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**STRIKING (UP) INTERSPECIES COLLABORATIONS
WITH CROWS AND FALCONS**

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STRIKING (UP) INTERSPECIES COLLABORATIONS WITH CROWS AND FALCONS

INTRODUCTION

This essay discusses two different kinds of human collaboration with wildlife. First, I consider the short non-fictional text *Krähengekrächz* (2016) by German author Monika Maron. Second, I look at young artist Hara Walther's body of work, including her falconry, work she performs with her animal companion Sicilia.¹ I deem both creative engagements to be two distinct yet related cases of zoopoetics (more on this below).²

Maron's text is an incomplete and tentative account (in German *Erzählung*) of her attempts at striking up a friendship with a crow in the Berlin neighbourhood where she lives. As the writer announces at the outset, her experiment in interspecies companionship is initially in the service of a planned novel featuring a crow among its main characters.³ However, as I shall argue, while explicitly conceived with such an agenda in mind, precisely by following the crow's movements, Maron's text strays from such a goal –or map– but rather follows what Thom van Dooren might call the crow's "interjections". For Van Dooren, an interjection involves an interruption of the status quo, a getting in between what is and what might be, whether verbally or bodily, in an effort to realize something different, to propose an alternative configuration of how we may get on together.⁴ Indeed, Maron's text functions as one such interjection itself, for, in being "recruited" by the crows, the narrative breaks away from any specific genre. As I hope to make clear below, this story or rather collection of stories is less the result of the author's intention than a meandering response to the crows' own experimental gestures in the emergent interspecies contact zone where woman and crows meet.⁵

Walther's art is the offspring of her long partnership with Sicilia. For example, Walther has created colouring books for children, books she uses to teach falconry in her school *Falconette*, as well as watercolour paintings and assemblages with materials acquired during her hunts with Sicilia.⁶ Her art is made of *markings* that, as is the case in Maron's text, are neither authorial nor authoritative. In contrast, her art follows the trail left by her wild animal companion and collects the traces as gifts. Issues of creativity, vulnerability, and impermanence punctuate the joyous gestures of co-becoming in Walther's work. For this artist, therefore, falcon and human are creatively joined in the everyday practices of falconry, teaching, and art.

Despite their differences, these two practices of interspecies collaboration emerge from what van Dooren calls the work of *attentiveness*, “of paying attention and attending to the complex realities of actual animals.”⁷ As van Dooren remarks, such a labour of attentiveness is first grounded in curiosity, with all the obligations that come attached to it, and, second, “takes us beyond our previously known worlds ... putting knowledge at risk and allowing others, of all shapes and sizes, to make a difference to the process of knowing, and so of being.”⁸ The labour of attentiveness thus interpreted informs both Maron’s essay and Walther’s art practice: they both are expressions of particular, contingent, and mundane⁹ interspecies relationships (and the ensuing accountabilities) that repeatedly demand that the humans involved rethink ethical cum aesthetic codes. In short, their practices are “efforts” –i.e., ongoing experiments– to redescribe (as in to take a second look, *re-specere*) something that matters to both animals and humans, whether it be the birds’ ways of life at their intersections with the human life-ways, the places these birds share with humans, or their interactions within and beyond their species, “so that [this something] becomes thicker than it first seems.”¹⁰

It is thus that Maron’s text and Walther’s art practice, reveal their zoopoetics, and do so in a twofold manner: first, as experiments in multispecies living, which recognize, in Aaron Moe’s words, “that nonhuman animals (*zoon*) are makers (*poiesis*), and ... have agency in that making” and second that “when a poet undergoes the making process of poiesis in harmony with the gestures and vocalizations of nonhuman animals, a multispecies event occurs. It is a co-making. A joint venture.”¹¹ Maron’s and Walther’s creative practices of writing and art are the mediated renditions and translations, as well as the sites for the unfolding, of these women’s ongoing efforts (essays) to respond to the diverse modes of being, agency, and understanding that their interspecies collaborations bring about, the “im-pressions” of which they then register on either page or canvas.

A few more words on zoopoetics may be in order here. As a *practice*, I interpret zoopoetics as a kind of zoopoiesis, which, in turn, occurs as sympoiesis, the practice of worlding that, according to Donna Haraway, is always a complex, unfinished and non-innocent “becoming with.”¹² On this reading, zoopoetics describes the generative and expansive material and semiotic capacities to create, construct, and weave worlds that humans and non-humans share and in which they are, at all times, imbricated. As a *method*, zoopoetics involves human noticing, imagining and re-describing (van Dooren) these interlaced multispecies acts of worlding, which our actions and thoughts affect and by which we let ourselves be affected. Thus texts, events, signs, and matter commingle, but also dis-agree, and shape each other often in surprising and unpredictable ways. Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann’s clarification of the diffractive method and intra-action of matter may be invoked here. They write:

Instead of concentrating on texts and seeing how they “reflect” the world’s phenomena—natural life or a society’s cultural practices—such an interpretation [my note: the diffractive method] reads world and text as an agentic entanglement. ... According to this vision, text and world can be read as “circulating references,” the same way that nature and culture can be read and thought through one another in laboratories, gender politics, or hybrid collectives of humans and nonhumans. ... the “diffractive” method allows us to actively participate in a creative process in which material levels and levels of meanings emerge together.¹³

In short, as Haraway variously puts it “the partners do not precede their relating; all that is, is the fruit of becoming with,”¹⁴ and: “to be one is always to become with many.”¹⁵

Kate Rigby has illuminated how what she calls a creaturely ecopoetics – i.e., a merging of ecocriticism and zoopoetics– may manifest in literary texts. She shows how, for example, the humming of bees experienced by a poet instigates a poetic language which is inflected with that non-human sound/sign: the humming of bees is thus first perceived and then, echoing in the poet’s body, finally resonates in and around the text, through onomatopoeia and other rhetorical devices.¹⁶ The workings of zoopoetics manifest through these kinds of reverberations that –for Jane Bennett – are tantamount to the enchanting “sonority” one experiences in refrains when ordinary meaning-making practices are suspended and new (sensate) meanings emerge. Bennett writes:

Such breakaway vibrations put your body in contact with the other potential refrains humming around it. ... You whistle a song started by a bird; you shudder in the wake of the cawing of a crow... Through sound, through the various refrains we invent, repeat, and catch from nonhumans, we receive news of the cosmic energies to which we humans are always in close, molecular proximity.¹⁷

For her part, Rigby reads the “humming” poem as an event of sounds and signs taking place on, around, and off the page. The poem, on this reading, responds to and augments, conjoins and multiplies the humming of the bees, all the while fostering a kind of human affective communication, thus connecting symphonically the poesis of bees and humans, each co-becoming in the ongoing dynamic practice of symposiesis.

This form of attunement does not have to do with sounds only and does not have to be harmonious. As Maron’s text shows one can be paradoxically in attunement with “cacophonous” crows.¹⁸ For the purposes of the following analyses, attunement refers to animal and human *bodily* movements that emerge through the labour of adaptation and response to one another, as such labour is elucidated by Vinciane Despret.¹⁹ More to the point, interspecies bodily attunement involves reciprocal – physical – interjections, namely those gestures and interruptions, including misunderstandings and recalcitrance, that happen between partners in conversation. Such gestures and interjections morph into the subtle signs, digressions, doubts, and contradictions that constitute Maron’s text and typescript, on the one hand while, on the other, they *in-form* and shape Walther’s art, among other things, through Sicilia’s traces.

Thus, Maron and Walther’s interspecies collaborations are less about human representations of companion (wild) animals, or our knowledge of them, as pointed out above by Iovino and Oppermann. Rather, they are repeated attempts – in the sense of being quite literally imperfect and faltering essays²⁰ – at approaching, approximating, and adjusting to the crows’ and falcon’s own initiatives and responses to the attention they receive from these two humans as the latter endeavour to follow what it is that interests the birds themselves.

Through the performativity inherent in (diffractive) zoopoetics, the text and art under scrutiny here repurpose or, as van Dooren writes, “inherit otherwise” the typical representations and symbolism of crows and falcons.²¹ The writer and artist trouble and re-signify these animals’ generic representations: Maron, for instance, probes the death symbolism associated with “the” raven through her mundane encounters with the living urban crows in her neighbourhood. Through her paintings of a falcon’s chicks, Walther, for her part, insists on the fragile material presence of one individual and very mortal bird, rather than falcons in general. Walther’s works always invite us to appreciate a falcon’s complex world beyond its allegorisation (as perfect predator and thus war machine, for example). Text and art are always works in progress, ready to change course, veer off,

according to the more or less precarious relations between these women and the wild birds they attend to, birds who are free to leave the “game” at any time they wish.

Below, I look at how Maron and Walther, on the one hand, experience and move in space differently in the company of crows and Sicilia, the falcon, respectively. On the other hand, I consider the performative aspects of both text and art, how they caw and cache, swerve from intentions and canonical representations, and thereby make themselves into capacious “carrier bags” for unfinished stories of earthly living and dying together.²²

MARON'S JUMPING-JACK DANCE WITH JUMPING-JACK CROWS

Maron's *Krähengekrächz* (Crows Cawing) is, at first sight, a short and rather simple first-person account about the research *cum* experiment the author conducted for a novel, in which she featured a crow. This 'pre-text' presents itself as a reflection on that experience, i.e., a second-order narrative that both precedes the novel and differs from it, as the book's genre revealed on the cover makes apparent. In this way, the pre-text announces it is temporally framed by a beginning and an end, an end that, here, also implies the objective mentioned: when the author is released to write her novel. The account, furthermore, is clearly identified in literary terms, confined within a specific genre, which further cements a reader's expectations. Or so it seems.

However, on closer examination, while the above textual scaffolding remains in place, things within the text get more complicated, less predictable, as is the case when corvids become involved in human storytelling, at least according to most ethological studies and literature that take these animals as their subjects.²³ To be sure, Maron's narrative morphs from the pre-text she intended to write – her intention is emphasized by the recourse to verbs such as undertake, decide, plan – into a *pretext*. This is a pretext for following the local living crows along their errant and Terran²⁴ paths, for approaching them both in the flesh, in person, and performatively in her writing, e.g., in the space of the city, and through the proliferation of multispecies stories the text collects. As such, the narrative discloses that the author, her omnipresent dog, and these wild birds continuously interject their bodies through their gestures, gait, voice, and in their communications. At the same time, these interjections can only take place within the bounds of each participant's expectations which they have inherited from history and/or texts (including those that are associated with literary genres). In the process, they all learn to enhance their bodily and perceptual capabilities and they make each other available to previously unsuspected sites of affective and physical attachment. Nothing short of happiness finally ensues from this “curious game,” a sensate joy that, as declared in the closing passages of the narrative, in fact overflows the boundaries the author had set for her scientifically informed research. The experiment-turned-game with the crows subverts the literary instrumentality that had motivated the author's initial interest in these birds, ultimately exceeding even the contours of the reflective account itself.

As Maron writes, these crows leave indelible affective traces in her thinking about humans, their lives and history, so much so that: “... for reasons that I find almost impossible to name, I can no longer reflect on humans without [reflecting on] animals.”²⁵ In this statement, the crows turn into *ambassadors* for other animals, which they draw into material-semiotic configurations of all sorts of extant and potential interspecies imbrications, configurations that Maron, as per her statement, will no longer be able to disregard when writing of human affairs.²⁶ If, as she adds, to learn to know animals one must learn to know oneself, this self –as this text uncovers– will only come to know

itself through a human's acknowledgment of its own animality, which, in turn, reveals the human species to always already be an interspecies encounter.²⁷ Maron's dog's participation in the daily encounters with the crows testifies to this.

While animals had been a constant in Maron's prose prior to *Crows Cawing*, as critics have noted,²⁸ these local crows gradually and unexpectedly press themselves into this text, in her words, and recruit her:²⁹ Maron's animal interest is pushed beyond that which she usually finds in those creatures with "beautiful eyes and soft fur, and especially those who respond to my concern for them." (Kindle Edition, np) In short, through the Berlin crows, she learns with surprise that it is possible to forge a special bond with *wild* animals, and thus to enter into a sort of conversation with them as *gossip*.³⁰ While she confesses that, against her expectations, she cannot befriend a crow, because only crows recognize human faces and not vice versa, crows make good "companions." In other words, one can "break bread" with them, for they are curious and sociable animals, ready to take risks, if with caution.³¹

Poignantly, the author's experiment with the crows starts with their mutual recruitment in the everyday practice of food sharing. Through every exchange and attempted contact or visit with each other, their respect for each other's ways, as these transform in their co-presence, grows. Thus, Maron's experiment, which started for opportunistic reasons – i.e., in the service of literature – turns into play, a daily game where crow, woman, and dog, literally feed each other with mundane yet reliable moments of joy. At the end of the book, Maron writes that she has put a stop to her academic research *about* the crows because, as she maintains, she has gathered enough information to write her crow novel, yet the nourishing encounter with the crows does not end: to do so would be to abandon the opportunity to engage seriously in what must always be the unfinished labour of companionship. This would only cause the crows' dis-appointment, a word that in German brings to mind to dis-illusion (*Enttäuschung*). In this sense, calling off the game of interspecies relationality would be like turning down the opportunity to craft the world in the imaginative and surprising ways that multispecies engagements afford and gift.³² It would amount to accepting the fated narrative of a forever disenchanting world, where animals and humans have parted ways. In contrast, Maron's feeding game with the crows anchors her firmly in the fleshly, earthly materiality that, the crows remind her, she shares with other non-human animals – a materiality that, once embraced, compels her to face the discomfort and suffering, but also the joys, that come with dwelling in Terran Paradise with mortal beings.³³

Accordingly, the interspecies feeding game that runs through the text literally adds flesh to the canonical representations of corvids, which often reduce these birds to morbid allegories of a miserable death, or symbols of divine punishment for acts of disobedience. As a counterpoint to the prejudices that have affected crows and contributed to a "dark chapter in cultural history," as the *incipit* reminds the reader, Maron's text collects a gamut of stories, poems and ballads that, in featuring ravens and crows as they revel in the fallen heroes' human corpses, consider mortality from these carrion birds' material point of view: after all, humans too, animals among animals, decay and turn into nourishing compost. These carrion feeders lead the way through their rowdy chorus (*Krähengekrächz*), a recruiting cry that is also performed by this text. The author herself ultimately concedes that, once the initial horror humans feel at the thought of becoming a crow's meal passes, to look at death through a crow's gaze may bring relief – indeed, even provoke laughter. The crows' law is straightforward: a corpse is a corpse, whether that of a friend or a foe, and all is compost.

Consequently, Maron rejoices at the sight of the loudly cawing crows that slowly gather in numbers on her balcony in order to feast on the sausage she provides for them. She is happy to imagine that their recruiting calls – their *cra cra*, as the calls are marked on the page – address her, perhaps with complaints, demands, or thanks. To determine the meaning of these sounds can only be of secondary importance here, and that also applies to the fact of their opportunistic motivations for the initial contact: food for the crows; a novel for Maron. What matters now is that physical communication has ensued from their respective, now mutual, interests in one another. Indeed, Maron writes, in time she comes to forget the goal of her experiment. After a couple of crows dares to cross the threshold and join her and Momo (the dog) indoors, she feels rather that she must accept the crows' invitation to continue their feeding game outside, on the streets, an engagement that goes above and beyond any of her original expectations.

The crows crossing the threshold to get to Maron's food offering is the first step in the multispecies dynamics of recognition that unfolds: prompted by the risky curiosity that is typical of crows, this daring proximity initiates a familiarization process that breaks with anthropocentric views of domestication as human mastery.³⁴

Here, in contrast to such notions of mastery, the woman narrator curiously observes without ever disturbing the crows; the dog, having understood that the food is not for him, seeks Maron's caresses as reassurance; and the crows, with their characteristic jumping-jack movements, signal their cautious endorsement of a three-way relationship in which each practices polite commensality in a real contact zone. (Dog and crows are even fed the same food.) On this threshold and beyond it, in the physical space of the neighbourhood, the boundaries between outside and inside, nature and culture, wild and domestic constantly shift and are re-negotiated.

The meat pellets and nuts that Maron first places on her apartment's floor to invite the crows into her home and, later, tosses onto the streets from her little "carrier bag," palpably draw the contours of new and flexible multispecies configurations: woman, dog, and crow dissolve as distinct, species-specific images to emerge as a fluid, movable assemblage: woman-with-dog-with-woman-with-crows-with-dog-with-crows. At one point, for example, Maron is sure that, during her dog walks, the neighbourhood crows recognize her as the "Woman in Black with Black Dog." Seeing herself through the image she imagines the crows have of her (and her dog), she acknowledges the crows' agency in matters of social recognition: they affect how she views herself. But they do still more: the crows provide her with the opportunity to gain a new subjectivity; they make her (and Momo) into the subject of a painting they paint, and paint again. Following another experience, for instance, she understands that the crows slowly learn to recognize her even when she wears prominent dark sunglasses. Maron deduces that the crows can figure out that the "Woman in Black with Black Dog" occasionally also has "Big Black Eyes." A novel arrangement thus comes into view. In turn, the crows' initial reticence to approach Maron, and which they then manage to overcome, confirms to the author that she too "affects" how the crows see her. As van Dooren explains throughout *The Wake of Crows*, in each different situation humans and corvids are influenced by each other's modes of recognition; they are made and remade in their relating. This practice of mutual interspecies recognition out of which, in Maron's text, new dog-woman-crow configurations emerge makes everyone responsible (response-able, accountable) to the other, in ways that require situated attention, indeed bodily attunement.

When following the crows up, down, and around the streets of Schöneberg, the author discovers that she and Momo adopt the crows' jumping-jack gait. It dawns on her that in other people's eyes this behaviour makes her *look like* a "bird lady." In fact, she soon discovers she is turned into a crow, as if by magic, when a drunkard addresses her explicitly as one: "You, crow," she calls to her, in Berlin dialect. Such an appellation, pronounced in dialect, on the one hand identifies Maron, the old crow, as belonging to the neighbourhood while, on the other, the form of address – coming as it does from a person on the margins – extends the drunkard's liminality to Maron (the dog, and her crows). Having been recognized as one crow among the Schöneberg crows, the author (*cum* her animals) is invited to join the members of an emergent "community of difference" that only then – it seems – comes to her attention. These different modalities of interspecies recognition the text suggests, perhaps unwittingly, can be of political consequence: along with the challenges and complexities that interspecies entanglements always entail, along with the taste of co-presence, one may also acquire a taste for configuring the world in unanticipated ways.

If, on the one hand, the syncopated movements of these always emergent arrangements of different bodies in space draw alternative maps of Maron's neighbourhood (maps that expand to include those on the margins, such as vulnerable old ladies and drunkards), on the other, the text, as evinced in its title, also performatively rehearses the multiple practices of becoming-with-crows that Maron's text illustrates. A few examples will have to suffice as evidence.

The guttural alliteration in the composite German title, *Krähengekrächz*, emphasizes the power of the onomatopoeic name for this species of birds: the word "crow" derives from the corvids' raucous voice. As Josef Reichholf, amongst others, reminds us, to utter the name means to invoke the thing itself, to summon a crow's presence. Maron's title doubles the onomatopoeic name (*Krähen* and *Gekrächz*, *Crows* and *Cawing*) and, with it, also the sound/noise typical of their calls. The title, therefore, not only summons the birds' presence materially (as written signs on the page, and then as subjects in the stories told), it also helps to echo and proliferate cacophonies, sending out noises that reverberate throughout the text as the marks/signs of the crows' both bodily and vocal interjections. Such multiplication returns in the compounding of stories that, as mentioned, break with the laws of genre, including the looser one of "narrative." Significantly, the German term for genre is the same as "genus" and, as such, also relates to species. Arguably, then, from the start, this genre-multiplying and thereby genre-defying text opens up as a space for uncontainable, buoyant cross-species dealings and kin-making practices. As I have shown with the feeding experiment above, movable configurations of bodies breed from the seeds Maron scatters from her small yet capacious carrier bag.

Moving rather erratically, the text – like Maron and Momo following the crows – mimics the corvids' characteristic jumping jack behaviour. It proceeds by trial and error, with doubts, contradictions, questions and ellipses that capture well the fleeting, unsure, and indeterminate nature of the unfolding interspecies relations. The ineffable, as much as indelible, traces that the material encounters with the crows leave in the author's phenomenal and perceptual world are also rendered rhetorically and typographically: besides the onomatopoeia already mentioned, anaphors make an appearance – for example when the author confesses her guilty feeling to a captive bear, in a zoo: "I am sorry, I am sorry," she repeats; and dinkuses graphically break the page, put a halt to a flow of thoughts, before the text veers off in a new direction. Thus, the Schöneberg crows' jumping-jack bodies and their vocal interjections interrupt and derail the narrative purpose of this account that, distracted from its "end," makes room for the unfinished stories of multispecies becoming, within its capacious bag.³⁵

HARA WALTHER AND SICILIA: THE MAGICAL ART OF INTERSPECIES ENGAGEMENT³⁶

Unlike Maron who initially approached the crows for her experiment with a clear goal in mind, falcons appear and “fall” into Walther’s life as if by chance (*Zufall*), setting her art and life on what retrospectively looks to her like a “predestined” course. This is the path the artist / falconer will follow. According to one account, Walther discerned a *posteriori* a falcon’s contours in an early 2007 automatic drawing, sketched according to the Surrealist tradition; the chance discovery of a falconry book, a true found object, followed, and so Walther was inspired to delve into this art.³⁷

According to another account, she became “transfixed in wonder and [was] transported in sense,” to quote Bennett’s words,³⁸ when, around 2009, she saw a falcon perched in a neighbour’s garden. Walther relates this experience thus: “The ... aura of this falcon left a strong impression on me. I felt a magical attraction. ... I was allowed to touch and carry the falcon, and it even

ate from my hand. Then I knew that I wanted to become a falconer. I wanted to be in touch with this magical being.” (Letter, Dec 1, 2022)³⁹ Whereas in Maron’s case, then, the crows distract the writer from her research objective, and thereby authorize a *sui generis* text that takes her off the beaten path, in Walther’s case the falcons show her the way: since that first physical encounter, she has devoted her life to nurturing her partnership with falcons and to sharing this bond’s very material “magic”⁴⁰ with other humans. This she does through her three distinct but related practices, all brought together under the wing, as it were, of her Lanner falcon-companion, Sicilia. She is a trained artist, an expert falconer, and the founding director of a children’s falconry school, *Falconette*, in which she also teaches. Before focusing on her art, let me say a few words about Walther’s school.

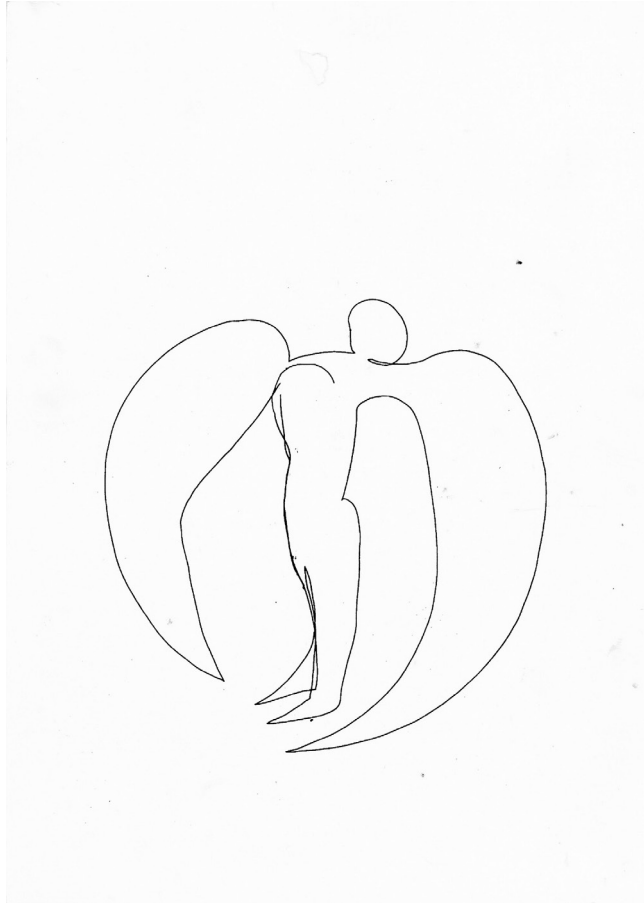


Figure 1. Hara Walther, *Oracle Drawing*, 2009, Automatic Drawing with Seismograph, 29.7x21 cm. Copyright Photograph by Nikolaus Steglich, Courtesy of Künstlerhaus Marktoberdorf, Maya Heckelmann, Director.

In her school, her apprentices are taught to approach falconry by way of the visual arts: their first introduction occurs primarily through a colouring handbook, *Become Falconette!* that Walther crafted when working with children in kindergartens and primary schools.⁴¹ Walther's book, inspired by Friedrich II von Hohenstaufen's classic text in 6 volumes, *De Arte venandi cum avibus* (1240s), provides the key principles, techniques, and basic ancient vocabulary of falconry. The children learn to appreciate the very same by cultivating patience, mindfulness, attention to detail, and individual creativity, all skills that are required for both colouring and falconry. She writes:

You have the opportunity by playing to learn much about this art [falconry] and furthermore to create marvellous images that others will enjoy. ... To colour templates is a very contemplating and creative process. Let yourself be surprised by the enjoyment you'll find in it, and the insights that you'll get from it! ... You will learn to understand wind, weather and clouds [*Wolken* in German]. You will get to know the wilderness, the avian world, and nature more generally. Your understanding for accuracy, reliability and responsibility will grow. ... This will help you later to keep a raptor yourself, perhaps."⁴²

Significantly, the passage above suggests many of the tenets that hold together Walther's threefold practice: First, the hand that draws –and that also crafts the gear for falconry, which the children also learn—connects body and mind, and yields enjoyment, for oneself as much as for others. (The children's art is on view, for instance, on the website.) One finds oneself centred, situated, not just individually but within a dynamic ecology of relations, which, through the falcon, extends to a respectful experience of “unfamiliar” nature. The text weaves art appreciation, as an individual body-mind activity, with a broader context in which ecological responsibility matters.

Second, the text also highlights poetic terms (through its word-choice), essential features that return differently expressed in Walther's own paintings, with which I deal more in depth below. For example, it is striking that, when moving from the instructions on colouring templates to falconry, Walther has recourse to the alliteration *Wind, Wetter, Wolken*. This rhetorical figure conveys the airy sensation of the falcon's flight environment (ecology) that one gains when one is syntonized with the bird during hawking, something which, as anthropologist Sara Asu Schroer reports, falconers translate as the sensation of “becoming a bird.”⁴³ In Walther's own words, falconry's goal is “to become one with the falcon.” (Letter, December 8, 2022). The goal and/or sensation of becoming, however, does not happen spontaneously but, rather, requires mutual training on the part of both bird and human as they engage in a co-responsive, two-way relation. “To become [with] a falcon” means to train each other in understanding the other's different sensorial and bodily apparatus so as to see, move and act in the landscape together in ways that imagine those of the other being. For example, a falconer must learn to see how a falcon's prey moves, to understand its speed, in what direction it runs, etc. This kind of attunement, which for Walther involves telepathy and trained attentiveness to a whole ecology, is rendered through the text's alliteration. The latter's sound also captures, I believe, the airiness of Walther's paintings. Through her use of light and a suffused pencil touch, Walther's representational paintings manage to arouse such complex dynamics with simplicity. While her assemblages, including feathers and other physical remains, such as the skulls and bones of Sicilia's prey, bring to the fore the shared material existence and collaboration of bird and woman, the watercolours depicting Sicilia more surreptitiously gesture towards the situated, always precarious, relationality at stake between falconer (and/or viewer) and bird. (More on this below)

The book itself is thus more than a textbook. It functions, perhaps in disguise, as an additional *trait-d'union* between Walther's art and her falconry: it pairs artmaking with the art of falconry, attentiveness with imagination, training (including training responsibility) with creativity (the movements of the hands in syntony with those of the mind). In doing so, the book highlights the communicative impulse inherent in Walther's threefold practice. One could then conclude that Walther's passion for art, falconry and her pedagogical activity manifests the desire for training and sharing a comportment that, according to Bennett, nurtures responsiveness to enchantment. In Bennett's words, this means letting oneself be affected "by other selves and bodies and [thereby] more willing and able to enter into productive assemblages with them."⁴⁴

In Walther's case, such assemblages involve networks of people (the children, teachers, and parents, who encouraged her to open her school; other artists; her falconry teachers; and people she meets all over the world when practicing her falconry); animals (besides Sicilia and her chicks, this includes the falcon's prey, for example), and artworks that, as was the case for Maron's *sui generis* text, escape rigid classification. Mostly ensuing from Sicilia and Walther's long interspecies partnership, the artwork has followed, recorded, and/or retraced the events that have punctuated this falcon's life and, consequently, have affected Walther's. I will now take a closer look at how Sicilia has inflected Walther's art.

In approaching falcon imagery, both as a viewer and, I imagine, as an artist, it is hard to escape the mythical, symbolic, and allegorical associations with power and nobility, war and heroism, that have accompanied this bird's various representations all over the world and across different epochs. Yet, I argue that Walther's art resists reifying *the* falcon because she adopts representational techniques and uses materials that always stem from her embodied relation to Sicilia, from her ongoing collaboration with a living falcon. From this situated positionality reformulations or reprisals of classic genres also occasionally arise in her work - for example in a recent mosaic, depicting Sicilia seated on a perch with simple pebbles, first created during an exhibition in Sicily.

Walther's recourse to this ancient art is a kind of "archaeological" dig into its history, and through it, of mosaics' connections to her own art and her bird-muse, Sicilia. Mosaic, a word derived from the Greek original for "muse," indeed flourished on this Italian island, during the Norman Kingdom in the twelfth century. In this place and at that time, falconry also took off. Through the collection of natural pebbles out of which Sicilia's profile emerges the genre of the mosaic turns, in Walther's hands, into a vehicle for a material re-collection of this bird's historical and artistic genealogy. The simple mosaic grounds, in the real sense of the word, Walther's art, falcon and falconry: it harks back less to the legacy of the majestic hunting scenes such as one finds, for instance, in the Villa Romana del Casale's mosaics, a UNESCO World Heritage site.⁴⁶ Rather, Walther's mosaic pays homage to her companion animal by adopting more modestly the technique of some of the earliest, less decorative, mosaics. These, like hers, used natural pebbles, stones that, importantly, were the same as those used to pave floors. Walther's intimate mosaic with falcon signals here the attachment of both woman artist and bird of prey to the Terran –literally *pedestrian*– materiality that unites them in their patterned, quotidian lives. More broadly, it unites falcons with humans, beyond all crucial differences.

For a 2023 solo exhibition in Sicily, Walther produced a series of large format drawings, some with watercolour details, devoted to the life cycle of eyasses from the moment of their hatching to their first hunt.⁴⁷ The chicks are depicted in all their vulnerability, as they sleep on a few pebbles or a rose-bed, alone or while being fed by caring parents.⁴⁸



Figure 2. Hara Walther, *Mosaic*, 2023, Natural Pebbles, 50x30 cm. Artist's Collection.⁴⁵

The classical image of the potent falcon is here suspended and replaced by that of fragile animals that, not unlike humans, need attending to in order to fulfil their potential. It is no coincidence that, at least in German, the term used when training a chick is *Ausbildung*, which translates as education, apprenticeship, formation, schooling among other connotations. As caring as the adult falcon is in feeding its chicks, so is Walther's attention to detail in her drawings of both parent and chick, and their interactions. Occasionally, depending on the painting, one finds touches of colour that vary from pale pink and yellow to bright red. These add an emotional undertone that affectively connects the viewer with the delicate scenes. Similarly, the wavy brushstrokes used to show a fledgling's grey or whitish down synesthetically elicit softness. While one may be inclined to interpret such representations as examples of anthropomorphism, or of a domestication of the wild falcon, perhaps other readings are in order. What if the artworks were instead troubling strongly held positions about the meanings and presumptive incompatibility of these terms? Falcons, for instance, don't make their nests, they "squat" in those of other birds, and —while they would probably not breed on rose hedges— they do live and roost in cities, on towers and skyscrapers.⁴⁹ Furthermore, when being trained, they often share the domestic space of their falconers, and engage in close, playful interactions with them, though this does not mean they relinquish their wildness.⁵⁰ It is possible to look at these scenes as the imaginative attempt at opening the human domestic space to its gentle occupation by another species.

Other watercolours, with or without assemblages, specifically show the intimate and profound relation between Sicilia and Walther, even when, as mentioned, some of these appear to be entirely devoted to portraying Sicilia alone. This raptor's grip on the artist goes deep into her thoughts, which, Walther observes, would never have been the same without Sicilia in her life. Her 2019 self-portrait⁵¹ viscerally illustrates this: Sicilia's talons and beak penetrate and pick Walther's brains, the only coloured portion of the painting. If Walther offers herself as food to her falcon, the falcon appears as this head and brain's physical protuberance, e.g., the incarnated tranquil thought of a concentrated woman. In another instance, Walther lightly sketches her gently reclining head as suspended in mid-air from Sicilia's claws, which hold it in its tight grip.⁵² Both figures are suffused with the light and air of the watercolour's background, with which they merge. On the one hand, the dreaming artist is lifted by her bird into the sky, and thus made part of Sicilia's airy world; on the other, the bird rises vertically, as a material body, not just a figment of the imagination, from this faint human figure. Both, in short, hold each other in thought and body, each in her own way.

There are paintings where Sicilia appears alone, as a solitary form sitting on a perch floating in the sky, as if ready to take off and possibly never return. While in these cases, the paintings express the precariousness of the bond between falcon and falconer —the falcon is always free to leave— they also convey the attachment and attunement between them, despite the falconer's absence.

To begin with, one of the bird's eyes is shown as turned towards the viewer and/or falconer standing just outside the frame. The interlocking of their gazes suggests that the falcon's imminent flight may be one of approach, or return, rather than of departure. Further, the use of translucent watercolours for both the bird's body and the sky allow for the merging of one and the other, foreground and background. Because the watercolours also overflow the boundaries of the paintings, exceeding their frames, and thereby creating a porous atmosphere, the human outsiders are affected and drawn into the picture. In this way, Walther shows falcons and humans as breathing the same air, partaking of the same atmosphere, albeit in distinctive ways.



Figure 3. Hara Walther, *Chick on a Rose Bed*, Artist's Collection.

If the branch on which Sicilia rests is an indication of the bird's attachment to and dependence on the earth and the life that treads upon it, Walther's assemblages materially testify to this: they gather the physical traces of their shared life, and mark their ongoing co-existence and collaboration, especially during their hunts. Hence many such works are Sicilia's own trophies.

They include small objects made with claws and bones, or watercolours with birds' skulls and feathers, the remains retrieved from Sicilia's hunted prey.⁵³ Alternatively, Walther produces portraits of Sicilia with her moult feathers, which she carefully collects, labels, and mounts in accurate rearrangements of her plumage.⁵⁴

Both types of assemblages ultimately function as *memento mori*. The death of the prey only anticipates that of the predator, including the falconer. The assemblages collect these material traces, i.e., the feathers, as traces of a passing life, in order to commemorate (re-collect) such life; these works therefore situate both this human and this falcon, and their art, in the fleeting time of mortals. Finally, Sicilia's assembled feathers remind us that this falcon is a living presence, a body. They are also this bird's signature: with these feathers, Sicilia leaves her mark on her (and Walther's) life-work. For her part, Walther's indiscrete initials morph into the traces of tiny claws on the margins of the canvas.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have taken the "inter-" in the title of this journal's issue to refer to the forms of conviviality or interactions encountered between humans and non-humans —specifically, those between humans and birds (crows and falcons). These interspecies engagements, I have maintained, stress the agency of the avian partner in the relationship; properly speaking they are collaborations, creative in nature and reciprocal in their effects.

Zoopoetics, a theory variously described, has informed my analyses, and has helped me to focus on the entanglement of species and the dynamic movement of their inter-relationship rather than their being an encounter between two discrete and bounded *zōon*. I have expanded on this idea to discuss how a mutual, interspecies attentiveness gives rise to peculiar forms of attunement, which should not be understood as implying interspecies harmony but rather a complex field marked by interjections, resonances and even cacophony.

With reference to Maron, and her engagement with crows, I have argued that a zoopoetic view of this interspecies relationship should consider the ways in which an openness to these birds radically destabilises ontological boundaries: between 'animal' and 'human', within human social identities, but also, importantly, in the forms used to represent interspecies (such as the *Erzählung*). The result is, I suggest, a kind of overflowing of borders in which each new material level in the engagement between species produces its own level of meaning in an unending task of companionship. This notion of companionship looms large also in my discussion of Walther. Here, attunement and attentiveness become a praxis that, as with Maron, results in something that is "sui generis" and difficult to confine within traditional definitions: Walther's expert practice of falconry cannot be separated from her work as an educationalist, and neither can be divorced from her artistic production that itself also partakes in this border-crossing.



Figure 4. Hara Walther, *Hunting Painting*, 2014. Scissors Cut and Watercolour, 79.7x60 cm, Copyright Photograph by Nikolaus Steglich, Courtesy of Künstlerhaus Marktobendorf, Maya Heckelmann, Director.



Figure 5. Hara Walther, *Trophy 2*, 2014, Heron's Skull, Feathers and Watercolour, 79.7x60 cm.
Copyright Photograph by Nikolaus Steglich, Courtesy of Künstlerhaus Marktoberdorf, Maya Heckelmann, Director.



Figure 6. Hara Walther, *Moult Image: Labelled*, 2019, Assemblage on Laid Paper, 80x110 cm, Artist's Collection.

In sum, my overarching point is that, as examples of zoopoetics, Maron's crow text and Walther's interrelated practices of art making, falconry, and education demonstrate that, by paying attention to processes of interspecies attunement and interjections, new modalities of communication and new languages unfold thus making room for surprising sites of attachment to emerge. An important corollary of this argument is that, in their contingent and unfinished ways, these creative practices also participate in what van Dooren terms "multispecies ethics," i.e., the open-ended, situated, and provisional work (labour) of worlding with others.⁵⁵ Indeed, I have reasoned, Maron's crow text and Walther's artistic collaboration with Sicilia redescribe what we see so as to make the visible anew, to provide the world with some more complex story, and thus understanding, all principles at the core of Van Dooren's notion of emergent ethics. Both text and art, as reiterated above, "give others vitality, presence, perhaps 'thickness' on the page," and the canvas.⁵⁶ Furthermore, as shown, in defying closure, through the multiplication of meanings and perspectives, these works "craft spaces for the collaborative imagination," thus holding open possibilities and interpretations.⁵⁷

In conclusion, Maron's and Walther's zoopoetics engage the biocultural complexity of the worlds that we always craft with others, both humans and non-humans. In exploring their entanglement with avian species, the writer and her text, the artist and her art, and all the animals engaged in their lives and work provide important insights into the crucial ways in which, as Anna Tsing puts it, "human nature is an interspecies relationship."⁵⁸

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1. Monika Maron's book title translates as *Crows Cawing*. As far as I am aware, no English translation has yet been published. All translations are mine. *Krähengekrächz* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2016). I use this edition's Kindle version that does not support page numbers.
2. Anne Simon's *zoopoétique* relies on a reading of the Greek term *zōon* that is flexible or broader than generally assumed. Following Francis Wolff, she underscores that *zōon* designates neither the animal nor the living but rather movement, including that of stars and demons. Wolff proposes to translate *zōon* as that which is animate or animated. *Zoopoétique* thus interpreted would include the motion, emotion, and animation of living matter (the word "anima" reverberates in soul, animal, and breath). It would call for a language that follows the movements of the living (*les vivants*), the animated world, as Simon puts it. See Stephanie Posthumus and Anne Simon, "Conversation Questions, Interview with Lucas Hollister," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 1 (2021), 16-41.
3. Monika Maron, *Munin oder Chaos im Kopf* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2018). The novel has sparked controversies in the press due to Maron's recent politics, which, for several reviewers, informs her book. Here, it is not my intention to discuss whether Maron's politics find expression in *Crows Cawing* or how the text examined here might forebode that politics.
4. In *The Wake of Crows: Living and Dying in Shared Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019) Thom van Dooren writes that "animals take initiatives in a hybrid community," and he goes on to claim that: "Community is always a kind of negotiation of sorts." Van Dooren provides the example of Brisbane's urban crows swooping people— a behaviour that also occurs in Berlin, as Maron notes. Swooping is, accordingly, the corvids' experimental gesture at doing community with humans, their way of communicating their political demand, namely, what might be needed from humans to share and divide the living space available. (Ibid., 41)
5. These are the contact zones where companion species are always co-emerging as entangled. Donna Haraway appropriates and adapts the term contact zone from Mary Louise Pratt (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, originally published in 1992) and James Clifford (*Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). For Haraway, contact zones occur within and across species; in contact zones, species come undone. Making kin across species boundaries becomes crucial (against the species-focus on, for example, reproduction). Contact zones offer the possibility to make the world differently, to "retie some of the knots of ordinary multispecies living on earth." For Haraway's discussion of multispecies contact zones, see *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
6. See Walther's webpage: <https://www.falconette.eu> (Accessed 1 August 2023).
7. Thom Van Dooren, *The Wake of Crows*, 9.
8. Van Dooren, *The Wake of Crows*, 9
9. I use the word "mundane" in the sense of "pertaining to the world."
10. Van Dooren, *The Wake of Crows*, 11.
11. Aaron Moe, *Zoopoetics: Animals and the Making of Poetry* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 2.
12. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 17, 237. See also Haraway, quoted in Katherine Wright, "B for Becomings," *The Multispecies Salon*, <https://www.multispecies-salon.org/becomings/> (Accessed 8 October 2023). Wright poignantly elaborates: "From this multispecies perspective becoming-with can be understood as an ecology, where becomings are openings into the responsive capacity of all earthly life, with important implications for ethics." (Ibid.)
13. Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, ed., *Material Ecocriticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 9-10.
14. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 17.
15. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 4.
16. Kate Rigby, "'Piping in their honey dreams': Towards a Creaturely Eco-poetics," in Frederike Middelhoff et al., ed., *Texts, Animals, Environments: Zoopoetics and Eco-poetics* (Freiburg i. Br, Berlin and Vienna: Rombach, 2019), 281-293, in particular 283-284. There, she writes: "'Humming' is of course onomatopoeic, and in this way the written text bears a zoopoetic trace of an other-than-human voice. In conjunction with other metonymies of place and time ... this apian mood music summons the 'atmosphere' ... of dreamy, drowsy easefulness arising from a creaturely somatic-affective responsiveness to particular socio-environmental conditions."
17. Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 168. It is interesting to note that Walther, when describing her connection with Sicilia in flight, uses the term telepathy, a term that recurs when she speaks of her connections with animals more generally. Walther, email message to author, 1 December 2022.

18. I read “attunement” as a variation on the term “attentiveness” above. In particular, I take it here to include bodily and affective availabilities and responses to animals’ ways of being. In this sense, I borrow the term from Vinciane Despret. It is not Maron’s term. See the next endnote. More on Maron’s text below. On the rowdy and cacophonous paths traced by these “lowly” and earthbound songbirds (the corvids), see Jeff Cohen and Julian Yates’s book *Noah’s Arkive* (Milwaukee and London: UMP, 2023), 233.
19. Vinciane Despret, “The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-zoo-genesis,” *Body & Society*, 10:2–3 (2004), 111–134. Despret speaks of the attunement between horses and riders. The latter learn to behave and move like horses who, in turn, teach their riders how to move like them. This interspecies communication is now known as the “isopraxis” phenomenon. She comments: “Both, human and horse, are cause and effect of each other’s movements. Both induce and are induced, affect and are affected.” (Ibid., 115) Despret shows how humans and animals make each other capable in novel ways.
20. In French, “essayer” means to try, to attempt.
21. Van Dooren, *The Wake of Crows*, 17. Van Dooren underscores the *ethical obligation* involved in matters of inheritance(s) –for example of the problematic legacies inherent in concepts such as community or hospitality, which must be rethought but not renounced. Haraway similarly insists on the *political* responsibility intrinsic in inheriting these histories, with their figures of speech. They both stress the importance of how and which stories and languages one chooses in order to craft better stories for earthly survival and flourishing (i.e., earthly = impure). Both insist on facing up to the mundane (earthly, material) complexities and contradictions that have gone into the figures and gestures that shape the living and their worlds, always in particular locations and at specific times.
22. I refer to Haraway’s appropriation of Ursula Le Guin’s “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” (1986) in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 117-125. Haraway writes: “Sympoiesis is a carrier bag for ongoingness, a yoke for becoming with, for staying with the trouble of inheriting the damages and achievements of colonial and postcolonial naturalcultural histories in telling the tale of still possible recuperation.” Stressing the non-innocent ways in which worlds come to be and co-become, she remarks that for the sake of ongoingness one must not look for “rectitude and final peace.” Rather, she is committed to paying attention to “the finicky and disruptive details of good stories that don’t know how to finish. Good stories reach into rich pasts to sustain thick presents to keep the story going for those who come after.” In this regard, “Symbiogenesis is not a synonym for the good but for becoming with each other in responsibility.” (Ibid., 125)
23. Maron’s text starts with a quote from the ethological study of crows by Josef H. Reichholf’s *Rabenschwarze Intelligenz: Was wir von Krähen lernen können* (Munich: Herbig Verlag, c.2009); I have already mentioned van Dooren’s book, which also references other ethological works on ravens and crows, including Despret’s. In her book *Quand le loup habitera avec l’agneau* (Paris: Seuil, 2002) she analyses how ravens “dismantle” the boxes into which experiments want to fit them. The entire experimental apparatus that tries to “figure them out,” according to the experimenter’s expectations, and how crows defeat it, is discussed in Jeff Cohen and Julian Yates’s *Noah’s Arkive*, 247. At one point they write, “To the raven belong stories of waywardness, tales peripheral to the plot, of making the best of it when you find yourself unable or unwilling to participate in expected conclusions. A satisfying ending is built on the casting away of alternatives, tales full of challenge that will not culminate in the desired destination, that might even wreck the narrative ship.” (Ibid., 238) Here, the authors refer to the “bad” reputation ascribed to the raven that, after Noah charged it with the search for dry land, in fact does not come back to the Ark. The raven abandons ship, stays with “the earthly trouble,” binds itself to mortal catastrophe, preferring this over obedience, the price of salvation: it “exits the allegory for a world of penetrating smells and delicious tastes.” (Ibid., 251)
24. Haraway uses the Latin-derived *Terran* to imply of the earth, mud, humus, dust in contrast to the Olympic gods, and human heroes. See for example Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 40.
25. No page reference is available on the eBook version I have in hand.
26. “Ambassadors” is the term used by Frederike Middelhoff et al., ed., *Texts, Animals, Environments*, 27. The crows in *Crows Cawing* are very material and situated animals. At the same time they become the conduit for Maron’s reflections and stories about how she is affected by other animals, from horses, to giraffes, chimpanzees, other birds, and a bear in a zoo.
27. Anna Tsing, quoted in Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Milwaukee and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 19.

28. Among others, see Elke Gilson, "Postface" in *Krähengekrächz*, np, and Paola Quaderelli, „Von Menschen und Tieren im Frühwerk Monika Marons," *Recherches Germaniques*, 48 (2018), 95-110. <https://doi.org/10.4000/rg.426> (Accessed 1 September 2023).
29. My use of this term comes from Cohen and Yates who, in turn, borrow it from Despret in "The Enigma of the Raven," *Angelaki* 20:2 (2015), 57-72. According to various ethological experiments, most notably Bernd Heinrich's, as reported by both Despret and van Dooren, the uncooperative crows recruit other crows, for example, inviting them to share food (or according to practices of interspecies mutualism). This contravenes traditional models of evolution and the questions these models pose including the answers they provide and the ways they go about answering them. The ravens who act not according to plan invite, or recruit, the really interested researchers to pose more interesting questions to the unreliable birds who resist the answers expected of them. Thereby the really interested scientists also come to question their own models and apparatuses of investigation. To be recruited by the ravens means here to take the ravens seriously, hence conferring on them the "power not to submit to his [the scientist's] interpretations. ... [to address] them above all where they actively resist the models to which they could have been subsumed." For Cohen and Yates, to be open to recruitment by ravens means to take on the challenge of the imagination, and "not write off the capacity of stories to work out differently, to go awry, the possibility that we may all learn something ... unscripted." (*Noah's Arkive*, 248-249)
30. "A gossip is ...someone with whom to gather and keep good company, to flock. Gossip is [also] conversation ... the news in unofficial circulation, the work of imagination, the energy of story in motion." (*Noah's Arkive*, 234)
31. As van Dooren relates, experiments have proven that crows live in a world that to them, as for us, is peopled with distinct subjects, individuals with particular projects and understandings. They possess what is known as a "Theory of Mind," that is, they can see how we look at them; in other words, they are capable of intersubjective engagements with one another and with other species. See *The Wake of Crows*, 165. Haraway translates this kind of intersubjective and interspecies practice of recognition with the phrase "the taste of co-presence." Taste here refers to the shared/sharing of bread, hence of interspecies companionship, as a "delicious" if messy affair which involves much digestion and indigestion. See Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 17, 31.
32. Baptiste Morizot speaks of the "ancient wonder of bewilderment and gratitude" human beings feel when entranced by the howls of wolves. Once it is extricated from the intentionality of a gift-giving God, this gratitude for something that is given and received, without either source or recipient ever being adequately defined, makes possible all kinds of "immanent blessings." *Ways of Being Alive*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022), 29. Bennett calls this ability to receive gifts "natality" and roots it in an "ontological susceptibility to contagion." (*The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 159)
33. In Cohen and Yates's words, to follow the raven's trajectory means "to veer into a space of no return, a disaster paradise that provides everything the creatures need, but nothing to trigger further journey" - by which they mean the return to Noah's Ark, to being saved, to eternal paradise. They add: "it will certainly not be winging home with chunks of scavenged flesh." (238) The throngs of pleasure taken when embracing fleshly mortality return in a scene from Maron's *The Defector* (*Die Überläuferin*, 1988). During a storm, the protagonist throws herself to the ground and wallows in the mud like a pig. Following the experience, "an unknown feeling of agreement resonated within me like a wonderful chord." (My translation) Quoted in German, in Paola Quaderelli, "Vom Menschen und Tieren im Frühwerk Monika Marons" online version, no page number.
34. According to Cohen and Yates, perhaps anthropocentric domestication would follow the itinerary of Noah's docile dove that trades writing its own script, winging its own flight, for the destination promised by salvation - in contrast to the wayward raven whose unscripted story seduces the human imagination, inviting it to leave the Ark (its "fated denouement") and choose the pleasure of errancy over the price of salvation. See *Noah's Arkive*, 238.
35. While the above reading has emphasized the performativity of the crows and through it that the text holds open the notion of community, I am aware that this is not necessarily Maron's political position, i.e., "outside" the text, as her most recent literary work and public statements seem to indicate. This prompts us to remember the importance of mediation between text/art and world. In turn, this reminds us that ethical *cum* political (sympathetic) dispositions towards animals and democratic politics don't necessarily overlap. On Maron's turn to right-wing politics, see, for example, Stefan Dege "Monika Maron: Chronicer of the GDR turns 80," *Deutsche Welle*, 6 February 2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/monika-maron-chronicer-of-the-gdr-turns-80/a-57758191#> (Accessed 15 August, 2023).

36. My thoughts on Walther's art with her falcon Sicilia are rooted in an email correspondence she and I had on and off between November 2022 and August 2023. I saw Walther's work at the opening of her two-person show (with Daniel Spoerri) at the Künstlerhaus in Marktoberdorf, titled *Jäger und Gejagte* (Hunters and Hunted), on January 16, 2015. The exhibition ran until 15 March 2015 and was curated by Maya Heckelmann. In this essay, I focus on one specific example of interspecies collaboration, which has involved a partnership between a woman and a bird for over a decade. I don't engage the controversies about whether the Sport of falconry or the breeding and captivity of falcons, more generally speaking, are cruel practices. This would be for another paper.
37. Wenzel Jakob, "Die Aneignung von Natur," *Die Aneignung von Natur: Walther/Walther*. Catalogue Kunststiftung Petra Benteler (Murnau: Germany, 2016), np.
38. Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 5.
39. Helen MacDonald mentions that several falconers' accounts of their first encounters with their raptors speak of a sort of destructive seduction or enslavement to the bird. They "pathologize" their activity, MacDonald writes, "They say they never meant to be falconers. They say that they came under the grip of an impulse they couldn't control. ... I have heard falconers bemoan how falconry has ruined their careers..." See Helen MacDonald, *Falcon* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 69. Walther's own story is one of "love at first sight," and then ongoing companionship. As she puts it, she and Sicilia are "lovers." Yet, their relationship is not of the romantic sort, it is rather rooted in the bond that unites human and animal in practices of living, and sharing their very distinctive phenomenal worlds, day after day, in a work of ongoing attunement. See Letter, November 1, 2022.
40. Magic is meant here as Bennett intends it: Not magical in the sense of "a set of rituals for summoning up supernatural powers within a coherent cosmology," but in the sense of cultural practices that mark "the marvellous erupting amid the everyday." (8) See *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 8.
41. Hara Walther, *Werde Falconette! Begleitbuch zum Kurs FALCONETTE 1* (Copyright Hara Walther 2017), 8.
42. Hara Walther, *Werde Falconette!*, 8.
43. Sara Asu Schroer, "Voler d'Amour," *Billebaude*, 18 (Spring – Summer, 2021), 49.
44. Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 3-4, 131.
45. All images of Walther's art have been reproduced with the artist's permission.
46. <https://www.villaromanadelcasale.it> (Accessed 6 September 2023).
47. "Falco e Falconeria: Mostra di Opere di Hara Walther," *Agemina, Terrasini*, 21 May – 21 June, 2023.
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