

Notes Towards a Stevensian Bestiary: Wings Extended

Warqaa Lowi Mohammed Al-Bazi

Email: warqaa.loaiy1203a@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Asst. Prof. Haitham Kamel Al-Zubbaidi, (Ph. D.)

Email: haithamkamel@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Department of English/ Collage of Arts / University of Baghdad

Abstract

This study aims to trace Wallace Stevens's bird bestiary in two eye-catching poems. Wallace Stevens is one of the few poets known for his eloquence in poetic dictionaries, riddling phrases and devices, and metaphors of magnifico. He is known for his employment of animals, as each animal stands as an emblem for the poet's ideas associated with modernism's *topos* and his contribution to the modern American Bestiary. A man of words and feelings has employed birds extensively throughout his poetic career. He was very fond of roosters or cocks, parakeets, and doves. Many of his bird poems can be seen as a bestiary. Doves have been essential in his poetic affluence and identity as a man and a poet.

Keywords: Bestiary, identity, Bird bestiary, Doves, The Stevensian Bestiary, Modernism, The Modern American Bestiary.

الخلاصة:

لقد تميز الشاعر الأمريكي والس ستيفنس عن رواد الحداثة كما برع في استخدام ملكته الشعرية للإشارة الى الكثير من المفاهيم التي الهمت الحداثة وفي صدد ذلك تبنيه لعالم الحيوان وعلى وجه الخصوص الطيور. الحيوانات الرامزة هو تقليد ادبي تمتد جذوره من العصور الوسطى وما قبلها. في سياق الادب الأمريكي الحديث تطور هذا التقليد عبر الزمن وأصبحت له ابعاد حداثوية وما بعد حداثوية متنوعة. شعر والس ستيفنس لا يخلو من الحيوانات والطيور حيث وظف الطيور الرامزة بثتى أنواعها ليقدم قيم فلسفية وتعليمية وحداثوية, وأهمها الحمامة لارتباطها المباشر بهوية الشاعر ومفاهيم متعلقة بالطيور الرامزة الامريكية الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحيوانات الرامزة، الطيور الرامزة، الحمامة، الحداثة، الهوية.

Introduction

To comprehend the Stevensian Bestiary of birds, one must illuminate the Bestiary and its elements. A Bestiary is a collection of descriptions of all sorts of animals, whether natural and imaginative or fabulous, such as the Unicorn. This form was popularized during the Middle Ages when animals and their actions were illustrated to serve the Christian creed (Beckson. 1992, p.24).

The medieval Bestiary or "the moralized book of beasts" have resumed gaining popularity over time. It resumed to influence art and literature. On the other hand, Bestiaries' origins were not speculated until the twentieth century when bestiaries gained their initial popularity and interest (Clark & McMunn, 1989, p.1). Medieval Bestiaries represent the divinity of order of the universe, where God's powers of creation are celebrated in the medieval mindset (Americana Corporation, 1970, p.625). Interpretations of bestiaries are not enclosed to religious or monastic ideals. Instead, moral lessons are provided with every description and illustration (Clark and McMunn, 1989, p.16). Animals in medieval bestiaries have allegorical functions too. This is seen in texts and illustrations carrying moral messages and entertainment to courts and royal places (Maritny, 2012, p. 556). The spiritual meaning of a bestiary is not a mandatory subject for all bestiaries. On the contrary, some bestiaries carry erotic messages seen in the *Bestiaire d'amour* by Richard de Fournival, where there are no longer any Christian annotations (Americana Corporation, 1970, p.625).

A bestiary can be defined as medieval stories in collections, pseudoscientific in content where descriptions of animals, plants, and stones link the world of natural history and religion to give a moral lesson, and the *Physiologus* ("the naturalist") became a source of such descriptions. Each

description is usually linked to biblical scriptures where zoological metaphors of the bible assist in transmitting the moralization of the tradition. Many Anglo-Saxon poems in the *Exeter Book* have various animals drawn from the *Physiologus*, such as the whale and the panther (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1964, p.549). While "The Bestiary" is the only surviving poem of the late 12th and 13th century that maintained the tradition and represented many French and Latin works (Ousby, 1993, p. 80).¹

After defining a bestiary and its functions, it is essential to trace its functionality to understand the Modern American Bestiary and the Stevensian bird bestiary.

The first and the most important element in a bestiary is where the actions of animals are demonstrated and highlighted to provide a lesson or morale (Quinn, 2004, p.36). One example is when the male pelican, in expressing his wrath, attempts to kill his young birds as a reaction to their rebellious behavior, while the female pelican saves her brood by sitting on their dead bodies to revive them, which later succeeds and they feed from her blood (Dent, 2018, p.836).

Another element of a bestiary is the characteristics of animals that are highlighted to address the moral lesson (Quinn, 2004, p.36), i.e., animals such as the lion, Unicorn, panther, and the stag whose characteristics are associated with good and virtue (Kalof and Pohl-Resl, 2011, p.11). Moreover, birds and insects whose characteristics are borrowed from

¹ Even though the *Physiologus* was written in 2nd century in Alexandria, it was dedicated to the Christian community in Syria, it is biblical in essence but more strikingly unbiblical in zoology, as it is a core text of prose and verse bestiary. Its sources are traced to ancient works, that of Aristotle's tier thus most tales are viewed as possessions of the ancient world in which the created world in the book have a contemporaneous scientific inclination, little to say; *Physiologus* is original in employing animals that celebrates the Christian creed (Diekstra 142). It was translated to Latin in the 6th century yet this version was adapted in English bestiaries; especially *Verso B* and *Y* as they contain core moral lessons (Hassig 6) which participated in initial defining of bestiary.

observation, fable, myth, and many others to compile a lesson (Clark and McMunn, 1989, p.2). As the long version of the bestiary text of Pierre De Beauvais starts with a comparison between Christ and the phoenix, the short version also mentions the concise physical characteristics of the phoenix and its attributes. It also ends with Christ's symbolism (Ibid 77). The *Physiologus* and its variants have shared the physical characteristics of animals. i.e., the lion, with his triple nature, stands as a symbol of Christ and chivalry. His tail can clear its traces in order to escape hunters. He can also sleep with open eyes and many other characteristics (Ibid 135). Habits and reactions of fabulous animals are another elemental particles to a bestiary, whether they belong to the Unicorn or the phoenix. For instance, the phrase "crocodile tears" is obtained from an old bestiary where the crocodile cries as he eats his victims (Shaw, 1976, p.35).

In addition to serving the Christian dogma and implying morale, another provision to bestiaries' ends is giving a lesson on natural history (Ibid) seen in Pliny's *Natural History*. Much symbolism surrounds every Bestiary; thus, it is a crucial element.

Animals and their symbolism are very efficient to medieval Christians, as symbolism generally bridges the seen and the unseen or the divine. The medieval use of animal symbolism was much induced in the likeness akin to God, and all creation is his manifestation, which reflected the medieval dogmatic tendency towards symbols as God spoke to a man in symbols. The symbolic approach was seen in bestiaries, where God fated animals' characteristics and habits for a moral purpose (Kalof and Pohl-Resl, 2011, p.33).

On the other hand, animal imagery in medieval bestiaries had a symbolic significance where two opposites were engaged in combat: the panther and the dragon, the elephant and the crocodile, and the stork and the

serpent. All symbolized the battle between the animals of the divine and the satanic (Ibid 37).

Jo Gill highlights the American Bestiary modern Poem. Modern Bestiary is highly cultural. One example is Ted Hughes's *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957) and *Crow* (1970), where he employs certain qualities from the animal world. The Australian poet Les Murray summons animals such as whales and insects in a collection of poems named *Translations from the Natural World*. The modern American cultural context differs (Martiny, 2012, p. 555-556). This and the following paragraphs corroborate that the Modern American Bestiary has developed over centuries in literature and managed to have certain modern and different features.

Nevertheless, as the famously Charles Darwin's theory spread, the tradition seemed to lose popularity until modern poets, specifically, proved otherwise in the modernized American context exhibiting its different purposes and directions (Martiny, 2012, p. 555-556). Which is, as Arnold Clayton Henderson (1982) alludes to, "innovation." As a genre and a tradition, Bestiary has shown resilience in its subjects (40).

Morales and lessons have been an inevitable part of the medieval Bestiary, yet in modern Post-Darwinian, Post-Freudian American contexts; poetic bestiaries maintained the didactic end. Acutely inviting philosophical readings besides the moral and the ethical. One example of the cooperation of the moral lesson and the notion of entertainment is seen in *The Lost Zoo* (1940) by Countee Cullen, the lessons of the poem are both subjective or personal and political, with the employment of imaginative animals, he shows that such animals illustrate humanistic restrictions despite their imaginative qualities. Also, it maintains the traditions of medieval intent of illustrations and allegory (Martiny, 2012, p.557). Guy Rotella asserts the American tendency obtained from past influences such as Transcendentalism

and Puritanism as well as to resort to nature to impose esthetic and epistemological questionings, and the Native American lore incorporated show the quality of such poetry (Klausner and Rotella, 1991, p. ix).

Ethical messages are also seen in American bestiaries; Cullen's poem and Gary Snyder's "What Happened Here Before" both retell the creation story in unconventional ways where, in Snyder's case, there is no God yet real animals take their course in the description and man is the source of corruption of the natural organic world. His concerns are typically environmental, as the didactic function of his Bestiary becomes his anxiety towards the American environment. Many shared this tendency, such as Wendell Berry and many others. Sympathy and identification with animals are notions shared by Snyder to demonstrate the Native American models who function to serve the belief (Martiny, 2012, p. 558-9).

In the modern age, the term "bestiary" retains other connotations that are not necessarily allegorical or religious. The modern Bestiary refers to any written or drawn formula describing animals. Larisa Grollemod claims that the 20th century has witnessed the revival of this genre by writers and artists (Morrison et al., 2019, p. 283).

The human-animal relation is also embodied in other ideas, such as the unification between man and animals. This idea is seen in Mary Oliver's bestiary poetry, i.e., "Wild Geese." She also shares her concern towards the environment seen in certain metaphors, such as the silencing of birds which leads the poet's voice to defend the silenced birds (Martiny, 2012, p. 560-1). Jo Gill propagates that an allegory is demonstrated by showing the dual voices of a man and an animal. In Cullen's case, he and his cat named Christopher expose the underlying marginalization of oppressed animals embodied in the cat who allegorically stands for the African American individuals as they are stripped from their voice (Ibid 557).

Modern American bestial poems have also shown the relation between imaginative and real animals, which is shown in Kenneth Rexroth's "The Phoenix and the Tortoise," in addition to the exposure of political turbulence as WWII is being alluded to, through the pathetic fallacy which results in the reflection of animal suffering due to human conflicts. Bestiaries have proved to be more politicized. Rexroth's "A Bestiary" is an example of a political bestiary where animals are described with their expected characteristics, i.e., the eagle is proud (Martiny, 2012, p. 558). Jo Gill argues that the complex animal-human relation and distinction is seen in his Poem "I" and "Uncle Sam," the former shows the spirituality of life. At the same time, the latter validates human superiority by distinguishing animal and human intents, which is a huge priority of the Modern American bestiary poem (Ibid).

Other poets are more concerned with gender and sexuality, as Sharon Olds's "Bestiary" incorporates wonderings of animals' reproduction and the similarity of this intent with human beings through the voice of a child who reflects on "fantasies of cross-species reproduction." Later, animals are estranged from the child, yet such strangeness becomes part of his consciousness. The child and his mother are seen as similar to animals, dispensing the barriers between man and animals (Martiny 561-2).

Also, animals provide space for feminist theories to thrive. On a historical note, animals and female inferiority are both associated. Margaret Atwood's animal poems are used to expose puritanical masculinity through defamiliarization. She also taps into lost chances, denial, and restraint. Her animals are metaphors that refer to what man do man. The modernist period has also dispensed the conventional associations of animals, such as lions associated with bravery. Instead, they have been left to other interpretations. While other poets have sought identity through animals as objects and man as

an observer, Marianne Moore has established detailed characteristics of animals, i.e., "The Buffalo." Also, she imposes animal characteristics on man instead of the conventional projection of human traits into animals. In addition, she alludes to the familiarity and strangeness of animals in her *Bestiary* (Ibid 562-4).

Moore and her contemporaries have been familiarized with readers' modes of thinking. She attempts to re-engage with history, which can be a catalyst to reform the present. Such ideals are seen in her animal poems, where she uses the bestiary tradition to highlight Darwinian and modernist ideas (Malay, 2018, p. 23)

Anti-bestiary is another aspect contemplated in ideas such as transforming to animals in *Bestiary USA* by Anne Sexton, who was the first to propose this idea. Her work is rich in symbolism with individualistic values. In literary texts, transforming into animals symbolizes punishment and humiliation. She seeks to show the animal world as a standard ideal for her bestiality. In some parts, she is eager to be no longer human. Thus, transformation to animals is an end that occurs not for the sake of becoming-animal itself. Her animals are means to elaborate on her objections to the brutality and violence of the contemporary world. She seeks to reflect upon violence, decay, and sickness; thus, her *Bestiary* is seen as an anti-bestiary or a failed one which also owes to the grotesque properties (transforming to beasts) of her *Bestiary* as well as the minimum remains of the bestial tradition (Martiny, 2012, p. 565-66).

Moving to the poems chosen for a comparison, both "The Dove in the Belly" and "The Dove in the Spring" are two different poems with two different thematic subjects and two birds attached to two different bestiaries.

Despite his wild use of animals, such as bees and sea animals. Stevens integrates all kinds of bird symbolism in his birds poems, such as "Of Birds"

and "Dove in the Belly" (Frye, 1957, p. 359). The dove of Stevens represents a sense of creativity and religious affiliation. The bird coos as it builds its nest for "the whole of appearance." It can also be seen as the dove of Venus, a "fecund spirit out of whom pours all of creation, and all of the words to tell it" (Preston and Gower, 2017, p. 154). The dove represents the universal concord and the love of Venus and the Holy Spirit (Frye, 1957, p. 144). As the introduction mentions, an animal's behavior is a significant element in a bestiary. The female pelican sits on her brood to feed them later, her blood to revive them. The dove here builds its nest and coos.

"The Dove in the Belly" is a poem that taps into the bird world. Doves and pigeons seem to reappear many times in his poems. The title indicates that the dove is hiding inside a person's belly or foreshadows a coming dive in a person's mind. Pigeons have been mentioned, but the attributes of a dove are slightly different.

The general attributes of a dove vary depending on its color. The red dove leads her flock and gathers them in their place. The dove generally sings a sad song. They prefer to be in flocks. They are birds with a very high instinct, given that they sit near water to see the reflection of flying predators like hawks. Allegorically speaking, a dove is relevant to Jesus Christ and the holy spirit. God has sent the Holy Spirit as a dove to gather people in the church. It is mentioned previously that a dove's connotations depend on its color; likewise, the red dove represents Christ's blood in redeeming humanity, the white dove that alludes to John the Baptist and the purity that proceeds baptism, and so on (The Medieval Bestiary, 2023).

The poem starts with a statement that appearances are mere games. The poem then jumps to describe the animal intended. The dove is in a very peculiar place. It is not on a window pane or a tree; the dove is nesting and cooing in the belly:

The whole of appearance is a toy. For this,
The dove in the belly builds his nest and coos,
Selah, tempestuous bird. How is it that
The rivers shine and hold their mirrors up (Stevens,
1971, p. 366).

The dove of Stevens represents a sense of creativity and religious affiliation. The bird coos as it builds its nest for "the whole of appearance." It can also be seen as the dove of Venus, a "fecund spirit out of whom pours all of creation, and all of the words to tell it" (Preston and Gower, 2017, p.154). The dove represents the universal concord and the love of Venus and the Holy Spirit (Frye, 1957, p.144). It is mentioned in the first chapter that the way an animal behaves is a significant element in a bestiary. For instance, the female pelican sits on her brood to feed them later and her blood to revive them. The dove here builds its nest and coos.

Axel Nesme has demonstrated critics' multiple opinions and views regarding "The Dove in the Belly" as it illuminates the metaphor theory. Blooms says that the poem demonstrates the repressed sexuality and erotic side of Stevens, taking a few guidelines such as "appearance as a toy" and the "deep dove" that can be requested to "placate you in your hiddenness." On the other hand, Eleanor Cook assumes that the dove represents "an internal psychic and physical force" (Nesme, 2008, p.217), as it is also demonstrated that many of his later poems share erotic nuances. Nesme resumes that aside from the word "belly," no evidence supports such assumptions, textual or whatsoever. Inwardness is the issue that Nesme adopts; Cook's assumption that the inner world is a response of the outer world using imagination and emotions from "the dove in the belly," as the outer world makes a significant dependency on the former (217). The dove may allude to Stevens's concept

of "the world within us," mentioned in the former section, and the modern dependence on insight oversight.

The dove's bestial attributes are related to sacrifice and Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the dove of Venus. With such representation, the reader is met with the same trinity of ideas in "Invective Against Swans." Nonetheless, the poem shares a different view of the bird and its function in the poem. Even though this poem has been examined and accepted by many interpretations, the dove exists in a different dimension. The belly can tolerate the interpretation of the mind or inner consciousness. Nature takes its course, and the dove builds its nest and coos. According to Stevens's idea of perception in "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," the internal dove represents the statement that "the whole appearance is a toy." Given the religious features of the bird, the toy could allude to worldly pleasures that are being sealed by the dove's nest in the belly or "the mind." It coos to distract the mind from thinking of the natural pleasures of enjoying life as it is or its façades. In this case, this is ironic because sensations are part of human nature. If the dove symbolizes Puritan restrictions, the pleasures cannot be avoided. The following lines may illustrate this view:

Selah, tempestuous bird. How is it that
The rivers shine and hold their mirrors up (Stevens,
Collected 1971, p.367).

The bird is called tempestuous because no cooing or puritanical restrictions can bottle the human sensation. What supports this assumption is the two foreign words that the poem shares: "Selah,"; a Hebrew word, and "Salut!". Despite their linguistic correspondence and relations, whether in letters or sounds. Meaning plays a crucial role, "Salut" means hello or salvation, and "Selah" means "up" when actors in any liturgical musical are ordered to rise, as Cook elucidates. It was neither commonly used in

Stevens's day nor in the latest version of King James's Bible. The poem addresses the bird identified by its hiddenness amidst the past few lines using "Selah" as it gives a biblical reference (Nesme, 2008, p.217-18). This is also ironic because Stevens has shared his views on using old diction in "Invective Against Swans." His revival of old words plays a crucial part in conceiving the dove.

The dove's cooing gives a metaphysical dimension to earth: "How is that/ The rivers shine and hold their mirrors up, / Like excellence collecting excellence. Transport to Summer does not seem to deviate from the dove's cooing from its religious roots "The dove in the belly builds his nest and coos, / Selah, tempestuous bird," (Stevens qtd in Clarke, 2011, p. 85) which is in a Psalmist musical way. He resumes accounting and blessing a deep dove, "...oh, brave Salute! / Deep dove, placate you in your hiddenness" (Stevens qtd in Clarke, 2011, p. 85). Stevens attempts to ask the dove, but its hide in the belly evades away what might become religious from the poet (Clarke, 2011, p. 85).

Nesme assumes that Cook does not mention each word's biblical and religious roots in the title. Jonah, a prophet whose name means a dove, ends up in the belly of a whale. His name's meaning grants a tropological interpretation and alludes to Jesus, whose dove descended in Matthew (3:16-17). Also, Jonah described the sea twice as "tempestuous" (1:11-13) before being lost. Nevertheless, "Salut" illuminates Jonah's reechoing "Salute." This allusion is highly related to how the dove, the belly, and the description "tempestuous" are viewed in Stevens's poem (2009, p.218).

Nesme's assertion that Cook does not mention the biblical and religious roots of each word in the title has led her to the following interpretation. Jonah, a prophet whose name means a dove, ends up in the belly of a whale. His name's meaning grants a tropological interpretation and

alludes to Jesus, whose dove descended in Matthew (3:16-17). Also, the sea was described twice as "tempestuous" in Jonah (1:11-13) before being lost. Nevertheless, "Salut" illuminates Jonah's reechoing "Salute." This allusion is highly related to how the dove, the belly, and the description "tempestuous" are viewed in Stevens's poem (2008, p. 218). Accordingly, this results in the idea of being lost inside something, just like the story of Jonah.

Like excellence collecting excellence?
How is it that the wooden trees stand up
And live and heap their panniers of green
And hold them round the sultry day? Why should
(Stevens, *Collected*, 1971, p. 367).

These lines describe the metaphysical dimension and the world that the dove lives in. The wooden trees are covered with leaves and protected from the day's heat. The mountains are repeated in Stevens's poems. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" commences with a scene of twenty mountains. The following lines of "The Dove in the Belly" describe the greatness of the mountains; the snowy feature repeats itself:

These mountains being high be, also, bright,
Fetched up with snow that never falls to earth?
And this great esplanade of corn, miles wide,
Is something wished for made effectual (Stevens,
Collected, 1971, p. 367).

Corn and the wildly open space of land recall the story of the immigrants and settlers of America. What supports this assumption is the letter that is shared previously. Stevens is an earth poet who needed to appreciate the American landscape.

And something more. And the people in costumes,
Though poor, though raggeder than ruin, have that

Within them right for terraces—oh, brave salut!
Deep dove, placate you in your hiddenness. (Stevens,
Collected, 1971, p. 367).

The American scene is not absent; even its poor residents partake in roles in costumes and celebrate the brave. The final line shifts back to the deep dove and his order to the bird to build a hidden nest.

Through the dove, Stevens builds up a conclusion to his poem that encourages people to beseech the dove within and admit it as a source of comfort (Preston and Gower 155). Stevens considers animals as the first idea and the myth of all myths, just like when a "lion roars at the enraging desert," whose sense is of physiognomic Gestalt. "The Dove in the Belly" takes and creates a new version of the world that corresponds with its response (Hillman and Moore, 1991, p. 69).

The idea of reality is tough to illustrate as many significant scientific figures such as Einstein and Infeld have given an example that our attempt to apprehend reality is similar to understanding the mechanism of a closed watch. Even if the person attempts to use his common knowledge of that watch or illustrate its content, his vision cannot be the exact copy of the real object. Stevens, just like the Romantics, emphasizes this concept and elucidates that the response of an individual constructs the world. "The Dove in the Belly" is an excellent example of this idea. The poem shares a few of the most eloquent and sensational provocations in the natural world with his exquisite use of interrogative sentences and the reignition that "The whole of appearance is a toy" (Serio, 2007, p. 5).

The dove, like other creatures in many of his poems like the "brown bird" in "God is Good, It Is a Beautiful Night" or the owl in "The Woman Looking at a Vase of Flowers," is a muse-like creature whose peeps of Summer are heard in the poet's ears himself that brings to him "human

reconciliations" through those "inhuman colors," George S. Lensing adopts the assumption that these muse evocations suggest a fable-like quality that Stevens seems to gravitate on his poetry (2004, p.340). The fable is of a medieval quality, just like the Bestiary.

The dove is revisited in "Dove in the Spring," one of his last poems. The bird's connotations and general attributes and its connotations concerning "The Dove in the Belly" are different from those in this poem. It creates a different message.

It is amongst the last poems in his last volume, *The Rock*; the dove takes its brooding that has been submerged in waters in a river of being. Its howling creates a different type of reality (Clarke, 2011, p. 106-7):

Brooder, brooder, deep beneath its walls—
A small howling of the dove
Makes something of the little there,
The little and the dark, and that (Stevens, *Palm*,
2011, p. 385).

The speaker is drawing attention to a sound beneath the walls. A sound unfamiliar to the ear, a howling of a dove. An interpretation articulates that the poem illustrates a model of a dove and how Stevens wants this to be. The howling of the dove, DeSales Harrison explains, is a form of making. The dove "makes something of the little there, / The little and the dark"; this act recalls a "minimum of making in mind" (Stevens qtd in Harrison, 2005, p. 94) in one of Stevens's poems. Unlike that poem, the dove's howling calls for the minimum extreme poverty that no life is left, even in poetic-making. Thus, "a small howling" is created from a dove in a spring season associated with a new life (Harrison, 2005, p. 94):

In which it is and that in which
It is established. There the dove

Makes this small howling, like a thought
That howls in the mind or like a man (Stevens, *Palm*,
2011, p.385).

The bird is isolated from selfhood; it is very skeptical towards knowledge except for the truth that it is a creature. It is a subjective creature that beseeches its identity and poses its insecurities "like a man." The dove exists in an imagined cage and howls, sounding and acting against its birdy nature. It exists in darkness and a very unpleasant physical state; it reflects upon the self, and the bird broods in that uncertainty of his (Doggett, *Stevens' Poetry of Thought*, 1966, p.145). Like his other poems, the regime of "the world within us" is revisited again. Stevens supports this idea by separating the dove from selfhood which corroborates the Stevensian idea of seeking truth. The bird as a bestiary also shares the modern notion of seeking identity. Nonetheless, it fosters the spiritual role of the poet.

The dove is making something
Who keeps seeking out his identity
In that which is and is established...It howls
Of the great sizes of an outer bush (Stevens, *Palm*,
2011, p.385).

In the *Last Looks*, Vendler explains that the dove is imprisoned and asks if there is a better world where it can coo, yet she does not have high hopes. "Silver stripes" are similar to the poles of a dungeon's window. The dove of the poem howls for its misery. It howls against what fate have done. Through the poem's speaker and its howls, it seeks to question how to maintain identity. Due to encountering pressures, Stevens attempts to describe himself as a man and a dove; both are different in aspects yet similar in others (2010, p. 40). The poem takes place in a moment of misery and torment, as it howls five times in the poet's ears. Ironically, no dove is

supposed to howl, and no bird can howl as it is against its nature (Ibid p. 41). The sadness of the dove's howls may suggest the Romantic notion of Keats, where desolation is present. Stevens has always been infatuated with the romantics and their works as he has read them thoroughly. Despite his objection to the unjustified use of Victorian diction in "Invective Against Swans," it does not negate the fact that he adopts concepts from the romantic tradition, which may make the poet neo-romantic. The ethical message of seeking an identity does not deviate from the Bestiary.

And the great misery of the doubt of it,
Of stripes of silver that are strips
Like slits across a space, a place
And state of being large and light. (Stevens, *Palm*,
2011, p. 385).

It is a poem about the "desire's centrality to being," Harrison clarifies; it contributes that desire is a notion and a form of making. This desire exists in the ear, a "howling at the ear." It might be seen as an external torment, away from the self. Nevertheless, it is likened to "a thought/ That howls in the mind." It is a notion and a state of being external. A state of being "at the ear" and not in the belly (2005, p. 95).

There is this bubbling before the sun,
This howling at one's ear, too far
For daylight and too near for sleep. (Stevens, *Palm*,
2011, p. 385).

It is mentioned before that the dove, according to Stevens, is the dove of Venus and the dove of the Holy Spirit. These associations are his muse, energy, and imaginative powers. This poem is no exception (Vendler, *Last Looks*, 2010, p. 40). To conclude, the bird bestiary of this poem positions the dove as a central didactic element where its sad songs affect the speaker.

Unlike "The Dove in the Belly," this dove disturbs the listener's mind because it howls and seeks something to no avail. The fact that supports this is the dove's position in the belly and the walls, where each implies an indication. Also, the modern notion that captivates the bird's connotations grants the Bestiary an allegorical and symbolic function. These are related to ethical, didactic, modern, and truth-seeking messages.

Conclusion

Both poems create different sets of ideas regarding the Modern American Bestiary. The Stevensian bestiary has made an implicit symbolism of the dove in both poems. Doves are a source of identity, human-animal relations, and so forth. His bird bestiary makes the didactic, philosophical, and moralistic function in the modern and the Stevensian contexts.

Works-Cited

- Americana Corporation. (1970). *The Encyclopedia Americana*. In *Internet Archive*. New York, Americana Corp. <https://archive.org/details/encyclopediaamer0003unse>
- NESME, A. (2008). Notes Toward a Deleuzian Reading of "Transport to Summer." *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, 32(2), 206–222. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44885423>
- Beckson, K., & Ganz, A. (1992). *Literary terms : a dictionary*. Noonday Press.
- Clark, W. B., & McMunn, M. T. (1989). *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages the Bestiary and Its Legacy*. Philadelphia University Of Pennsylvania Press.
- Clarke, E. (2011). *The Later Affluence of W. B. Yeats and Wallace Stevens*. Springer.
- Dent, S. (2018). *Brewer's dictionary of phrase & fable*. Brewer's, An Imprint Of Chambers Publishing Limited.

- Doggett, F. (1966). *Stevens' Poetry of Thought*. JHU Press.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica, a new survey of universal knowledge. (1964). In *Internet Archive*. Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://archive.org/details/encyclopaediabri03univ/page/548/mode/2up?q=Bestiary>
- Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton. Princeton University Press, .
- Harrison, D. (2005). *The end of the mind : the edge of intelligible in Hardy, Stevens, Larkin, Plath, and Glück*. Routledge.
- Hillman, J., & Moore, T. (1991). *A blue fire : selected writings*. Harperperennial.
- Henderson, S. (2009, February 18). *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Medhum.med.nyu.edu. <https://medhum.med.nyu.edu/view/12931>
- Kalof, L., & Pohl-Resl, B. (2011). *A cultural history of animals*. Berg.
- Klausner, L., & Rotella, G. (1991). Reading and Writing Nature: The Poetry of Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, and Elizabeth Bishop. *American Literature*, 63(4), 766. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2926899>
- Lensing, G. S. (2004). *Wallace Stevens and the Seasons*. Louisiana State University Press.
- Martiny, E. (2012). *A companion to poetic genre*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Morrison, Elizabeth, et al. *Book of Beasts : The Bestiary in the Medieval World*. Los Angeles, Published By The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019.
- NESME, A. (2008). Notes Toward a Deleuzian Reading of "Transport to Summer." *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, 32(2), 206–222. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44885423>.
- Ousby, I. (1993). *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Preston, A., & Gower, N. (2017). *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*. Hachette UK.

- Quinn, E. (2004). Collins dictionary literary terms. In *Internet Archive*. Glasgow : HarperCollins. <https://archive.org/details/collinsdictionar0000quin>
- Serio, J. N. (2007). *The Cambridge Companion to Wallace Stevens*. cambridge university press.
- Shaw, H. (1976). *Concise dictionary of literary terms*. New York, , Pr.
- Stevens, W. (2011). *The Palm at the End of the Mind: Selected Poems and a Play*. In *Goole Books*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
https://www.google.iq/books/edition/The_Palm_at_the_End_of_the_Mind/3TZ-FO48hZMC?hl=en&gbpv=0
- Stevens, W. (1971). *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* . Alfred A. Knopf.
- The Medieval Bestiary. (2023b, February 15). *Medieval Bestiary : Beasts : Dove*. Bestiary.ca.
<https://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast253.htm#:~:text=The%20dove%20is%20associated%20with>
- Vendler, H. (2010). *Last looks, last books : Stevens, Plath, Lowell, Bishop, Merrill*. Princeton University Press.
- Vendler, H. (1969). *On Extended Wings*. Harvard University Press.