

Another Side of 'Animal Rights': A compilation in progress

Anon

General

'How I Put the Horse before Descartes'.

Bernard Rollin, title of an autobiographical fragment in *Between the Species* 1, Winter 1984/85: 44–50.

'Too many people speak against our cruelties to animals more in Thoreau than in anger.'

Jon Wynne-Tyson, in a 1996 letter to George Hendrick, editor (1993) of Henry S Salt's *The Life of Henry David Thoreau* (1890).

'The Animals, you say, were "sent"

For man's free use and nutriment.

Pray, then, inform me, and be candid,

Why came they aeons before Man did,

To spend long centuries on earth,

Awaiting their Devourer's birth?

Those ill-timed chattels, sent from Heaven,

Were, sure, the maddest gift e'er given –

"Sent" for Man's usage (can Man believe it?)

When there was no Man to receive it!

Henry S Salt, 'The Sending of the Animals', in *Cum Grano: Verses and Epigrams* (1931).

'Most horses have two arseholes – one under their tails and another on their backs.'

S.A.B., quoted in John Bryant, *Fettered Kingdoms* (1982: 21).

'Heaven is by favour; if it were by merit your dog would go in and you would stay out.'

Mark Twain, 'What is Man?' (1906).

'The very beginning of Genesis tells us that God created man in order to give him dominion over fish and fowl and all creatures. Of course, Genesis was written by a man, not a horse.'

Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984: 286).

Bloodsports

'The bull-fighter who torments a bull to death and then castrates it of an ear has neither proved nor increased his own virility; he has merely demonstrated that he is a butcher with balletic tendencies.'

Brigid Brophy, 'The Rights of Animals', *Sunday Times*, 10 October 1965.

'But the sporting instinct is due to sheer callousness and insensibility; the sportsman, by force of habit, or by force of hereditary influence, cannot understand or sympathize with the sufferings he causes, and being, in the great majority of instances, a man of slow perception, he naturally finds it much easier to follow the hounds than to follow an argument.'

Henry S Salt, *Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (1980 [1892]: 68).

'As for the nonsense sometimes talked about the beneficial effects of those field-sports which bring men into contact with the sublimities of nature, I will only repeat what I have elsewhere said on this subject, that "the dynamiters who cross the ocean to blow up an English town might on this principle justify the object of their journey by the assertion that the sea-voyage brought them in contact with the exalting and ennobling influence of the Atlantic".'

Henry S Salt, *Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (1980 [1892]: 71).

‘When a man wants to murder a tiger he calls it sport: when the tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity.’

G B Shaw, *Man and Superman* (“The Revolutionist’s Handbook and Pocket Companion, Maxims for Revolutionists, Crime and Punishment”) (1948 [1903]: 255).

‘There are three prerequisites for angling. A hook, a line and a stinker.’

J.M.B., quoted in John Bryant, *Fettered Kingdoms* (1982: 67).

Vivisection

‘The Anti-Vivisectionist does not deny that physiologists must make experiments and even take chances with new methods. He says that they must not seek knowledge by criminal methods, just as they must not make money by criminal methods. He does not object to Galileo dropping cannon balls from the top of the leaning tower of Pisa; but he would object to shoving off two dogs or American tourists.’

G B Shaw, ‘These Scoundrels’, reply to H G Wells in the *Sunday Express*, 27 August 1927.

‘as any fool can vivisection and gain kudos by writing a paper describing what happened, the laboratories are infested with kudos hunters who have nothing to tell that they could not have ascertained by asking a policeman’.

G B Shaw, ‘These Scoundrels’, reply to H G Wells in the *Sunday Express*, 27 August 1927.

‘It is not unknown for the lower forms of schools to care for mice as “pets”: which pets are killed and dissected by the upper forms. In America they may be dissected alive, or starved to death upon deficiency diets. What state of character is induced in a child constrained to dissect a pregnant female mouse in order to learn the mechanics of reproduction? The casual brutality of such an institutionalized dismissal of normal affection, normal sympathies is a symptom of how far the rot has gone. It isn’t even as if the demonstration were – pitiful pretext – *necessary*. At this rate of corruption female teachers will be being bribed to conceive and abort a foetus for the fifth form’s biology lesson.’

Stephen R L Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (1984 [1977]: 153).

‘To this day the more conventional biologists suffer from an obsessional fear of anthropomorphism, and even put such words as “hunger” and “fear” between quotes (a literary solecism in any case) when writing about animals. The quotes are a way of saying “I cannot get on without Anthropomorphism, but I am ashamed to be seen with her in public”.’

C W Hume, *The Status of Animals in the Christian Religion* (1957).

Food

‘You can be a Sancho Panza on any food provided there is enough of it. If you want to be a Pythagoras, you have to be more careful.’

G B Shaw, letter to Thomas Demetrius O’Bolger, 16 March 1920, quoted in *Bernard Shaw, Collected Letters, vol 3, 1911–1925*, edited by Dan L H Laurence (1985).

‘The Stoic tradition has always had its opponents, and Stoics have perpetually been stepping down from their high principles to arguments of the most blatant sophistry and self-interest to deal with them. The plaint “what about plants, then?” ... is plainly a Stoic slogan – it is remarkable how sympathetic the orthodox become to tomatoes when asked how they excuse the torments to which we put a veal-calf’

Stephen R L Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (1984 [1977]: 17).

‘The laborious transformation of plant proteins into animal protein, indeed, is notoriously inefficient,

and wastes a great deal of food that would greatly assist human beings in less carnivorous places. It is not necessary for us to do this: I say nothing of what may be necessary for the Eskimos, for whom (along with tomatoes ...) the orthodox display a sudden, strange affection when confronted by zoophiles ...'

Stephen R L Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (1984 [1977]: 44).

'if we are to mean what we say in outlawing the unnecessary suffering of animals, we must become, at the least, vegetarians. I repeat that I say nothing here about the Eskimos, nor have I any interest in the desert-island castaway. We are not on a desert-island. Nor have I yet seen an orthodox moralist defend rape or even fornication merely on the ground that most males trapped in solitary and beyond the law with a naked and lubricious female would find their principles a little strained.'

Stephen R L Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (1984 [1977]: 45).

'That I like the flavour of mutton no more entitles me to kill a sheep than a taste for roast leg of human would entitle me to kill you. To argue that we humans are capable of complex, multifarious thought and feeling, whereas the sheep's experience is probably limited by lowly sheepish perceptions, is no more to the point than if I were to slaughter and eat you on the grounds that I am a sophisticated personality able to enjoy Mozart, formal logic and cannibalism, whereas your imaginative world seems confined to *True Romances* and tinned spaghetti.'

Brigid Brophy, 'In Pursuit of a Fantasy', in R Godlovitch, S Godlovitch and J Harris, *Animals, Men and Morals: An Inquiry into the Maltreatment of Non-humans* (1971: 124–45).

Clothing

'It would seem that fur-wearers are almost unconscious that their sables and sealskins are the relics of previous possessors, and, like the heroines of modern drama, have very decidedly had "a past"; or, if they do not wholly forget this fact, they think it quite natural that they should now have their turn with the skin, as the animal had before. Thus Pope, in a well-known couplet:

Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear.

One would have thought that the bear who grew the skin had somewhat more right to it than the monarch! Politicians may talk of "one man, one vote"; but really, if there is ever to be a civilized state, a programme of "one man, one skin" seems fairer and more democratic.'

Henry S Salt, *Seventy Years Among Savages* (1921: 167–8).