Caged Birds and Subjugated Authority: A Study of the Thematic and Historic Significance of Bird Imagery Within the Works of Fanny Fern, Kate Chopin, and Susan Glaspell

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ABSTRACT

Fanny Fern, Kate Chopin, and Susan Glaspell are three American feminist writers who wrote throughout the development of the Women's Movement. Within the works of these three influential women authors, there occurs similar caged bird imagery. Though the use of bird imagery is a well-established literary tool, it is unique to find the symbol occurring in similar thematic motifs within the works of all three authors. The focus of this paper includes an analysis of each work that includes bird imagery to determine that symbol's importance to the overall theme of the piece, a look into the cultural importance of the each species of bird that appear in the works, and the historical influences of the time period, specifically the Women's Movement. This paper will also discuss the various influences caged bird imagery has to the overall thematic messages of all three author's work regarding feminism and matriarchal authority, along with the historical and cultural significance of bird imagery with regard to women of the time period. This insight into the history and culture of the late nineteenth century will then be used to show how historical contexts have influenced the overall theme of the women's works, and also how the women's works have influenced history and culture.

INTRODUCTION

The writings of Fanny Fern, Kate Chopin, and Susan Glaspell extend from the very beginning of the Women's Movement, 1848, through the devastation and social turmoil of the Civil War, and finally ending about ten years after the Treaty of Versailles and the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920. They cover seventy years of social upheaval and reinvention that has had lasting repercussions in literary history. These three women authors were part of the legacy of feminist literature when it was just beginning to have momentum.

Though their personal history does not have as much impact on the symbolism of their work as social traditions of the time period, it is still useful to look a brief description of their accomplishments. Fanny Fern, the oldest of the three authors, was originally born Sara Willis Parton and married to become Sara Willis Parton Payton. In the late 1840's, she became one of the first female newspaper reporters, writing under the pen name Fanny Fern. Heavily influenced by her work in print journalism, Fern published a book of short stories entitled *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* in 1853. She was an obvious success despite writing about topics that were often taboo for the targeted submissive female of the times (Michael).

Kate Chopin had a similar success even though her circumstances differed slightly from Fern's. As a child, Chopin grew up during the Civil war and attended Sacred Heart Academy. Much of her work still reflects this religious influence. Chopin married in 1870 and had seven children before she was 28 years old. When her husband died, Chopin turned to writing to support her family. Her struggles between motherhood and the freedom she found in writing is also a common theme in her work. She became popular as early as 1890 with her publication of the novel *At Fault*. She next published a couple collections of short stories—*Bayou Folk* and *A Night in Acadia*. Her career ended in 1899 with the harsh criticism of *The Awakening*, her most well known work. (Wyatt).

Susan Glaspell is the youngest of all three authors, born in 1876. She also began her career as a newspaper reporter right after college. Her most famous play, *Trifles*, reflects a piece she reported about a similar court trial. She became popular in 1915 when she published a series of novels. Yet the majority of her work was published between 1920 and 1926 (Evans).

Though each of these three influential women lived very different lives, all their works share a similar metaphoric theme in animal imagery. Animal imagery in literature is one of the oldest and most symbolically rich methods of metaphoric expression. Mary Allen concurs with this when she states that, "beyond man's language,

animals appeal to the symbol making mind. They were initially established and still are usually seen as representative images in literature" (4). The idea of representational imagery is especially applicable to bird imagery. In *Birds in Literature*, Leonard Lutwack explains that:

> "…of all wild animals, the bird has always been closest to human-kind because so much of its life can be readily observed and appreciated. Flight and song make birds exceptionally noticeable in every sort of environment…the very attributes that make them familiar to us, flight and song; still retain an air of mystery that sets birds apart from other animals. [This] familiarity and transcendence [has] given birds a wider range of meaning and symbol in literature than any other animal." (x-xii)

Because birds are so easily observed, they become an accessible idea for metaphoric expression while also maintaining an aloofness that allocates the transfiguration of common meanings into more aesthetic creations.

A secondary quality of birds that makes avian imagery a great source for symbolic fodder is "the resemblance of their activities to common patterns of human family behavior [that] makes them exceptionally suitable for anthropomorphic imagery" (Lutwack xii). The instinctual behavior of birds that mimic homosapien familial attachments allows writers to use avian images to create an emotional attachment between birds and humans. This connection changes the meaning of both human and bird images to produce a vastly different connotation than was originally intended. The three feminist writers of Fanny Fern, Kate Chopin, and Susan Glaspell all employ bird imagery with similar connotations.

Specifically, the synthesis of avian characteristics with aspects of the feminine form creates unique interpretations within the resulting literature. Edward Armstrong comments in *The Folklore of* Birds:

> Some sub-conscious impulse may be responsible for the tendency in many cultures from the Paleolithic to the present day to represent human figures with avian characteristics, especially with beaks, wings, or claws. Female beings of this type, or with birds perched on head or hands, are particularly common—goddesses, sirens, harpies, angels, and so forth. Man's ambivalent attitude to women seems to find expression in this imagery embodying contrasting attributes—soft feathers and sharp beak and claws, songs and shrieks, amorousness and cruelty, devotion and fickleness. (19)

The duality of women's representation in fiction pre-dates the publication of Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell. It is important to recognize how pre-19th century metaphoric motifs impact the way all three authors use bird imagery to express a specific message.

In writings that predate these three authors, women are expressed by the dichotomous illustrations of either the amorous or devoted woman. In contrast, "Men in literature often conceive of their sexual role in terms of the violent and rapacious traits of birds" (Lutwack 216). Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's works attempt to emulate this early development of the dichotomy between matriarchal and patriarchal authorities.

The third and final reason bird imagery is such a lucrative metaphoric image relates directly to its archaic origins as a religious symbol, but also gives the greatest connection between birds and humanity. Birds become very important in representing social struggles because they are the symbolic representations of the human soul. Rowland explains that, "…the idea of the soul as a winged creature is not new here. It is a widespread and extremely ancient belief that the soul assumes the form of a bird or, put more extremely, that all birds are the physical embodiment of human souls" (xiii).

Rowland is discussing the archaic belief of the bird being synonymous with the soul, but this can also be extended to encompass the use of the literary bird as well. When bird imagery is used by the three authors in their works they are very aware of this second meaning. Rowland further expounds upon this ancient belief by adding that the bird is a ubiquitous image, claiming both female and male attributes, and making it the perfect symbol for the soul (xiv). Thus when Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell use this image within their works, they claim the female avian symbolism with the intent of creating metaphors of the bird being representational of matriarchal authority, or the feminine soul. The treatment of birds within the text thus becomes a statement about the constant struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal authorities.

Bird imagery is the tool all three authors use to express their dissatisfaction with feminine social constructions within their lives. The use of avian imagery, both caged and free, illustrates in all forms the varying degrees of power present within the society in which all three authors function. The patriarchal subjugation of these three women stems from the restrictions of a society that predates them. These restrictive social practices are subtly attacked in all three women's works in an attempt to identify the greater symbolic feud between patriarchal and matriarchal powers.

All three authors have bird imagery within their works that reflect metaphorically the struggle between patriarchal power and matriarchal power. In *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots*, Louise E Robbins comments

on how often easily dominated animals become metaphorically associated with certain groups. She writes, "Animals often become explicit or implicit vehicles for commentary on the issues, because of the ease in which they are metaphorically associated with certain human groups, especially those that seemed to share their subordinate, dependent status" (19). The caging of the bird, both literal and implied, demonstrate how women in society are subjugated by men yet still seek their own source of power within that socially accepted domination. Thus birds become representational of not only the emerging feminism of the time period, but a great matriarchal soul that struggles against the institutional confines of a patriarchal society.

ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE

Bird imagery in Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's works, is just one of the many metaphors used to demonstrate the power struggle between men and women. Within the collected works of the three authors, bird imagery has a varied metaphoric impact upon the overall piece. This is not to say that the use of bird imagery in each work has more or less value with regards to its overall theme, but that the use of bird imagery falls into a classification of three different types. These categories include minor metaphoric impact, an intermediate metaphoric impact and major metaphoric impact. Each category of bird imagery has certain characteristics that qualify the bird imagery in that section. Regardless of their depth of impact, however, every example of bird imagery within the three author's works is representational of the emerging feminism and a greater demonstration of nature struggling against patriarchal institutional oppression.

Minor Metaphoric Impact

The first category of minor metaphoric impacts of bird imagery includes bird imagery in one word or one sentence injections. The bird imagery also features the critique of a social convention. These instances may seem inconsequential to the overall theme of the pieces, but actually create a very pregnant statement about femininity and the social conventions of the period.

The use of minor metaphoric impact bird imagery in Fanny Fern's work is seen not only in her short stories, but her novels as well. There is a definite suggestion in these examples of subjugation in reference to female intelligence and behavior. In the subsequent stories, Fern uses bird imagery to describe social conventions with the intent to illustrate how matriarchal authority is very much dominated and suppressed by these conventions.

In "The Still Small Voice," one of the first stories in Fern's collection entitled *Fern Leaves*, a mother sends her child away for asking silly questions while the mother is trying to read. Fern writes "The room is very quiet, now that Franky is banished; nobody is in is but herself and the canary (12). In "Self Conquest," a newlywed husband asks her crying wife "What, then, is your pet canary sick? Can't dress your hair to suit you? Or are you in despair because you can't decide in which of all your dresses you look the prettiest?" (27). Within "Everybody is having a vacation except editors," Fern wrote "Who gets tickets to all the Siamese boys, fat girls, white negroes, learned pigs, whistling canaries, circuses, concerts, and theatres?" (357). Aunt Hetty, in the short-story "Aunt Hetty on Matrimony," preaches "O, girls! Set your affections on cats, poodles, parrots, or lap dogs; but let matrimony alone. It's the hardest way on earth of getting a living" (379). An unknown bird appears in "Lena May; Or Darkness and Light" when Fern narrates, "You should have seen Charley with his birds and his flowers" (172). All five of these examples from different stories within *Fern Leaves* demonstrate how birds are used to illustrate social customs, mostly in the form of pets or pieces of clothing, that are standard for females of the period.

"Self Conquest" has the most striking example, where the one sentence holds a wealth of meaning in a few words. Women are supposed to put so much emotion into their pets that they would weep over an illness. The phrase implies emotional states are then limited to a caretaker; ironically one of the very valid points Aunt Hetty is trying to make in "Aunt Hetty on Matrimony." The bird images in all the previous examples are Fern's attempt to show her audience how a patriarchal society. Social conventions illustrated by the bird images in these small examples demonstrate a very deliberate use of patriarchal dominance that prevents women from exploring their own femininity and intelligence. However, the bird imagery is also the attempt of women to assert their own authority, but having control over the caged birds.

In terms of control, Fern also uses children in context with bird imagery to show the power struggle between patriarchal and matriarchal authorities. The children include both males and females, but it is most often either a female child or female adult upon which the narrator is focusing. Fern often uses gender-neutral children in this manner to demonstrate how women are subjugated. Women are most often the caretakers of these children and must follow a set of social rules and regulations. Yet in caring for children, women often assert their own power. Take the little boy in "The Still Small Voice." The mother shoos him away, demonstrating her own matriarchal authority to a child who will eventually become the dominant authority in another household.

Also evident within Fanny Ferns work is the concept of women embodying bird characteristics. The novel *Rose Clark* demonstrates an assimilation of bird characteristics. When the orphanage Rose inhabits is reviewed by its patrons, the children are subjugated to a session of questions about the establishment. Gender does not matter as much as who the narrator is targeting as an audience. Rose relates how "The committee then seats themselves, and Markharm asks a list of questions, out and dried beforehand, to which parrot tongues respond" (51). The children assimilate the characteristic of parrots. This in turn demonstrates their subjugation under a matriarchal authority, or the headmistress. In *Fresh Leave's* "Edith May; or the Mistake of a Lifetime" Edith May's husband leaves and in her attempt to stem gossip about her abrupt marriage she bars herself indoors. "The time had already passed that was fixed upon his return; and Edith, nervous from close confinement and weary inward struggle, started like a frightened bird at every footfall" (112). The simile of the bird to Edith's emotional state illustrates the demure way in which women are depicted versus the amorous or hostile characteristics upon which women are sometimes fostered. Yet this simple use of a bird simile demonstrates the depth of female subordination under the male counterpart. Edith has a case of "nerves" a social maxim deemed appropriate in a submissive females. The flutter of Edith's nerves mirrors the confinement of a bird in a cage and becomes a very potent image in reference to the confines of a patriarchal society.

Despite almost four decades of history between them, Chopin and Fern have similar avian symbolism. Take the first collection of short stories she published in 1894 entitled *Bayou Folk* in which the short story "A Lady of Bayou St. John" appears. In this story there is a similar situation to that of Fern's "A Still Small Voice." The bird image becomes an afterthought to demonstrate how women of the time behave. Chopin writes of Madame Delisle, the lady of Bayou St. John: "She was very young. So young that she romped with the dogs, teased the parrot, and could not fall asleep at night unless old Manna-Loulou sat beside her bed and told her stories" (298). Madame Delisle has authority over the parrot, and uses that authority negatively, but also is subjugated to a patriarchal authority that sees the parrot and the dog as acceptable pets.

In a second collection of short stories *A Night in Acadie*, Chopin further illustrates the parallel between her and Fern's work in the short story "Athenaise." In this story Athenaise runs away from her husband due to her distaste for the whole institution of marriage. When she was away she "tried to take an interest in the black cat, and a mockingbird that hung in a cage outside the kitchen door, and a disreputable parrot that belonged to the cook next door, and swore hoarsely all day long in bad French" (451). The mockingbird and parrot are caged just like Athenaise in her marriage. The parallel between the subjugation of women through bird imagery is solidified when Chopin gives Athenaise bird-like characteristics. Chopin writes "People often said that Athenaise would know her own mind one day, which was equivalent to saying that she was at present unacquainted with it. If she ever came to such knowledge, it would be by no intellectual research…it would come to her as the song to a bird, the perfume and color to the flower" (433). The simile of Athenaise to a bird and the bird's instinctual knowledge of how to sing are delivered in a manner laden with sarcasm. Chopin illustrates her own disdain for the social perspective that equates Athenaise with a lack of intelligence. Her sudden instinctual knowledge relates her to a more infantile state, and a being too primitive for the social structure of the current society.

Susan Glaspell is the last to employ minor examples of bird imagery in a way that depicts the submissive social attitude of women. Glaspell was published over seventy years after Fern yet demonstrates the same traits of feminist images. The novel *The Morning is Near Us* depicts the assumptions a society has for a Lydia, who has lived around the world. She is initially ostracized for being something different than the norm in the hometown to which she returns. Her brother tries to encourage his hesitant wife into accepting her back home. "And this person called Koula and someone named Diego is to make a visit with us?" Ivy would have him tell her. "Koula may be a cat," he cheered; "and something tells me Diego is a parrot"" (31). Lydia's brother automatically assumes that she would bring a cat and parrot back from her travels. These are two socially acceptable pets for women and demonstrate that the patriarchal social norms that have dominated for the last seventy years are very much alive.

Like Fern and Chopin, Glaspell also gives bird characteristics to her characters as a metaphor for her characters. In the book *Judd Rankin's Daughter* Glaspell describes the main character's aunt Adah as being "…a bird of bright plumage" (20). The bright plumage has a dual meaning: one, that Adah's personality was ostentatious, and also incorporates a sense of freedom. Adah is a character that flaunts the conventions of society, so it is very apt that she is given avian characteristics when described by others. In this way the assimilation of bird characteristics is both critique by society and transformation of the negative connotation.

In the play *Women's Honor*, several women are vying for the right to save a convicted man. One of the women is very silly. She says, "My heart is full," to which another character replies, "Your heart is full of a simpering parrot" (151). This small metaphor demonstrates how women are placed into a submissive role by their lack of education. It is even more demoralizing to have another women being the one to use this analogy because it demonstrates how patriarchal degradation have bled into even relationships between females.

Intermediate Metaphoric Impact

The next classification of bird imagery in the works of Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell is the intermediate metaphoric impact group. In this group, the example of bird imagery is usually one sentence to one paragraph long. These examples are more in depth and include greater metaphoric influences to the overall theme of the works. Yet the overall themes usually include the use of caged birds and free, yet hunted, birds in which to illustrate the flux of power between patriarchal and matriarchal authorities.

Caged and free birds become very important in expressing the dichotomy between masculine and feminine authorities as an extension of their context within the pieces. Jennifer Mason points out in *Urban Animals, Sentimental Culture, and American Literature 1850-1900*:

> …if wild animals whose existence was untrammeled by civilization became interesting to people as embodiments of individualism and self reliance, then domesticated animals were either meaningless to "Americaness" or meaningful only as symbols of enervation, subordination, or dependency—in short, of that which is opposite from or despised within the American point of view. (4)

If wild or free bird imagery represents something uncivilized and primitive, it is a direct reference to matriarchal authority that is inherent in most nature themes. This inference being true, then caged birds reflect patriarchal subordination and oppression and adherence to patriarchal authority.

Fanny Fern's intermediate examples of the influence of bird images can be separated into two sections, that of caged birds and those of free birds. Her two short stories from *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* entitled "A Night Watch with a Dead Infant" and "Little Charlie, the Child Angel," do not directly feature the influences of a women protagonist, but that of children. This is still vital in the projection of women in the time period as their role was dedicated to child rearing. The future sociological development of children revolves around the involvement or subsequent neglect of these women. Indirect references to women's roles give the bird imagery a more metaphoric role than in the previous stories; yet still manages to provoke much discourse on the topic of feminine identity in the late 1800's.

"A Night Watch with a Dead Infant" features the death of an infant and Fern's thoughts on the matter. She states, "Flutter thy wings impatiently against the bars of thy sweet prison-house, sweet bird of paradise? God speed thy flight! No unerring sportsman shall have power to ruffle thy spread pinions, or maim thy souring wing. No sheltering nest had earth for thee, where the chill wind of sorrow might not blow!" (98). This is an expressive image in context with the larger theme of feminism. The child (its gender unknown) is spared from what Fern entitles a "prison" in his or her death. Through death, the child is spared the price of being hunted. Though the object of entrapment is never specifically mentioned, it is inferred later in the passage to be society as a whole. In those who watch over the dead infant there is included: the betrothed maiden, the bride, the mother, the loving wife, and the widower (98-99). All of these ladies are types of women who in the course of a lifetime are subjugated by a series of patriarchal authorities. Each constitutes a level of interference by a male counterpart. It is ironic that the story of a child being "spared the price of being hunted," ends with the image of a widower who is no longer hounded by her husband, and thereby free. The image of freedom through death transforms itself through the bird image into freedom from social entrapment and subsequent patriarchal tyranny.

"Little Charlie the Child Angel," has a similar cage metaphor, but unlike in "Night Watch," this cage isn't as implicit. Charlie has a neglectful mother, thus the narrator of the story takes him under her wing. Yet the idea of a patriarchal society luring the negligent mother away from her child into more culturally stimulating pursuits emerges through the dichotomy of a happy nurtured bird versus a caged one. It is in fact the bird that is the instrument for luring the child to the narrator. Fern introduces the bird imagery early in the story saying "The cheerful sun has expanded the fragrant flowers I love so well to nurture; my canary trills his satisfaction in a gayer song than ever" (197). This passage establishes with the flowers and the canary that the woman is a nurturing soul. She qualifies herself as "one of that persecuted class, denominated old maids" (197) because she defied convention and did not marry. Yet the young boy Charlie enters her world, "attracted by the carol of [her] canary" (198). The child's mother has neglected him in favor of "devouring all sorts of trashy literature, or in idle gossip with her drawing room companions" (199). Charlie's mother is trapped by the lure of the tripe society just as Charlie is attracted to a nurturing soul that is personified in the song of the canary. Both are imprisoned by forces outside of their understanding, yet both instinctually seek each other in the attempt to alleviate their sense of imprisonment. This prison is revealed later in the story when Charlie dies. Fern writes, "his heart fluttered like a prisoned bird" (201). The boy dies because of his mother's neglect. He was trapped in the conventions of society just like his mother, making him the real caged bird. The canary was also caged, but free in its happiness of a nurturing owner.

Through Charlie's mother, another layer of depth is added to the caged bird image. Charlie's mother is subjugated to the rules and restrictions of a patriarchal society; thus, her behavior towards her own child is not outwardly criticized. Yet it is through her very blatant misuse of Charlie that her own internal power is depicted within the larger subjugation by her husband. Charlie's mother says "O it don't signify if you have patience with him, he's so tiresome with his questions. 'I've bought him heaps of toys, but he never want to play, and is forever asking me such old-fashioned questions. Keep him and welcome if you like; but take my word for it, you'll repent your bargain!" (198-199). The mother uses her matriarchal authority to ensure that the next generation of patriarchal figures is stunted. Thus the bird that lures Charlie to the narrator is also symbolic of his own entrapment between his mother and father's implied power struggle.

Fern's next two stories feature birds in varying forms of freedom. Yet like in "A Night Watch with a Dead Infant" there is a hunted or caged element to that freedom that parallels the trapped or caged motif. Coincidentally, both of the stories involve women writers, a field in which women were not respected. Just such an experience happens to the protagonist of "A Chapter on Literary Women" from *Fern Leaves*. Colonel, the intended for a young women names Minnie says "Minnie, I tell you, literary women are a sort of non-descript monsters; nothing feminine about them. They are as ambitious as Lucifer; else, why do they write?" Minnie replies, "Because they can't help it. Why does a bird carol? There is that in such a soul that will not be pent up—that must find a voice and expression; a heaven-kindled spark, that is unquenchable; an earnest, soaring spirit, whose wings cannot be earth clipped" (177). In this small scene there is a wealth of images being presented under the guise of bird imagery. Using the idea of birds being the embodiment of the soul, Minnie's metaphor of why women write makes much more sense. It is the female soul that cannot be bound by social convention even though a patriarchal society seeks to cage it by making its wings "earth clipped." The voice of women rises above such attempts of subjugation, a sentiment that was a major component of the Women's Movement.

The short story "Charlotte Brönte" features a similar image of flight and implied incarceration by a patriarchal society's hand. Fern writes "So have I seen a little bird trying bravely with out-spread wing to sour, and as often beaten back by the gathering storm cloud—not discouraged—biding its time for another trial—singing feebly its quivering notes as if to keep up its courage—growing bolder in each essay till the eye ached in watching it triumphant progress—up—up—into the clear blue of heaven" (332). The image of a bird attempting to fly in the great expanse of the sky is an extended metaphor for Brönte's attempt to be a female writer in a male-0dominated genre. The perseverance of the bird in the metaphor demonstrates not only Brönte's determination but can also be extended to encompass the larger determination of the Women's Rights Movement and their perseverance to gain equality.

Another of Ferns short stories, *Fanny Ford*, explores matriarchal authority and freedom through a similar image of soaring birds. Beauty and freedom become synonymous in this piece with and underestimation by patriarchal authority of the intelligence of women. Mary and Fanny Ford are found appealing because of their beauty and behavior, yet in it is in this beauty that their power laid. Men want both these women for their looks, completely overlooking their other attributes. Fern speaks of this trend as a camouflage, writing and "Let the bird soar, while his song is sweetest, before one stain soils his plumage or with maimed wing he flutters helplessly. Let him soar. The cloud which hides him from the straining eye, doth it not hide him from the archer?" (Fresh Leaves 164). Although the bird imagery in this passage is masculine, the methodology describes wholly belongs to a matriarchal authority. Fern further establishes this later in the story during the conversation between Fanny Ford and her friend Kate. They are discussing Kate's tendency to have a mutable personality around men. Fanny questions "Kate, why do you always choose to wear a mask…Why do you take so much pains to make a censorious world believe you the very opposite of what you are?" (Fresh Leaves 200). Kate replies, "Because paste passes as current as diamond; because I value the world's opinion not one straw; because if you own a heart, it is best to hide it, unless you want it trampled on" (Fresh Leaves 200). Kate presents to Fanny a very serious matriarchal view of the world. Authority comes through providing the prominent patriarchal authority the idea they have control through an illusion of behavior while maintaining their own ideas of authority outside of public view.

Though free bird imagery becomes synonymous with matriarchal authority, the cages bird present within Mary's segment of the piece alludes to the ever dominant masculine authority. Social confines force Mary into a marriage she neither wants no is physically able to contemplate (137). The caged but singing mockingbird is symbolic of not only Mary's internal anguish over her loss of Percy, but also her frustration in the inability to do anything about her current situation. Gossip within her social confines has made her seemingly unclean when her virtue is really quite chaste. Yet she never really sheds this socially constructed image and is truly *seen*, similar to the mocking bird that is scolded for singing at and inappropriate time, when it is simply part of its nature.

Kate Chopin also has similar bird metaphors that allude to the dichotomy of incarceration versus freedom that also relates to a feminist view against the hypocrisy of a male dominated society. From her collection *A Night in*

Acadie, the two short stories entitled, "At Chênière Caminada" and "A Sentimental Soul" include bird imagery that reflects a specific type of caged symbolism. This cage symbolism reflects not only the subjugation of femininity to a more patriarchal social counterpart, but also the reverse notion of women expressing their power with such implied conventions. This is illustrated in Fern's character Lizzie in "Little Charlie, the Child Angel," and "Fanny Ford." Both these stories depicted women expressing their own power over men within the limits of their patriarchal restrictions. The cage not only represents them, but also other characters within the stories that were affected by the power struggle between the matriarchal and the patriarchal.

In "At Chênière Caminada," the bird imagery has the duel incarceration image associated with not only the feminine but also the masculine. The subjugation of the feminine appears early in the story with reference to women's clothing. Such a highly wielded weapon of male social convention is a powerful weapon with regard to how women were viewed, treated, and overall classified. Chopin writes, "The ribbons on the young girl's hats fluttered like the wings of birds, and the old women clutched the flapping ends of the veils that covered their heads" (309). Chopin applied bird characteristics to the women's clothes to depict its absurdity. The fluttering and flapping of the hats and veils mimic the wings of a bird, while still possessing a sarcastic undertone that mocks such unnecessary convention. Though the caged bird image here is not implicitly stated, the implied image of incarceration through fashion is still evident.

The secondary method of entrapment—that at of the masculine under the feminine—is depicted by an actual caged bird. Tonie, the male protagonist, is lovesick over a woman, Clair, whom he met at church. He is so infatuated that all other aspects of his life become secondhand. When he learns that Clair died while waiting in the cold for a carriage, he finds himself reconnected with society. "Some women passed by, laughing coarsely. He noticed how they laughed and tossed their heads. A mockingbird was singing in a cage, which hung from a window above his head. He had not heard it before" (317). Tonie becomes symbolic of the caged bird as he was trapped by his infatuation with Clair, who was only expressing her matriarchal power within the confines of her implied social subjugation. The moment Tonie learns of her death marks the moment he realizes the conflict of power and his own submissive role. It is interesting that he notes the tossing of the women's hair, a social norm associated with flirting, a moment before the mocking bird, revealing both people's struggle for power over the other.

"A Sentimental Soul," expresses a similar conflict, yet instead of fashion being the object of subjugation, the church becomes the aforementioned tool. Mamzelle Fleurette is the female protagonist of the piece and a shop owner who has feelings for another woman's husband, Lacodie. Fern writes upon the realization of this love "She thought the world was growing brighter and more beautiful; she thought the flowers redoubled their sweetness and the birds their song, and that the voices of her fellow creatures had grown kinder and their faces truer" (389). It is ironic that Fleurette seeks the bounty of nature to describe her feelings while it is the patriarchal controlled church that condemns her for her actions. The same church traps Fleurette in her behavior as this one institution dictates all actions for her life. Fluerette heart "went on loving Lacodie and her soul went on struggling; for she made this delicate and puzzling distinction between heart and soul, and picture the two as set in a very death struggle against each other" (394). This is a very legitimate struggle for a woman consumed and subjected by the patriarchal church. Yet that same church that imposed such measures upon Fluerette "was heartily sick of and tired of [her] and her stupidities" (395). By using Armstrong's interpretation of birds mirroring the soul, Fleurette's attempt to master her own feelings is metaphorically captured in a caged situation; a battle.

Though Fleurette was captured by the patriarchy of the church, Lacodie's wife, Augustine, was not. She operated within the confines of the patriarchal authority to win herself another husband. Fleurette sees Augustine "singing roulades, vying with the bird in the cage" (395). Augustine may be like the caged bird she hung outside her husband's closed store, trapped under the mourning period the church imposes upon her without means to support her children or herself. However she uses this incarceration to her own advantage to showcase her femininity. Singing with the canary allows her to attract other suitors, thus the appearance of Gascon. Augustine marries early and flounces her own feminine power in the face of the patriarchal society that had forced her to expose herself as the metaphorically singing caged bird. The bird is representative of nature and the cage the churches attempt to corral that power. Going back to the first time Fleurette realized her feelings and used nature bird imagery to describe it, matriarchal power is once again being expressed here through nature; matriarchal authority wars with patriarchal subjugation, leaving Fleurette confused between the two.

The conflict that is inherent between the church and nature is also mirrored in Chopin's short story "Lilacs." In this story both caged bird imagery and natural bird imagery is also used to depict the conflict between these two dichotomous forces. This story is one large metaphor concerning matriarchal forces against patriarchal forces. It follows the main character, Adrienne, as she defies patriarchal social convention, that of the church and accepted society, by becoming a stage performer. When first introduced she is described using nature imagery or free bird imagery. "She was clad all in brown; like one of the birds that come with the spring" (355). Adrienne is linked by

the image of bird and spring into a matriarchal authority outside the patriarchal church. This is further enforced when Sister Agathe states "I you should fail once to come, it would be like the spring coming without sunshine or the song of birds" (358). Spring is linked to birth, a domain specifically linked to the maternal aspects of women. Thus when Adrienne is paralleled to that birth, she embodies matriarchal authority.

Economically and socially free from the obligations other such young women of the time period are subjugated, Adrienne belongs to a group of women that were very rare in Chopin's time. Yet despite this individuality, there is still an attachment to the patriarchal institutions through which to she was raised. She must always return to the Abbey where she grew up when she smells lilacs. She says "Did you ever know, Sister Agathe, that there is nothing which so keenly revives a memory as a perfume—an odor?" (358). Dependence on forces her into a type of incarceration that is further illuminated later in the text by a caged parrot (362). The parrot's attempts to talk but cannot quite form the words, just like Adrienne attempts to free herself from the convention of the patriarchal society, but cannot quiet release herself from such dependence. Adrienne's internal struggle between the matriarchal and patriarchal forces in her life is illustrated through juxtaposition of free and caged bird imagery.

Like a few of the short stories in Fern's collections, Chopin also features short stories that have free or natural bird imagery. "Lilacs" and "A Sentimental Soul" gave small examples of this imagery, but the short stories entitled, "Tante Cat'rinette" and "An Idle Fellow" features exclusive bird imagery from nature yet still maintains the internal conflict between matriarchal and patriarchal forces. Tante Cat'rinette finds herself bombarded in this story by the town authorities, at this time all male, which want to condemn her house. She becomes so paranoid that she refuses to even leave for a minute, convinced the patriarchal authorities will demolish it. Yet when her charge gets sick she cannot help but visit. She plans only to visit for the night; convinced her house will not be there if she tallies past sunrise.

Because Cat'rinette is so trapped by the authority of her male dominated society, she addresses key aspects of nature's feminine, the moon, in an unfavorable light. She "addresses herself to the moon, which she apostrophized as and impertinent busybody spying upon her actions….She called up to the mocking-bird warbling upon a lofty limb of a pine tree, asking why it cried out so, and threatening to secure it and put it into a cage" (341). That Cat'rinette would actually threaten to cage the mocking bird, or its symbolic personification of nature, illustrates how patriarchal authority still rules her life and thus subjugates her own matriarchal expressions of power.

Through the same nature images that Cat'rinette originally spurned, her own matriarchal authority is expressed. She says on her run back into town to beat the sunrise "The mocking-birds were asleep, and so were the frogs and the snakes; and the moon was gone, and so was the breeze…She stopped suddenly, as if at command of some unseen power that forced her" (342-343). It is nature and the maternal authority within nature that stops Cat'rinette from returning to town and the patriarchal obligations that awaited her there. She turns away from that obligation to those dictated by nature and she returns to her charge thus defying her patriarchal obligations in favor of her matriarchal ones.

Similarly, "An Idle Fellow" has similar bird-in-nature images that reflect the power struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal authorities. Though a very short story, there is a wealth of meaning in its two pages. The narrator is the character steeped in the patriarchal social conventions of the period. He has done everything society bade him and is now "tired." Yet he berates his friend for being idle all this time. "[Paul] laughs when I upbraid him, and bid me, with a motion hold my peace" (280). The narrator is held in thrall by his own patriarchal aggression and suffers under the social custom of the period that men should work for a living. Idleness is not an accepted past-time.

Paul is the foil of the narrator who embodies patriarchal authority. Instead, Paul embodies matriarchal authority through nature as demonstrated by bird imagery. The narrator says, "He is listening to a thrush's song that comes from a blur of yonder apple-tree. He tells me the thrush is singing a complaint. She wants her mate that was with her last blossom-time and builded a nest with her. She will have no other mate. She will call for him till she hears the notes of her beloved-one's song coming swiftly towards her across forest and field" (280). The female thrush in nature has a great deal of authority. Yet even though this may seem like the female is demanding compliance from the male, it is more of a balance of power than subjugation, something completely foreign to the socially driven narrator. This entire metaphor comes as a great surprise to him, and thus he revaluates his patriarchal obligations. He states, "[Paul] is very wise, he knows the language of God which I have not learned" (281). The "language of God" to which he refers is the matriarchal call of nature, yet the narrator places a patriarchal title onto the phenomenon, which he witnessed. Again, the patriarchal authority of the period conflicts with the inherent matriarchal message of the thrush's story. Unlike Chopin's previous short stories, the protagonist does not wholly turn to an acceptance of matriarchal authority but instead tries to shade it with tones of patriarchal nomenclature.

Glaspell's examples of intermediate bird imagery can be found in her book *Fugitive's Return*. This book is interesting in that the bird imagery is incorporated completely into one character, that of Irma Lee's dead daughter.

Glaspell writes, "Irma, when alone, called her [daughter] Birdie, for she made such lovely little sounds. Soon she was calling her Birdie all the time—taking back her gift of the name" (176). Irma uses the name of Birdie, thereby giving her daughter the personification of a bird, because Bertha, her original name, was given to her by her father. Patriarchal authority was installed into that name, and by naming the child Birdie, Irma is countering her husband's patriarchal authority with her own.

This is further illustrated in the novel when Irma compares Birdie to the spring, and thereby solidifies her matriarchal authority over the patriarchal domination of society. She says, "How much more surely she moved in the spring, and all the time she would be gaining now, she would be learning. Birdie would know in her youth thing she herself was learning belatedly. In seeing pleasures, opportunities, come to her little girl it would be as if she herself had had them when she had not had them" (191). The slowly emerging social opportunities that were emerging for Glaspell at the time of her writing is depicted in this thought processes of Irma with regard to her daughter.

Major Metaphoric Impact

The third and final classification of Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's is bird imagery with major metaphoric impact. These works include stories with bird imagery as the largest overall image that heavily influences the theme of the work. Like the intermediate displays of bird imagery, these pieces have very in depth metaphorical connotations that deal with the struggle of patriarchal and matriarchal sources of authority.

Fern has one story from *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* entitled "Owls Kill Humming-Birds" that meets these criteria. In this story the matriarchal source of authority is again the nature imagery. The story begins "We are not to suppose that the oak wants stability because its light and changeable leaves dance to the music of the breeze; —nor are we to conclude that a man wants solidity and strength of mind because he may exhibit an occasional playfulness and levity" (397). In this passage the narrator, who we can assume is Fern, pokes fun at the stability and seriousness that is encouraged of well-bred gentlemen of the period. Like the narrator from Chopin's "An Idle Fellow," the embodiment of patriarchal authority emerges in the stubborn male of the family who "wants solidity and strength of mind" above all else. When Fern pokes fun at this social norm through nature imagery, she is immediately creating conflict between patriarchal and matriarchal forces. Bird imagery in the title alludes to the theme of the piece: dichotomous forces like male and female, big and small, stern and joyful. This is established further in the piece when Fern writes, "Don't marry a tombstone. You come skipping into the parlor, with your heart as light as a feather, and your brain full of merry fancies. There he sits! Stupid—solemn—and forbidding" (397). The heart is given the bird symbolism, personifying a bird's flight with the emotions expressed by wives or females in general.

In describing the differences between a solemn husband and a cheerful wife, Fern further establishes the struggle of power between patriarchal and matriarchal forces with nature imagery. It is very important to note the satirical tone of the narrator and thus the importance of the conflict of authority being illustrated through nature. Nature to Fern is a matriarchal, placing the overall tone of the piece in favor of matriarchal authority. She writes "So you go plodding through life with him to a dead march of his own leaden thoughts. You revel in the sunbeams' he likes the shadows. You are on the hill-tops; he is in the plains" (398). The simplistic dichotomy of images like light and dark, high and low, alludes to the other simplistic yet increasingly complicated dichotomy of male and female. Ferns theme becomes most transparent in the last lines of her story. She writes, "Marry a man who is not to ascetic to enjoy a good, merry laugh. Owls kill humming-birds!" (398). Though this may seem like an innocuous line, it has duel meaning. First, in reference to marriage, Fern encourages women to resist marrying for social necessity, instead urging them to marry suitability. She works on encouraging women to exert their own matriarchal powers to ascertain a good match in marriage, thus maneuvering matriarchal authority within the confines of social convention. Yet there is a deeper metaphor within the images of the birds. Nature imagery is initially used to mock patriarchal authority, but this last line reveals an unintended truth. Though humming birds may be more pleasing, owls are the predator. They have more strength and power in the animal kingdom, a metaphor that transfers equally affectively into a social context. Though Fern urges women to find suitable personality matches in their husbands, she acknowledges in the last line that men have most of the social authority.

Kate Chopin has a similarly constructed piece to Fern's "Owls Kill Humming-Birds" in her short Story "The White Eagle." The white eagle in the story is not an actual bird but a "cast iron bird" that belonged to a young girl's estate when she was little. "A small child could sit in the shadow of its wings. There was one who often did on sunny days while her soul drank the unconscious impressions of childhood. Later she grew sensible of her devotion for the white eagle and she often caressed his venerable head or stroked his wings in passing on the lawn" (671). Throughout her life it stood as a symbol for the dreams she didn't want to forget. It represented two things, wisdom and pride. "[The eagle] helped her to remember; or, better; he never permitted her to forget" (672). The girl grew

into womanhood, didn't get married, grew old, and died. This may seem like an ordinary cycle, but the white eagle was buried over her grave, again emphasizing the idea of pride, wisdom, and remembrance.

Initially a symbol for remembrance, the eagle is metaphorically it becomes symbolic of something bigger. As mentioned previously by Jennifer Mason, the free bird image is very American in its free thought and encouragement of individuality through feminine identity. Throughout the protagonist's life, the women were subjected to patriarchal authority. She lost her estate when her father died, lost her inheritance due to her "eccentricity," was deemed unsuitable for marriage, and thus died alone. Yet it is the idea of wisdom, pride, and memory that marks the eagle as a matriarchal figure. The eagle symbolizes an emerging fight for women's equality. The woman in the story never follows social convention, labeling her with such titles as "eccentric" and a tendency for "perspicacity." The eagle is her pride as a woman, the wisdom to see an equal future, and memory of the inequality that had come before. This is illustrated by the woman's last dream before she died. "The eagle had blinked and blinked, had left its corner and come and perched upon her, pecking at her bosom" (672). All that the eagle represents, wisdom, pride, and memory, is treasured in the hearts of women, especially the protagonist. The idea is to find equality, but the ending paragraph demonstrates why it has not yet happened. "With the sinking grave the white eagle has dipped forward as if about to take flight. But he never does" (673). For the dead women, equality is simply an idea that cannot yet take flight. Thus it waits for a time when it can. The eagle is symbolic of an idea of equality, and thus a shifting of matriarchal power against patriarchal subjugation.

Although Chopin's most celebrated piece, *The Awakening*, does not have one single bird image with major metaphoric impact, it never the less contains the most powerful metaphoric statements. It is very significant to note that of all the short pieces these three authors have crafted, *The Awakening* is the only one that opens and closes with bird imagery. In the opening of the novella, a parrot speaks in a mixture of French and Spanish "Go away! Go away! For God's sake!" (3). This parrot is joined by a caged mockingbird "…whistling in fluty notes out upon the breeze with maddening persistence" (3). These two caged birds in and of themselves may not be significant, but the lines following the birds, and their humanistic voices, are. Chopin writes, "The parrot and the mockingbird were the property of Madame Lebrun, and they had the right to make all the noise they wished. Mr. Pontellier had the privilege of quitting their society when they ceased to be entertaining," (3). Immediately the story begins with the firm establishment of matriarchal authority. Madame Lebrun, a widow, owns both caged birds and thus gains the right to let them speak as they wish. Metaphorically this simple fact expands to include a representational image of matriarchal dominance. Though Mr. Pontellier is the masculine authority of the household, he cannot stop the two birds from speaking. Their representation as the encaged feminine allows a feministic message distributed without the objection of patriarchal authority. Though Mr. Pontellier's patriarchal authority is not immediately established in the first couple paragraphs, his objectification of the feminine emerges soon after. ""You are burnt beyond recognition," [Mr. Pontellier] added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of property which has suffered some damage" (4). The objectification of Edna is synonymous with the entrapment of both the parrot and mockingbird. Yet even though all three are entrapped, they still manage to struggle against their bonds and exert their own authorities.

The struggle continues as matriarchal and patriarchal both try to find dominance in the odd social setting provided by the summer home. Edna explores the depth of her new feminist realization, but still within the confines of the male presence. The caged bird images once again demonstrate this correlation. One night during a gather when the parrot begins expressing himself once more, Monsieur Frival "insisted on having the bird removed and consigned to regions of darkness…the parrot fortunately offered no further interruption to the entertainment" (23-24). The constant metaphoric struggle between the feminine and masculine authorities represented by the parrot is mirrored by Edna's character and her subsequent struggle with the same ideas of freedom.

The Awakening is such an important novella for bird imagery as it turns common notions of femininity and birds on its head. Chopin writes, "The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer on Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood" (9). Motherhood within *The Awakening* becomes one of the major means by which masculine authority is administered. Institutions such as family, economy, and tradition appear again and again to pull the protagonist, Edna, away from her internal exploration of her own matriarchal authority.

Just as there are social institutions that solidify masculine authority, there are also feminine outlets that encourage Edna to continue her struggle. Mademoiselle Reisz is just such a character saying, "The bird that will soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice must have strong wings. It is a sad spectacle to see the weaklings bruised, exhausted, fluttering back to earth" (79). The free bird is used as a symbolic reference to Edna's feminist path of discovery and the potential threats along the way.

Mademoiselle Reisz statement was initially used to bolster Edna's confidence on her journey while also demonstrating the different forces pulling Edna towards both a metaphoric freedom and captivity. It is this passage

and Chopin's systematic movement from caged birds to free bird imagery while still maintaining a contestation between authorities that invoke such powerful catharsis with the final bird image of the piece. Chopin chose to make the ending of *The Awakening* open for the reader. She allows the reader to come to his or her own conclusion writing "All along the beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water" (108). Though this last poignant image seems like a direct contradiction of Mademoiselle Reisz's feminine soaring bird, there is another layer. The bird over Edna is only partially injured, on wing is still very much functional. Because the bird is falling is becomes a metaphor for Edna herself, illustrating her own bruised journey between the conflicting authorities. However no concise finality is depicted of the bird's journey. With one good wing it has the potential to fly upwards once more. This ambiguous ending to the bird is the major source for the conjecture of Edna's ending. It provides her character also with the potential for escape while still maintaining Chopin larges theme of the unending struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal authorities.

Susan Glaspell's play "Trifles," that was also transformed into a short story, "A Jury of Her Peers," is one of the best examples out of all three women's works of how bird imagery can embody the struggle of matriarchal authority against patriarchal authority. The story follows the count attorney, Mr. Peters and his wife, the sheriff, and Mr. Hale and his wife, as they try to ascertain for themselves whether Minnie Wright killed her husband.

Immediately patriarchal authority is displayed as the two men begin the investigation and all but ignore the women. Peters, the man who discovered Mr. Wright murder says, "She worried about [her preserves] when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break." The sheriff replies, "Well, can you beat women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves." The sheriff comments, "I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about." Hale finally states, "Well, women and used to worrying over trifles" (Pollaro). This short conversation between the men demonstrates their sentiment towards women and illustrates their patriarchal subjugation of their wives and demonstrates their inability to see the justification of Minnie's motives. Women are objectified and mocked. When Mrs. Hale tries to defend Minnie's mussed house the attorney states, "Ah, loyal to your sex, I see" (Pollaro). Any attempt of the two wives present to get the men to understand the horrible living conditions Minnie experienced were ignored under the guise of "loyalty to the sex." Because they have very little social power, the women begin their own investigation, their own attempt at matriarchal authority. They discuss whether or not they think Minnie killed her husband, and how the men criticize them for behaving in the very manner their patriarchal social conventions demand of them. Yet it is through this impromptu investigation that a bond forms between Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Peters, and even Minnie. The two women find her bread, her aprons, and even her quilt. These are all symbolic of patriarchal subjugation, yet it is these same symbols that draw the women together.

Bird imagery becomes important in the story as it personifies the conflict between patriarchal and matriarchal authorities that was established early in the play. Mrs. Peters finds a mangled birdcage in the cupboard. Mrs. Hale remarks "She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and fluttery. How—she—did—change" (Pollaro). By tying Minnie and the canary together as one entity, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters manage to make the bird in its cage symbolic of Minnie. Like the bird, she was subjugated to the jealousy of her husband. Because he was so jealous he did not allow her friends or children, thus the bird became her child. It is symbolic of not only herself in a patriarchal society, but her attempts to fashion her own matriarchal authority over the bird.

When Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale find the dead canary with its neck wrung, pieces of not only the murder but also Minnie's motivation come together. Minnie was symbolic of the caged bird. The bird was her soul, a phenomenon Armstrong explained earlier. By killing the canary, John Wright was killing Minnie's soul and any progress Minnie's had gained at matriarchal control. John wanted complete dominance, and thus to ascertain her own power Minnie killed him. The women come to this conclusion, but do not tell their husbands. This demonstrates a huge theme that was depicted in Chopin's "The White Eagle," that of woman's camaraderie. The White Eagle represented the idea of women's equality just as Minnie's canary became the tool by which Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale invisibly supported Minnie's actions in hiding the damning evidence. In both stories the bird became a matriarchal symbol that a patriarchal society tried and failed to destroy.

IMPORTANCE OF TYPES BIRD TYPE

Though Lutwack explains in his book why bird imagery is such a commonly used metaphor to express relationships between people, there is a further analysis that can be made based on the specific types of reoccurring birds that are used. In all three authors' works, the free or caged bird images fall into two categories, that of domesticated and wild birds.

Caged birds in all three author's works are a reflection of social conventions associated with the time period. Jennifer Mason explains, "Throughout the early modern time period, the keeping of animals with no economic value was associated with the aristocracy, and possession of beautiful or expensive animals became one way for the bourgeoisie to display their aesthetic sensibilities and wealth" (13). Though this was initially true, pet keeping became very popular as time progressed. "The growth of pet keeping's popularity owed less to a middle-class desire to resemble the upper class than it did to the construction of a middle class identity based on interior qualities of mind" (Mason 13). Thomas Keith supports Mason claiming "…it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that pets seemed to have really established themselves as a normal feature of the middle-class household" (110). Keith further narrows the category of caged birds saying "there were caged birds, kept either for their song (such with canaries, nightingales, goldfinches, larks, and linnets" or for their imitation of the human voice (as with parrots, magpies, and jackdaws" (111).

Of the reoccurring caged birds, the most notable symbolic and historic reference that appears in all three author's works is that of the canary. According to Keith "Canaries, which had been imported annually by the thousands since the mid sixteenth century, were by this time bred domestically as said to be so plentiful that 'even mean persons' could afford them" (111). Robbins in *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots* explains how canaries, though extremely popular, fell "in a state of limbo between the native and the exotic." Because they had such great melodious voices and very submissive, they tended to be the most favored of the caged birds (Robbins 201-202). Through their capacity to be so submissive, canaries have become representational of caged subjugation and transformed into a symbolic creature within those terms. Robbins supports this saying "Women kept pets more for show or frivolous entertainment than because of any genuine affection, and they linked pet-keeping with other aspects of a superficial lifestyle" (229). Canaries in all three women's works become associated with not only submission but of vicarious and superficial living. Take the caged canary in Chopin's "A Sentimental Soul," where Lacodie's wife uses the canary's voice to showcase her own voice in order to catch a new husband even though mourning traditions have not yet been met. Here both patriarchal and matriarchal authorities are warring with the canary's song. In other words, canaries within all of the author's works become synonymous with matriarchal power being subjugated by a patriarchal dominate not only within the home but within society as well.

The second reoccurring caged bird image that emerges is that of the parrot. The parrot holds symbolic importance because of its unique ability to mimic human speech. It is often uses this ability to influence or mimic human vices. Its role symbolically becomes the instrument to uncover truths, the "voice" of the bird become of heavy metaphorical importance (Rowland 121-122). This is used in Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's works to convey truths that may not be heard at the time, but metaphorically holds a wealth of meaning. Take the parrot in Chopin's "Lilacs." A servant says, "How can you ever expect Zozo to talk? A dozen times he has been on the point of saying something!" (362). Zozo, a caged parrot, is representative of matriarchal authority being subjugated by patriarchal authority inherent within the conventions of society. Yet Zozo attempts to say something, attempting to speak out against that subjugation without success. Zozo in this example becomes a very powerful tool by which social patriarchal oppression is exposed.

The mockingbird is the last caged bird that reoccurs several times within Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's works. This songbird is known for its ability to mimic other birds and also for is great singing ability (OED). Mockingbirds are a favored caged animal for this reason, and a symbolic image in much the same way of canaries and parrots. They are a huge part of social convention within the time period, and also a tool by which the conflict between patriarchal and matriarchal powers within the three authors' works were exposed. A great example of this is Chopin's story "Tante Cat'rinette." In this story it is through the mockingbird's song that Tante Cat'rinette defies patriarchal authority within society in favor of the more important matriarchal duties that nature imagery, the mockingbird song especially, inspired. She threatens to cage it initially calling, "Ca to pé crié comme ça ti céléra?" (341), or "Why are you crying?" It is the mockingbird's ability to invoke truth that makes it such a prolific symbol within all three author's works.

Free bird symbols are often associated with individuality or "independence" and "self reliance" as Mason terms it. The one major wild bird image is that of the eagle. It appears in Chopin's short story, "The White Eagle." Even though in this story the eagle is only made of stone, its symbolic importance is still palpable. Rowland in *Birds with Human Souls* explains, "The sacred associations with the bird were maintained in many cults. It was the bird of apotheosis and resurrection" (52). This symbolic meaning applied to Chopin's "The White Eagle," reveals the wild bird to be the embodiment of matriarchal authority in its attempt to resurrect itself from the depth of subjugation that the current patriarchal authority has implied. It is almost ironic that a bird with such close ties to the church is used symbolically to convey the resurrection of a much more pagan matriarchal authority.

The sparrow, owl, and humming bird have very menial appearances as wild bird symbols. The owl and humming bird appear in Chopin's "Owls Kill Humming-birds," while the sparrow in Fern's "Fanny Ford." Owls

and Hummingbirds in the context of Chopin's story have a very ironic and almost superficial symbolic context. The owl, traditionally the iconic symbol for wisdom (Rowland 116) is made into a boring man, while the hummingbird is made into a twittering female who incorporates some of the physical aspects of the small bird. The dichotomy of the two birds is the main metaphor more so than the bird's actual historical meanings. The sparrow, in turn, has connotations with infidelity (157), a theme in "Fanny Ford," that is conveyed through Percy's abandonment of Mary and her daughter. Again the symbol conveys the similar metaphor of patriarchal authorities becoming oppressors of matriarchal authority.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Historically Fern, Chopin, and Glaspell's works fall into a very turbulent time for women. The three women's works stem through seventy years of historic upheaval that includes the Civil War and World War I. Although the works of these three women were produced in distinctly different historical periods, the message within their works still stays the same. Olive Banks in *Faces of Feminism* outlines the three ideals within the Women's Movement to which these three women contribute: Evangelicalism, Equal Rights, and Social Reform. These three ideals are what women from 1848, when Fern was first published, to 1920, when Glaspell was active, sought to improve or revolutionize. Fern was first published in 1853 with *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio*; just five years after the Seneca Fall Convention in 1848 that historically marks the beginning of the Women's Movement in America (63).

Evangelicalism can be seen much of Fern's early works and included a new way to look at Evangelical moral behavior for both men and women. Banks states "It has been claimed that the unmistakable improvement in the manners and morals of early nineteenth century England was due to the Evangelicals, whose concern with a religious revival took the form, in large part, of an attack on sexual immorality, as well as on the neglect of religious observances" (63). Though this may not sound like and improvement on the subjugation of women, it gave them more equality within the social structure. Women were no longer regarded as impure for being a mother or wives (Banks 72). The idea of an Evangelical revival is especially apparent in some of Fern's short stories. Her disdain for the conventions of society especially those with family is depicted in "Little Charlie: the Child Angel," and "The Still Small Voice."

Though Evangelicalism can be seen in her works, Fern was mostly concerned with equal rights for women. She wrote on "social critic, exposing what she saw as societal wrongs and sometimes proposing ways to right these wrongs. She was deeply concerned with the injustice to women, both at home and in the marketplace, which is why she never ceased urging women to secure financial independence from men," (eNotes.com).

Economic independence is a concept with which both Fern and Chopin struggled. Fern become a talented columnist despite negative influence by her family, a story she tells in the book *Ruth Hall*, but struggled for many years for that independence. A similar case happened to Chopin.

By the time Chopin became well known in 1894, the Civil war and depression had long since passed, yet it had become important as the issue of slavery had many women in the mid 1800's questioning the current patriarchal social domination. June Hannam explains in *Feminism:*

> Involvement in the anti-slavery campaign also encouraged women to question aspects of their own social position. They drew an analogy between the position of slaves on plantations and their own sexual, legal, emotional, and physical slavery to men with marriage. (26)

The marriage and slavery parallel spurred a whirlwind of cooperation between women for social equality, yet even twenty years later economic equality still eluded Chopin's generation of women. Chopin's husband died in 1882 and left six sons who were still dependent (Wyatt). Her economic independence was only gained after much turmoil, a concept that she explored with Edna's character in *The Awakening*. Edna seeks economic independence just like Chopin and Fern. This is a running theme through both women's work that is very much reflective of the struggle for equal and social rights that was dominate in first wave feminism.

The economic struggle was not one that Glaspell encountered. Susan Glaspell became popular at the tail end of first wave feminism. Her works became popular around 1916 with the conclusion of WWI (Evans). The Women's Movement had become centralized around suffrage, which was granted in the nineteenth amendment in 1920 (Hannam 75). In Glaspell's works, the language is quite different from those of Fern or Chopin, marking the language shift that emerged after the "Great War." Paul Fussell explains this phenomenon in *The Great War and Modern Memory* when he talks about works written before the war. He states, "Another index of prevailing innocence is a curious prophylaxis of language. One could use with security words which a few years later, after the war, would constitute obvious double entendres" (23). After WWI words and social norms that were usually taboo become common. Fussell adds "Out of the world of summer, 1914, marched a unique generation. It believed in Progress and Art and in no way doubted the benignity even of technology" (24). The shift in language and the great social upheaval that prevailed after WWI gave Susan Glaspell an added depth of feminist criticism to her works. In

Judd Rankin's Daughter, a novel set in the ends of World War I, she even comments on the phenomenon of the changing language writing, "Life must have been easier to handle when the word forbid was in good standing. We had been educated out of forbidding, it was supposed to do terrific things to the ones forbidden" (22-23). The concept of the words had changed since the war began. The concept of not only society but also the entire way that words that had previously constrained had changed is one that to which Glaspell was fond. She did not focus on economic equality but social and intellectual equality within the new emerging construction of society.

CONCLUSION

Fanny Fern, Kate Chopin, and Susan Glaspell's works spanned over seventy years of historical upheaval at both a social and personal level. Yet despite the differences in their placement in history, all three women wrote literature that critiqued the subjugation of women through social and economic patriarchal authorities. These brilliant women sought to accomplish this feat through the use of caged and free bird imagery. The dichotomy of free birds and caged birds symbolically references the conflict between matriarchal and patriarchal authorities in the historical context of their subsequent time periods. Yet despite the difference in their historical context, the works of all three women have similar thematic ideas and uses of the caged and free bird symbol with varying degrees of influence to the overall feminist themes.

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