

The Grizzled Wolf and The Mauled Lamb:
An Interpretation of Animal Language in Melville's Translation of Ovid's "Tereus, Procne, and
Philomela"

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Animal language permeates A.D. Melville's translation of Ovid's story, "Tereus, Procne, and Philomela," in *The Metamorphoses*. I use Melville's acclaimed translation since he notes that its goal was to "find words that are equally striking" as their Latin counterparts (xxxiv). English is a language with multiple words to convey the same object or idea, and each synonym carries a specific nuance. Latin was a language that lacked synonyms. Thus, good translators should carefully analyze Ovid's original Latin before choosing an English word for the translation. Melville was meticulous in this effort, which is why the translation provides the most realistic representation of Ovid's original connotative intentions.

This paper will analyze Melville's translation to discuss Ovid's connotative intentions of using animal language within the tale. I argue that animal language relates the male and female characters to animals at the story's beginning, which figures the men as dangerous predators and the women as vulnerable prey. This predator/prey binary also foreshadows Tereus' (the main male character's) rape of Philomela, which the text, in keeping with this language pattern, describes in terms of feral (sexual) heat, hunting, and consummation. However, at the story's ending, when Philomela and her sister, Procne, kill Tereus' son, Itys, and feed him to his father, there is a reversal of this predator/prey binary since the women become the predators. The transformations at the story's ending figure Tereus as a prey animal and the two sisters as predatory birds, supporting this reversal of power dynamics. The primary function of this reversal at the conclusion is that it undermines the idea that Philomela is powerless and voiceless in protesting her rape—an abstraction that readers might make on a first reading due to this rape plot. This reversal also advances the idea that the nature of men is inherently corrupt and cursed. Tereus' consumption of his son supports this. This consumption of his son is symbolic of the extinction of his genetic lineage. And I would go as far as to say that this cursed nature of men

derives from the violent and animalistic nature of the male Gods. Ovid ultimately figures women via this reversal to be the gender with a more robust and resilient nature. This predator/prey binary and the reversal of it are essential for recognizing this distinction.

The story's opening establishes a predator/prey binary when the text presents the "sea-born bands of wild barbarians" whom Tereus fights (134). These barbarians are invaders. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (abbreviated OED henceforward), the word "barbarian" describes a person who is rude, wild, or uncivilized—animal like. The word's meaning of wildness debases these uncivilized people to brutes which are a pack of wild animals. The word "band," which means a pack or flock, also supports the idea that the men were acting as though they existed in an animal group together. This relating of the barbarians to animals is finally informed from the phrase "sea-born" which modifies the word "barbarian." Humans are not born in the sea; aquatic mammals are. Therefore, the word "barbarian" compounded with the other words in the phrase that connote animal meanings should be read in the context to dehumanize the male fighters by relating their identities to marine animals—and not to merely describe their behavior as uncivilized or as existing in the context of a maritime fight.

This phrasing also provides an implicit connection to Tereus' barbaric behavior since he will rape his wife's sister. The story's opening language makes the point that Tereus is just as much of an animal as his male enemies are. The text describes how he "routed" against the barbarians (134). The word "routed", per the OED, once connoted the meaning of "an animal's roar" and it also can mean "a collection of wolves." This word can even describe the mooing of cattle or a stampede. A human would scream—not "rout", likewise a human would attack his enemies—not stampede them. The effect of portraying Tereus as an animal early in the text is that it foretells the animalistic rape that he will commit. The animal language used to describe

him relates him as a predator—a threat—to his city and its women just as the barbarians he fights are painted as animalistic threats to the city's security.

It is even more interesting that the text describes how Tereus “traced his lineage from Mars himself” (134). Mars was the Roman god of war and the second to Jupiter in the Roman pantheon. Mars was also associated with the animal of the wolf¹. And because, Tereus’ “routing” against the barbarians again can connote a pack of wolves, this figuring of Tereus in the story as a predator relates his animalistic behavior to the similar behavior of the male gods. This claim is further supported when the text depicts Tereus as an eagle when he snatches Philomela to rape her: “Jove’s bird of prey has caught a hare, and in his talons carries it aloft to his high nest, the captive has no chance of flight” (137). The eagle was Jove’s bird of choice to morph into when abducting innocent humans; Jove morphed into an eagle to abduct Ganymede. Jove also morphed into a bull and a wolf to abduct humans in other stories in the text; therefore, it is not a coincidence that Tereus is depicted as an eagle when he snatches Philomela to rape her. This figuring of him as both an eagle and a wolf in multiple parts of the text essentially illuminates his male behavior to be biologically natural and existing as a byproduct of the male Gods who acted in this similar animalistic manner by taking on identical animal forms to rape mortal women. Leo Curran discusses this fact when he writes that “Rape in the form of bestiality occurs in Arachne’s catalog of rapes in which gods become [predatory animals] bull, eagle, swan, snake, ram, horse, dolphin, and lion” (219). After all, if all men are created in the image of the male Gods, then the

¹ The claim that Mars was associated with the wolf was garnered from the online and peer-reviewed *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. The article “Mars” written by historian Mark Cartwright features this claim.

male mortals on Earth should embody the same characteristics as their Godly creators because of this natural order of the Gods. This idea is also presented to readers in the “Creation” story of *The Metamorphoses*: “Man was made, from seed divine/formed by the great Creator” (3). This notion of men descending from God’s seed furthers the binary between men and women in terms of their own characteristics which were imprinted from the Gods. At the core, the biological nature of males is violent and predatory since the nature of the male gods was also violent and predatory.

Therefore, all the male characters in the story are figured as predator animals just as the male gods also acted very predatorily. However, some critics might question the character of Philomela’s father, Pandion, and claim that he is not portrayed as a predatory animal. This is true. However, Philomela’s father is effeminized. The feminization of Philomela’s father is seen when he gives his daughter, Philomela, to Tereus to visit her sister, Procne, whom Tereus has married: “Weeping tenderly, he kissed his child goodbye/he scarce could say farewell for sobs and tears” (137). Pandion’s behavior is typical of how a compassionate mother would act toward her daughters when she parts with them, and the fact that he is responsible for raising his children which is an act of both nurturing and protecting them was typically a woman’s job in Ancient Rome. Gillian Clark discusses this historical fact that fathers, culturally speaking in Ancient Rome, were not the ones who typically took care of children—the mothers were relegated to domestic tasks such as child raising when she writes that, “[w]omen were [...] chaste, dutiful, submissive, and domestic; they took pride in the family they produced” (209). Therefore, Pandion’s nurturing of his daughter as demonstrated by his want to not let her leave is a mother’s role, and his weeping is indicative of a mother’s deep emotional connection to her

child—an emotional connection that fears a parting of her child even if it be a couple days and an emotional connection that is typically stronger than a father’s emotional connection to his child.

Pandion’s weeping is also indicative of a man who has lost his *virtus*—a specific virtue in Ancient Rome. This virtue carried connotations of valor, manliness, excellence, courage, character, and worth, perceived as masculine strengths (from Latin *vir*, meaning man). In addition to this, the text makes no mention of any motherly figure, offering more evidence that Pandion has taken on that role. Clearly, he is figured more as a mother than as a manly figure in the text which is why he is not described as a predator. He does not share the same cursed nature as men do because he acts in a feminine manner. Female behavior is enough to escape the curse of male violence resulting from the natural order of the Gods. Females are generally not destructive, abusive, or violent as males are in this text/time. Pandion’s description is more reminiscent of how the women are described in the text until the reversal at the ending: the women are vulnerable and powerless (after all Pandion is submissive to Tereus by “yielding” to his demand to allow his daughter to leave). The word “yielding” notably connotes a submissive person in a power dynamic. When one yields, he or she gives in to the demands of a more powerful person.

The vulnerable and powerlessness nature of women in the text before the reversal is seen mainly in the depiction of the rape which again is described using animal language. Philomela is figured as three different animals throughout the rape—all of which are typically prey or weak animals. Philomela is first described as a hare when she is snatched by Tereus: “Jove’s bird of prey has caught a hare” (137). It is quite interesting that the animal of the hare is the first figure that Philomela is figured as. Hares are a type of jackrabbit, and a breed that is known for its agility and fast nature due to its large hind legs which support running. In British society, the

word “hare” also functions as a verb to describe someone or something who runs with great speed. Therefore, the figuring of Philomela as a hare has a contradictory double meaning. The figuring implies that although Philomela is a docile animal since the hare is generally a calm and docile animal, as hares spend most of their time resting and foraging for food, she still tries to escape from Tereus/the eagle since the text uses the word “caught” in the sentence “Jove’s bird of prey has caught a hare” (137). Hares do have great running ability, and Tereus needed to catch Philomela. Therefore, the text does provide implicit connotations through the words themselves that the nature of women is not as docile or weak as the overall plot in this scene suggests—which is a common feature according to Leo Curran when he claims that “Ovid’s attitude toward women may appear paradoxical” (213). After all, Ovid’s depiction of Philomela as a “quivering” animal as she is being raped is underscored by the fact that Tereus first needed to “catch” her—implying that she did try to escape and was not as docile in this scene as the text describes overtly.

However, since Philomela *is* caught by Tereus as an eagle when he “carries her aloft in his talons” the nature of women in this part of the text is still, overall, superficially figured as weak (137). After Tereus catches Philomela, the text describes the next stage of the rape—the actual act of it. During this, Philomela is figured as a lamb: “He ravished her, a virgin, all alone/She shivered like a little frightened lamb, mauled by a grizzled wolf and cast aside” The animal language used in this one sentence to describe the physical act of the rape is significant since it connotes the physicality of the rape itself while also relaying Philomela’s emotions in Ovid’s contradictory fashion. The fact that the text uses the word “mauled” connotes the physicality of raping a virgin. Sexually-speaking, virgins still have a hymen, and usually a virgin’s first experience of sexual intercourse—rape or consensual—is quite painful since the

hymen literally tears causing bloodshed. The word “mauled” is quite fitting for this act of raping a virgin since it denotes a predatory animal who tears another’s flesh—and the tearing in this case is symbolic of a torn hymen. Because the text uses the word “maul” as compared to any other type of verb that can cause cutting of the flesh like “bite” is significant since “maul” literally connotes a complete tearing of the flesh—whereas a word like “bite” does not always lead to a complete tearing of a piece of skin—biting may puncture skin, but it does not usually tear it fully.

In addition to the word “maul” connoting the physical act of penetrating a virgin, Philomela is lastly figured as a peaceful dove with its “feathers dripping blood” (137). The fact that Philomela drips blood is further evidence of her hymen being ripped since blood would be a byproduct of the tearing of it. Moreover, the imagery of blood that underscores this rape further relates the rape to be the consummatory result of a predator’s hunt. The text implies through this image of blood and a hunt that Tereus is taking something from Philomela—he is taking her virginity as well as her innocence which makes this rape scene far worse since Tereus is stealing something from Philomela that she would never be able to get back. He is metaphorically consuming her innocence by raping her as a virgin—a childhood innocence that requires protection from danger by parents which is revealed when the text states that she was “calling and calling out to her father, calling to her sister” for help as she was attacked (137).

The physical act of forced penetration is not the only thing conveyed in this rape scene. Philomela’s emotions are also conveyed through the language of her “shuddering in fear, still dreading the claws [of Tereus]” (137). Even though Philomela is raped, and despite that the language expressing her emotion paints her as a fearful and weak animal, the language and her being interpellated as weak prey animals do provide her with a voice since they have a rhetorical

effect on readers. As Curran states, “Perhaps the most impressive element of Ovid’s treatment of rape is his understanding of the sheer horror of the experience for the woman and his ability to empathize with her and thereby to portray her terror with compelling authenticity” (232). Just as Ovid empathizes with Philomela, we as readers empathize for her as well. We recognize and understand the fear of the innocent, prey animal— when she says that she is “dreading her captor’s—Tereus’—the eagle’s—claws (137). We recognize that the language in the phrase “You Brute! You Cruel Brute!” demonstrates her willingness to complain of that which the eagle/wolf, Tereus, has done to her” (137-138). And as I have been saying, despite the fact that Philomela is painted as weak in this exchange since she is raped by a man figured as a predator animal as she stands there, “shivering”, and takes it despite trying to escape it in the beginning— she still has a voice—she still holds some power in the exchange, since without a voice, she is completely objectified and ravished. This again highlights the paradox of Ovid’s writing as Curran asserts. Even though Philomela is raped, she still is given a voice through the language she utters and through her animal figuring evoking pity by readers and fear by her which seem to deny a complete state of powerlessness—something which Curran argues is Ovid’s intent when he says that “For him it is no contradiction to present rape simultaneously as both an outrage committed on the woman and as a grotesque caricature of masculinity” (218).

Tereus’ recognition of Philomela’s desire to talk about the rape since she says that she will “shout what [he has] done” prompts him to cut off her tongue (138). This moment has been read by contemporary feminist critics such as Patricia Johnson as constituting the ultimate form of female suppression since it highlights a societal culture that often allows male rapists to silence their victims: “The silencing of rape victims is common in the *Metamorphoses*, where voices of complaint or protest are cut off as part of their resulting metamorphosis (68). Elissa

Marder also argues that “The story thematizes a woman’s experience of violation and rhetorically enacts her inability to speak that experience. While Philomela does ultimately find a discourse for her rage [by weaving the tale of her rape], her experience is expressed in disarticulated speech—by a language that has no tongue” (157). Marder concedes that although Philomela is silenced via the removal of her tongue, she still does have a voice since she finds a non-articulatory method of communicating her experience by weaving. Indeed, weaving is not articulated speech, but as current linguistic theory rooted in semiotics has demonstrated, mainly the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who defined language as a system of “arbitrary signs” and argued “the word *sign* [should] designate the whole [word] and concept by *signified*,” language is composed of a series of arbitrary signs or words by which we assign and interpret meaning to/from these signs (the signified) (5). One does not need to physically be able to articulate these signs or words to communicate something. If this were the case, then mute or deaf people would never be able to use and understand language. For example, sign language—is not vocalized; however, it is still a communicative language by which people can understand each other. And the fundamental essence of language is to communicate between people. Philomela may be physically voiceless, but she is not powerless by being physically voiceless. Lynn Enterline discusses this point when she argues that “As Philomela’s tongue suggests, violated bodies also provide Ovid with the occasion to reflect on [...] the power of language as such (3). After all, Philomela still has power in her ability to communicate since she still can convey her experience through weaving images which Procne does eventually receive and understand.

However, Marder is correct to claim that Tereus’ cutting of the tongue supports a culture that silences raped women when she says that “the physical cutting of Philomela’s tongue does not merely function as a narrative consequence of this rape, but rather becomes a figurative

representation of it” (158). This figurative representation of the severed tongue is in of itself another rape—this time Tereus tries to steal as most rapists do (since rape literally means ravishing or taking another’s possession) her voice which would allow her to tell people of the rape—something which Curran claims functions as a sort of “rape fantasy or metaphorical conquest in which the man’s conquest is characterized by the language and imagery of the rape” (222). This notion of fantasy as Curran discusses can be seen in the language when Tereus cuts out Philomela’s tongue.

The cutting of Philomela’s tongue is described, in keeping with this pattern, in animal language. The text specifies that Tereus “seized [Philomela] by the hair/And forced her arms behind her back and bound [...]He seized her tongue with tongs and with his brutal sword, cut it away” (138). This physical mutilation of Philomela’s body is very evocative of animal slaughter by humans. When one slaughters a chicken or bird, for example, the slaughterer usually bounds the animal’s arms together and slashes its throat. Philomela is figured in this same manner since she literally is bound and “offered her throat [to Tereus]” (138). Moreover, the text then depicts Tereus “even after that dire deed, lusting still/Often on the poor maimed girl he worked his will” (138). This is also indicative of Tereus’ gaining some sort of sick, sexual pleasure from mutilating Philomela when he cut off her tongue. There is a level of power in her inability to speak that excites him, and this prompts him to continue to “lust over her” and “work his will”—a euphemism which denotes that he continued to sexually assault her.

This cutting off her tongue is also evocative of a hunt. Animals when they hunt something tend to leave a portion of the animal behind as a source of pride, and this portion that Tereus left is clearly Philomela’s tongue. The language in this instance is very reflective of a sort of pleasurable, sexual hunting by the predator.

The symbolism of this rape being the result of an animalistic hunt of sexual heat is seen throughout this episode—and is first connoted when Tereus meets Philomela. In this passage in the middle of page 135, Tereus views Philomela as a woman who “sets [his] heart ablaze as stubble leaps to flame [...] or fodder blazes stored above the byre.” This language is significant in that it describes the food of cattle which relates Tereus to a livestock animal. According to the OED, the word “stubble” is the straw of grain-stalks, etc. gathered after the crop has been harvested. This is the straw that livestock primarily eat after most of the crop has been harvested for human consumption. In addition to this word, the word “fodder” also describes the food, especially dried hay, or feed, given to cattle and other livestock, and the word “byre” is synonymous for a cow shed. Therefore, the text describes Tereus’ emotions when he looks at Philomela as how a cow would act when feeding. The effect of this language is that it describes Tereus’ desire for Philomela as a sexual hunt. He, like an animal, has an intense hunger for her, and this physical language of feeding connotes the impending danger Philomela will face.

The language of Tereus’ hunting of Philomela as being a manifestation of the sexual heat he feels for her is also seen when the text describes how his “passion drove unreined” (135). The word “unreined” is significant since it maintains this pattern of animal language. The word “unreined” denotes the action of freeing a horse from restraint. At this point, Tereus’ passions—his sexual desire for Philomela—is uncontrolled. He will do anything he can do to hunt her as evident when he weighs the possibility of “assailing her with gifts” or raping— “ravishing her” if even she is not permitted to go with him (135).

However, once Tereus does get permission to take Philomela with him—the language of the text shifts from Philomela being the cause of Tereus’ animalistic sexual heat—to her being a prize that he has hunted for, won, and now wishes to consume (via this rape): “I’ve won, he

cried! I've won/The captor gloats over his prize" (137). The fact that the text uses the word "gloat" is significant since this word means to contemplate or dwell on one's own success or another's misfortune with smugness or malignant pleasure. And clearly, Tereus' own success is in his capture of Philomela. He has won the hunt. This language via the word "prize" also objectifies Philomela by portraying her to be nothing more than a prized object—and the manifestation of Tereus' own predatory and hungry nature. And on a literal level, this is what rape is—it is the objectification of a person—a woman usually—for her sexual goods—goods that a rapist wants to take, steal, and consume/use without permission. The animal language of rape being figured as a hunt makes this point more overt since predatory animals—at their core—mostly think about their own survival by consuming another animal's body for nourishment and pleasure. Eating is nonetheless a pleasurable act. A predatory animal lives its life of hunting, and this extended metaphor of a hunt is very conducive to describe the act of rape itself because both ideas are so similar. Both a hunt and rape are actions that steal, consume, or use the flesh of another animal or person without the animal or person's permission.

Now that I have established how the animal language is functioning in the scene leading up to the rape and the act of rape, and how this rape scene creates a binary of predatory and prey animals to describe men and women—it is essential to discuss the ending of the story in which Philomela and her sister Procne plot against Tereus by killing and feeding Tereus his son. Why is there such a reversal at the ending and what function does this reversal serve? This is a topic that few critics of the story talk about, so I would like to advance my own interpretation of this final part of the story, which if accepted, can be used to concretize the story in a different light.

It is worth noting that throughout the rape, Philomela is mostly powerless. Indeed, she does put up a fight by trying to escape from Tereus' claws, and yes, she does protest and scream about what happen to her—prompting Tereus to cut off her tongue. She then weaves her story. However, she is still raped, and that of itself connotes an extreme lack of power over one's sovereignty and body. Although, the ending of the story is so interesting since the sisters become the predators and Tereus and his son become the prey when Procne kills her son and feeds him to her husband. There is a clear reversal of power occurring in this moment since the women gain power over both Itys' and Tereus' bodies. Procne mutilates her son's body by killing him and decapitating his head just as Tereus mutilated Philomela by raping her and dismembering her tongue. The women are clear predators now.

The reversal of the predator/prey binary is first seen in the figuring of Tereus' son Itys as a "suckling fawn" and the figuring of Procne and Philomela as a "tigress" (141). This predator/prey binary is being reversed in this sense since a Philomela who was once figured as a "lamb" in the rape scene is now a "tigress". Moreover, a fawn is a baby deer. The figuring of Itys as a baby deer serves two purposes—firstly, it relates him as a prey animal since deer are herbivores and not predatory animals by nature, and the text takes this one step further by figuring him as not only a deer—but a baby one. This has the effect of emasculating him since babies are not grown and able to live independently. A baby deer requires his mother to nurture and protect him—a relationship which is also designed to show how his father did not protect the woman when the woman was the one who once protected him as a baby.

Itys is also dehumanized by how Procne kills him. The text describes how she "slit his throat" and "carved him and cooked his parts" (141). The fact that she "slit his throat" maintains the pattern of animal language since this is the primary method by which prey animals are

slaughtered by humans in factory farming settings. Chickens, for example, are bound by their necks in a metal restraint and dragged across a line as a large razor blade slits each throat. Also, after slaughter, chickens and other farm animals are dismembered prior to packaging each individual piece of meat for human consumption. In this sense, Procne is now initiating the process of consuming Tereus' son by carving and cooking his body parts just as Tereus metaphorically consumed her sister by raping her. The killing and mutilation of his Itys' body for consumption is basically that which Tereus did to Philomela—only now the women are the powerful ones doing the killing and performing a sort of inverted consumption by forcing Tereus to do the consuming that they started by hunting and killing his son.

Tereus' consumption of his son could also be read as functioning as a womb image which emasculates him. However, it is far more accurate to say that it functions as a tomb image since his eating of his son represents the extinction of his own genetic lineage—a punishment that was required and deemed just by Procne when she realizes that Itys is “just like his father” (140). Marder discusses how this moment can be read as a tomb image:

Procne violates her husband by making him gag on the law of the father; she arrests the progression of paternity by feeding him his own child through the mouth. Procne thus uses her own child as a substitute for a tongue. She speaks through her child, forcing the child into her husband's mouth and belly. In the body of the father, the belly becomes the place of a tomb instead of a womb. Rather than relying on a logic of exchange and a discourse of loss, Procne transgresses the boundaries of the male body by forcing it to assume the presence of another. Metaphorically, Procne turns Tereus into a pathetic mimicry of a sterile, masculine maternity. (162)

Clearly, the extinction of Tereus' ability to reproduce is the worst and yet fitting punishment that he could receive. And by erasing Tereus' genetic lineage through his consumption of his only son, his existence is worth nothing. Genetically speaking, he has been lost in the memory of the world forever. His negative, masculine qualities will never have the chance to imprint themselves onto his future offspring, and these predatory qualities will never have the opportunity to harm another woman again. It is a just punishment for Procne who fears that Tereus' son (and likely all the sons thereafter) will be just like him since she recognizes that Tereus' son is already "just like his father" (140), and it is a punishment that Tereus himself recognizes as being the worst possible type when he "wept and wailed and called himself his son's disastrous tomb with his naked sword" (142). His "weeping and wailing" compounded with the image of him now having a "naked sword" further emasculates him and relates him to the very type of "quivering lamb" [prey animal] that Philomela once was due to the image of this "naked sword."

In this instance, the term "naked sword" should be read as referring to a penis since it is described as "naked." However, that word "naked" also serves a double meaning and a pun since "naked" can also connote exposure to harm; unprotected or vulnerable since without clothes humans have no protection to their bodies. However, the term "naked" can also refer to a body that lacks a backbone or support since clothing does add a layer onto the vulnerable and damage-prone, physical flesh. This modifying word "naked" to describe his "sword" does indeed carry multiple shades of meaning which all emasculate him further.

Tereus' consuming of his son also supports the reading of males being cursed by the natural order of descending from the male Gods. Larry Benson even suggests that the later depiction of Mars accompanied by a wolf in Chaucer's *Knights Tale* (1.2041-50) is derived from

the iconographical tradition of Albricus Philosophus' *De deorum imaginibus*, which offers *mares vorans*, Latin for “devouring males,” as the etymological basis for Mars “Mavors” (836n). The idea that the name Mars derives from the Latin phrase that means “devouring males” is very significant since as this ending of the story reveals, Tereus consumes his own son—providing more evidence to Tereus' cursed nature that resulted from the natural order of descending from the male Gods and in Tereus' case—tracing his descent from “Mars himself” (134).

However, it is worth noting that Tereus is not only emasculated and punished through the extinction of his own genetic lineage. He is also punished via the metamorphoses² that occurs at the story's very end which continue this emasculation. In this final metamorphosis, Tereus is figured now as a grounded hoopoe bird, and Procne and Philomela take on forms of birds that “float on wings” (142). Therefore, the predator/prey binary continues to reverse itself since Tereus who was once a powerful, flying eagle is now a grounded, small hoopoe bird—a bird that is not a predatory animal, but rather a prey animal. Indeed, like all birds, hoopoes fly. However, the text describes his transformation as a hoopoe that remains “grounded.” Clearly, the text shows him to be a bird that does not fly often, if he flies at all. Hoopoes, in general, are birds that do not fly as often as other birds. Furthermore, the diet of a hoopoe is largely plant-based. Hoopoes live near pastures and eat grass, seeds, and berries. They do eat meat in the form of small frogs and insects, but their diet is generally herbivorous. Thus, it is fitting that Tereus who was once a predator turns into a prey bird that does not typically eat other living mammals.

The hoopoe bird also makes a muzzled “hoo, hoo, hoo” sound. This pattern of vocalization is reminiscent of weeping which provides more evidence of Tereus' newfound

² The biological information about the birds that the characters get turned into is paraphrased from *The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Birds of the World: A Detailed Visual Reference Guide To 1600 Birds And Their Habitats, Shown In More Than 1800 Pictures*.

emasculatation through this transformation. This crying as a bird is a continuation of his crying when he eats his son and destroys his genetic lineage. Tereus, even now as a bird, is a upset, weak, and fearful animal. He is no longer the strong, predatory male he once was.

Procne and Philomela become nightingales in the metamorphoses at the story's ending. Procne and Philomela still hold more power than Tereus in their transformations since Tereus does not fly. Procne and Philomela have the power and freedom of flight which is something that they lacked at first as submissive and vulnerable women. It also is fitting that the women are turned into nightingales. A nightingale is a very vocal bird, and this species of bird is known for its beautiful song. Thus, it is ironic that a woman who had her tongue dismembered after being raped takes on the form of a bird who sings beautifully and often. Nightingales, in Western culture, also are symbolic of purity, virtue, and goodness. This supports this paper's interpretation that males are a cursed gender due to their descent from the predatory male Gods. Feminine behavior is good and blessed. Nightingales are also migratory birds. They fly over large distances over the winter to more tropical areas. Thus, it makes sense that Procne and Philomela turn into a bird that flies freely whenever it wants to move to a better (or less dangerous) place. Philomela may not have been able to escape a violent act against her. As a nightingale, she now has the power and sovereignty to fly anywhere she pleases, and she can escape danger whenever she needs to.

Nightingales also feed exclusively on other living things. Unlike the hoopoe that typically consumes seeds, Nightingales primarily survive with a diet of insects. They directly consume other animals for survival which is the marker of a predator. They may not be large predators in the sense that they do not consume birds of their same size, but they are still predators because they still hunt and feed on other animals.

The text also describes Tereus as a hoopoe bird in an interesting manner. The text says that “for a sword, [he has] a long bill” (142). The OED defines a bill as a “weak, flattened, or slender beak” and makes the note that “*beak* is always used of birds of prey, and generally when striking or pecking is in question; *bill* is mainly used of crows, finches, sparrows, perching birds and songsters [non-predatory birds].” Clearly, this bill further emasculates him since his hard, powerful “sword” or penis has now become a “bill” that is weak and flattened. His transformation into a weak bird with no sword/weak pecker is another punishment fitting for his crime of rape.

Shelley Kaufhold discusses this idea that metamorphoses fit the crimes that human characters commit in the text:

A number of scholars have studied the relationship between narrative and metamorphosis in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, suggesting that metamorphosis is a manifestation of some essential feature described in the narrative: the character of the person; the passions that act upon a person; [or] a person’s conduct” (66).

Clearly, Tereus’ transformation into an animal with a weak and flattened sword and the consumption of his son which destroys his own lineage is a just punishment for a hyper-masculine man who succumbed to sexual desires by raping a woman for reasons of untamed passions and a drive for hedonistic pleasure. He had no respect for women, and therefore he is effeminized. Only once he is effeminized and made to experience the other gender will he learn his lesson, and this is the main distinction between the Male gods and the male mortals. As Garrett Jacobsen points out, “[identical] passions [due to identical traits] may motivate both gods and men, but only human beings suffer” (52). However, the far more interesting abstraction that we can make via this reversal of the predator/prey binary at the story’s ending compounded with

the ending transformations is that the women hold far more power and resilience than the story conveys on a surface reading, and this translation, albeit very similar to the original Latin, might perhaps shed light that this was Ovid's intention. This story also shows that male behavior is the result of descending from the male Gods; however, male mortals are cursed because they ultimately face punishment for the crimes they commit; the Gods do not.

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