shrouds the cognitive dissonance which inevitably accompanies feminist consciousness.

[37] Auerbach, *Haunted Heiress*, p. 126. This sentiment dates back to Aristotle's deeming that women's thinking is 'inconclusive'. See Carol J. Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (New York: Lantern Books, 2015, p. 10. First published in 1995. This distortion of women's knowingness is a thematic concern that du Maurier repeatedly returns to in her fiction.

Du Maurier typically refuses to provide a denouement of feminist-vegetarian utopia. Her protagonist admits 'I wanted to stalk with him. This was new emotion, something I could not explain. We ate our [carnivorous] breakfast' (C, 268). As Betty Friedan observes, disenfranchised wives perpetuate their own malaise by choosing to comply with patriarchal culture for the sake of marital harmony rather than dealing with the inevitable conflict that accompanies truth-telling.[38] In the end, du Maurier's housewife is no different as she sets off to hunt with her husband: 'life seemed suddenly very good […] There was none of that strain that had been with us yesterday' (*C*, 269). Indeed, she 'put it down to sleeping well, to the new bond shared, and to the absence of the goatherd Jesus' (*C,* 269). The suppression of her feminist-vegetarian consciousness allows her to circumvent the awkwardness of having to speak against the dominant and the violent, the sleepless nights, the jeopardised personal relationships, and the bewildering confrontation with one's suppressed sexuality and proximity to nonhuman animals on a hierarchy of beings.

As with other literary avian-related entanglements considered in this thesis, 'so profound a challenge to the status quo seems too much to sustain' (*SPM*, 175). The dominance of violent patriarchal culture is such that, rather than articulate the profound connections that she has made between her own and other animals' victimhood and the predatory masculinity that dominates them, she finds that she has become more deeply complicit in the acts that she now identifies as abhorrent. Her participation in the final hunt of the tale, during which the chamois-goatherd is shot to death, is threefold: she becomes complicit in a culture of violence; she eradicates her capacity to restore the absent referent; and she perpetuates her shared status with the egg-laying bird as a sexually oppressed and objectified being, whose freedom to determine her own life and assert her preferences is obliterated. Despite her vegetarian moment of insight, the narrator becomes fully complicit in the hunt, willing her husband to kill the chamois, and confesses that this brings her closer to him. Not unlike the unnamed narrator of *Rebecca*, another tale of female complicity in male murder, she chooses to acquiesce with her psychologically unstable, murdering husband rather than instigate a dialogue relating to 'the question of the animal' that she attempts to articulate at the commencement of their relationship.[39] Her recognition of the need to restore the absent

[38] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 2010). Henceforward *FM*.

[39] 'The question of the animal', a phrase that recalls 'the woman question' of the nineteenth century, refers 'to the way in which philosophers have traditionally written about animals in reductive and essentialist terms'. See Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). p. 4. Jacques Derrida employs the phrase to

referent, emblematised by her refusal to consume the bird's eggs, is overridden by the dominating culture from which she has no prospect of disentangling herself.

Du Maurier's fictional world makes known its critique of pervasive and persistent male dominance and violence, and its refusal to provide a feminist utopian denouement makes a powerful statement about its insidiousness. Having her women protagonists seemingly 'choose' to endure marriage to murderers makes a bold statement on the prevalence of and disturbing if ambivalent attractions to a predatory, violent culture. Despite the feminist-vegetarian consciousness embedded within this short story, the established hierarchies of beings between men and women, and humans and other animals, are shown, in the end, to be far too deeply entrenched to defy. Although the end of the tale sees the restoration of the system that allows the referent to remain absent, the fact that both husband and wife are mutually complicit in the murder of the chamois-Zus is, on the part of du Maurier, a refusal to fabricate a fantasy of resolved intersectional oppression, of which women themselves are complicit, that continues to persist beyond her own lifetime.

'The Blue Lenses'

> [Marda West] awoke, not to the sanity she had hoped for, but to lunch.
> […]
> 'This test on my eyes,' said the patient, uncovering the boiled chicken on her plate. 'I don't see the point of it […] What is the object?'
> 'I'm sorry, Mrs West, [said the nurse] 'Did you tell Nurse Brand you couldn't see properly yet?'
> 'It's not that I can't see,' replied Marda West, 'I see perfectly well. […] I'm about to eat boiled chicken.' (BL, 56-57)

The presence of a dead bird is integral to Marda West's adjustment to her newly acquired 'clarity' of vision. This vegetarian interruption – she refuses to eat the bird – is a crucial element in her development from a 'subdued' (BL, 51) 'prisoner' (BL, 52) to a dissenter who newly-perceives her coercive husband as a bird of prey. Marda, recovering from an operation to rectify her vision, is awakened to uncomfortable truths

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both critique the notion of 'the animal' in the Western speciesist philosophical tradition and to extend thinking about nonhuman animals as individuals with specific, rather than pluralised, experiences. See Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mellat, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008). In Calarco's interpretation of Derrida, which recalls du Maurier's narrator's encounter with the dead chamois, 'the question of the animal' is 'a question deriving from an animal whom I face and by whom I am faced and who calls my mode of existence into question'. See Calarco, *Zoographies*, p. 5.

about her victimised status and the intentions of those she is accustomed to trust. Due to a medical blunder, the temporary 'blue lenses' that Marda is fitted with during her convalescence in a private nursing home allow her to identify those around her as having the heads of nonhuman animals, which reveal to her the duplicitous natures of her seemingly benevolent carers and husband. Anxiety increases when it transpires that she is the victim of a conspiracy, which involves her vulture-headed husband, thought to be conducting an affair with the snake-headed nurse, attempting to coerce her into signing a document that will make him director of her trust fund in the likely event that 'the operation was not successful' (BL, 70). Once it is uncovered that Marda's lenses have been touching an optic nerve, the supernatural 'animality' of those around her is explained; her painful insights seem to be once again subdued so that her life of resignation can resume. That is, until she looks in the mirror and discovers that she herself has the 'meek, already bowed' (BL, 82) head of a doe, 'wary before sacrifice' (BL, 82).

'The Blue Lenses' follows the du Maurian tradition of placing the protagonist in the realm of the ontologically unstable and destabilising to initiate an altered, often terrifying, view of his or her 'reality'.[40] The 'hypervision' (BL, 66) that Marda gains when the temporary 'blue lenses' are fitted endows her with a heightened consciousness of the corruption of institutions and this initiates a nihilistic response to their seeming benevolence and authority. Du Maurier's use of the avian vegetarian interruption to mobilise Marda's feminist consciousness, and resulting nausea, is this time placed within the context of the medicalisation of the female mind and body, and its subjection to other patriarchal institutions, such as marriage and the law. This state of affairs is made particularly pertinent for the twenty-first-century reader with insights into the practices of animal experimentation that were developed contemporaneously to du Maurier's writing of *The Breaking Point* since Marda's experimented-upon status mirrors that of the objectified nonhuman animal. In this section, I examine the significance of Marda's vegetarian incident in the context of her newly acquired feminist consciousness. To do this, I focus on three aspects of the tale: Marda's altered

[40] Other notable examples, in the short fiction alone, in which characters are confronted with the disconcerting nature of their existence through a disturbing heightened consciousness, occur in 'Fairy Tale', 'Split Second', 'The Chamois', 'The Pool', and 'Don't Look Now'. See du Maurier, 'Split Second', *Rendezvous*. Existential disorientation is also a theme prevalent in the long fiction – *Rebecca* (1938), *The Scapegoat* (1957), and *The Flight of the Falcon* (1965) are the most obvious examples of this, but the theme proves to be an important concern for du Maurier throughout her novels. See Daphne du Maurier, *The Scapegoat* (London: Virago, 2004), and Daphne du Maurier, *The Flight of the Flacon* (London: Virago, 2005). The use of birds' eggs and flesh as a trope to articulate these issues can be found in all but one of these works.

vision as a metaphor for a feminist consciousness; the use of bird consumption-related nausea to articulate the impact of this heightened consciousness; and the Rochester-like presentation of the bird of prey husband, at once threatening and desirable.

From the outset, Marda experiences the 'anonymity', 'discontent' (BL, 46), 'dull' (BL, 50), 'negative feeling', and insomnia, despite a 'great sense of fatigue' (BL, 44), that characterises Friedan's conception of the 'the problem that has no name' (*FM*, 5) in *The Feminine Mystique*, published four years before du Maurier's *Breaking Point* collection. Friedan's conception of 'the problem that has no name', experienced by middle-class Western women in the 1950s, is characterised by 'a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning' (*FM*, 5), 'a strange feeling of desperation' (*FM*, 10), 'this terrible tiredness' (*FM*, 19): the 'housewife's fatigue [that] took so many women to doctors in the 1950s' (*FM*, 19). One woman's testimony infers a connection between the dissatisfied housewife's tendency to fall prey to medical exploitation and 'scientific' animal experimentation when she sardonically insists that 'by noon I'm ready for a padded cell […] the American housewife is once again trapped in a squirrel cage' (*FM*, 17). Marda's initial, self-imposed 'feminine virtue' – her 'patience' (BL, 44) , 'subterfuge' [and] pretence that she did not mind and was content' (BL, 44-45), since 'it would be offensive to complain' (BL, 46) – are also symptoms of 'the problem that has no name'.[41] All the while, Marda is 'fearful of pain and blindness', of being 'subdued' (BL, 51), and asks the revealing question: 'What if I never see again?' (BL, 45). Contrary to her husband and doctors' intentions to nullify her, the operation accidentally brings about an existential clear-sightedness – 'the sudden shock of being able to see' (BL, 68) – which gives way to nausea.

The process of seeing clearly is described as a painful transition from 'peaceful darkness' (BL, 56), 'dim' (BL, 46) 'shadow' (BL, 51), 'mist' (BL, 51), and 'fog' (BL, 51), to a realisation that 'all was in focus now' (BL, 51). This echoes the fog of 'The Chamois'. Wearing the 'blue lenses', Marda can experience her existence 'more clearly than ever before' (BL, 44). The impact of this 'hypervision' (BL, 66) is one of horror and disgust; the nausea she experiences, ostensibly induced by her proximity to the carcass of the chicken presented to her for lunch, is the manifestation of repulsion to a now starkly perceived absurd and terrifying reality. With her clear-sightedness, the prospect of consuming a murdered bird is symptomatic of the dis*ease* she feels towards, and detects, in the people and institutions she has placed her trust in. Upon

[41] Friedan claims to encounter women who feel that their dissatisfaction is shameful and is oftentimes dismissed as ungrateful for the privileged life they lead. See Friedan, *FM*, pp. 8 and 13.

voicing her criticisms of the medical staff, Marda is urged by the nurse to comply and 'eat your chicken' (BL, 57). Marda considers that she is subject to 'trickery' (BL, 58), 'deception' (BL, 55), 'some gigantic plot' (BL, 61), and considers that there 'could […] be a conspiracy amongst them to drive her mad' (BL, 58). At this point, nausea overwhelms her and induces rejection: 'sick at heart […] she had no further appetite and pushed away her plate, the rest of the chicken untasted' (BL, 58-59). This non-compliance is perceived as 'madness' by the staff. Marda, who makes an animal noise at the nurse, is 'now in disgrace' (BL, 59); 'the patient, by confronting them, had committed a breach of etiquette' (BL, 55) that demands docility.

As mentioned in chapter two, Giuliana Giobbi reads the literary rejection of food consumption as a 'response of the – female – individual to the frustration caused by external reality [and is thus] an instrument of rebellion'.[42] Giobbi uses the term 'anorexic interval', but the avian specificity of du Maurier's scenes of female food rejection is particularly revealing and speaks also to Adams's notion of the vegetarian 'interruption' or 'incident' (*SPM*, 181). Giobbi's use of the caged bird metaphor to characterise a heroine's 'imprisoning walls of bourgeois patriarchy' reveals that she implicitly recognises the interconnections between women and birds, and renders du Maurier's repeated avian-vegetarian narrative interruptions particularly pertinent to this approach.[43] In light of these critical frameworks, Marda's avian vegetarian stance can be read as a protest against complicity in the corrupt institutions she now perceives. From a twenty-first-century ecofeminist perspective, the avian specificity of her protest signifies her shared exploitation with the once-living bird on her plate and her refusal to perpetuate this interconnected oppression. Her reaction to the bird meal enforced upon her is a visceral reaction to the disgust she feels with this newly gained heightened consciousness:

> Marda West *felt sickness rise in her stomach, choking her, and suddenly physical reaction proved too strong*. She turned away, but as she did so the steady hands of the nurse gripped her, she suffered herself to be led to her bed, she was lying down, eyes closed, the *nausea* passing.
>
> […]
>
> *Fear made her open her eyes*, but directly she did so *the sickness gripped her again* […] She put her hand over her mouth to stifle her cry.
>
> […]

[42] Giuliana Giobbi, '"No bread will feed my hungry soul": Anorexic Heroines in Female Fiction – From the Example of Emily Brontë as mirrored by Anita Brookner, Gianna Schelotto, and Alessandra Arachi', *European Studies*, 27 (1997), pp. 73-92, pp. 75-76.

[43] Giobbi, 'Anorexic Heroines', p. 88. Giobbi refers to 'the cage of conventions' and 'the steel cage'. See Giobbi, 'Anorexic Heroines', pp. 81 and 89.

> ‘Something has turned you *very sick*,’ [the nurse] said. ‘It can’t be the sedative. You’ve had it before. What was the dinner this evening?’
>
> […]
>
> ‘Lie still, dear, and don’t upset yourself.’
>
> […] Marda West, disobeying instructions, slipped from her bed and seized the first weapon that came to her hand […] *Revulsion was too great*. She must defend herself […] now she was certain that what was happening was real, was true. Some evil force encompassed the nursing-home and its inhabitants, the Matron, the nurses, the visiting doctors, her surgeon – they were all caught up in it, they were all partners in some gigantic crime […] and she, Marda West, was one of the pawns; in some way they were using her as an instrument. (BL, 63-65, my italics)

In this passage, Marda’s revulsion at the chicken and revulsion at her sense of entrapment in the nursing home become indistinguishable. The ‘sickness [that] gripped her’ (BL, 44) mirrors the grip of the nurse that she ‘suffered herself’ (BL, 44) to be subjected to. Her affliction intensifies when the staff continue to dismiss and infantilise her. The nausea is at once a reaction to the prospect of consuming the dead chicken and the horror and absurdity that she now sees clearly: ‘fear made her open her eyes, but directly she did so the sickness gripped her again’ (BL, 64). Her detection of ‘some great crime’ (BL, 44) against her, and her visceral reaction to the prospect of eating the bird, are interconnected catalysts of her nausea. ‘The Blue Lenses’ charts Marda’s existential crisis, which intensifies as she is faced with the ‘grotesque and horrible’ (BL, 63) appearance of the reality she now perceives too clearly. As Carolyn Michaels Kerr recognises in the fiction of Jean Paul Sartre and Flannery O’Connor, the nauseated character in crisis is ‘repelled by a hideousness of “truth” they perceive, [they] find themselves in a world in which they do not count […] and become physically nauseated when faced with certain ontological truths’.[44] The feeling of ‘not count[ing]’ also characterises Marda’s experience as a patient and aligns her with nonhuman animals, such as the murdered bird on her plate, whose lives are likewise deemed to ‘not count’.

Marda’s fear that she is the victim of a sinister conspiracy is by no means unfounded or delusional. Her precarious position at the mercy of powerful and authoritative patriarchal institutions – marriage, the law, and the medical system –

[44] Carolyn Michaels Kerr, ‘Stomaching the Truth: Getting to the Roots of Nausea in the Works of Jean Paul Sartre and Flannery O’Connor’, *Christianity and Literature*, 60 (2010), pp. 67-96, p. 74. In his novel, *Nausea* (1938), Sartre’s protagonist, Antoine Roquentin, ‘experiences the absurdity of existence through the bodily sensation of nausea. The nausea begins as a particular revulsion to physical objects and other people, leading to feelings of disgust and isolation’. Kerr, ‘Stomaching the Truth’, p. 68. See Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (London: Penguin, 1965).

carry grave implications for her identity, property, and psychological and physical well-being.[45] The notion of patriarchal institutions as sites of terror for women protagonists is important in this tale. This trio of institutions is implicated in the 'conspiracy' that Marda gains an acute consciousness of – 'an organization of devils, of liars' (BL, 68). She recognises that the medical institution, a site in which vulnerable members of society have historically been exposed to exploitation, figures powerfully at the centre of this project: 'Greaves, the surgeon, was in this too, very naturally. He had a high place in the conspiracy' (BL, 71). The sense that her presence in the hospital is not entirely of her own agency is emphasised by the language of entrapment and the use of medication to still protestation: 'the room assigned to her, where she still lay, [was] like a wooden box built only to entrap' (BL, 46); she is 'a captive' (BL, 49), drugged with 'a sedative' (BL, 56).

The symptoms that Marda develops in the nursing home – species boundary-blurring 'hallucinations', descent into 'madness', and 'unfeminine' provocations towards the staff – characterise what Elaine Showalter outlines, in her study of 1985, as 'the female malady', the symptoms of which are, she asserts, 'a consequence of, rather than a deviation from, the traditional female role', the infantilising of women, and the mismanagement of the psychological afflictions this can give rise to.[46] 'The Blue Lenses' also evokes the 'rest cure' explored by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the short story, 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892) – Marda feels subjected to 'enforced rest and idleness' (BL, 47) and speculates on 'this dreadful plot, this conspiracy against her person or her sanity' (BL, 72).[47] Moreover, the tale evokes the medical treatments endured by supposedly 'mad' women of du Maurier's own generation, during the period between the 1930s to the 1950s, who were at risk of falling prey to particularly

[45] In her discussion of Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished, posthumously published novella, *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1797), Elaine Showalter could also be commenting upon Marda's circumstances: 'Wollstonecraft's heroine, Maria, has been forced into a madhouse by her abusive husband, who wants control of her fortune and liberty to pursue his sexual adventures. To Maria, the "mansion of despair" in which she is incarcerated becomes the symbol of all the man-made institutions, from marriage to the law, that confine women and drive them mad'. See Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987), p. 1. See Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary, A Fiction and The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, ed. Michelle Faubert (London: Broadview, 2012), p. 161.

[46] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, back cover.

[47] The 'rest cure' was 'a controversial treatment that [Dr Silas] Weir Mitchell pioneered', which advocated bed confinement, isolation, and strict abstention from intellectual pursuits. As a treatment ostensibly concerned with treating women's nervous exhaustion, it more often than not contributed to further psychological breakdown. Treatment also involved 'overfeeding on a diet rich in dairy produce'. Since dairy produce is obtained through female reproductive exploitation, its emphasis as the main proponent of the 'cure's' dietary recommendations supports Adams's premise that women and animals share an interconnected exploitation. See Maggie O'Farrell, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Selected Writings* (London: Virago, 2010), p. x.

invasive surgical procedures such that the nerves were altered.[48] In du Maurier's tale, it emerges that the operation to which Marda has been subjected to has been carried out on other women before her – 'scores of them' (BL, 73).

Marda is given no real understanding of the nature of the operation she has undergone – 'Mr Greaves tried to explain. Something about a nerve' (BL, 79). The surgeon's attempt to 'explain' (BL, 79) is clearly not intended to enlighten his patient. His evasiveness perpetuates the idea that he is the keeper of knowledge and power; his patient is more easily managed if kept in a state of puerility. This 'patient narrative' works 'to undermine the myth of the objective, heroic scientist'.[49] The fatal incompetency of the surgeon's practice is revealed to the reader but suppressed in the world of the tale: 'Nurse Ansel made a face towards the door. "He doesn't know himself," she whispered, "and he's not going to say either […] I wonder it didn't kill you."' (BL, 79). The operation's initial failure suggests that its purpose is not to equip Marda with a feminist consciousness. The irony of the surgeon's promise – that Marda will 'see […] more clearly than ever' (BL, 44) after the operation – is heightened by the fact that his own incompetent management of the female body, and lack of understanding of 'the problem that has no name', could not possibly encompass any notion of the feminist consciousness that he unwittingly unleashes. The clandestine acknowledgement of the surgeon's mistake ensures that his 'authority' and 'knowledge' go unchallenged. Instead, the nurse, a woman complicit in the patriarchal 'conspiracy' (BL, 58), urges Marda: 'Don't think about it' (BL, 79). In writing this tale, du Maurier insists that her readers do 'think about it' (BL, 79), and gain awareness of such medical practices flourishing during the 1950s.[50]

Women are not the only living beings to fall prey to this dangerous mastery. Electroconvulsive treatment was developed through experimentation on slaughterhouse pigs before it was practiced on dissenting female humans during the period in which du Maurier was writing *The Breaking Point* collection.[51] In a

[48] As outlined by Showalter, these procedures, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and lobotomy, were considered ideal treatments for women, 'judged to have less need of their brains […] housewives can be seen as excellent candidates on these terms'. See Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 207.
[49] Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 69. Hendershot is not writing about 'The Blue Lenses'. Du Maurier's 'patient narrative' is not Marda's first-person account; whilst free indirect discourse intimately acquaints the reader with Marda's interiority, third-person narrative undoubtedly intensifies the sense that she is herself a looked-at victim not fully in control of her own story. Neither her sight, nor her voice are her own; neither her perception, nor her story are unmediated.
[50] Du Maurier revealed to her publisher, Victor Gollancz, that 'The Blue Lenses' 'reflected her view of the world'. See Margaret Forster, *Daphne du Maurier* (London: Arrow, 1994), p. 299.
[51] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 206.

particularly revealing double entendre in 'The Blue Lenses', a nurse announces, 'I'll give you your first shock' (BL, 46).[52] Marda's post-operation persona is that of an animal, 'wary before sacrifice' (BL, 82). The sacrificed nonhuman animal in 'The Chamois' is now a woman in 'The Blue Lenses', extending the interconnected victimhood of women and nonhuman animals. This lends a further meaning to the way in which the narrator of 'The Chamois' is connected to 'the doe' (C, 241), the female to the male chamois, the buck. In patient narratives, Showalter discovers testimonies of women who, prior to their own treatment, would hear 'the hoarse animal cries of the other comatose women, knowing they too would slobber or grunt […] become ugly or grotesque'.[53]

This connection between the medicalisation of women and animal experimentation is taken up by Adams in her study of 1995, *Neither Man nor Beast*. Adams's premise is particularly pertinent to 'The Blue Lenses' since she considers the importance of eyes and vision at play in the dynamic between the 'arrogant eye' of the scientist-psychiatrist-surgeon figure and the focus on animal eyes during experimentation: 'many experiments fetishize the animals' eyes in a way that guarantees that the animals will be injured or blinded and thus physically unable to return the experimenter's look'.[54] Similarly, Marda is compliant when her eyes are covered with bandages. Her sense that in 'some way they were to use her as an instrument' (BL, 65) aligns her with experimented-upon animals who are similarly coded as objects to be used rather than subjects who determine their own lives. Marda's treatment is remarkably evocative of a surgical procedure, pioneered in the decade leading up to the publication of 'The Blue Lenses', in which 'the surgeon or psychiatrist entered the patient's brain under the eyelid with an icepicklike [*sic*] instrument, severing the nerves connecting the cortex with the thalamus'.[55] Marda is aware that the surgeon 'did something to her eyelids […] Whatever he did was cold, like the slipping of ice' (BL, 50), during which the surgeon expects her to 'lie quietly' (BL, 50). Adams details experimentation practices involving the annihilation of

[52] This play on the word 'shock' appears five times in the tale: pp, 44; 46; 68; and twice on p. 73.
[53] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 206.
[54] Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, p. 41.
[55] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 208. The thalamus is related to the eye; it is 'the part of the brain at which a nerve originates or appears to originate. Now *spec.* the optic thalamus'. 'Thalamus', *OED*, accessed 2 August 2019. In a letter to Oriel Malet, dated 19 August 1957, du Maurier writes: 'Sometimes people – like in that fairytale – somehow get a piece of glass or ice in their eye which makes them *see* things wrong, and do strange things, and eventually they get into a sort of jam, and it's awfully difficult to get the piece of glass or ice out of their eye, and have them themselves again'. See Daphne du Maurier, *Letters from Menabilly: Portrait of a Friendship*, ed. Oriel Malet (New York: M. Evans, 1992), p. 99, original italics.

nonhuman animal's eyes, such as one in which a female monkey has her visual cortex removed, enacting a power dynamic in which 'the patriarchal subject [the scientist] is turning [female] subjects into nonseeing objects, thus robbing them of the notion of subjectivity and being'.[56] Adams further relates that 'once her visual cortex was destroyed, Helen [the monkey] was dependent on interaction with others to help her relearn what she saw [thus] imputing an ontological crisis that accompanies a disabled gaze – not seeing is not being'.[57]

In one sense, Marda's eye operation subverts the sightless fate imposed upon women and animals. Whereas women and nonhuman animals are typically rendered docile after undergoing operations in which they are necessarily medicated to 'dull feeling' (BL, 50) to the full extent of physical and psychological trauma, Marda's treatment initially enables her to see 'more clearly than ever before' (BL, 44). The elliptical nature of the tale allows for the possibility that Marda's 'hypervision' (BL, 66) might give way to self-determination. Initially, she recognises that 'for the first time she became aware of her own new latent power, the power to tell the truth from falsehood' (BL, 74). Marda is initially hopeful that her new-found consciousness will facilitate a less shadowy subjectivity: 'Instead of darkness, light. Instead of negation, life' (BL, 81). However, confronted at the close of the tale with her status as the 'timid', 'meek, already bowed' (BL, 82) woman-animal, this outcome is by no means certain. Knowing the fate of mid-twentieth-century women and nonhuman animals placed at the mercy of an exploitative scientific institution, the reader has no grounds for imagining that Marda, the doe, made aware of 'the utter hopelessness of her position […] her hell […] coldly conscious of the hatred and cruelty about her' (BL, 71), will overcome her oppressors. She certainly would not fare well if she entered the realm of Stephen and his wife in 'The Chamois'.

'The Blue Lenses', a tale of entrapment and species boundary-blurring 'animality' is haunted by the legacy of the nineteenth-century medicalisation of the female mind and body, and is evocative of the medical mistreatment of women contemporary to the tale. 'The Blue Lenses' also anticipates the burgeoning awareness, in the decades following the tale's publication, of the exploitation of nonhuman animals in the name of scientific research and mass food consumption. The

[56] Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, p. 42.
[57] Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, p. 42. Adams's discussion of the 'long-established Draize test [which] involves dripping [chemicals with unknown consequences] into rabbits' eyes', coincides with the scientific view that women and nonhuman animals' sight is disposable. See Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, p. 42.

implications of Marda's refusal to eat the dead chicken presented to her for lunch is particularly poignant in light of the fact that, contemporaneously to du Maurier's conception and publication of the tale, chickens were fitted 'with contact lenses to "calm" their "uneconomical" frenzy by destroying their vision'.[58] 'Picturing herself as helpless and maimed' (BL, 45), Marda ponders: 'even a prisoner […] could find comfort in his cell if he had been blinded first' (BL, 52). The practice of fitting the bird with lenses to quell 'frenzy by destroying their vision' is remarkably evocative of the second pair of (permanent) lenses that Marda is fitted with. When Mr Greaves, the surgeon, insists 'your troubles are over now. No pain and no confusion with these lenses' (BL, 77), the subtext seems to be as follows: once subdued – blinded to the full extent of your 'hell' (BL, 71) – you can better endure your life as a 'good girl' (BL, 80).

Marda admits that 'the revulsion of the night before was not so easily forgotten' (BL, 78), and realises that her husband, the surgeon, and those who collaborate with them could no longer 'fob her off with stories' (BL, 77). Now that she has seen 'the same things differently', they can hardly go unseen.[59] However, despite the heightened consciousness that she experiences with the first lenses, the second, permanent lenses seem to yield their intended results: patient resignation to the docile role she is assigned. After escaping the nursing home in which she is entrapped, Marda admits that 'she might as well be there as anywhere else' (BL, 77). Her temporary 'hypervision' (BL, 66) has engendered a sense of futility in attempting to challenge the pervasive forces she sees working against her. Sartre's nauseated character is likewise 'repelled by the physicality' of those around him and yearns to see the world with less clarity – he wishes things would 'exist less strongly'.[60] Marda longs to retreat back into her blinkered life, but du Maurier insists that to do so is to embody the objectified, experimented upon animal 'weary before sacrifice' (BL, 82). When a physician asks 'Patient fully restored?' (BL, 77), Marda's acquiescence, 'You're going to be happy now' (BL, 79) ensures her compliance – 'I promise' (BL, 79). But she also knows that, to maintain this outlook, 'lies would have to begin' (BL, 79). She thus agrees to play 'the happy housewife heroine' (*FM*, 21) since this seems to be the best way to avoid 'all strain' (BL, 78) with 'the anxiety and fear of the past months put away forever' (BL, 81).

[58] Karen Davies, 'Thinking Like a Chicken', p. 205.
[59] Bartky, 'Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness', p. 429.
[60] Kerr, 'Stomaching the Truth', p. 82. Sartre, *Nausea*, p. 183.

The final twist of the tale, in which Marda realises the extent of her animalised victimhood, confirms that she is bowed now, through complacency and failure to challenge the status quo. Like the hunted chamois in the tale examined above, Marda becomes a doe – a female chamois. The animal victim of 'The Chamois' graduates, in 'The Blue lenses', into a sacrificial women-doe. With its focus on the potential power of the gaze, 'The Blue Lenses' reconfigures the status of the woman as the 'to be looked at' object.[61] Du Maurier determines that, when the gaze is that of the female protagonist, what she gazes upon incites horror and disgust, inducing nausea. Although Marda willingly relinquishes her new-found powerful gaze, the ramifications of this willed subjection remain in sharp and brutal focus for the reader. There is a sense of power in the knowledge of her animalised victimhood – 'she had been given vision […] and for the first time she became aware of her own latent power, the power to tell the truth from falsehood, good from evil' (BL, 74). Marda has gained a form of consciousness even in her entrapment. But this knowledge is also her tragedy. As Carolyn Heilbrun and Catherine Stimpson have outlined,

> tragedy, for many women characters, springs from the fact that consciousness must outpace the possibilities of action, that perception must pace within an iron cage. Women writers, like Charlotte Brontë, have been very quick to see the limits of action open to, as well as permissible for, women. […] the tragic woman thinks and knows she cannot act. […] She sees her life more and more clearly. Ironically, the more clearly she sees, the more deeply she knows that her life cannot change for the better.[62]

For both Marda and the narrator of 'The Chamois', whose 'sight may be better after this than it's ever been before' (BL, 73), meaningful action remains outside of their reach. The act of writing or revealing her journey to consciousness harnesses a degree of agency even if this reinforces the fact that 'perception must pace within an iron cage'. Heilbrun and Stimpson acknowledge Charlotte Brontë's understanding of this bind; it is equally true to say that their outline of the tragic heroine's heightened, yet largely futile, perception also speaks with remarkable accuracy to the plights of du Maurier's heroines.

A Bird of Prey Husband

[61] Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 19.
[62] Heilbrun and Stimpson, 'Theories of Feminist Criticism', p. 68.

> no one was safe, the man a pace or two behind her was like Jim, another vulture. There were vultures on the pavement opposite. […]
>
> She turned and ran. She ran, bumping into them […] vultures […] The world was theirs, there was no human left. Seeing her run they turned and looked at her, they pointed, they screamed […] they gave chase, their footsteps followed her. Down Oxford Street she ran, pursued by them, the night all darkness and shadow, the light no longer with her, alone in an animal world. (BL, 76)

'The Blue Lenses' articulates dark fears and desires about predatory avian men. Marda's presentation as a vulnerable animal is compounded by her husband's metamorphosis into the bird of prey most potent in the Gothic imagination: the vulture.[63] In nature, vultures subsist on the rotting carcasses of mammals.[64] This avian scavenger has thus become synonymous with 'a person of a vile and rapacious disposition'.[65] In literature, the bird has come to represent 'something which preys upon a person, the mind, etc., after the manner of a vulture; *esp.* a consuming or torturing passion'.[66] Thus, the vulture is at once a menacing figure, an agent of terror, and a figurative representation of psychological torment. Du Maurier's use of the vulture encompasses all of these aspects; Marda's scavenging bird of prey husband, Jim, evinces the terror lurking within the heterosexual relationship, as well as broader patriarchal institutions, in which women are assigned a social and legal position of weakness.

The power dynamic between the avian Jane Eyre and the eagle-Edward Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is reconfigured in du Maurier's chilling tale.[67] My analysis of the presentation of the bird of prey husband in 'The Blue Lenses' will illustrate the ways in which du Maurier reworks the earlier avian gendered

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[63] Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart' (1843), for example, also a short story about heightened consciousness to a hellish reality, presents a protagonist who is psychologically tormented by a menacing, vulture-like man: 'I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture […] Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold'. See Poe, 'The Tell-Tale Heart', *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (Edison: Castle Books, 2002), p. 199.

[64] RSPB, <www.rspb.org.uk>, accessed 8 August 2019.

[65] 'Vulture', *OED*, accessed 8 August 2019. Corresponding with issues raised in 'The Blue Lenses', literary examples of the vulture quoted in the *OED* reveal a connection to a sinister patriarchy ('vultures amongst men'), legal and financial exploitation ('vultures that always hover over fortunes'), and perverse medical associations ('Before midnight I was in high fever; they sent for the vultures of physic—I was bled copiously').

[66] 'Vulture', *OED*, accessed 8 August 2019. Since Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, the literary vulture has remained synonymous with a tortured mind afflicted by both internal and external forces: 'the gnawing vulture of thy minde' speaks of the psychological torment experienced by a father whose daughter, the Ovidian, Philomela-like Lavinia, is raped and tortured. See William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), v. ii. 31, p. 254.

[67] Du Maurier was working on the 'The Blue Lenses' during a period of renewed interest in the life and works of the Brontës. See du Maurier, *Letters*, pp. 40-41.

dynamic. What emerges in the later writer's rendering is a less optimistic envisioning of the potentialities of women's lives and relationships between the sexes during the mid-twentieth century than that imagined by Brontë a century earlier. Jane Eyre's avian idyll, in which the sky-lark and the eagle co-habit with seeming mutual contentment, is transformed, in du Maurier's 1950s re-imagining, into a terrifying nightmare void of refuge.

The eagle and the vulture, both birds of prey, belong to the same family; the falcon, also a bird of prey, belongs to the same avian order.[68] When Jane is a dependent, vulnerable to being lured into a bigamous marriage, Rochester is perceived as 'a fierce falcon' (*JE*, 215). At this point, Jane stands 'in peril [of] his full falcon-eye flashing' (*JE*, 305). Once Jane has obtained a level of independence later in the novel, Rochester's avian fierceness is diminished. Although invariably troublingly bird-like – 'his hair was still raven-black' (*JE*, 479) and 'reminds [Jane] of eagles' feathers' (*JE*, 485) – Jane observes at the novel's close

> that [he] looked desperate and brooding – that [he] reminded me of some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson. (*JE*, 479)

Rochester's bird qualities demarcate him as 'mad, bad', and 'dangerous to approach' (*JE*, 479), but the menace expressed in his 'wild' (*JE*, 479) avian predatory persona, necessary to his enduring desirability, is now tempered by both Jane's newfound autonomy and Rochester's compromised independence and sight.[69] Rochester now shares Jane's earlier avian characterisation: the wronged and fettered caged bird. Whereas Brontë's Rochester intermittently exhibits features of the bird of prey in metaphorical terms, du Maurier's Jim-the-vulture's threatening persona is unrelenting and literal: 'Jim had a vulture's head. She could not mistake it. The brooding eye, the blood-tipped beak, the flabby folds of flesh' (BL, 68). Although Marda's second, permanent pair of lenses restore Jim's 'humanity', her husband nonetheless continues to embody the sinister nature associated with the vulture.

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[68] In bird classification, the eagle and the old-world vulture belong to the same bird family known as the Accipitridae. The falcon, eagle, and old-world vulture all belong to the order known as the Falconiformes. See Christopher Perrins, ed. *The New Encyclopedia of Birds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 154 and 163.

[69] Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828) described Lord Byron as 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know'. Quoted in Daisy Hay, *Young Romantics: The Shelleys, Byron, and Other Tangled Lives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 13.

The image of feeding on carrion is inseparable from notions of the vulture in the cultural imagination. Marda's husband's presentation as a corpse-eating bird carries significant implications for Marda's refusal to consume the corpse of the bird on her plate. Whereas Jane encourages Rochester to consume the eggs of the smaller birds that she is associated with – 'I must bring an egg at the least' (*JE*, 487), thereby remaining complicit in a hierarchy of beings in which women and birds exist at the behest of men – Marda's reaction to her husband's bird of prey persona is that of 'sick and speechless horror [and] sudden shock' (BL, 68). Jane's problematic insistence that Rochester devours a bird's egg is in conflict with his 'avowal of his dependence: just as if a royal eagle, chained to a perch, should be forced to entreat a sparrow to become its purveyor' (*JE*, 488). Jane's complicity in avian consumption reveals that she must comply with systems of shared oppression if she is to enjoy a relationship with Rochester. Her iconic revelation – 'Reader, I married him' (*JE*, 498) – is couched in the prevailing culture of avian objectification. As established in chapter one, Jane and Rochester return from their wedding ceremony to their hunting lodge home where Mary, the housekeeper, is preparing their first marital meal – 'basting a pair of chickens roasting at the fire' (*JE*, 498). Her husband's seeming dependence is predicated upon her complicity in the avian consumption for which she criticises other women earlier in the novel. Likewise, Jim-the-vulture's association with the consumption of dead animals, such as those embodied by his wife, suggests Marda's potential to be devoured. However, unlike Jane, who endorses and partakes in Rochester's avian consumption, Marda refuses to consume bird matter. Marda's new consciousness impels her to retaliate against her husband's predilection for eating dead animals through her refusal to eat the bird corpse. Notwithstanding this, the end of the tale suggests no barrier to Marda following the same fate as the bird.

Jim's power does not subside in the manner of Rochester's; his phallic paraphinalia (akin to Stephen's rifle in 'The Chamois') exert a pervasive menacing force. Jim's beak is a violent symbol – 'the vulture's beak was sharp' (BL, 68) – and carries connotations of violent and non-consenting penetration: 'the vulture opened its blood-stained beak' (BL, 69). Furthermore, his accoutrements, like the umbrella that announces his arrival, are directly related to predation:

> she watched the vulture pare his nails. He carried a *file* in his pocket. She had never thought of it before – it was part of Jim, like his *fountain pen* and his *pipe*. Yet now there was reasoning behind it: a vulture needed sharp claws for tearing its victim. (BL, 70-71, my italics)

Jim's phallic violence is embodied in his vulture's body and props of patriarchal power. Brontë similarly draws attention to Rochester's bird of prey claws. However, unlike Jim's 'sharp claws for tearing [his] victim' (BL, 71), Jane notices that Rochester is in need of a manicure – 'whether your nails are grown like birds' claws or not, I have not yet noticed' (*JE*, 485). His unkempt claws suggest a diminished predatory intent.

Whereas Rochester is presented as an individual distinct from other men in the novel, Marda's predatory partner is representative of a widespread troubling masculinity. Marda realises that her husband is not the only vulture as the epigraph to this section attests. Unlike Jane, who focuses her attention on the single object of her desire, Marda is aware of a pervasive threat – that of 'the hooded beasts surrounding her and closing in' (BL, 69). Whereas 'all [Jane's] confidence is bestowed on' Rochester (*JE*, 500), Marda's world is populated by vultures. This recalls Mary Yellan's vision of a multitude of predatory bird-men intent upon stalking her in *Jamaica Inn* (1936).[70] Marda frets about 'whom she could ask for refuge' (BL, 76) and it dawns on her that the world 'could give her no protection' (BL, 76). This is contrary to Jane's seeming safe haven at Ferndean, but, as explored in chapter one, the site of refuge is also a hunting lodge.

Practices that perpetuate the objectification of birds and women alike are not limited to hunting and medicine in these fictional worlds. The violence at work in the systems of law and capitalism are particularly damning in du Maurier's tale. Jim's insidious project is revealed by his attempt to seize ownership of his wife's trust fund: '"I won't bother you," said the vulture, "with these documents tonight. There's no *violent* hurry anyway. You can sign them at home"' (BL, 69, my italics).[71] Jim's characterisation as the vulture is particularly pertinent in this respect since Marda's husband reveals himself as the 'vulture capitalist'.[72] Marriage, the law, and capitalism converge in the tale as terrifying institutions at odds with the interests of women.

When it comes to light that Marda's eye operation has been – potentially fatally – botched, Jim asserts his masculine authority with the empty threat: 'I'll sue him'

[70] Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (London: Virago, 2015), p. 287.
[71] Violence is also inferred in relation to the medical institution when the surgeon, referring to a colleague, states that 'he's an orthopeadic surgeon and *breaks your bones*' (BL, 54, my italics) – an example of du Maurier's ability to foreground the chilling nature of the seemingly benevolent patriarch.
[72] 'Relating to investment in the debts of failing or bankrupt companies with substantial tangible assets. Usually in *vulture fund, vulture investor*. Cf. *vulture capitalist*'. 'Vulture capitalist', *OED*, accessed 8 August 2019.

(BL, 80), calling forth one institution to deal with another. Like nonhuman animals, Marda finds that she is 'one of the pawns' (BL, 65), rather than an agent, in the system of law. In order to seize possession of her property, Marda's husband enlists the authority of the lawyer, putting 'the whole business [of her trust fund] into the hands of the Forbes & Millwall people' (BL, 67), whom he seems to be in continual dialogue with during his wife's confinement. Marda recalls that 'there had been so many financial discussions before the operation' (BL, 67), but confesses that she does not fully understand the implications, and when she presses her husband to clarify the matter, he immediately 'rang off' (BL, 67). Whereas Brontë's bird of prey is depicted as a victim – as well as an agent – of patrilineal practice, du Maurier's bird of prey is a dangerous agent of the institutions that oppress his wife and condemn her as 'mad', powerless prey. Brontë maims her heroine's partner; du Maurier's heroine is found 'picturing *herself* helpless and maimed' (BL, 45, my italics).

'The Blue Lenses' is a tale of multi-species boundary blurring. The fact that a dead bird is the catalyst to Marda's nausea, and the key figure of manipulation in her life – her husband – is a vulture, confirms that birds continue to play a crucial role in du Maurier's articulation of deep anxieties about gender politics and a mistrust of institutional authority that both borrows from and critiques similar preoccupations in Brontë's novel. Furthermore, the continued employment of a character's repulsion at the prospect of the consumption of dead bird matter as a metonym for women's psychological and existential unrest confirms du Maurier's interest in feminist issues as they relate to commodified nonhuman animals. Du Maurier's tales of avian gendered power dynamics offer frightening meditations on the pervasive patriarchy that is ever at work to determine women's lives and undermine their validity.

Conclusion

These two critically neglected tales of species boundary-blurring offer important insights into 'a malaise so ingrained as to become invisible' (*SPM*, 35) – that is, until an avian-induced moment of perception brought about in the presence of dead birds. These post-World War Two tales demonstrate that an interlinked oppression of women and birds persists over one hundred years after the Brontës' novels were published. 'The Chamois' and 'The Blue Lenses' reveal that, like other twentieth-century women writers, du Maurier 'perceived connections between male dominance, […] and meat eating' (*SPM*, 180). In both of these stories, the question of bird consumption marks a crucial and conspicuous 'breaking point' in the female protagonist's conceptualisation

of her shared status with the dead bird on the plate. Both stories are concerned with an awakened feminist consciousness brought about by confrontation with a violent culture whose power is derived from the exploitation of women and other animals. This consciousness finds expression in avian vegetarian incidents in which women protagonists are compelled to reject bird consumption. As Kerr has said of 'getting to the roots of nausea in the works of Jean Paul Sartre and Flannery O'Connor', my examination of the nauseating effects of confrontations with dead birds reveals du Maurier to be a 'writer attuned to the nihilism of the modern age, [which] contributes to an appreciation of the complexity of her vision'.[73]

[73] Kerr, 'Stomaching the Truth', p. 67.

Coda: 'The Birds'

'the birds had been more restless than ever […] the agitation more marked'.[1]

In her introduction to a 1955 edition of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1848), Daphne du Maurier singles out 'one brief haunting phrase' as encapsulating 'all the pathos and reality of [the] Brontë' imagination: 'the ghost child *tapping at the window*, "Let me in, let me in"'.[2] Du Maurier was clearly captivated by this iconic Brontëan moment, in which the ghost of the 'bird' heroine, Catherine Earnshaw, attempts to gain entry into the dwelling of a bird-murdering patriarch.[3] Du Maurier's own fiction is itself haunted by a recurring, and explicitly avian, 'tapping at the window'; she utilises this phrase, and numerous variations on it, in her short story, 'The Birds' (1952), as well as in her novels about bird heroines – *Jamaica Inn* (1936) and *Frenchman's Creek* (1941).[4] Furthermore, du Maurier's tale, 'The Birds', published three years before the publication of her introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, contains the same 'brief haunting phrase': 'Let me in […] Let me in' (B, 20). This indicates a symbiotic avian imagination between du Maurier and the Brontës that has thus far gone unremarked by critics. Du Maurier's 'The Birds', as this coda will illustrate, is an example of literary haunting that is 'oppositional, even subversive' and, with this phenomenon of 'palimpsestuousness', 'there are as many opportunities for divergence [from the original text] as adherence, for assault as well as homage'.[5] While 'The Birds' is haunted by the Brontë canon, 'it is also entirely antithetical in that it simultaneously advocates a radical break with that same tradition, a dissonant and dissident rupturing of its value-systems and hierarchies'.[6]

[1] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Birds', *The Birds and Other Stories* (London: Virago, 2004), p. 2. Originally published by Victor Gollancz in 1952 as *The Apple Tree*. Henceforward B.
[2] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, intro. Daphne du Maurier (London: MacDonald, 1955), p. xix. My italics.
[3] By this point in the narrative, Heathcliff owns Wuthering Heights; Catherine appears at Lockwood's sleeping quarter within it. I establish both men as bird-murderers in chapter two of this thesis.
[4] Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *JI*. Daphne du Maurier, *Frenchman's Creek* (London: Virago, 2015). Henceforward *FC*.
[5] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 12. As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn employ the term 'palimpsestuous'. See Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 21.
[6] Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, p. 12.

In this coda, I will analyse 'The Birds' in light of du Maurier's profound literary indebtedness to *Jane Eyre* (1848) and *Wuthering Heights*.[7] Many of the avian encounters that I have examined in du Maurier's and the Brontës' fiction across this thesis resonate with the thematic concerns of 'The Birds' – a tale which, at first glance, would seem to mark a departure from these heroine-centred works. As well as turning attention to du Maurier's tale, this account of avian afterlives offers new insights into the Brontës' canonical novels. It becomes apparent that du Maurier's literary forebears, traditionally read as proto-feminist thinkers, espouse problematic statements about the relationship between women and birds, whilst du Maurier's fiction – often dismissed as antithetical to feminist concerns – is, in fact, deeply engaged in gender politics when seen from the perspective of avian encounters. With these tensions in mind, I argue in what follows that du Maurier's 'The Birds' provides a pathway towards moving beyond the potential anthropocentric pitfalls of enlisting birds as symbols of woman's oppression.

The tale's protagonist, Nat Hocken, a retired war veteran living with his wife and two small children in a sparsely delineated Cornish landscape, appears to be the only person in his community to foresee, and endeavour to protect his family against, a ferocious bird attack. His employer – the arrogant, bird-hating farmer, Harry Trigg – fatally fails to conceive of the impending onslaught. All the while, increasingly large numbers of agitated birds – ranging from the usually benign garden-dwelling robin, wren, and sparrow to the ominous 'rooks, crows, jackdaws, magpies, jays' (B, 16), the more fearsome, and, it turns out, deadly, black-headed gull and gannet, and finally birds of prey such as 'hawks, buzzards, kestrels, and falcons' (B, 30) – are intent on the destruction of humankind.

The birds' attacks become increasingly vigorous and violent. Their first unsettling attempt to gain entry into Nat's cottage betrays the extent to which Brontëan imagery is crucial to the haunting atmosphere of the tale:

> [he] drew the blanket round him, […], and stayed wakeful, watchful, aware of misgivings without cause.
>
> Then he heard *the tapping on the window*. There was no creeper on the cottage walls to break loose and scratch upon the pane. He listened, and the tapping continued until, irritated by the sound, [he] got out of bed and went to the window. He opened it, and as he did so something brushed his hand,

[7] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin Classics, 1996). Henceforward *JE*. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Beth Newman (Plymouth: Broadview, 2007). Henceforward *WH*.

> jabbing at his knuckles, grazing the skin. Then he saw the flutter of the wings and it was gone, over the roof, behind the cottage.
>
> It was a bird. (B, 3, my italics)

Nat's first encounter with the eponymous birds is remarkably evocative of Lockwood's nightmare encounter with the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*.[8] Given Catherine's strong association with birds – the lapwing in particular, as established in chapter two of this thesis – and du Maurier's special relationship with Brontë's novel outlined above, if the passage was not composed as an homage to the novel, it is nevertheless deeply indebted to *Wuthering Heights*, as the following passage from Brontë's novel indicates:

> presently the whole chapel resounded with *rappings and counter-rappings*. […] a shower of loud *taps* […] resounded so smartly, that at last, to my unspeakable relief, they woke me.
>
> And what was it that had suggested the tremendous tumult? […] Merely the branch of a fir-tree that touched my lattice, as the blast wailed by, and rattled its dry cones against the panes!
>
> I listened doubtingly an instant; detected the disturber, then turned and dozed, and dreamt again, if possible, still more disagreeably than before.
>
> This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard also the fir-bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause; but it annoyed me so much that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and I thought I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple, a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten.
>
> 'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! (*WH*, 55-56, my italics)

The similarities between these two scenes are remarkable. Elusive slumber presages both Nat's and Lockwood's disturbing encounters with the birds and a bird-heroine

[8] To my knowledge, no other critic has made connections between du Maurier's avian tale and either *Wuthering Heights* or *Jane Eyre*, with the exception of Camille Paglia, who identifies what she sees as a shared atmosphere between 'The Birds' and Brontë novels: 'though there is no Gothic manor house [in 'The Birds'], the story's bleak atmosphere and ferocious weather resemble those of the great Brontë novels, which are the literary ancestors of *Rebecca*.' See Camille Paglia, *The Birds* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 8. Aside from these three generic tropes, common to most Gothic literature, Paglia does not elaborate on the particularities common to the texts. I would argue that Nat's modest cottage takes on a Gothic character from the outset: it is a dwelling beleaguered by a supernatural force; a house of death and site of bodily horror (the spectacle of the mass of dead birds' bodies and Nat's bloody wounds are described in detail); much like the quintessential haunted house, the cottage bears witness to unsettling tappings, extinguished candles render it dark, rooms are blocked up, and the dwelling itself becomes a prison boarded up; boundaries are transgressed, particularly around the window pane; and Nat and his family will (probably) be brutally murdered inside it.

desperate to gain entry. For both men, beleaguered sleep is startled by 'tapping on the window' (B, 3), 'rappings and counter-rappings […] a shower of loud taps' (*WH*, 55). Nat is 'irritated' (B, 3); Lockwood is 'annoyed' (*WH*, 55). Du Maurier's 'creeper on the cottage walls to break loose and scratch upon the pane' (B, 3) recalls 'the branch of a fir-tree [that] touched [Lockwood's] lattice […] and rattled its dry cones against the panes!' (*WH*, 55). Both men are compelled towards the window, determined to put a stop to the persistent and disconcerting tappings and rappings.[9] In their endeavours to open windows, knuckles are grazed and blood is drawn when encountering the 'flutter of wings' (B, 3) and an 'ice-cold hand' (*WH*, 56). Whereas the sleeping Lockwood draws blood from Catherine's wrist, in du Maurier's tale, it is the half-sleeping Nat whose skin is grazed on account of a bird eager to gain entry. Like Catherine, Nat's 'hands had suffered the most, and his wrists' (B, 20). After dozing once more like Lockwood, Nat encounters a second round of tappings: 'the tapping came again, this time more forceful, more insistent', and he re-establishes that 'there's some bird there, trying to get in' (B, 3). Analysing these passages together reveals du Maurier's re-imagining of the spectral bird-woman as a literal bird.

Also like Lockwood, Nat responds to the distressed avian intruder with violence. Lockwood recounts:

> I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it.
>
> […]
>
> Terror made me cruel; and finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist onto the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes. (*WH*, 56)

In du Maurier's tale, Nat

> shut the window and went back to bed, but feeling his knuckles wet put his mouth to the scratch. The bird had drawn blood. Frightened, he supposed, and bewildered, the bird, seeking shelter, had stabbed at him in the darkness. Once more he settled himself to sleep.
>
> Presently the tapping came again, this time more forceful, more insistent […] 'there's some bird there, trying to get in.'
>
> […]

[9] Incessant 'tappings' pervade du Maurier's tale, revealing that this was an important element in du Maurier's conception of the birds' presence: 'the tapping went on and on' (B, 30), 'the hammering had started at the windows' (B, 28), 'there was no rest to be got while the tapping and the scratching went on at the windows' (B, 30). These suggestive sounds also permeate the final scene, in large part responsible for its chilling atmosphere: 'the tapping began at the windows' (B, 380), 'the light tap-tapping of their beaks' (B, 38).

> He went to the window for the second time, and now when he opened it there was not one bird upon the sill but half a dozen; they flew straight into his face, attacking him.
>
> He shouted, striking out at them with his arms, scattering them […] Quickly he let the window fall and latched it.
>
> […]
>
> 'The birds were on the sill, trying to get into the room.' (B, 3-4)

What follows is a deadly tussle between Nat and the birds amid 'the beating of wings' (B, 4), 'the fluttering of wings' (B, 4), and 'the whirring of the wings' (B, 5). The birds were

> not yet defeated, for again and again they returned for the assault, jabbing his hands, his head, the little stabbing beaks sharp as a pointed fork. The blanket became a weapon of defence; he wound it about his head, and then in greater darkness beat at the birds with his bare hands. (B, 4-5)

The following morning, 'Nat gazed at the little corpses, shocked and horrified' (B, 5). Much like Lockwood, Nat is now dealing with the dead. What was in Brontë's novel the ghost of a bird-woman trying to get in becomes, in du Maurier's rendering, a barrage of home-invading birds – 'those corpses on the bedroom floor, which he must now collect and bury' (B, 9) in a mass grave. Two men, Nat and Lockwood, experience the terror of nocturnal window tappings that turn out to have avian connections. Both confrontations with a dead bird-woman or literal birds are encounters that unsettle domestic boundaries.

'The Birds' has historically been overshadowed, in both the popular imagination and in academic criticism, by Alfred Hitchcock's iconic film adaptation of the same title, which makes significant departures from du Maurier's original story.[10] I aim to address this by focusing on the tale apart from the film. The few critics who have focused on du Maurier's 'The Birds' independently of Hitchcock's film have grappled with the significance of the seemingly unaccounted-for bird attack in a manner that reads the birds symbolically as signifiers of anthropocentric anxieties.[11] Such studies have typically enacted a humancentric ideology to decipher the birds'

[10] *The Birds*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, with Tippi Hedren and Rod Taylor (Universal Pictures, 1963).

[11] See, for example, Gina Wisker, 'Don't Look Now! The Compulsions and Revelations of Daphne du Maurier's Horror Writing', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8 (1999), pp. 19-33; Terry W. Thompson, '"They had Everything They Needed": Autonomy as Sub-Text in Du Maurier's "The Birds"', *The North Dakota Quarterly*, 76 (2009), pp. 63-74; and Mary Ellen Bellanca, 'The Monstrosity of Predation in Daphne du Maurier's "The Birds"', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 18 (2011), pp. 26-46.

behaviour, reducing them to symbols of human plights at the cost of silencing the bird exploitation explicitly depicted in the tale.[12] Drawing on the insights of ecofeminism, I argue that the birds are not simply enacting humancentric anxieties, but rather avenging an oppression shared by both heroines and birds.

Although she does not heed her own advice, Mary Ellen Bellanca warns of the pitfalls of 'discount[ing] a text's literal referentiality, in this case the story's relation to actual birds'.[13] She goes on to claim that,

> ignoring the question of literal birds would leave us with a text that not only 'effaces' real animals but also perpetrates an ecological scandal by imagining those animals as a danger to human existence, when for over a century the situation has been the other way around.[14]

Although the issue of women's exploitation and confinement remains a central concern in du Maurier's fiction, her foregrounding of 'literal birds' in 'The Birds' makes an important statement about equally troubling issues regarding the exploitation of nonhuman beings. Carol J. Adams uses Hitchcock's film adaptation, rather than du

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[12] Richard Kelly's reading of 'The Birds' is deeply anthropocentric. It culminates in a sweeping dismissal of the lives of all nonhuman animals as he perceives that humans have been reduced to the lower level of other-than-human life: 'The end result [of the tale] is that human beings are forced to act like animals themselves, with survival as their solitary goal'. Not only does Kelly forget that humans *are* animals, he underestimates the dynamic lives of other animals. His earlier statement, that 'birds are attractive and elusive creatures', surely belies an assumption that avian life exists for human pleasure and delight. Contrary to Kelly's appraisal, I argue that 'The Birds' espouses a move beyond the purely anthropocentric. See Richard Kelly, *Daphne du Maurier* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), p. 126.

Gina Wisker's appraisal likewise subscribes to anthropocentric assumptions about humans and birds, 'whose behaviours we have come to depend on to be tame and manageable, under our hierarchical, scientific, bureaucratic, logical and organisational powers as chief primates. The horror of the story is based on the natural world's potential for unpredictability and violence. The familiar turns into the monstrous and mankind is powerless'. Wisker juxtaposes the 'tame and manageable' bird against humans, who are the 'logical' 'chief primates'. Even if we concede that this statement is intended to be ironic – since Wisker acknowledges that the hierarchy of beings is humancentric – her statement upholds an anthropomorphic dualism that readily perceives the 'violence' of the natural world, but fails to acknowledge the violence of the human world. See Wisker, 'Don't Look Now!', pp. 19-33.

Mary Ellen Bellanca labels the tale a 'nature-rebellion' narrative containing a 'nature-strikes-back plot', but she does not give any indication as to what the birds are rebelling against. Rather, the bulk of the article conjures a raft of human anxieties. Although Bellanca occasionally uses phrases such as 'an ecocritical reading', 'human-centric viewpoint', and 'ecocritical glance', these are, indeed, mere glances. Like preceding critiques, Bellanca's otherwise illuminating article does not veer from the anthropocentric tradition. Her reading of the birds furthers a notion of their inherent violence and thus fails to acknowledge human predation. In terms of animal theory, a flaw in Bellanca's argument is on the one hand exaggerating the violence of real birds whilst understating the violence perpetrated by humans (towards birds). When teetering around a consideration of the 'literal action in du Maurier's tale or the "motives" of her birds', she commits a grave oversight: 'du Maurier's characters don't appear to deserve punishment or vengeance; indeed, they have done nothing whatsoever to bring on the attacks'. I will argue to the contrary. See Ballanca, 'The Monstrosity of Predation', pp. 26-41.

[13] Bellanca, 'The Monstrosity of Predation', p. 27. Despite the promise of Bellanca's claim of reading literally, her article is speciesist and focuses on human anxieties.

[14] Bellanca, 'The Monstrosity of Predation', p. 27.

Maurier's tale, to illustrate the tendency to analyse cultural artifacts in symbolic terms that often obscures 'the literal oppression' being depicted.[15] The point Adams makes about Hitchcock's film is equally pertinent to du Maurier's tale. In both, the presence of avian exploitation provides the literal motivation behind the birds' retaliation. The film contains the opening, extended scene depicting caged birds in a pet shop, and later draws attention to fried chickens in a restaurant while various members of the community attempt to make sense of the birds' aggression towards humans. Du Maurier's tale similarly bears witness to explicit avian exploitation: for example, farmer Trigg's gleeful, murderous threats to the birds and his subsequent plan to feast on the spoils. Adams's point about the virtue of reading literally, rather than symbolically, renders the cause of the bird attack explicit. As I shall explore in this coda, du Maurier makes the birds' 'motive' explicit on the second page of the tale – 'that's why the birds are restless' (B, 2). The few critics who have analysed 'The Birds' subsequent to Adams's comments have chosen to read symbolically and thus fail to make a connection between the explicit avian exploitation depicted in the tale and the birds' subsequent 'agitation' (B, 2). Much like Nelly Dean and Edgar Linton in *Wuthering Heights*, who fail to make a connection between Catherine Earnshaw's domestic confinement and her subsequent 'ravings' (*WH*, 141), such readings of 'The Birds' fail to acknowledge subjugation as the cause of the birds' savagery and thus perpetuate an insufficiently accurate appraisal of du Maurier's scathing criticism of systems of oppression.[16]

In light of the ecofeminist perspectives that I have engaged with in previous chapters, and the shared avian interconnections between the Brontë and du Maurier oeuvres, this coda argues that the restlessness articulated by avian-associated heroines across the novels and tales analysed in this thesis is crystallised in du Maurier's depiction of an apocalyptic avian attack on *man*kind. The restlessness of entrapped Brontë and du Maurier bird-heroines, consistently portrayed in relation to avian exploitation, reaches a crescendo in du Maurier's tale of bird retaliation *en masse*. Contrary to existing criticism on 'The Birds', I argue that the avian agitation and revolt

[15] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 105-6.

[16] Savagery is a term, like restlessness, used in conjunction with du Maurier's birds and the Brontë and du Maurier heroines. Birds and bird women 'acting savage' (B, 9) in response to entrapment, cruelty, and exploitation is a central and pervasive concern across the Brontë and du Maurier oeuvres, which is re-enacted when the birds 'flew straight into [Nat's] face' (B, 4). Bertha's avian species boundary-blurring illustrates the subtle and pervasive ways in which an interconnected oppression between birds and women finds powerful expression in these fictional worlds.

express an interlocking feminist, anti-speciesist consciousness and suggest that du Maurier's tale might thus be read as a revenge narrative.[17] Whereas Kyle William Bishop argues that Hitchcock's film adaptation of 'The Birds' charts a successful patriarchal takeover, in which the heroine is subdued, I read du Maurier's original tale, which inspired the film, as an *ecofeminist* takeover. [18]

Restless Birds Revisited

The incessant tapping noted above reveals that the birds themselves also experience the restlessness associated with the Brontës' and du Maurier's heroines, who are 'uneasy in mind and spirit'.[19] From the outset of 'The Birds', du Maurier conjures a haunting sense of avian malaise that is evocative of that experienced by the heroines discussed throughout this thesis. Like the unending tapping, restlessness describes 'a condition: unceasing, continuous, unremitting […] a thing: constantly in motion, continually operating; never ceasing or pausing […] of thoughts, mind, etc.: constantly active or in search of new stimulation'.[20] I have already detailed much of the heroines' restlessness in the introduction to, and elsewhere in, this thesis. In addition to those examples already given, the following are particularly pertinent to du Maurier's avian restlessness.

When Rochester questions Jane – 'don't you curse me for disturbing your rest?' (*JE*, 246) – he takes up her hand and declares 'What cold fingers!' (*JE*, 246), recalling Catherine Earnshaw's 'fingers of a little, ice-cold hand' (*WH*, 56) in the window tapping scene analysed above. Like Catherine Earnshaw, Jane Eyre has her own avian window scenes in an early site of restless confinement at Gateshead Hall. In the opening of the novel, she reads Bewick's book and contemplates his arctic birds by the window. Later, she furtively feeds a starving robin through an open casement.

[17] Bellanca identifies the tale as a 'nature strikes back' narrative but does not identify what the birds are avenging. Her subsequent anthropocentric argument undermines the notion of the birds as victims with a motive. See footnote 12.

[18] See Kyle William Bishop, 'The Threat of the Gothic Patriarchy in Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds"', *Rocky Mountain Review*, 65 (2011), pp. 135-47. Bishop's argument is convincing, although he does overlook the fact that the film's protagonist, Melanie Daniels, is herself a bird-exploiter, a detail that rather complicates the issue and perhaps reveals the ways in which women are co-opted into their own subjugation. Notwithstanding this, Hitchcock's film undoubtedly enacts punishment on the financially and sexually 'independent' heroine, but this seems rather more to subdue her 'liberated' persona rather than as retribution for bird exploitation. Hitchcock himself makes his obligatory cameo exiting the bird shop as Melanie enters. In 'To Catch A Thief' (1955), Hitchcock sits alongside Cary Grant and a caged bird on the back seat of a bus while a woman looks on disapprovingly. See *To Catch A Thief*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, with Cary Grant and Grace Kelly (Paramount Pictures, 1955).

[19] 'Restless', *OED*, accessed 23 September 2019.

[20] 'Restlessness', *OED*, accessed 23 September 2019.

Mary Yellan, as analysed in chapter three of this thesis, endures her own avian window tapping scene – a moment that explicitly foregrounds an overpowering restlessness:

> something was scraping gently at the kitchen window … tapping lightly, softly, scratching furtively at the pane of glass.
>
> It was like the sound made by a branch of ivy when it has broken loose from the trunk and, bending downwards, teases a window or a porch, disturbed and restless with every breath of wind. But there was no ivy on the slate walls of Jamaica Inn, and the shutters were bare.
>
> The scraping continued, persuasive and undaunted, tap … tap … like the drumming of a beak: tap … tap … like the four fingers of a hand. (*JI*, 201)

In this scene – remarkably similar to its Brontëan prototype and its corresponding scene in 'The Birds' – all the details of the former are brought to bear: the window pane, the relentless tapping, the loose branch of ivy, the restlessness, a disconcerting hand, and the avian element manifest in the beak. It is significant that Mary's frightful avian tapping encounter takes place at the kitchen window, whereas Nat's and Lockwood's occur at the bedroom window. This is fitting because Mary's restlessness is directly related to domestic confinement. Mary's persistent fear of succumbing to the contagion of 'madness' is connected to her bearing witness to a speciesist exploitation enacted by bird of prey men. Although, at this earlier stage in du Maurier's writing career, 'revenge was an empty thing' (*JI*, 241), indebted to *Wuthering Heights*, this is surely an early rumination on the theme of restless-related revenge, that later finds expression in 'The Birds'.[21]

With her first novel, *The Loving Spirit* (1931), du Maurier explicitly signals her intention to engage 'palimpsestuously' with the Brontës, and this, as I have demonstrated, is sustained throughout her writing career.[22] In this novel reeling with avian unrest, a haunting, bird related window tapping, that evokes Emily Brontë's window scene, persists. Early on, 'the wind blew around the house, sighing and tapping against the window pane, crying mournfully like a lost thing' (*LS*, 19). Making a woman-bird connection explicit, the narrator reveals that the heroine's 'restless spirit haunted the deep, flying with the gulls' (*LS*, 42). Interacting with *Wuthering Heights* whilst anticipating 'The Birds',

[21] Like the avian heroines before her, Dona St Columb undergoes her own encounter with an avian tapping: 'something, not herself, disturbed the birds, for the heron rose slowly, flapping his slow wings, and followed the curlew, and Dona paused a moment, for she too had heard a sound, a sound of tapping, of hammering' (*FC*, 40).

[22] Daphne du Maurier, *The Loving Spirit* (London: Virago, 2003). Henceforward *LS*.

> something was dashed against the window and fell, sending Janet's hand to her side with the shock of the sound. She opened the window to see, and saw the dead body of a gull with its two wings broken.
>
> […]
>
> And to her, too, came the call for liberty, the last desperate longing of a soul to seek its freedom, and the anguish of a body cast from its restraint. (*LS*, 47)

Later in the novel, 'she awoke, startled by the sound of something striking against the window pane' (*LS*, 91). This Brontë-esque bird-woman restlessness, framed through window tapping, haunts du Maurier's fiction from the beginning of her writing career.[23]

Remarkably evocative of these heroines' plights, as well as Betty Friedan's depictions of feminist malaise explored in chapter five, du Maurier's eponymous birds are 'restless, uneasy' (B, 1).[24] In fact, du Maurier reiterates an avian restlessness no less than five times in the opening passages of the tale. [25] This overwhelming sense of

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[23] Du Maurier's 'The Birds' became implicated in a rather palimpsestuous case of 'anxiety of influence'. In Frank Baker's introduction to the 1964 Panther edition of his unsuccessful novel, *The Birds*, originally published in 1936, he ends with the following statement: 'Read on. And be careful if you here the *tapping at the window*'. See Frank Baker, *The Birds* (Kansas City: Valancourt, 2013), p. 4, my italics. In the 2013 edition of the novel, which claims to incorporate the extensive revisions that Baker intended for the 1964 edition but were not carried out in full by Panther, his publisher at the time, the following passage appears:

> all night long there is a tapping on the pane, a metallic sound of bone upon glass. Under the bedclothes he hears it, louder, until the sound seems like a knuckle rapping on the hollow curve of his skull. (Baker, *The Birds*, p. 118)

The rest of the novel is concerned with an avian presence at the window including repeated tappings. Baker had initially wanted to sue Hitchcock for plagiarising his 1936 edition of his novel, but after being advised against it, Baker instead decided to re-issue the novel with revisions, perhaps in the hope of capitalising on the success of Hitchcock's film, which was officially claimed to be adapted from du Maurier's 1952 tale. In a letter to Oriel Malet, dated 2 September 1963, du Maurier reveals that Baker had written to her and sent her a copy of his novel. She knew that he 'was cross' about his belief that his novel had been plagiarised. Given the date, only months before the film's official release date in America (March 1963), it is likely that the copy Baker sent to du Maurier would have been the original, 1936 edition rather than the one he re-issued subsequent to the film's success. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate these circumstances further, but an analysis of the three editions of Baker's novel (including his extensive revision notes) alongside du Maurier's tale and Hitchcock's film might yield some valuable insights into these palimpsestuous interconnections. The repeated appearance of Brontëan/du Maurian avian window tappings throughout the 2013 edition of Baker's novel is intriguing, and there are many details of the film that are also to be found in the 2013 edition of Baker's novel. Baker died in 1982, which means that he did not oversee this latest edition. See Daphne du Maurier, *Letters from Menabilly: Portrait of A Friendship*, ed. Oriel Malet (New York: M. Evans, 1992), pp. 159-60.

[24] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 2010).

[25] The birds have a 'restless urge […] unsatisfying, sad' (B, 2). 'Great flocks of them came to the peninsula, restless, uneasy' (B, 1); 'restlessness drove them to the skies again' (B, 1); 'the restless urge of autumn, unsatisfying, sad, had put a spell upon them and they must flock, and wheel, and cry' (B, 2); 'the birds had been more restless than ever […] the agitation more marked' (B, 2); 'the birds are restless' (B, 2). Later in the tale, when Nat is confronted with the pecked-to-death Triggs at the nearby

the ‘restlessness’ (B, 1) of the birds in the tale corresponds with the restlessness of the Brontëan and du Maurian avian heroines, considered in the introduction to, and elsewhere in, this thesis, and similarly presages their agitation. The restlessness of du Maurier’s birds mirrors the collective restlessness of her own and the Brontës’ bird-heroines. As Dorothy van Ghent observes, in relation to women in *Wuthering Heights*, transgression enacted by birds and women in the Brontës’ and du Maurier’s fictional worlds ‘has always a set of emotionally motivating circumstances – revengefulness, or hysterical frustration, of the savagery of despair’.[26] Like the heroines, du Maurier’s birds are ‘seeking some sort of liberation, never satisfied, never still’ (B, 1). The birds act ‘as if compelled’ (B, 2). In unison with the avian heroines recalled above, Nat perceived ‘that same impulse to flight seized upon them too’ (B, 2). In his own estimation, ‘it’s as though a madness seized them’ (B, 6), recalling patriarchal appraisals of the heroines discussed throughout this thesis.

In both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, chapter twelve is a pivotal moment in the consciousness of the heroines – Catherine and Jane – and their agitated articulations of avian-inflected restlessness and revolt.[27] For both Catherine and Jane, restless revolt against living within the stifling confines of an oppressive hierarchy of beings is intricately connected to birds. As analysed in chapter two of this thesis, chapter twelve of *Wuthering Heights* recounts Catherine’s ‘ravings’ (*WH*, 141), surrounding herself with birds’ feathers.[28] This avian revolt anticipates du Maurier’s tale since Nat frequently finds himself engulfed in a profusion of ‘fluttering’ (B, 5), ‘whirring’ (B, 5) feathers. Similarly, in chapter twelve of *Jane Eyre*, Jane ‘long[s] for a power’ (*JE*, 125), she asserts that she is ‘discontented’ (*JE*, 125), and admits ‘the restlessness [that] was in my nature’ (*JE*, 125) whilst pacing, Bertha-like, ‘backwards and forwards’ (*JE*, 125), along the third-story of Thornfield Hall, the upper regions of which are almost ‘on a level with the crow-colony’ (*JE*, 122). Du Maurier’s ‘rooks, crows, jackdaws, magpies, jays’ (B, 16), harbingers of intense avian retaliation, recall Thornfield’s rookery, and its conspicuous inhabitants, who make their presence known

farmhouse, the ‘distressed cows’ (B, 34), also exploited by humans, are ‘moving restlessly in the yard’ (B, 34).

[26] Dorothy van Ghent, ‘The Window Figure and the Two-Children Figure in *Wuthering Heights*’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 7 (1952), pp. 189-97, p. 190.

[27] In her introduction to the 1955 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, du Maurier singles out chapter twelve (as well as eleven and fifteen) as ‘profound […] deep-felt expressions of a wish to enter more completely into the Gondal dream-world than [Emily Brontë] had entered already, to be bound by neither time, nor place, nor any living thing, to surrender herself completely to the drug of her own imagination in exactly the same manner described by Charlotte [Brontë]’. See du Maurier, intro. *Wuthering Heights*, p. xxi.

[28] Similarly, Jane Eyre declares, ‘I think I rave in a kind of exquisite delirium’ (*JE*, 227).

in conjunction with Jane's and Bertha's expressions of their yearnings for freedom from entrapment. Jane's 'restless' (*JE,* 309) presentiments regarding the discovery of Rochester's Bluebeard secret, are accompanied by a feeling that she is 'more restless than ever' (*JE,* 310), a phrase that exactly mirrors du Maurier's description of the birds' state of agitation quoted in the epigraph to this coda. In this tale, the restlessness of women and birds has become interchangeable.

The remarkable symbiotic restlessness of the birds in du Maurier's tale and the proto-feminist angst that infuses the Brontës' and du Maurier's heroine-centred fiction bears witness to an implicit understanding of their interconnected oppression. Their revolts are interconnected. One of Jane's most overtly feminist statements in the novel, made in chapter twelve, generates a dialogue with du Maurier's avian revolt in 'The Birds'. In a passage that resonates with the avian agitation depicted in du Maurier's tale, Jane declares:

> millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be calm generally: but […] they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation […] and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves. (*JE,* 125-26)

Following this declaration, Jane reminds the reader that Thornfield's 'dark rookery rose against the west' (*JE,* 127). The millions of revolting beings that Jane foregrounds anticipates the masses of birds who revolt in 'The Birds'. Women and birds share a 'stiller' doom; the latter are literally 'stilled' – murdered – in all of these fictional worlds. Bertha Rochester and Catherine Earnshaw are both ultimately 'stilled'. Heroines in du Maurier's fiction are 'stilled' to varying degrees despite a heightened avian feminist-vegetarian consciousness. The Brontës' heroines and du Maurier's birds are both confined under a hierarchical power structure upheld by their 'narrow-minded […] more privileged fellow creatures' (*JE,* 26).

In 'The Birds', du Maurier forces her protagonist to envision a subjectivity for the birds that mirrors Jane Eyre's empathy with 'millions […] in silent revolt against their lot' (*JE,* 125); Nat

> listened to the sound of the splintering wood, and wondered how many million years of memory were stored in those little brains, behind the stabbing beaks, the piercing eyes, now giving them the instinct to destroy mankind. (B, 38)

Nat's pondering as to the birds' capacity for memory, as well as his revelation that 'they've got reasoning powers' (B, 24), discredits the Cartesian conception of nonhuman animals as void of reasoning powers and knowledge.[29] As Derek Ryan recalls, John

> Locke outlines capacities of sensation, perception and retention [in nonhuman animals and] turns to birds as providing evidence of a nonhuman capacity for memory: 'birds learning of tunes, and the endeavours one may observe in them to hit the notes right, put it past doubt to me, that they have perception, and retain ideas in their memories, and use them for patterns' […] Locke therefore recognises knowledge-gaining capacities in [birds].[30]

Nat's ability to conceive of the birds' 'knowledge-gaining capacities', their consciousness of the human violence inflicted upon them, coincides with David Hume's 'view [that nonhuman] animals have foresight: "the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses"'.[31] Thus, Nat's insights in 'The Birds' 'open up pathways to challenge Cartesian hierarchical and oppositional modes of thinking'.[32]

However, this proposition is complicated by Nat's notion that the actions motivated by the birds' memory reduces them to the status of the Cartesian beast machine – the nonhuman animal as automata – since their 'knowledge-gaining capacity' is 'now giving them the *instinct* to destroy mankind with all the deft precision of *machines*' (B, 38, my italics).[33] By reducing the birds' actions to instinct, Nat reinstates the dualism that posits reason in opposition to instinct, which corresponds with the Cartesian human-animal dichotomy. Bird is now synonymous with machine, bringing us back to the Cartesian 'beast machine', automata. In light of this, Jane Eyre's outrage at Rochester, 'do you think I am an automaton?' (*JE*, 284), suggests that Jane sees her oppression as positioning her as akin to nonhuman animals, thus playing into this Cartesian conceptualisation of nonhuman animals as automata. Jane follows this with her iconic (seemingly feminist) declaration – 'I am no bird; and no

[29] Descartes encapsulates the still prevailing 'Enlightenment' sentiment by positing 'not only that animals have less reason than men, but that they have none at all'. In fact, he postulates that (nonhuman) animals 'have no mental powers whatsoever'. See René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, trans. Ian Maclean (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 47-48.
[30] Derek Ryan, *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 11-12.
[31] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 12.
[32] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 12.
[33] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 12.

net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will' (*JE*, 284). In doing so, Jane asserts her position as human, not animal – her liberation is conceived of in Cartesian speciesism and is achieved at the cost of the birds who she positions as dichotomous to her humanity. Whereas post-colonial readings of *Jane Eyre* recognise that Jane's relative emancipation is achieved at the cost of Bertha, the 'Other' woman, an animal studies reading insists that Jane's freedom is predicated upon the annihilation of the othered animal – the bird. When avian existence is reduced to that of 'beast-machine', birds are more easily rendered servile to human whim.[34] Nat's initial tentative conceding of the sophistry of the birds' capacity and lived experience, by imagining reasoning powers and memory, is ultimately diminished by the speciesist limits of an anthropocentric ideology that reduces nonhuman animals to the status of objects.

An Avian Vegetarian Interruption

A connection between the birds' agitated uproar and an exploitative patriarchal presence is established early on in du Maurier's tale:

> the birds had been *more restless than ever* this fall of the year, the *agitation more marked* […]. As the tractor traced its path up and down the western hills, *the figure of the farmer* silhouetted on the driving-seat, *the whole machine and the man* upon it would be *lost momentarily in the great cloud of wheeling, crying birds* […] such clamour
>
> […]
>
> *That's why the birds are restless*. (B, 2, my italics)

From the outset, a relationship between the birds' outcry, 'the figure of the farmer' (B, 2), and 'the whole machine and the man' (B, 2) is established that will culminate in a violent act of avian retribution by the end of the tale – an avian vegetarian narrative interruption. Whilst it dawns on Nat that the birds have 'got reasoning powers' (B, 24), Harry Trigg, the arrogant, gun-wielding farmer, here associated with the use of machinery, dismisses the possibility of an avian revolt, claiming that he has 'never heard of birds acting savage' (B, 9). In due course, du Maurier will exact a poetic justice that condemns the farmer's insensitive speciesist stance.

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[34] See Marian Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 3 and 17. Particularly pertinent to Jane Eyre's species-blurring declarations, see Leonora Cohen Rosenfield, *From Beast-Machine to Man-Machine: The Animal Soul in French Letters from Descartes to La Mettrie* (New York; Octagon Books, 1968), and Wallace Shugg's 'The Cartesian Beast-Machine in English Literature (1663-1750)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29 (1968), pp. 279-92.

Farmer Harry Trigg – the bird terroriser, murderer, and consumer who represents humans' exploitative use of birds at its worst – refuses to acknowledge the potency of the restless birds and arrogantly asserts his assumed power, bragging:

> 'It looks as though we're in for some fun', he said. 'Have you seen the gulls? Jim and I are going to take a crack at them. Everyone's gone bird crazy, talking of nothing else. I hear you were troubled in the night. Want a gun?
>
> […]
>
> Why don't you stop behind and join the shooting match? We'll make the feathers fly.
>
> […]
>
> Will you join my shooting match?
>
> […]
>
> My missus says if you could eat gull, there'd be some sense in [the large number of birds descending upon the village]', said Trigg, 'we'd have roast gull, baked gull, and pickle 'em into the bargain. You wait until I let off a few barrels into the brutes. That'll scare 'em.
>
> […]
>
> See you in the morning. Give you a gull breakfast.' (B, 18-19)

Trigg represents the violent masculine compulsion to hunt and consume birds that consistently threatens both women and birds in Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction. In 'The Birds', however, du Maurier foregrounds the issue of bird exploitation independently of the interconnected concerns of human women. Furthermore, du Maurier transforms the trope of the heroine-instigated vegetarian interruption by allowing the birds themselves to interrupt humans' avian consumption when the birds kill the farmers.

Trigg's use of the word 'brutes' *(B,* 19) in relation to the birds is a term that is always derogatory to both humans and nonhuman animals, and reinvokes Cartesian anthropocentricism.[35] With his use of the gun, Trigg maintains his speciesist stance that misconstrues a bird's function as a receptacle for male violence and a commodity for consumption and sport. Trigg, his wife, and his farm hand, Jim, are oblivious to the cause of the birds' restlessness – 'no explaining it, really' (B, 9). Du Maurier further spells out the farm inhabitants' ignorance regarding the birds: 'it took time for anything to penetrate Jim's head' (B, 9). Since their speciesism is foregrounded in advance of their avian death, the reader should be in no doubt as to the reason behind

[35] 'When animals figure, or can easily be thought of as figuring, in binary oppositions, they invariably represent the negative term in the opposition: "the Other, the Beast, the Brute"'. See Steve Baker, *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity, and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 83.

the attack. To combat any confusion in the readers' mind, Nat reflects that Jim 'was no more interested [in the birds] than Mrs Trigg had been […] you had to endure something before it touched you' (*B*, 9). The next time Nat sees Jim, the birds have ensured that he is indeed 'touched', for he is found pecked to death. Rather than re-organise their lives in accordance with the new hierarchy of beings that the birds' rebellion establishes, these farming humans continue to conduct themselves according to their death-dealing occupation.[36] Trigg's conspicuous speciesist arrogance and threats of continued violence towards the birds are directly linked to the fact that he and his wife, who plays the role of the woman complicit in sinister patriarchal practices, are also both pecked to death. These farm inhabitants are the only human protagonists whose death by beak and claw is represented in detail.[37] A reading of 'The Birds' that fails to recognise this readily available motivation behind the birds' revolt is a failure to acknowledge or 'see' the normalised violence that humans inflict upon birds.

The farm inhabitants' incredulousness that birds should be a cause for human concern typifies the speciesist ideology under which avian exploitation operates. Jim clings to the notion of 'tame' birds (B, 9), those whose existence has been co-opted by human oppressors and exploiters. Now *he* is rendered tame: 'Jim's body lay in the yard […] His gun was beside him' (B, 34). In the end, the farmer's weapon, a symbol of murder-mandating exploitative power, is overturned by the birds who enact justice when they brutally murder the gun-wielding farmer, his wife, and assistant.[38] In addition, the other exploited animals trapped on the farm are given the opportunity to enact their own revenge: 'When the birds had finished [killing Jim], the cows had trampled him' (B, 34). The birds are particularly drawn to the farm and its inhabitants. At first, the birds harass the farmer – 'I thought they'd knock my cap off!' (B, 2); later, they peck him, and his complicit wife and farm hand, Jim, to death. Du Maurier explicitly demarcates the farm as a site of especial interest to the birds' project of revenge when Nat observes that 'they were coming in towards the farm […] The farm,

[36] Mary Daly's critique of phallocracy as necrophillic – a love of beings rendered dead – is confirmed not least by its murderous use of nonhuman animals. Not content with killing life, masculine power is predicated upon eating death. See Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 59.

[37] Nat surmises that helicopter pilots also die as a result of the bird attacks, but these are not described in detail since the action occurs at a distance from him.

[38] Perhaps this is a moment in which Hitchcock's adaptation approaches a harnessing of the spirit of du Maurier's tale; one of the most memorable scenes in Hitchcock's film adaptation involves three progressively close-up camera shots of the farmer figure dead with both of his eye sockets hollowed and bludgeoned, the rest of his body ripped to shreds by the birds. His body is discovered by another character on a quest to discover whether the chickens at the farm have turned on their captors.

then, was their target. They were making for the farm' (B, 19). Du Maurier's interest in de-stabilising the authority and power of phallocratic institutions, already examined in relation to 'The Blue Lenses' (1959), is a central concern in 'The Birds'.[39]

Nat is disheartened by 'the inefficiency of the authorities' (B, 37), a disillusionment with institutions to preside over the earth and its inhabitants: 'Why don't they do something? (B, 21). Nat has no faith that the police have the necessary insight to understand the birds' behaviour or his perceptions of ecological unrest; they would merely 'think him mad, or drunk' (B, 11). This intuits the role of the police in subduing and besmirching dissenters. Likewise, the BBC is destroyed – 'there's been a breakdown at the BBC' (B, 23). The violent tactics of the army are shown to be futile. Man-made imitations of birds and weapons are similarly shown to be ineffective as the birds cause planes emitting gunfire to crash. Since 'the flocks of birds have caused dislocation in all areas' (B, 13), the benevolent disguise of institutions is exposed and their tradition of dominating and determining the lives of all beings is obliterated by the birds.

Supposing that government and chiefs of staff are likewise ineffectual, Nat

> had a picture of scientists, naturalists, technicians, and all those chaps they called the back-room boys, summoned to a council; they'd be working on the problem now. This was not the job for the government, for the chiefs-of-staff – they would merely carry out the orders of the scientists.
>
> 'They'll have to be ruthless,' he thought, 'Where the trouble's worst they'll have to *risk more lives*, if they use gas. *All the livestock, too*, and the soil – all contaminated.' (B, 25, my italics)

Risking more lives, including 'livestock' (B, 25) – meaning live beings, since 'stock' reduces subjects to consumable objects – is, as ecofeminists posit, common practice in 'science'.[40] Meanwhile, the birds obey their own law – that of the tides and, therefore, the moon:

> there was some law the birds obeyed, and it was all to do with the east wind and the tide.

[39] Daphne du Maurier, 'The Blue Lenses', *The Breaking Point: Short Stories* (London: Virago, 1995).
[40] In addition to my exploration, in the introduction to this thesis, of the murderous tendencies of the early science of natural history, as practiced by Thomas Bewick and John James Audubon, there is no shortage of feminist and ecofeminist criticism uncovering the disregard for life in science. See, amongst others, Carol J. Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defence of Animals* (New York: Lantern Books, 1995), Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture* (New York: Virago, 2000), and Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*.

> […] That explained the lull: the birds attacked with the flood tide. […] When the tide turned again […] the birds would come back. (B, 26).[41]

The birds' agenda and 'natural' agency displace the seat of power located within institutions.

By foregrounding the shared restlessness of the birds and heroines in du Maurier's tales and novels published between the 1930s and the 1950s, my thesis draws out the author's implicit understanding of, and anticipation of, the ecofeminist identification of the interconnected nature of oppression that emerged in the decades following. If the co-opting of birds as symbols of women's oppression in the heroine-centred novels studied in this thesis is problematic, 'The Birds' moves towards foregrounding avian oppression as a cause for concern in its own right. Although it is arguable that human-produced artefacts can never be fully disassociated from their inherent humancentric position, criticism adopting an ecofeminist or animal studies approach can identify those instances in which a work of fiction makes an ideological shift away from the kind of fiction that perpetuates, or fails to challenge, the tradition of exploitative and seemingly benign uses of birds (and other nonhuman animals) for humancentric, speciesist agendas. 'The Birds' establishes the birds themselves as the focus. In 'The Birds', avian beings are not symbols of women's oppression, but agents addressing their own plight by confronting human adversaries and conducting their own narrative vegetarian intervention. If acknowledging this capacity of the tale opens up debate around the problems inherent in systems that mar the lives of birds, the benefits of such an awareness might also extend to other oppressed groups, including women. It might be argued that the tale is concerned primarily with a human-centred critique of institutions; Nat's post-traumatic stress in the wake of World War Two is undoubtedly a recurring spectre in the tale. However, all such destructive human practices, including that of war, are in direct conflict with the life and welfare of birds

[41] The moon exerts its influence on the largest entity on the planet – the tidal movements of the Pacific Ocean. The moon also determines the reproduction cycles of tiny sea creatures. In pre-industrial cultures, the human menstrual cycle is thought to have been aligned with the phases of the moon. Studies have been conducted to determine the extent to which the moon's connection to women's menstrual cycles has been sabotaged by the proliferation of artificial light sources coinciding with urban expansion and industrialisation. See, for example, Winnifred B. Cutler, Wolfgang M. Schleidt, Erika Friedmann, George Preti, and Robert Stine, 'Lunar Influences on the Reproductive Cycle in Women', *Human Biology*, 59 (1987), pp. 959-72; Tina Hesman Saey, 'Biological Clocks Set By the Moon', *Science News*, 184 (2013), p. 6. Remnants of these ancient connections survive even in post-industrial literature; the moon functions as a prominent symbol of women's energy and consciousness in both the Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction. See, in particular, *Jane Eyre*, *Frenchman's Creek,* and 'The Chamois' (1959). See du Maurier, 'The Chamois', *Breaking Point*.

too. Therefore, the tale conducts what in ecofeminist terms amounts to a challenge to oppressive systems that exert power over and destroy living beings.

Restoring the Avian Absent Referent

'The Birds' forces the reader to experience horror at the sight of the avian corpse in a post-war culture in which the presence of bird corpses in the home (as objects for consumption) was becoming ever more widespread and normative. Thus, in a climate that, as Adams points out, necessitates, 'the increasing dependence […] on the structure of the absent referent', du Maurier's tale is working against this dominant capitalist trend.[42] As Adams recognises, the ease with which humans are willing to partake in animal corpse eating is in large part due to the distortion of dismemberment and the false naming of the once living being.[43] Recalling Catherine Earnshaw's naming of the feathers in *Wuthering Heights*, du Maurier restores the absent referent by naming the dead bodies of the birds in their literal sense. The reader is compelled to remember the dead bird for what he or she is – a corpse – rather than 'meat'. Nat names the birds literally: 'dead birds, nearly fifty of them' (B, 6). A clear distinction is made between the dead and the living birds:

> dawn, and the open window, had called the living birds; the dead lay on the floor. Nat gazed at the little corpses, shocked and horrified. They were all small birds, none of any size; there must have been fifty of them lying there on the floor. (B, 5)

The absent referent is restored by acknowledging that these are the corpses of once living birds. What is more, du Maurier insists on invoking horror at the sight of the bird corpse, where humans are conditioned to react to the dead bird on their plate with either indifference or pleasure. Du Maurier elicits the horror appropriate to a confrontation with the literal bird corpse that has been subdued or 'de-sensitised' through propaganda.

Nat's act of burying the dead birds compels him, and thus the reader, to linger on the presence of the restored referent, reiterating the literalness of the birds: '"They're dead, aren't they?" He went up with a sack and dropped the stiff bodies into it, one by one. Yes, there were fifty of them, all told' (B, 10). Nat reiterates that he is dealing with the dead bodies of birds, not an object for human consumption. As he

[42] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 114.
[43] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, p. 66.

counts out each individual bird – all fifty of them – the horror of consciousness is repeated over and over. There is a sense that each 'stiff body' matters with the phrase 'all told' (B, 10). With this, Nat dignifies the life of each individual bird. This repeated horror brings Nat to a realisation of the absurdity of the death toll: 'It was unnatural, queer' (B, 10). Nat twice uses the word 'queer' to describe his reaction to the unsettling scene. In this, du Maurier destabilises the normative status of the human practice of mass bird murder.

Later in the tale, du Maurier further destabilises the normative sense of the absent referent by reiterating this sense of queerness:

> there were dead birds everywhere. […] Wherever he looked he saw dead birds. No trace of the living.
>
> […]
>
> It was *queer*; he hated touching them. The bodies were still warm and bloody. The blood matted their feathers. *He felt his stomach turn*. (B, 27, my italics)

Recalling the heroine's revulsion at the consumption of birds' flesh and eggs in the fiction examined throughout this thesis, Nat's encounter with 'the bleeding bodies of the birds' (B, 27) provokes nausea – an appropriate reaction of disgust – at carrying out what very closely mirrors the practice of preparing bird corpses for human consumption. Nat now confronts the absurdity of this normative practice. It is after undergoing this edifying ordeal that Nat ponders the birds' capacity for memory and knowledge as analysed above: 'how many million years of memory were stored in those little brains, behind the stabbing beaks, the piercing eyes, now giving them this instinct to destroy mankind' (B, 38). With this, perhaps the final thought of a man about to die, Nat attempts to imagine an avian perspective, reaching a step further than Emily Brontë's feather scene in *Wuthering Heights*. In this moment, Nat approaches what can be deemed 'thinking outside the cage'.[44]

Conclusion

Does the depiction of birds meeting (human) violence with violence undermine the post-human potential of du Maurier's tale? To what extent does 'The Birds' partake in the damaging anthropocentric ideology that designates birds as to-be-feared Others?

[44] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 1.

Marian Scholtmeijer's critique of the use of animals in modern horror is particularly pertinent to such a reading of 'The Birds'. She holds that

> because animals represent almost no threat whatsoever to the modern person, horror generally relies upon the total corruption of the animal's image. Horror stories and horror films normally do little else but project human fears onto the stereotypical beast. The genre, typically, does not care a whit about the genuine animal beyond its, usually exaggerated, physical appearance. The animal monster, then, isolates evil from the human species and contains that evil safely in an alien image […] the animal monster removes collective guilt from the spectator, isolates and affirms the innocence of the humans that fall victim to the monster.[45]

When we consider 'The Birds' in light of the damning presentation of farmer Trigg and his associates, we come to see how du Maurier's 'horror' story works against the speciesist tendency of the genre. First of all, the image of the bird is not corrupted in du Maurier's story; although their uncharacteristic aggression towards humans might at first seem in keeping with Scholtmeijer's observations, this, as I have demonstrated, is not unprovoked. Far from assuming a 'monstrous' visage, the birds appear as they do in 'real' life; sparrows look like sparrows, so do gannets and gulls. It might be claimed that du Maurier did 'not care a whit about the genuine' birds, but the text foregrounds an imagined consciousness of the birds, acknowledging the inner workings of 'those little brains' (B, 38). The birds may seem to be the agents of evil, but du Maurier's damning presentation of the bird-murdering farmers surely reverses the dynamic of animal evil and human innocence that Scholtmeijer outlines. Farmer Trigg and his associates are clearly isolated as images of 'evil'. And yet the tale's depiction of unprovoked human 'evil' towards birds reinstates rather than 'remove[s] the collective guilt from the spectator' since most humans are deeply complicit in the culture of animal exploitation. Although readers who might consider themselves to be guilt-free of the atrocities represented by the Triggs, we are all, like Nat – a man capable of a degree of sensitivity to the plight of the birds – nonetheless collectively responsible for the birds' oppression through complacency as participants in our culture.

Du Maurier depicts Nat as a victim of war himself. Furthermore, his relative sensitivity to the birds, and his scathing appraisal of the farm inhabitants, suggests that he is scornful of their practices and opinions. The fact that none of the other humans

[45] Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims*, p. 283.

in Nat's community are prepared to take his careful avian observations seriously is symptomatic of the yet prevailing anthropocentric ideology that du Maurier was writing in and is still prevalent in non-esoteric human communities. Perhaps for these reasons, the reader might imagine, even hope, that Nat will survive the bird attack at the tale's close and activate his newfound consciousness of interlinked oppression. Thus, du Maurier is working both within the horror genre whilst revolutionising its speciesist tradition.[46] By imagining a kind of avian consciousness, and by foregrounding the legitimate reasons for their revolt through the figure of the farmer, du Maurier's story complicates the idea that the birds simply represent some aspects of human anxiety. Unlike du Maurier's heroine-centred novels, 'The Birds' makes a radical departure by insisting that exploitative power should be made to answer for the misery it imposes upon other beings.

The Brontës' and du Maurier's fiction exhibits an implicit, and oftentimes explicit, awareness of the shared oppressions – and its resulting restlessness that ecofeminists became acutely conscious of as du Maurier's long writing career was coming to an end. In addition to this pervasive avian restlessness, all three writers explore the gendered power dynamics at stake when men and women share avian meals and restless heroines reject birds' flesh and eggs. Across all the works examined in this thesis, normalised masculine violence – in the form of bird hunting and consumption – is complicated and condemned. Often, the heroines who become complicit in these pursuits, by force of their bird-murdering, yet compelling, male lovers, are punished; Honor Harris is rendered wheel-chair bound as a direct result of her involvement in bird hunting, and the narrator of 'The Chamois' must confront an uncomfortable, nauseating consciousness of her own ambiguous relationship to hunting and bird consumption. The Brontë novels as well as du Maurier's earlier novels might be regarded as speciesist since they co-opt the suffering of birds for the purpose of addressing women's oppression without concession to their fellow avian victims. However, an ecofeminist approach has the capacity to address these issues within the context of a larger project; one that seeks to uncover the interconnected ways in which patriarchal practice exerts its exploitative tendency on all of those deemed lowly in its hierarchy of beings.

[46] Scholtmeijer offers an astute reading of Stephen King's horror novel, *Cujo* (1981), to illustrate the speciesism inherent in the genre. In doing so, she simultaneously demonstrates that his writing also espouses a deeply misogynistic tone. See Scholtmeijer, *Animals Victims*, pp. 283-92.

In light of the scenes of avian consumption that I have examined throughout the thesis, the birds' killing of the farmers becomes a vegetarian interruption. Trigg threatens to shoot and eat the birds; the birds prevent this scenario by killing him first. The difference here is that in the other novels and tales, women, due to their shared objectified status with the birds on their plates, and their conflictual complicity in masculinist culture, determine whether or not the bird on their plate is consumed or rejected. The fate of the bird is more dependent on the heroine's nauseous reaction to her own confinement than her concern for birds. In 'The Birds', du Maurier removes this layer of female intervention to allow the birds themselves to respond to their own oppression. Humans can only guess as to whether or not other animals' behaviour can be motivated by a sense of injustice. On the one hand, it is presumptuous, and speciesist, to presume that they do not. On the other, it is anthropomorphic to imagine that other animals behave as we do. Notwithstanding this, there are cases in which literary anthropomorphism can be a necessary step towards moving beyond speciesist, and therefore exploitative, uses of other animals. Ryan points out that 'in naming the process of articulating experiences of animals as "anthropomorphism" we implicitly assume that the functions and features we are discussing belong solely to humans'.[47] Furthermore, Ryan considers the potential benefits of anthropomorphism as a 'way to consider the relationship between humans and animals that gives a voice to the animal', which I argue du Maurier achieves in her tale.[48]

Du Maurier's largely neglected tale, a bold meta-narrative vegetarian intervention, dares to envisage the extinction of the Anthropocene. A strength of du Maurier's tale is located in the fact that she allows the birds – who have been victims of the Anthropocene – to exact revenge on their human oppressors at the point of humans' own self-destruction. The World War context of 'The Birds' suggests that the human tendency to mass destruction was in the forefront of du Maurier's mind as she wrote the tale. Du Maurier daringly admits of the possibility of Anthropocentric extinction – an Earth without humans, that will presumably thrive once again in the manner it did in the pre-Anthropocene age: abounding with avian life.

[47] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 41.
[48] Ryan, *Animal Theory*, p. 42.

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