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**The Birds and the Bees: Gender Performance in Grandville's
*Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux***

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Alexandra K. Wettlaufer

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

The Birds and the Bees: Gender Performance in Grandville's

Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux

by

Nina Marie Sport, B.A.

Report

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Dedication

This is for Josh, who sees me, and whom I see in every word of the pages that follow.

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Abstract

The Birds and the Bees: Gender Performance in Grandville's

Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux

Nina Marie Sport, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2017

Supervisor: Alexandra Wettlaufer

Published between 1840 and 1842, J. J. Grandville's *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux* is a hybrid work of satirical allegory that stages the scandals, polemics, and power struggles of the July Monarchy through a collection of illustrations by Grandville and stories written to accompany them. The printed image significantly disrupted artistic hierarchies of the period and sparked heated debates about both the expertise of illustrators and the possibilities of the image, often described as an *instrument of seduction*. Scholarly engagement with *Scènes des animaux* has all but ignored gender, yet the increased visibility of women in the publishing industry during the July Monarchy permanently altered the terms of modern artistic legitimacy. In this paper, I demonstrate that gender has been conceptualized, represented, and reified in terms of animality and evolutionary discourses in Grandville's text. Drawing on Alexandra Wettlaufer's analysis of the dialectic between word and image at play in *Scenes des animaux*, as well as Bakhtinian *polyphony* and Eve Sedgwick's concept of *erotic triangles*, I consider the work in terms of a triple dialectic between word, image, and gender. Through the figures of bird and bee and their associated verbal tropes,

Grandville, Hetzel, and Balzac all link women to consumerism, materialism, stupidity, and sensuality. This set of associations distance women from the field of “legitimate” literary production and disempowers them as sociopolitical agents. At the same time, the overdetermined containment strategies employed by the contributors reveal that they rely on women as their primary reading public and clientele. Economic anxiety has been displaced onto the body of the animal-woman, and the contributors dress up their objections with the accoutrements of conservative morality. In titling this project “The Birds and the Bees” —a euphemism used to explain sex and courtship to small children— I call attention to the persistence of animal metaphors related to gender and sexuality in contemporary culture.

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Introduction: Clothing the Animal-Woman

L'idée de Balzac, c'est non seulement que l'apparence doit coller à la réalité comme le vêtement moule le corps, mais que, de toute façon, l'apparence est toujours vraie pour qui sait voir. Considérée comme un art véritable, l'élégance partage avec l'art littéraire, nous l'avons vu, la propriété d'être la nature ornée, la réalité élevée par l'art à la vérité." (Rose Fortassier, 1988, p. 56)

In "Traité de la vie élégante," an ensemble of articles published in the fashion journal *La Mode* in 1830, Honoré de Balzac conceptualizes *fashion* as an entire system of signification—complete with its own language, rules, and implications—whose subtleties were crucial to understanding the sociopolitical functioning of the July Monarchy.¹ Balzac regarded clothing and accessories as much more than mere frivolous commodities. He viewed them as artifacts indicative of aesthetic, social, and political identities. In Rose Fortassier's analysis of the "Traité", she notes that Balzac believed *la toilette* (clothing / outfits) was a visual text that could be read and interpreted if the observer knew how to decode the language of fashion. The same can be said of J. J. Grandville's illustrations of costumed animals in *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux*, published between 1840 and 1842, arguably the most fascinating and bizarre sociopolitical allegory of Revolution-era France.² With Balzac's comparison of *le vêtement* (clothing) to language in mind, I propose that it is possible to understand Grandville's illustrations in *Scènes des*

¹ "Traité de la vie élégante", published in 1830 in weekly fashion review *La Mode*, conceptualizes the central role of fashion in Restoration-era French society

² Hereafter I will refer to the work as *Scènes des Animaux* to continue the language games afforded by the theatrical lexicon evoked by *la scène* (stage, scene, or scenery).

Animaux in terms of *déguise*—that is, the word *dressed up* or *disguised* as image—to shed new light on the functioning of the work as a whole. In either case, Fortassier argues, reflecting upon clothing quickly reveals the opposing functions of the *déguise*, it shows one thing while concealing another. What does Grandville seek to show by dressing his animals, and what is being concealed? Does the status of the work as a pastiche result in an elegant ensemble or do the competing voices of its contributors result in an unintelligible cacophony? To answer the question of *déguise* in *Scènes des Animaux*, we must first establish what it seeks to show.

Scènes des animaux is a hybrid work of satirical allegory that stages the scandals, polemics, and power struggles of the July Monarchy through a collection of illustrations by Grandville and the stories written to accompany them. It reverses the writer-illustrator relationship at the time. Edited and directed by Pierre-Jules Hetzel (who also wrote stories under his pseudonym P.J. Stahl), the volume features contributions by Honoré de Balzac, Charles Nodier, Émile de La Bédollière, Gustave Droz, Jules Janin, Paul de Musset. Though an exhaustive list of the works parodied by Grandville et al. is beyond the scope of my analysis, its primary intertexts are Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*, Curmer's *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, and LaFontaine's *Fables*; the commonality linking these texts is their pedagogical function. Upon a surface-level reading the work seems to be a caricature of Parisian social identities with a didactic tone that instructs readers on appropriate engagement with the arts, a *physiologie* with an animal *déguise*. Yet the intense irony that virtually drips off of the page complicates any straightforward interpretation of the work. Upon closer inspection, the text reveals its simultaneous function as a metanarrative, a product of the publishing industry that is about literary and artistic production in the age of industrialization. Are any signifiers stable in a work that is

aggressively ironic, intentionally subversive, and explicitly performing a series of hierarchy reversals?

Scholarship on *Scènes des animaux* has dealt extensively with the production of the work, in Barthes' terminology the *scriptible* or *writerly* aspect of publishing.³ Phillippe Kaenel's foundational writing on the production of the text has anchored critical discussion in the illustrator's contested position in the artistic hierarchy during the July Monarchy⁴. Keri Yousif builds upon Kaenel's foundation to demonstrate how Balzac and Grandville employ the terms of artistic production in their fictional contributions to reconfigure the roles of artist and artisan in reality.⁵ Just as Balzac argued that *la toilette* could translate an idea into a form of visual representation, Yousif maintains that both writer and illustrator translate "aesthetics into a commercial language that the public will understand" and sympathize with (27). Despite the gendered rhetoric of fashion and prostitution permeating the archival materials cited by both Kaenel and Yousif, neither address the implications of anchoring a discussion on artistry in gendered, sexualized terms. In fact, scholarly engagement with *Scènes des animaux* has all but ignored gender, with the exception of Judith Goldstein's work on Grandville's animal-human hybrids in *Les Métamorphoses du Jour*.⁶ However, I disagree with Goldstein's conclusion that Grandville conveys sympathy for the victimized animal-woman, as the reading does not problematize the addition of clothing to the animal body or the status of his illustrations as visual texts whose most salient feature is their literal rendering of idiomatic expressions. While she does not

³ See References- Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte*

⁴ See References- Kaenel, *Le métier d'illustrateur*

⁵ See References- Yousif, *Balzac, Grandville, and the Rise of Book Illustration*

⁶ See References- Goldstein "Realism Without a Human Face"

explicitly address gender, Alexandra K. Wettlaufer's reading of Grandville's polyvalent aesthetics foregrounds my interest in the illustrator's visual wordplay.⁷

In the pages to follow, I will demonstrate that gender has been conceptualized, represented, and reified in terms of animality and evolutionary discourses in Grandville's text. As I am interested in the readerly (*lisible*) experience of the work, I follow its *mise-en-abîme* narrative structure to reveal that *Scènes des animaux* relies on the underlying structure of naturalized gender to *dress up* the social, political, and economic power of women in a *déguise* of avarice and vice. My analysis of the work's animal-women hinges upon the polysemy of the words *voler* (to fly and to steal), *nom de plume* (pseudonym and feather/quill), and *la griffe* (claw, talon, engraver's tool, signature, and designer label). I have chosen these terms on the basis of their associations with fashion, animality, and artistic hierarchy, but also because I focus specifically on the figures of the bird (*l'oiseau*) and the bee (*l'abeille*), employed in the text to signify a *voleuse* (a female thief/flying creature).⁸ Putting these associations over the top, *Le Voleur* was a fashion journal in the popular press during the July Monarchy. The logic behind my selection of the bird and the bee as exemplars of the animal-woman in *Scènes des animaux* is rooted in the cultural anxiety surrounding female engagement in the literary sphere, both as writer and reader, during the period. Drawing on Wettlaufer's analysis of the dialectic between word and image at play in *Scenes des animaux*, as well as Kaenel's description of the writer-illustrator-editor relationship as a "ménage à trois," I consider the work in terms of a triple dialectic between word, image, and gender. This approach reveals that financial compensation is the *disguised* object of contention underpinning the contributors' battle-royale for sociocultural prestige.

⁷See References- Wettlaufer "From metaphor to metamorphosis..." (article in *Word & Image*)

⁸ To contextualize these associations further,

To orient my discussion of *la voleuse*, I turn to Bakhtin's theory of polyphonic narrative and Eve Sedgwick's theory of erotic triangles⁹ in order to move beyond modes of critical analysis that are predicated on binarisms as a heuristic tool, which I believe is central to uncovering the *déguise* at play in this work. Bakhtinian polyphony—the multiplicity of voices within a narrative—is particularly well-suited to my focus on the animal tropes in *Scènes des Animaux* because of its traditional associations with singing (*chant d'oiseau*) and jabbering (*bavardage*). I have adapted Sedgwick's model of the erotic triangle as a way to think about the triple dialectic between artistic hierarchy, clothing, and animality, in order to reveal gender as the hidden center of the text. The increasing importance of women to the publishing industry during the July Monarchy—as a colleague of male artists, a competitor for resources, and especially a consumer driving demand—permanently altered the terms of modern artistic legitimacy. Through the figures of bird and bee and their associated verbal tropes, Grandville, Hetzel, and Balzac all link women to consumerism, materialism, stupidity, and sensuality. This set of associations distances women from the field of “legitimate” literary production and disempowers them as sociopolitical agents. At the same time that the men behind *Scènes des animaux* imply that the veneer of female artistry is a *déguise*, the overdetermined containment strategies employed by the contributors reveals that they rely on women as their primary reading public and clientele. Economic anxiety has been displaced onto the body of the animal-

⁹ The notion of polyphony is central to Bakhtin's narrative theory, which along with *heteroglossia*—the interplay among different languages, speech types, and voices that blend and clash to generate dialogic meaning—represent the distinctive feature of the novel as a genre. Consequently, polyphony is referenced throughout his oeuvre.

In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), Sedgwick distinguishes *homosocial* from *homosexual* to explore the expression of intimacy between men in a patriarchal cultural system which seeks to render such relationships invisible. In Sedgwick's configuration of the erotic triangle, the female love interest in a narrative serves as a conduit through which two men may express homosocial or homoerotic desire in a refracted way.

woman, and the contributors *dress up* their objections with the accoutrements of conservative morality.

First, I look at the extradiegetic paratexts and diegetic framing narrative imposed by editor and contributor PJ Hetzel, which position the bird-woman as victim. Following these outermost layers, I address a selection of Grandville's illustrations as a diegetic ensemble that functions as an ideologically consistent visual text where the animal-woman appears most frequently as a bird.¹⁰ My chosen vignettes reflect a pattern of bird-woman as victim, vulgar consumer, or *femme fatale*. I have selected "Voyage d'un Moineau de Paris" as the best example of the book-within-the-book because of Balzac's performative adopting of George Sand's *nom de plume*, making it an interesting case study for the notion of *déguise*. There is scholarship to be done on the performance of masculinity in *Scènes des Animaux*, but I focus specifically on the representation of *la voleuse*. Though I do not explicitly take on questions of problematic racial discourse, class difference, or performance as spectacle, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that they contribute to the exploitative tone of the text as a whole. There is a palpable racial component to the hierarchy established and perpetuated in the work that excludes the feminized Other from artistic legitimacy.¹¹ Similarly, the working poor are represented almost exclusively as victims and are excluded from the discussion of cultural capital in the work, signaled frequently by a lack of clothing and markers of stupidity. I do not intend to perform a Marxist analysis of this text and will only address capital in so far as it is relevant to my reading of women as consumers driving demand and producers of cultural capital. Finally, though references to Vaudeville and spectacle are scattered throughout *Scènes des animaux*

¹⁰ Though I mostly follow the order of each element's appearance, Grandville's images are the exception because they are scattered throughout the text.

¹¹ Nineteenth century understanding of 'race' included nationality, so the litany of countries evoked – either explicitly or allegorically— signals this aspect of hierarchization. See Edward Saïd's *Orientalism*.

and the scholarship surrounding it, my aim here is to only address performance as it relates to my use of the term *déguise*.¹²

¹² The abbé Pluche's *Spectacle de la nature*, published in 1732, was widely read across Europe by natural history enthusiasts. Nature as spectacle is made literal in *Les Animaux*, especially in Balzac's "Les amours de deux bêtes" where animals study insects under a microscope in the Jardin des Plantes. The study of insects as a distinct branch of zoology (entomology) traces back to Bonnet's 1764 *Contemplation de la nature*, which relied heavily on Pluche's work.

Historical Context: The Animal Image as Seduction

In *Le Métier d'illustrateur 1830-1880*, Philippe Kaenel traces the social history of the practice of illustration and the illustrator's position in the artistic hierarchy of nineteenth-century France. A descendant of fifteenth-century *illumineurs* and *ymagiers*, the illustrator's appearance in the Restoration artistic scene emerges from relaxed press laws under the Bourbons, the industrialization of *la gravure*, and the introduction of lithography into the Parisian bookselling industry in the early 1820s. The proliferation and mass circulation of printed images in texts rejuvenated the struggling publishing industry, which during the economic crisis at the end of the reign of Charles X had been forced to dramatically alter its marketing strategies to avoid bankruptcy. Instead of focusing solely on wealthy clientele interested in luxury editions of highly sought-after texts, booksellers began to target the bourgeoisie by producing less expensive books with more drawings. As images began to invade books and periodicals, traditional subscription services for the *livraison* were reinstated to better compete with the *journaux de bon marché* that began to appear in 1835. These changes in strategy did not go unnoticed by artists and intellectuals of the day. The printed image significantly disrupted artistic hierarchies of the time and sparked heated debates about the expertise of illustrators (are they artists or artisans?) and the possibilities of the image. On one hand, individuals across political and ideological camps saw the potential of *la gravure* as a means of indoctrination, steering the taste of the popular classes, and even democratizing educational modes. The alleged vulgarization of the literary was therefore incidental. On the other hand, more elitist and reactionary voices condemned the *vignettes* in the interest of preserving their cultural privileges. Conservatives saw them as possible catalysts of sociopolitical agitation and denounced them as examples of libertinage and impiety. Though Kaenel describes the printed image

as an “instrument of seduction” employed by booksellers and editors to entice bourgeois clientele, he fails to interrogate the heavily gendered discourse of artist-as-prostitute that permeates the discussion of the illustrator and the changes to the publishing industry under the July Monarchy. In his article « l’Éditeur » in *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*, Élias Regnault writes :

L’illustration est *un appel fait aux sens*, et en même temps une production nouvelle de la pensée, *une séduction* qui a peut-être quelque chose de matériel, et en même temps une *alliance heureuse* entre l’artiste et l’écrivain...et les arts, qui *se fécondent* et se développent lorsqu’une main intelligente sait les unir, ont été *prostitués* dans *un accouplement stérile* et un *honteux* amalgame.¹³ (32)

By describing illustration in terms of the senses, seduction, fertilization, and prostitution, the work of the illustrator is feminized and thus, delegitimized. There is an additional implication that the illustrator is impotent with the emphasis on the coupling as *sterile*. The description of illustration as *la pensée déguisée en vignettes* solidifies the embodiment of the art form as a woman, but more specifically as a prostitute selling herself to vulgar bourgeois readers.

In the frontispiece of *Scènes des animaux*, Grandville identifies French naturalist Comte de Buffon as one of the work’s primary targets for ridicule by including his name in the misspelled parody of *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*, “Les animo peints par un autre Buffon”. By association, his magnum opus *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, a 36-volume study of animals and minerals realized between 1749 and 1788, is a primary intertext of *Les Animaux*.¹⁴ Despite positioning the work of the naturalist below

¹³ I have added the italics here for emphasis

¹⁴ Paul Lawrence Farber in *Johns Hopkins Introductory Studies in the History of Science : Finding Order in Nature : The Naturalist Tradition from Linnaeus to E. O. Wilson* (2003)

that of the artist in his intellectual hierarchy—signaled by the parodic evocation of Buffon in the frontispiece— Grandville, Hetzel, and Balzac all draw upon the naturalist methodology of taxonomic classification, suggesting that it is a useful tool (*la griffe*) for the artist to realize their vision. The use of taxonomies as a tool suggests an anxious attempt to maintain the dominant position in the artistic hierarchy. The employment of naturalist methodology by the collaborating artists of *Les Animaux* reveals the power struggle embedded in the narrative that manifests in each contributor's trivialization of the animal-woman as bird and bee.

Ornately illustrated editions of natural history texts were in high demand in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, partially because of the aforementioned advancements in printing technology, but also because the discipline was in the process of moving away from its alignment with the humanities (history and philosophy) and toward the sciences.¹⁵ Zoology became increasingly stratified as naturalists refined their interests and the subdivisions of ornithology (the study of birds), and entomology (the study of insects) experienced a particularly large number of breakthroughs. Nonetheless natural history writings often waxed poetic with language more philosophical than scientific. Swiss naturalist François Huber's research on the natural history of bees led to his observation of the queen bee's impregnation which, along with innovations by Petro Prokopovych and Charles Dadant, led to commercialized beekeeping. Huber was also well-known for his 1784 study of birds in *Observations sur le vol des oiseaux de proie*, whose opening passage lends itself well to my discussion of *la voleuse*: « Pour se faire une idée nette et précise du *vol* des oiseaux de proie, qui font de tous les oiseaux ceux que la nature a la plus favorisés à l'égard du *vol*, il faut considérer leurs *allures* diverses » (3).¹⁶

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ I have added the italics for emphasis.

Reading this excerpt metaphorically, it is easy to see how the contributors of *Scènes des animaux* would see the satirical value of *le vol* for conveying the woman writer's encroachment into the male-dominated book trade. Huber goes on to say the way to express the *vol* of birds of prey is by tracing lines onto paper, amplifying the comparison between woman and *oiseau*. Although the word *oiseau* is masculine, the author repeatedly refers to the birds of prey as “la classe des oiseaux de proie” or “cette espèce”. As a result the associated adjectives and pronouns are feminine, and “elles” in the text stands in for the birds of prey. The evocation of *allure* in the opening passage of the book also demonstrates the way that early scientific discourse, like discussions of the role of the illustrator in the literary sphere, was deeply embedded in questions of gender and sexual reproduction. As the agents of pollination, the figure of the bird and the bee are intimately tied up in connotations of sexual reproduction. In titling this project “The Birds and the Bees” —a euphemism used to explain sex and courtship to small children— I call attention to the persistence of animal metaphors related to gender and sexuality in contemporary culture. What is at stake when we do not interrogate the ways we continue to describe human relationships and desires in animal terms?

Containing *la voleuse*: Hetzel's Framing Narratives

After the frontispiece, the first textual element the reader encounters is the title page announcing Grandville as the sole creator of “vignettes”. Yet, the organization of this page places Hetzel's pseudonym “P.-J. Stahl” at its center, identifying him as the boss of the project (*directeur*) as well as highlighting his entrepreneurial role in the book's publication (*éditeur*). Undoubtedly readers at the time would have recognized “George Sand” as the *nom de plume* of successful writer Armandine Aurore Lucille Dupin, grouping her along with the other contributing “messieurs” and setting the tone for Hetzel's paratextual contributions. His paratexts capitalize on the implied female reader (which I elaborate on below), while also having a laugh at her expense. The *Préface* serves to make explicit the series of reversals performed in the text and elaborates on the purpose of the volume, to « ajouter la parole aux merveilleux Animaux de Grandville, et d'associer notre plume à son crayon, pour l'aider à critiquer les travers de notre époque. » Hetzel's use of the word *travers* (peculiarity, bad turn) is striking because it is an egregious understatement of the social unrest that led to the Revolution of 1830. Furthermore, by using the *déguise* of the animal— described by Hetzel in terms of fashion as *accessory* and *coat lining* – “l'Homme” becomes the object of the animal gaze. From these first pages, Hetzel expresses an anxiety that *Scènes des animaux* will be perceived as *frivole* (silly, frivolous, or not serious). Before the reader has even entered into the fictional realm of the text, Hetzel explicitly links the animal to vestimentary coding, a form of signification that is at risk of being read as frivolous. He then defends the work as an innovation, thanking the public for embracing the project and using this as evidence of its legitimacy. Hetzel's preemptive defense of the work, along with his pejorative feminization of the press points to the

heightened scrutiny men were under as more women entered the literary scene to write back.

The chapter titles listed in the table of contents instruct readers as to the appropriate literary genres for women. Stories written by and featuring male animals as the protagonist— their *feuilletons*, grievances, prayers, conflicts, philosophies, memoires, court documents, guides, plays, and recovered archival materials like academic papers—are by far the most numerous. Though noticeably more limited in terms of genre, reading material for ladies that is still acceptable includes letters and the travel stories of female animals, but only as a cautionary tale as to why women are better off staying in the home. Letter-writing seems to be the only acceptable genre for ladies to share their “souvenirs” and “peines de coeur”, though they may verbally retell the stories of manly adventures or translate existing works of fiction.

Set against the backdrop of the anniversary of the death of LaFontaine, the animals of the Jardin des Plantes have just staged a revolution against their oppression by men and are gathered to institute an organized system of governance, elect a leader, determine their priorities, and identify action items. The text continues to identify “l’Homme” as the oppressor, but the capitalization and excessive repetition of this word hyperbolizes the injustice done to the animals assembled to the point that the animals’ complaints become farcical. We enter the diegetic realm of *Scènes des animaux* through our access to the *Résumé Parlementaire*. As a tribute to La Fontaine, the civilized animals in the Assembly wear mourning attire, while “les autres” are disdainful of “ces vaines marques de la douleur” and “se contentent de laisser tomber leurs oreilles et trainer tristement leur queue” (6). In addition to marking the importance of clothing to showing one’s character, this is the first indication in the Prologue of the gendered hierarchy Hetzel establishes that aligns animal-women with the *basse-cour* (barnyard or living space associated with animals) and

victimhood. In his hierarchy, the overwhelming majority of animal-women are represented as birds linked to stupidity, superficiality, and sensuality: “mesdames les pies, les oies, les canes, les grues et les poules” (magpies, geese, female ducks, cranes, and chickens). Particularly in light of the many expressions that link birds to prostitution (such as *la poule*, *la grue*, and *la cocotte*) the reader concludes that this is a pejorative representation. What is more, Hetzel writes that the place of these bird-women is not in “les assemblées publiques” and warns that those who meddle in politics “ont un défaut de plus et un charme de moins, comme les Amazones de l’antiquité.” The press is represented as a highly-feminized sphere, trivialized on the basis that it is the space for women to air their petty grievances, a pass-time for them during the leisurely breaks in their domestic duties. At the end of the Prologue, the assembly decides that “mesdames” should be banished from the political gathering altogether—the virtual removal of women from the space of political agency.

As a whole, Hetzel’s framing devices are almost dogmatic in their over-determination of the following messages. First, women do not belong in the political sphere, nor should they travel, be the protagonist in adventure stories, but instead need to fulfill their role as mothers. Second, women cannot be serious writers because they lack the intelligence and creativity, and are inherently silly and superficial, preoccupied with material concerns like clothing and accessories, collectionism, gossip, sex-capades, etc. Third, the point of life (for women) is not to be happy, but actually to fulfill the duties of wife and mother, which should be enough satisfaction for them to stop complaining... according to Hetzel. Despite the frames that he imposes, he cannot contain what he has set in motion by staging the symbolic death of the father figure—LaFontaine—no matter how many layers of hierarchy imposed. Hetzel’s frames paradoxically call attention to the invisible hand of the editor. If the illustrator is a visual author and the writer is a verbal

illustrator, the editor is the lens that shapes the way the reader sees and understands those images.

Defamiliarizing Grandville's Bird-Women



Figure 1: "Cabinet de rédaction"

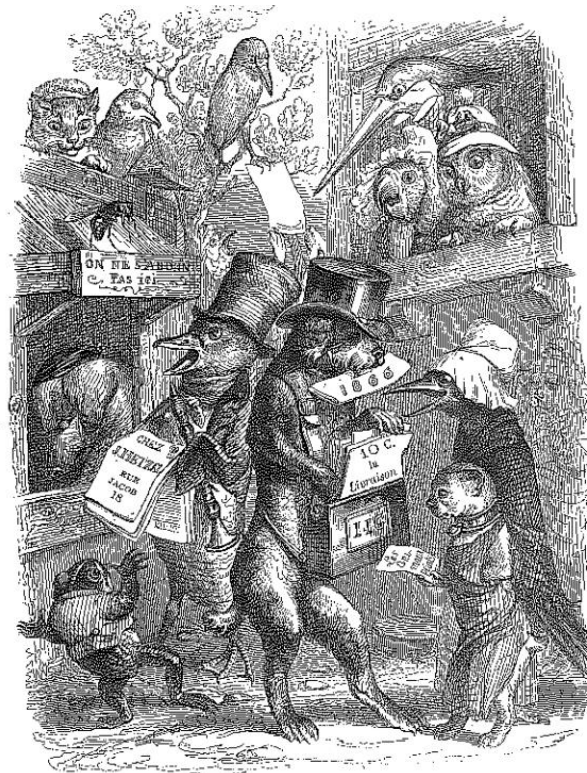


Figure 2: "Les colporteurs"

Keri Yousif's exemplary work on the implications of Grandville's using animal-human hybrids as a mode of representation is the foundation of my analysis. She contends that the "visual and symbolic gap between the original and its parodic replica allows the viewers to laugh at the image and themselves from an exterior position as spectator" (47). Otherwise stated, the animal-human image both *is* and *is not* a reflection of the spectator. Harkening back to the reversal of point of view signaled by Hetzel in the preface (the gaze of the animal Other turned upon the human), the reader is the object of the text's gaze, not vice-versa. Ultimately, Yousif argues, Grandville's aesthetics hinge on the defamiliarization of society via wordplay and visual juxtaposition. Because of the simultaneous identification and distancing enacted by the reader, I argue that his aesthetics also hinge on the defamiliarization of the reader from them self. My analysis of Grandville's bird-women mostly follows the order of their appearance in *Les Animaux*; they are first seen in the preface and prologue as part of social scenes, and then in isolation as types.¹⁷

Although Yousif executes attentive analyses of the prologue illustrations, Figures 1 and 2, she neglects to consider how gender factors into both images. Figure 1, "Cabinet de rédaction", depicts a chaotic editorial room managed by a monkey-editor and his rooster-assistant while a "flock of writers armed with a series of texts and multiple plumes" jockey for position (Yousif 88). Yousif notes that birds are significant in this context partially because of *la plume's* double-meaning of *feather* and *pen*, but also because of the animal's association with noisy, inane jabbering. Though their grouping emphasizes the affinities among the assembled writers, the parrot and the swan are notable intruders in this male-dominated space, as the animal embodiments of the woman writer. If, as Yousif

¹⁷ Judith Goldstein's analysis on the impact of representing animals in social scenes has significantly shaped my reading. See References.

suggests, we are to read this image as representative of the contributors to *Les Animaux*, this illustration produces tension when put into dialogue with the title page of the work which features the names of men only. It evokes the expression *nom de plume* while seemingly revealing the true identity and stature of women writers who dare to take on the phallic power of the pen. This first ‘gendered’ illustration sets up the two primary ways Grandville differentiates female animals from their male counterparts throughout the work, namely vestimentary coding and physical positioning, while elucidating the place of the woman writer in the artistic hierarchy.

Framed on all sides by male animals, the parrot and swan are literally and symbolically inferior in the pecking order of the editorial room. The swan is nearly swallowed in the center of the gaggle of birds, only identifiable by her large, rounded bonnet and manuscript “Le lac bleu” which aligns her with Romanticism.¹⁸ With the title of her manuscript calling to mind Alphonse Lamartine’s 1820 poem “Le Lac”, Grandville indicates that the swan-writer lacks artistic genius and is only capable of adding to or imitating the work of an established (male) poet while also highlighting the feminization of Romanticism as an artistic mode. To her left, the vulture’s sinister expression suggests she will soon become his prey. However, the addition of the judge’s hat suggests a simultaneous denunciation of Romanticism and the presence of the woman writer, rendering the verbal trope *chant du cygne* (or swan song) literal. With these minutiae, Grandville justifies his rejection of Romanticism by representing it as an effeminate, passé aesthetic. There is an additional insinuation that recognition by *l’Academie Française*, whose council named Lamartine a deputy in 1833 (footnote needed), is not necessarily indicative of artistic prestige or at least artistic capital. On the left-hand side of the

¹⁸ The bonnet in itself is a likely reference to Bonnet’s *Contemplation de la nature* (1764), further marking the swan’s conflation with Romanticism in this illustration.

illustration, the parrot-writer is dressed respectably in her bonnet and shawl as *la femme comme il faut*, but is barely tall enough to reach the editor's desk and fails to attract his attention despite the squawking presumably coming from her open beak. Here Grandville evokes the expression *réciter comme un perroquet* and its association with mindless repetition, but he also signals that the outward appearance of *la femme comme il faut* does not guarantee correspondingly docile behavior.

To further the understanding of the *perroquet*, it is necessary to turn to Georges Buffon's *Oiseaux*, a primary intertext of *Les Animaux*. Buffon's understanding of the parrot's character sheds light on Grandville's symbolic logic for selecting this bird. Buffon's influential descriptions of the birds in *Oiseaux* are furthermore exemplars in the *Dictionnaire Littré* entry for *perroquet*, signaling their definitive status during the period. Three of the citations listed in the dictionary of record include:

« Les perroquets ont le vol court et pesant, au point de ne pouvoir traverser des bras de mer de sept ou huit lieues de largeur » (117); « L'espèce de société que le perroquet contracte avec nous par le langage est plus étroite et plus douce que celle à laquelle le singe peut prétendre par son imitation capricieuse de nos mouvements et de nos gestes » (151); « On n'a pas l'idée de la méchanceté des perroquets sauvages » (289).

It is not unreasonable to suggest that Grandville would have been familiar with Buffon's anthropomorphic characterization of the bird and found it conducive to his representation of the woman writer: incapable of elegant long-distance flight, skilled at verbal mimicry, but above all malicious and spiteful. Although he attempts to represent the swan and parrot as out-of-place and to contain them within a masculine frame, their presence remains significant in its acknowledgement of the increased visibility and influence of women writers in the July Monarchy's literary sphere.

The inclusion of female birds in scenes of advertisement and pre-sale of *Les Animaux* in Figure 2 (“Les colporteurs”) suggests that Grandville is equally conscious of the female reader, represented here as consumer and spectator. Yousif notes that the crow’s cap and shawl mark her as a working-class maid. Yet the feminine form of crow in French (*corbeille*) as opposed to *corbeau*) transforms the representation of the crow-reader into a pun: like the wicker basket commonly used to hold bread, the working-class female reader is an empty receptacle and Grandville’s work is an object of her tasteless consumption. A female parrot appears again in this image, this time dressed in a frilly bonnet, looking out from a first-floor window with an elder stork in glasses standing over her. The spatial placement of the parrot-spectator in this illustration suggests a cage, which promises containment and invites association with the expression *un bâton de perroquet*, used to pejoratively describe the one-room home of a poor, working class family. Her large, hooked *nez de perroquet* and blank, open-mouthed expression convey an additional dimension of disdain. The parrot-spectator does not even have the decency to be beautiful to compensate for her stupidity. Despite rendering her trivial, tasteless, and brainless, the female consumer still figures into Grandville’s potential reading public, albeit as a source of financial exploitation. To avoid implicating himself as a bourgeois opportunist, Grandville identifies his scapegoat as none other than the reigning queen bee of French women writers, George Sand.



Figure 3: “Une pie intelligente”

As the first bird-woman type of *Les Animaux*, Figure 3 (“Une pie intelligente”) features an overdetermined collection of objects and a caption. Posing defiantly with one hand on her hip and a *plume* in the other, the *intelligent magpie* announces herself as a woman writer and the binary opposite of *la femme comme il faut*. Knitting and *éventail* carelessly discarded and no shawl or bonnet in sight, the implied meaning of *la femme fatale* is signaled by the dagger hanging from the magpie’s belt. The clothing she wears is highly reminiscent of George Sand’s portraits, but in the unlikely event that the reader did not immediately make this connection, Grandville literalizes the English idiom *a rope of sand* with the magpie’s belt and places a cigar in her hand to further evoke the iconoclastic author.¹⁹ The book under the magpie’s foot reads “Préjugé”, likely a reference to the French translation of *Pride and Prejudice*²⁰ and again calling forth a woman writer.

¹⁹ This cliché indicates a lack of cohesion or stability.

²⁰ Translated to French in 1813.

Above and beyond the novel's marriage plot, another thinly-veiled reference to the impropriety of Sand's divorce and her commitment to speaking out against marriage laws, the visibility of only the word *préjugé* suggests the magpie-writer's opinions on the matter are not to be trusted. When considering the magpie's pose, clothing, and accessories as elements of a larger narrative, Figure 3 is an overdetermined representation of the female author as the *la divorcée*. Under the July Monarchy the divorced woman is dangerous precisely because of her rejection of patriarchal authority and the nuclear family, the basic social unit of the monarchy. By analogy, *la divorcée* is a metonymy for mutiny against the King himself and therefore threatens to undo the sociopolitical fabric of Restoration-era France. With this illustration of the magpie-writer-divorcée, Grandville has placed before the reader a type that must be contained at all costs in order to preserve the established familial, social, and political orders.

To offset the risk of misinterpreting the magpie-writer as an empowering and defiant image of female liberation, the verbal tropes associated with the magpie and the caption provided advise the reader that *la pie intelligente* is not a true threat, but an object of ridicule. Many of the relational meanings involving the magpie originate from LaFontaine's fable "L'Aigle et la pie". *Bavard*, *caquet*, *agasse*, *babillarde*, and *jaser comme une pie* all denote stupidity and mindless chattering, while *bon-bec* carries the additional connotation of a talent for rapid, stinging comebacks. Additional variations on the magpie-chatterbox trope include *bavard comme une pie borgne* (chatty like a blind magpie) and *bavard comme une pie dénichée* (chatty like a magpie ejected from the nest). The caption, like the magpie-writer, is an oxymoron: there is no such thing as an intelligent magpie and by extension the "woman writer" is equally impossible.

Even without the clarification provided by the caption, the items amassed in this presumably domestic space suggest the thief bird *par excellence* and its associated idiom *larron comme une pie*. This pun evokes Théodore Baudouin d'Aubigny's 1815 play *La Pie voleuse*, the tale of a maid who receives a death sentence after being falsely accused of the thievery committed by a magpie.²¹ When considered in dialogue with the representations of female consumers in Figure 2 ("Les colporteurs"), the notion of maid-as-victim evoked by *La Pie voleuse* suggests that while female readers may lack the intellectual capacity to engage with literature meaningfully, the magpie-writer is the true guilty party. The thief trope is further signaled by the sculpture and the copy of *Orgueil et Préjugés* under the magpie-writer's foot, metaphors for the stolen intellectual property of other artists. To be *au nid de la pie* is to attain the highest degree of fortune and while the overflowing honeypot in the lower-right corner of the illustration is a metonymy for the magpie's cache of gold, it also designates *something that attracts*. With respect to *la pie intelligente*, who has been identified several times over as a *femme fatale* in this illustration, the honeypot is an innuendo for vagina. Thus, the magpie-writer has amassed her fortune through thievery, exploitation, and the exchange of her body.

The *pièce de résistance* of the visual spectacle in Figure 3 is the mouse and ball of yarn in the bottom left corner of the image, adjacent to the artist's lithographic stamp. In her discussion of *Les Métamorphoses du jour*, Keri Yousif observes that Grandville often depicts himself in his illustrations and though the specific metonymic object may vary. She writes:

²¹ Adapted as an Italian opera in 1817 by Gioachino Rossini, titled *La gazza ladra*.

As artists, each must play, paint, and write, begging for financial recompense. Grandville's animal metaphor of the artist as a mouse foregrounds the men's vulnerability. They are meek, small, fragile creatures who depend on the scraps of others for survival. Like the mouse, the artist is a pest that is tracked, trapped, and ultimately feared by society (28).

Due to its proximity to the artist's signature and to the ball of yarn, the mouse can be read as a metonymy for Grandville himself. The alternate meaning of *yarn* in English plays off the *rope of sand* pun, as it indicates the narrative of *la pie* is nothing more than a fabrication. The direct gaze of the mouse invites the reader to tug on the loose thread to unravel the truth behind the woman writer's fiction. Zooming back out to reconsider the image as a whole, the sheer volume of pejorative symbols and metaphors heaped onto the *pie intelligente* suggest that Grandville's preoccupation with the woman writer has more to do with reorienting the public's understanding of her artistic and financial success than seriously commenting on her character. Because he situates the woman writer as an opponent competing for prestige and compensation, Grandville's artistic posturing marks her as his colleague.



Figure 4: “Mademoiselle Pigoizeau”

Though *la pie intelligente* is not the only female intellectual represented by Grandville in *Les Animaux*, such illustrations (however disparaging) are few and far between. While I agree with Judith Goldstein that “the woman/animals in Grandville often appear as victims” and that this victimization is a primary feature of the representation of women/animals in his work, I disagree with her conclusion that the viewer of his illustrations is moved to compassion because of the victimization (78).²² On the contrary, the only alternatives to victimhood for Grandville’s bird-women seem to be the bad writer or the bourgeoisie incarnate. By deconstructing the vestimentary coding, pose, and facial expression for the bird-woman in Figure 4, I demonstrate how Grandville ascribes the attributes of the bourgeoisie to bird-women who are neither writer nor victim. As

²² In the chapter “Realism Without a Human Face”, Goldstein analyzes the animal-human hybrid illustrations of Grandville’s 1828-9 collection *Les Métamorphoses du jour*. From Margaret Cohen’s *Spectacles of Realism: Body, Gender, Genre*, 1995.

understood by those in the upper echelons of the (masculine) artistic hierarchy, these feminine consumers read as vulgar, superficial, and stupid.

“Mademoiselle Pigoizeau” (Figure 4) is an image of a bird-woman who fancies herself to be *la femme comme il faut*. She most certainly is *not* a lady, and this tension is the basis of the illustration’s humor. Instead, Grandville lays before the reader an overdetermined image of the *nouveau riche* female consumer. She wears the bonnet of *la femme comme il faut* but does tie the bow beneath her chin, rather wears the ribbons as an ascot. The hemline of the dress is noticeably short, leaving feet and ankles exposed, and the dress itself is paired with a mismatched *mantelet* (cape) fastened by a large, gleaming brooch. Instead of holding her hands relaxed and demure, one is clenched and the other tightly grips an incorrectly-positioned *ombrelle* (parasol). In *Accessories to Modernity*, Susan Hiner notes that while the *ombrelle* is representative of “idealized bourgeois femininity” due to its class-based association with wealth and leisure time, it is also an implicit signifier of whiteness and exoticism because of its function of “shield[ing] the fairer sex” and its Japanese origin (108). Furthermore, Hiner argues that the parasol “married domesticity and leisure by reproducing on a small, symbolic scale the private, domestic interior of its carrier in the public great outdoors” (108). When considering this last detail, in conjunction with the parasol’s function of perpetuating the carrier’s whiteness, Hiner concludes that the parasol became associated with “innocence, virtue, and cleanliness” during the nineteenth century (111). The fact that Mademoiselle Pigoizeau’s *ombrelle* is neither gracefully held nor positioned correctly points metonymically to her lack of knowledge about the rules of society and fashion. Considered as an ensemble, the unfortunate sartorial choices of Mlle. Pigoizeau imply that all the money in the world—indicated here by the brooch, parasol, and lace-trimmed cape—cannot buy good taste.

Amplifying the notion of *mauvais goût* (poor taste) are the verbal tropes. The conspicuous visibility of Pigoizeau's *pattes palmées* (webbed feet) with their protruding *griffes* (talons) and her failure to dress impressively evokes the expression *faire la cane*, meaning to fall flat on one's face. Grandville evokes the phrase *avoir la palme*, which literally means to be lauded but is often used ironically to connote the opposite. *Patte* is an antiquated name for low-quality chiffon destined for making paper, and *vêtements griffés* is an expression for designer clothing. The juxtaposition of these two elements furthers the gag as Mademoiselle Pigoizeau is literally and figuratively a *sitting duck* for jokes to be made at her expense. Grandville is merciless in his representation of *la cane* (female duck), whose stupidity is indicated by the odd spelling of her name (with a z instead of an s), her vacant stare, and the down-turned corners of her mouth. Though she displays all the markers of wealth and social success is within her grasp – *sous la patte* – Mademoiselle Pigoizeau embodies the perceived vulgarity, superficiality, and stupidity of the bourgeois, female consumer and is therefore denied social prestige.

Balzac's "Moineau": *La griffe* of George Sand

At this inner-most layer of *Scènes des animaux*, we are presumably reading the book being compiled by the animals in the Prologue, each individual *conte* is testimony, but relies on a variety of different literary genres and modes. Though the authorship of "Voyage d'un moineau de Paris à la recherche du meilleur gouvernement" continues to be contested by some scholars, (as to whether it was Sand or Balzac) it is still an interesting case of an authorial gender performance. Balzac uses the *déguise* of a woman author as a marketing tool to then erase woman-as-artist in the fictional narrative, in other words he uses *la griffe* of George Sand.²³ The tale is organized into 4 parts or chapters: the first is the introduction, the second is "du gouvernement formique", the third is "de la monarchie des abeilles", and the fourth is "De la république lupienne". Friquet the *philosophe* is a male bird but, true to the Balzacian style, the protagonist/narrator is ignorant of his own stupidity. "Nourri de haute philosophie et de petites grains", he consumes philosophy, a satire of the Romantic/Sentimental poet who compares his troubles to roses (228).

"Moineau" more or less follows the mold of the Balzacian bildungsroman of a young man who does not learn anything at all in the end. Friquet the Sparrow is on a mission to observe and subsequently report on the best form of government as a mouthpiece for the Birds of Paris, a pun on *birds of paradise*, which is ironic here because they are starving. In the introduction, Friquet introduces us to the fictionalized geography of Paris as it is experienced by the Bird of Paris and establishes the groups, categories, and hierarchies within the broad category of "Bird". Due to the numerous references made to Romantic literature, as well as Friquet's penchant for eavesdropping on prominent authors

²³ *Empreinte imitant la signature d'une personne ; L'instrument qui sert à faire cette empreinte ; l'action de saisir*, to take advantage, to seize, to capitalize on something,

of Paris, I think we should continue to read the bird as a metonymy for the writer and those associated with the literary sphere. He travels first to “le gouvernement formique”, an Oligarchy-Matriarchy of Ants which elevates children but relies on slave labor to support its economy. Next, Friquet travels to “la Monarchie des Abeilles”, a land of spectacle which disguises exploitation and a caste-based sociocultural system. Finally, Friquet observes “la République lupienne” (located vaguely near Ukraine/Tartarie), an extremely virile nation associated with republicanism, violence, guns, and savagery whose citizens do not seem to realize their own abjection. This final chapter is fascinating in its direct address to the readers as “sublimes carcasses antédiluviennes”, which continues the trend of the work as a whole of finding ways to reference the female reader through feminine grammatical constructions without acknowledging her explicitly.

The Nations of Ants and Bees are located on islands, presumably colonies, which plays with the verbal trope of “ant colony”. The only bird-woman in this *conte* the Corbine (female crow/raven, double meaning with war-hammer), who lives at the ant colony, presumably a stand-in for the colonizer, woman as the greedy oppressor of the working class and the embodiment of consumerism. La Corbine is key to Balzac’s representation of women who are complicit in the oppression of other women, much like the persistent contemporary myth that a woman’s success stems from another woman’s failure. The nation of *fourmis* are religious and patriotic, yet Friquet becomes disgusted by the “fiers sycophants” (proud sycophants) who happily and mindlessly accept their exploitation (240). After he declares the matriarchy “cet état contre nature” and condemns the ants for having neither faith nor law, Friquet departs for the Monarchy of the Bees. In *Traité de la vie élégante*, Balzac explicitly aligns the *abeille* with the mindless work of the vulgar bourgeois in his discussion of men who lead busy lives. In the story, *l’abeille* is gendered as female from the start, led by a queen who represents feminine hypocrisy. Despite “le

plaisir qu'elle prenait à bavarder", she does not tolerate opposing voices in her kingdom of order *déguisé* by spectacle, and so men are banished from political participation (248).

Because of the period's aforementioned advancements in beekeeping techniques, *l'abeille* would also have been associated with its recent commercialization. The OED entry for "bee" describes the insect as socially stratified, living in societies with many members, "living in societies composed of one queen, or a perfect female, a small number of males or 'drones,' and an indefinite number of undeveloped females or 'neuters' (which are the workers)". In French, *abeille* is specifically the female bee who has a stinger. The male bee, the *bourdon*, does not sting but rather buzzes or drones. These minutiae highlight Balzac's subtlety in representing impotent men who suffer at the hands of a female oppressor. Because of the connotations of sexual intercourse that go along with the bee, especially in light of Huber's revelations about bee impregnation, the Queen Bee is another representation in *Scènes des Animaux* of *la femme fatale*. With the stinger as symbolic of the phallus, not only does the Queen Bee have the sexual appetite befitting a man of the period, she is also a cunning murderer. The Littré entry for *abeille* reveals that the insect is also associated with vestimentary coding: "Le manteau impérial et les armoiries de Napoléon étaient semées *d'abeilles* d'or. Aussi a-t-on dit quelquefois les abeilles pour l'Empire." Similarly, a *ruche* is literally a *beehive* but also refers to a trim of gathered fabric (often lace or tulle) that is applied to garments and accessories. *Miel* (honey), the literal product of bees, is associated with sensuality, money, and sweet talking.

The overdetermination of references to spectacle, artifice, and clothing reinforce my reading of the bee in the text as *la voleuse*, and in the context of Balzac's contribution it seems to play off of the cultural anxiety surrounding women in power, hearkening back to figures such as Marie Antoinette. The female worker bees in "Moineau" are positioned as the victims of a greedy, sexualized *voleuse* as Friquet reflects "Je n'osai pas dire que les

voleurs n'avaient pas d'autres principes, je reconnus l'impossibilité d'éclairer cette nation." Not only are these winged thieves morally bankrupt, but they also cannot be enlightened or reasoned with. By performing a reversal of the exclusion of women in the political sphere, while representing the Queen Bee as the embodiment of decadence at the expense of worker bees whose femininity has been occluded by their oppression, Balzac suggests his fear and horror of women in power. To delegitimize his opponent (the woman writer), Balzac redirects the frame of competition such that the relationship between women is either adversarial or exploitative. There is nothing new about the stereotype of the relationships between women as competitive, but my point is that this language continues to be rooted in animal metaphor, which essentializes it and places it beyond the realm of scrutiny on the basis that it is natural. If prior to the Revolution in 1789 the defining features of salon culture were civility, friendship, and politeness, Balzac's recoding of the relationships between women in animalistic terms further disempowers the woman in the literary sphere. Friquet's disillusionment by his travels and his failure to find a better government than France seems to suggest to the (female) reader that they should be satisfied with the status quo and remain *in the nest*.

Conclusion: *Scènes des Animaux* as Carnival

Why would Sand participate in this project, even only to sign her name? When considered in conjunction with Sand's refusal of female presence in government, the circulation of this text by subscription and delivery suggest that women's political sphere is the domestic. Subscription implies that the text is delivered to the home, which presumes a female readership, and according to the text's logic the addressee of this work is most likely a *bourgeoise* woman. The lengths that Hetzel, Balzac, and Grandville have gone to in this work to contain the feminine suggest their desire to keep women confined to the home to preserve male dominance in society, but the result is an acknowledgement of the power that resides in hidden spaces like the home. However, this conclusion is complicated by the feminization of the illustrator and the association of the printed image to seduction during the July Monarchy. Both Kaenel and Yousif have meticulously documented the ways that both writers and illustrators of the period felt exploited by profit-seeking editors and publishers like Hetzel. A future project assessing the status of *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des Animaux* as Bakhtinian carnival could prove quite productive, as it could shed light on Grandville's consistent alignment of the illustrator with prey, who is embodied as the animal-woman in this text.

On fera des divisions, sans prétendre par-là fixer des limites à l'infini, c'est-à-dire la nature ; qui, plus elle est observée, moins elle préfère de limites absolues.

(Huber, Observations sur le vol des oiseaux de proie)

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