



How Ravens Came to the Tower of London

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Abstract

According to popular belief, Charles II of England (reigned 1660-1685) once heard a prophecy that if ravens left the Tower of London it would “fall,” so he ordered that the wings of seven ravens in the Tower be trimmed. Until recently, this claim was not challenged even in scholarly literature. There are, however, no allusions to the Tower Ravens before the end of the nineteenth century. The ravens, today meticulously cared for by Yeoman Warders, are largely an invented tradition, designed to give an impression of continuity with the past. This article examines the few known references, both graphic and textual, to the Tower Ravens through 1906. It concludes that the ravens were originally brought in to dramatize the alleged site of executions at the Tower. Although not accorded great significance at first, legends that would eventually make the ravens mascots of Britain began outside of the Tower.

Keywords

Tower Ravens, Tower of London, Natsume Soseki, ravens, Charles II.

Introduction

A flyer (Anonymous, 1997) entitled “A Guide to the Tower Ravens,” published by the Tower of London and distributed free to tourists, announces:

For many centuries, ravens have guarded the Tower of London and, since they are said to hold the power of the Crown, it is believed that the Crown and the Tower will fall, if ever the ravens should leave. Fortunately, these respected residents, since the reign of King Charles II, have been protected by royal decree.¹

These seven ravens have a special intimacy with visitors, and some people think they even pose for cameras. Most of the time, however, they play, quarrel, or simply enjoy the company of one another. Their behavior can be so spontaneous that visitors almost forget they are captive, so expressive that we

almost forget they are not human. Their wings are trimmed on one side, so that they are slightly off balance and cannot fly very far, though they have no trouble ascending walls of about six feet. They are fed regularly with meat purchased from the nearby Smithfield Market, and their health is carefully monitored; however, the ravens are not allowed to leave the grounds of the Tower.

Ravens in the Tower—First Appearance

When I first visited the Tower, it did not even cross my mind to doubt the antiquity of the ravens,² but I was intrigued by their story and attempted to research it. After a year of so of searching in research libraries and archives for references to the ravens, I was unable to find any before the end of the nineteenth century. It gradually dawned on me that the reason why I failed to find such references was because there were none. I wrote Dr. Geoffrey Parnell, the official historian of the Tower of London about my findings, and he wrote back to say that he had reached the same conclusion.

Not very long afterwards, Parnell went public with our findings. On Monday, November 15, 2004, an article based on an interview with him appeared on the front page of the London newspaper, *The Guardian*, entitled, "Tower's raven mythology may be a Victorian flight of fantasy." The article quoted an anonymous "spokeswoman for Historic Royal Palaces," which runs the Tower, as saying that, "so much of the appearance of the Tower we see today dates back to the Victorian period that it is quite appropriate that the ravens should be a Victorian legend."

According to Parnell, the earliest known reference to the Tower Ravens was a short piece by Hawthorne (1895) from the October issue of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) journal, *The Animal World*, which mentioned a companion animal (pet), a cat, being harassed by two ravens, one of whom was named Jenny. *The Guardian* reproduced an illustration from the RSPCA journal showing a raven pulling the tail of a cat, with the caption, "Is this the first depiction of ravens in the Tower?" (Kennedy, 2004).

The Tower Ravens are in large part what historians call an "invented tradition," like, for example, the wearing of kilts in Scotland, which is widely supposed to be an ancient practice but only goes back to the latter half of the eighteenth century (Trevor-Roper, 1994). Typically, invented traditions serve to encourage social cohesion, consecrate institutions, or promote beliefs. As Hobsbawm (1994) has put it, "... modern nations and all their impedimenta

generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition . . ." (p. 14). Traditions are invented especially during abrupt transitions from one era to the next, and they serve to create continuity—or at least the illusion of continuity—with earlier times.

In reaction to the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution, many in Britain were nostalgic for a more stable, uncomplicated, and unhurried way of life. Even as Britain led the world in industrialization, the British Empire was driven in large part by an ideology of romantic anti-capitalism (Cannadine, 2001). The Victorian era was a great period of invented traditions, as the British tried to sanction their Empire through the creation of impressive titles, uniforms, and genealogies.

All of this quasi-Feudal pageantry was intended, at least unconsciously, to give the impression that the elaborate hierarchal relationships within the Empire were part of a timeless order (Cannadine, 2001). The fabrications were not confined to prominent officials but reached into the lives of the middle classes. Breeds of dogs and other nonhuman animals, for example, were sometimes mistakenly alleged to go back to medieval or ancient times, even to the Stone Age (Derr, 1990; Ritvo, 1986). Great antiquity was claimed on doubtful evidence for a wide range of customs, dances, and other practices (Hutton, 1996). By linking Britain and the monarchy with the remote past, the ravens in the Tower dramatize both their own antiquity and that of the Crown.

To determine how the ravens first came to the Tower and began to acquire their status as mascots of the nation I will look closely at all references to the Tower that both Parnell and I found up to 1906. Were the "legends" that gave them special importance entirely fabricated by the tourist industry at the Tower, or did they begin outside the Tower in oral traditions? Parnell believed the ravens had been brought in as pets by a private individual and later taken over by the Tower after the mate of Jenny escaped. They subsequently acquired a sinister reputation (Kennedy, 2004). I find that evidence strongly contradicts that view, but it is partly Parnell's generosity in providing me with references that enables me to challenge his conclusions.

The choice of 1906 as a cut-off point may be a bit arbitrary, but it marks the approximate end of the time in which the ravens became established as an institution at the Tower. Over this period, I found four visual depictions of the Tower Ravens and an additional four references to them in print. This list is probably not complete,³ but it does represent the result of extensive searches, which include the British National Archives, the Westminster Archives, the research collection of the New York Public Library, and the Guildhall Library. That there were so few references to the Tower Ravens shows that they did not

initially attract a lot of public attention. This total of eight references represents at least what major archival collections have thought worth preserving. Any references that have yet to be discovered are likely in local or highly ephemeral publications—such as newsletters—or else in publications produced outside Britain and the United States. However, there is, so far as I can tell, no reason to doubt that these selections are representative in their depictions of the ravens. We have, furthermore, at least enough references to generalize from with a reasonable amount of confidence.

One of these accounts, that by Japanese author Soseki (1906/2004) of his visit to the Tower, is far more important than the rest for its detail, insight, and literary quality. To the extent that its descriptions can be confirmed, this is certainly our major source for information about the early history of the Tower Ravens. Soseki was an authority on English literature and culture in Japan, and he would later become one of Japan's leading novelists. Yet to what extent was the account an accurate description of the Tower of London and, specifically, of the ravens? He had obviously taken pains to research the history of the Tower in detail, since he cites historical and literary sources, all of them in English. In addition, he refers not only to many historical events but also to highly specific locations and inscriptions.

What is most likely to place his account in question is its literary and imaginative nature. Like several modern novelists, Soseki (1906/2004) often blends reality with fantasy, as well as the present with the past. To learn about the Tower of London and its ravens from Soseki's account is like trying to learn about Dublin in the early twentieth century from *Ulysses* by Joyce (1922/1990), a writer roughly comparable to Soseki in reputation. Like Soseki, Joyce described certain locations with great care and exactitude; yet he also depicted them in a context that is obviously fictional.

Like Soseki (1906/2004) and other artists, Joyce (1922/1990) endeavored, in a broader way, to be faithful to his experience. But how could one separate the fantasy from reality in his novel? A scholar studying Dublin in the early twentieth century would probably do that by confirming whether elements in the description of a locale in Dublin by Joyce could be confirmed by other sources. If so, the scholar would probably regard the novel *Ulysses* as a generally reliable source of at least certain kinds of information. In an analogous way, I will use other sources to verify the accuracy of the account by Soseki.

Early Visual References to the Ravens

The picture reproduced by *The Guardian* [not shown here]⁴ is not the earliest depiction of the Tower Ravens. I found a drawing of a Tower Raven by

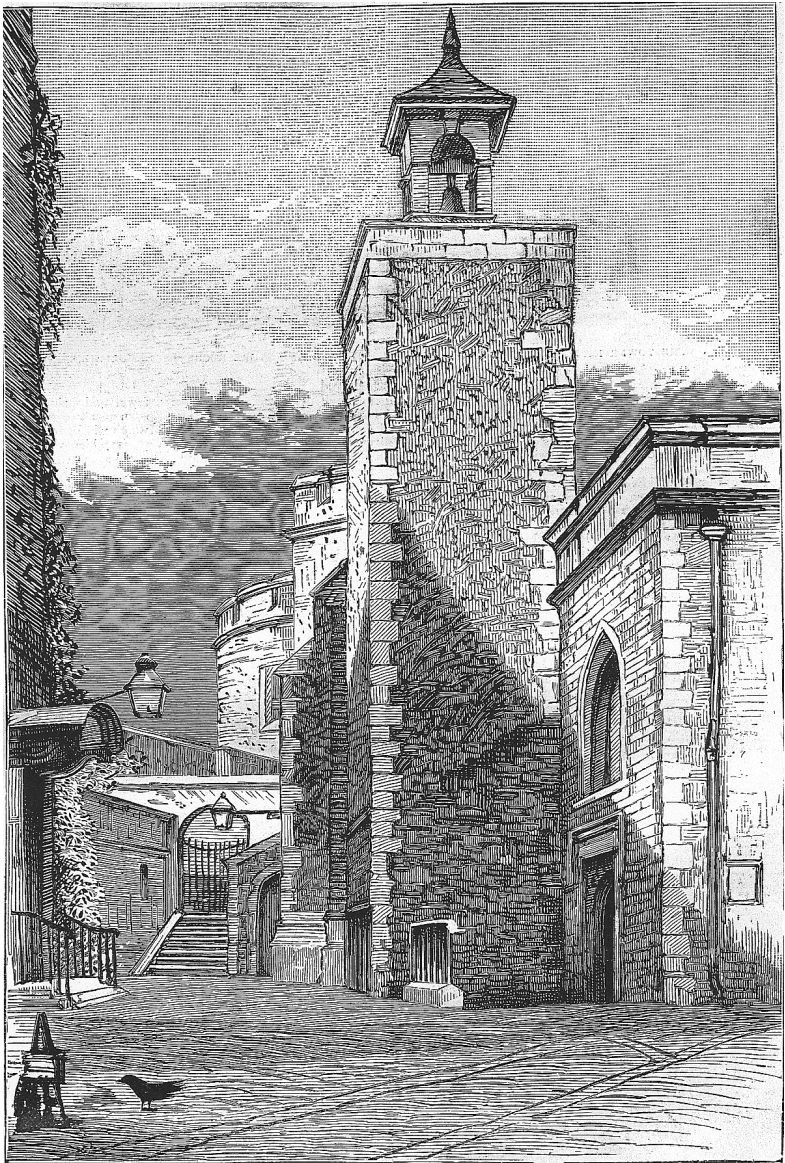


Figure 1. John O'Connor, Church of St. Peter's, courtesy Guildhall Library.

O'Connor (1883) in the collection of materials on the Tower of London at the Guildhall Library (Figure 1), which appeared in a special supplement of *The Pictorial World on the Tower of London* reproduced below:

There is no accompanying mention of the raven in the commentary. The drawing of the raven is a bit crude by comparison with other parts of the picture, indicating that perhaps the artist thought it an insignificant detail. What is noteworthy, beyond simply the date of the picture, is the location of the raven.

At the Tower of London, there is a large brass plaque with an inscription stating, "On this site stood a scaffold on which were executed . . ." It lists seven illustrious prisoners, including Queen Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, Robert Devereux, and Sir Walter Raleigh. In 1861, Prince Albert, on a visit to the Tower, had remarked that the Queen would like to see the site of Anne Boleyn's execution. This had actually been in front of the Ordnance House in eastern side of the Tower, but a stone marking the site was set up in front of the chapel of St. Peter Vincula.⁵ The site immediately became a major tourist attraction, and in 1866 it was surrounded by railings and marked with a plaque (Impey & Parnell, 2000). In the later nineteenth century, the place was proclaimed to be the spot of a permanent scaffold and several beheadings.

The raven in O'Connor's (1885) illustration is placed very close to the presumed location of the scaffold on the Tower Green, next to the church of St. Peter Vincula. Directly in front of the raven is a sign, which very probably tells of the executions that allegedly took place there. This positioning suggests that the ravens were from the very beginning used to dramatize accounts of executions, as proverbial birds of doom who gather at scaffolds to eat human flesh. From very early times, ravens, as scavengers, had been notorious for congregating at scenes of carnage such as scaffolds and battlefields; in fact, the executioner's block had been known as a "ravenstone" (Sax, 2003). By the nineteenth century, the ravens at the scaffold had become a cliché. Dixon (1909), the author of a popular book on birds in London that did not mention the ravens in the Tower of London, observed that ravens were extinct in the city but added that "... imagination pictures the sable bird frequenting the various gibbets that in the good old days stood in various parts of the London suburbs" (p. 199).

The next early visual reference (see note 4) is the one previously mentioned from the RSPCA journal. This picture also places a raven on the Tower Green not far from the scaffold, though that is not included in the picture. The raven is biting the tail of the cat, an act that could cause a good deal of pain—raven beaks are very sharp—but this is a type of behavior that many ornithologists have observed. Ratcliff (1997) writes of ravens, "A favorite ruse is to sidle up



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Figure 2. H. E. Tidmarsh, Place of Execution in Front of St. Peter's Chapel, courtesy Guildhall Library.

to a sleeping animal and tweak its tail, quickly jumping back or flapping up to a higher perch before the enraged animal can retaliate” (p. 116). The cat in the illustration, who appears startled and puzzled, is looking down at the raven; however, the raven is not reciprocating the gaze, and there is no suggestion that the teasing is mitigated by affection.

The third early reference, also in the collection at the Guildhall library (Figure 2), is a painting by H. E. Tidmarsh, which was reproduced as a post-card in about 1900 and later in the June 1904 issue of *Cassell's Magazine* (Hammond, 2000, p. 168). It shows well-dressed ladies and gentlemen gazing at the scaffold on an overcast day, as a raven lands somewhat ominously in the foreground, distracting only a young boy. While adults are focused intently on the past, he is mindful of a precarious future.

The fourth visual depiction, also in the collection of the Guildhall Library, is by far the most revealing (Figure 3). In a drawing by Dadd (1904) entitled “Ravens at the Tower,” men women, and children in formal attire are gathered around the scaffold:⁶

On the plaque commemorating executions at the Tower are two large ravens, one of whom is pecking at a scrap of food, probably intended as a



Figure 3. St. Dadd, *Ravens at the Tower*, courtesy Guildhall Library.

symbolic commemoration of the human flesh such birds enjoyed in times past. The other raven is looking up ominously at a Yeoman Warder.

To summarize, all of the early visual depictions show the ravens near the site where executions are commemorated. One portrays a raven as a menace, while the other three, with various degrees of subtlety, represent them as birds of dark omen.

Early Mentions of the Ravens in Print

The first mention of the ravens in print media may indeed be the article previously mentioned by Hawthorne (1895) in *The Animal World*. The account was

the starting point for a longer piece by Hudson (1898/1968) in *Birds in London*. Hudson reports that "For many years past two or three ravens have usually been kept at the Tower of London" (p. 21). This was unusual because wild ravens had apparently vanished from London in the mid-nineteenth century (Ratcliffe, 1997). Hudson conjectures that this was the mate of the Tower Raven named Jenny.

According to Hudson (1898/1968), in 1890 a pair of ravens started to construct a nest in a tree within the Tower of London but then demolished it and started another. After about a half-dozen attempts, they were still dissatisfied, so the male lost interest in domestic life. He flew off and began to explore London, leaving the Tower to fly around St. Paul's Cathedral and the docks. Finally, the owners of the birds, fearing that the raven would be lost forever, decided to clip his wings. The male raven, however, had become suspicious of human beings, though he returned to eat and rest on one of the turrets of the Tower every evening. At last he disappeared, to spend the rest of his life in Kensington Garden.

I have, however, not been able to find any confirmation of Hudson's (1898/1968) account. There are many elements that make it appear very dubious, and Hudson himself admits it is based on conjecture. Heinrich (1989), author of *Ravens in Winter* and an authority on raven behavior, told me in a personal communication (B. Heinrich, December 31, 2003) that he found it impossible to keep ravens for even a short time without either imprisoning them or trimming their wings. He tried this several times, sometimes with ravens whom he raised since birth, but they always leave immediately if given the chance. If Heinrich is correct, the ravens would not have stayed around the Tower for about seven years, as Hudson claims they did.

Another thing that makes us doubtful about the account by Hudson (1898/1968) is the anthropomorphic description of the raven couple, which coincides too closely with Victorian stereotypes. Jenny, the wife, is entirely domestic, while her unnamed mate goes out on adventures, as Hudson puts it, "in search of a new mate with a better knowledge of nest-building" (p. 21). How are we to understand the very odd behavior of destroying a series of six attempted nests and giving up? If this part of the account is accurate, the most likely possibility is that Jenny and her mate were owned by the Tower from the start and their wings had always been clipped. Perhaps the trimming had been poorly done, making their balance precarious. The possibility that I find most likely is that the raven in Kensington Gardens did not come from the Tower at all but was either a pet who escaped from a private home or a bird in the wild.

Still another early description of the ravens in the Tower, from an essay by Thompson (1904), describes them thus:

Rising on to Tower Green under the old plane and elm trees, the five pet ravens may be seen in ominous proximity to the site of the Block. This was where the keen blade of the masked executioner made history in brief and brutal chapters, and many noble heads rolled within the encircling chains. The ravens, which haunt the locality with dismal croaks, are a private gift to the Tower, and should one die it is replaced by the donor. (p. 12)⁷

This association with the executioner's block is, as we have seen, consistent with early visual depictions of the ravens. It may not be confirmed by the other two early references to the ravens in print that we have looked at so far, but the account by Hawthorne (1895) is sketchy and the one by Hudson (1898/1968) is mostly a journalistic fabrication.

The link between the ravens and beheadings at the alleged scaffold is strongly confirmed by our fourth and final early mention of the ravens in print, which is the account by the Japanese writer, Soseki (1906/2004).

Natsume Soseki and the Tower Ravens

In 1900, Natsume Soseki embarked, supported by a small stipend from the Japanese government, to study in London. He visited the Tower on October 31, 1900, wrote a phantasmagoric account of it a few years later, and first published the piece in 1906, though an English translation did not appear until very recently. Other writers had only mentioned them in passing, but Soseki (1906/2004) made the ravens the focus of his report, which blends fantasy, history, and present experience.

First, the narrator sees the two young princes who died mysteriously in the Tower, perhaps murdered at the orders of Richard III. The narrator observes that their tunics are "as black as ravens' wings" (p. 97), subtly hinting at the revelations that will come. Soseki then visits the alleged place of executions:

I leave the White Tower and go over to the Beauchamp Tower. On the way, there is an array of captured cannons. A small space in front of them is enclosed with an iron railing, and, on part of the chain, a notice is hanging down. I look over and see that it says that this used to be the place of execution. Pushed into a dark underground room with no sunlight for two, or even three, or sometimes even ten years, the prisoner is one day suddenly pulled above ground only to be installed in this even more terrifying place. Seeing the clear sky after such a long time, he hardly has time to count his blessings, then, with dazed eyes and the colors of the world around him still imperfectly registered in his pupils, the blade of the white axe quickly cuts through three feet of air. The blood that flew out must have been cold even while he was still alive. A raven descends. Hunching its wings, its black beak protruding, it stares at people. I feel as if the rancor of a hundred years of blood have congealed and taken the form of a bird so as to guard this unhappy place for ever (p. 102).

The raven appears to have descended in order to devour the corpse; however, as we learn shortly, those who have been executed then live on as ravens. After the first raven has appeared:

In the blowing wind an elm tree rustles. I look over, and on the branches, too, there is a raven. After a while another one flies down. Where they have come from I do not know. Beside them a young woman with a boy of about seven is standing staring at the ravens. Her Greek nose and beautiful, polished gem-like eyes and the undulations of curves shaping her pure white neck moved my heart more than a little. The child looks up at the woman and says with curiosity, "Ravens, ravens." Then, imploring her, "The ravens seem to be cold. I'd like to give them some bread." The woman says quietly, "Those ravens do not want anything to eat." The child asks, "Why?" The woman, staring fixedly at the ravens with eyes that seem to be floating in the midst of her long lashes, says only, "There are five ravens," and does not reply to the child's question. She looks lost in thought, as if reflecting alone over something. I wonder whether there is not some strange karma between this woman and the ravens. She speaks the raven's mood as if speaking of her own and declares that, although only three ravens are visible, there are five (pp. 102, 103).

The young woman appears to have supernatural knowledge, and she fluently reads inscriptions that the narrator cannot begin to decipher. Gradually we realize that the woman is Lady Jane Gray, the beautiful young queen of great learning and courage, who ruled England for nine days before being deposed and eventually executed on the orders of Mary Tudor. She and the boy, together with others who died in the Tower, have returned to haunt it as shapeshifters who at times assume the form of ravens.

The narrator sees Walter Raleigh, who wrote a history of the world in his cell; Guy Fawkes, who once tried to blow up Parliament; and many others who were imprisoned within the Tower walls. All of them, it appears, are spirits who have returned in raven form. Finally, Soseki (1906/2004) continues, he returns to his lodging and to the mundane realities of everyday life:

... I tell my landlord that I have visited the Tower today, but the landlord says, "There were five ravens there, I suppose." Well, I wonder with great surprise, is my landlord also a relative of that woman, but the landlord laughs, "They're sacred ravens. They've been keeping them there since ancient times, and, even if they become one short, they immediately make up the numbers again. There are always five ravens there." (p. 113)⁸

It is unlikely that Soseki (1906/2004) could have substantially contributed to the myth of the ravens, since his account was not available in English until the twenty-first century. He represents the lore of the Tower Ravens in part as a legend told to him by his landlord. The landlord could conceivably be simply a fictional device, but Soseki was, as evidenced by his careful details, attempting

to describe the Tower and its environment for his contemporaries in Japan. Inventing characters and events, even supernatural ones, is easily consistent with the fidelity to experience demanded by an artist such as Joyce (1922/1990) or Soseki, but changing the ambiance of a time and place is not.⁹ A reader of Joyce's *Ulysses* in the twentieth century would probably not have traveled to Dublin expecting to meet the character Leopold Bloom, but he might well have gone looking for the River Liffey. Although the landlord may well be either invented or fictionalized, the information that he gives, as part of the environment in London, is probably recorded accurately.

Furthermore, the account by Soseki (1906/2004) does not at all require the mention of the landlord and his story to constitute a coherent narrative. I believe, therefore, that Soseki was recording incipient legends that were beginning to circulate in oral traditions. As a man of great sensitivity, he might also have picked up on associations and implicit ideas that had not been clearly articulated by the British themselves. Perhaps his religious background enabled him to speak openly of ideas that would have appeared blasphemous to Christians and superstitious to rationalists. Soseki's Buddhism, which traditionally entails belief in reincarnation, might have given added dimensions to relatively casual sayings about the ravens by people like his landlord.

Perhaps Soseki (1906/2004) identified Lady Jane Gray—at least in part—with Amaterasu, the Japanese goddess of the sun, from whom the Emperors of Japan claim their descent. Amaterasu, like Lady Gray in his story, is sometimes depicted in the form of a giant raven. Most significantly, Soseki was, as an outsider to London society, not blinded by ideologies of progress or rationalism. He could clearly observe the mythic dimensions in the Tower of London, of which other residents of that city were at most barely aware.

The Marketing of the Tower

Soseki (1906/2004) used the executions commemorated at the Tower of London as a starting point for reflections on the transitory nature of experience, in which the ravens often mediate between the present and the past. The ravens are not only a form in which the slain are reincarnated but also one in which historical events remain current.

The tourist industry at the Tower may have had very little of Soseki's (1906/2004) philosophical and aesthetic sophistication, but it did share his focus on tortures and beheadings. The Tower of London was presented essentially as a house of horrors, not very different from those found at amusement parks. Yeoman Warders, dressed in their full medieval splendor, would invite tourists, including children, to kneel with their necks on the chopping block

(Hammond, 1999). Like other artists of distinction, Soseki was able to clarify relationships, particularly with regard to the ravens, that remained largely unconscious for most people who worked at, or visited, the tower.

The Tower of London (Ainsworth, 1880), a novel that did much to establish popular images of the Tower (Impey & Parnell, 2000), mentioned in passing a "flock of carrion-crows and ravens" at the execution of Lady Jane Grey (p. 481). In the realm of nature, violence is most effectively dramatized by predation, which is an essential part of the process by which organic material is endlessly recycled. The feeding of predators such as the big cats in Victorian zoos was sensationalized as a bloody spectacle, as it had been from the time of Roman circuses. As Ritvo (1989) has observed, "The bloodier the spectacle, the more reassuring it must have been to the audience to know that human-kind had conquered the animal kingdom" (p. 224).

After much searching, I have found no descriptions of the feeding the Tower Ravens have come down to us from the Victorian era. Even without being sensationalized, the spectacle of the birds tearing apart carcasses, especially bodies with blood in them, would have challenged more fastidious sensibilities. Since carrion appears much the same no matter what animal it comes from, it would have been easy to imagine that this could once have been from executed prisoners. After the first few decades of the twentieth century, when references to the ravens become more common, there are many allusions to the Tower Ravens eating human bodies (Dinnis, 1978; Heinrich, 1989).

Conclusion

In summary, the paucity of early records compels us to reconstruct much of the early history and reputation of the Tower Ravens, but the account by Soseki (1906/2004) of his visit to the Tower closely identifies them with victims of executions. This association is confirmed by the placement of ravens near the scaffold in all visual depictions from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is, furthermore, consistent with other Victorian displays of animals in the wild, with the folkloric reputation of ravens, with the marketing of the Tower to tourists, and with later descriptions of the birds. We can conclude that the ravens were initially brought to the Tower near the end of the nineteenth century for use as props in tales told to tourists about queens and nobles decapitated at the scaffold.

Nevertheless, the Tower Ravens should not be dismissed as nothing more than a commercial gimmick to entertain tourists. Though largely beyond the scope of this discussion, the bond between the ravens and the British public is complex and merits further attention by students of human-animal

relationships. It has far more dimensions than stylized heraldic animals such as the lion or the unicorn. Much of this complexity is already indicated by Soseki (1906/2004), for whom the ravens represent at once the beheaded and their persecutors at the Tower of London.

Notes

1. Charles II is widely said to have had the ravens clipped because of an ancient legend that the Tower of London and Britain itself will “fall” if they leave. The legend, however, actually dates back only to summer and fall of 1944 (Sax, 2007).

2. The idea that the ravens were protected and domesticated by Charles II has even found its way into the Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore entry under “ravens” (Simpson & Round, 2000, p. 291).

3. I would be grateful for any further references to the Tower Ravens from the nineteenth century and the first decade or so of the twentieth, and may be reached by email at Vogelgreif@aol.com.

4. An anonymous picture accompanies a short article by Edith Hawthorne in the *RPCA* journal, *Animal World*, October 1895. The picture in color may be viewed on the Internet at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/monarchy/story/0,2763,1351402,00.html>.

5. I am indebted to Geoffrey Parnell for details concerning the history of the scaffold, which he supplied in personal correspondence.

6. I am indebted to Ravenmaster Derrick Coyle for the reference.

7. The donor appears to have been the Earl of Dunraven, whose motivations were probably very different from those of the Tower authorities. He was not interested in the ravens as a way to promote tourism but as a Celtic symbol. For a detailed discussion of them, see Sax (2007).

8. The number of ravens was raised to seven following World War II (Sax 2007).

9. In his introduction to *The Tower of London: Tales of Victorian London* by Soseki (1906/2004) translator/editor Damian Flanagan discusses the values and motivations of the author. According to Flanagan, Soseki was not only describing sights but also interpreting British and European culture for the Japanese reader. This was not only a descriptive but also a philosophical endeavor. Summarizing the major themes of Soseki's visit to the Tower of London, Flanagan observes, “At the heart of this drama is the question: how in our increasingly rationalized world does one come to terms with a place that contains within it ‘the mysterious thing called the past’? Should we, like the narrator's landlord . . . , be numb to the generations of agony stored up in the walls of the Tower of London? Or should we allow the place to lead us into a Zen-like contemplation of the fleetingness of this world . . . ?” (p. 21). Similar concerns are found in the works of many Western authors of the early twentieth century such as James Joyce, Thomas Mann, and Marcel Proust.

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