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Mark Twain's Zoo: The Higher Animals

A Thesis

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The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Iva A. Walker
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ABSTRACT

Animals pervade Mark Twain's entire literary output, from the famous jumping frog of 1865 to "A Horse's Tale" in 1906, and provide a rhetorical means for some of his commentary on human behavior. Although several scholars have collected and praised Twain's animal sketches, none has attempted to trace a changing pattern in his manner of treating this literary menagerie.

Throughout his career Twain was a sharp observer of human attitudes and behavior and, as a result, the more he dissected his fellow man, the more he admired animals and, consequently, elevated them in his writings while simultaneously relegating man to "the lowest animal." Men became cruel, exploitative, and fanatical as animals assumed the anthropopathic qualities of loyalty, generosity, and reason. This shift in viewpoint did not occur suddenly, but intensified during a lifetime of writing, with Twain modifying his use of animals as his opinion of man sank increasingly lower. Therefore, as man falls in Twain's opinion, animals rise inversely, and more importantly, animals parallel his movement from humorist to satirist to cynic.
In his later writings Mark Twain makes obvious his opinion that what we usually call "the lower" animals are superior to humans, and he often portrays humanity finishing a poor second to the brutes in what is conventionally called "human dignity":

I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the 'lower animals' (so-called), and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me. For it obliges me to renounce my allegiance to the Darwinian theory of the Ascent of Man from the Lower Animals; since it now seems plain to me that that theory ought to be vacated in favor of a new and truer one . . . named the Descent of Man from the Higher Animals.¹

This passage from "The Lowest Animal," written in 1897, is typical of Twain's numerous invidious comparisons of humans with animals, and in fact, his prolific use of animal stories links Twain to the early fabulists. He took the venerable beast fable, colored it with the folklore of erstwhile slaves and the Southwestern humor of his America, and polished such stories into satire. "His fresh handling of the materials and techniques of backwoods story-tellers," remarks Henry Nash Smith, "is the clearest example in our history of the adaptation of a folk art to serious literary uses."² This "serious literary use" grew as America did, with
Twain using his animals to embody not only frontier humor but also serious criticism of man's moral, social, and political obtuseness.

Twain's menagerie could fill an entire volume, and in fact, four scholars have recently done just that. In 1966 Robert Rodney and Minnie Brashear compiled an anthology containing approximately thirty of Twain's animal stories. Then in 1972, Janet Smith edited a much larger compilation, containing some seventy-five of his animal sketches. More recently, in 1976, Maxwell Geismar, with the help of illustrator Jean-Claude Suares, produced a comprehensive collection which, though it contains no commentary (as do the first two), presents an interesting bestiary which, with a little alphabetical juggling by Geismar, stretches from A to Z. Even though these scholars were solely concerned with collecting Twain's animal stories for presentation in one book, they recognize Twain's talent for animal portrayal. Rodney and Brashear praise "Twain's perception of human traits in these birds and beasts" as well as "the natural and unconscious dignity he reveals in animal behavior" (viii, ix). Geismar credits Twain's "journalistic nose for sniffing out the real nature of things" and his "remarkably rich, fresh, open and encyclopedic mind" for the memorable Twain menagerie (Intro.).

Despite their praise of Twain's animal collection, none of the scholars attempts to trace a changing pattern in his manner of treating this menagerie. Animals pervade Mark Twain's entire literary output from the famous jumping frog of 1865 to "A Horse's Tale" in 1906, and provide a medium for his commentary on human behavior. Initially, Samuel Clemens was a journalist, and his sharp
observations of human attitudes and behavior remained throughout his literary career. As a result, the more he dissected his fellow man, the more he admired animals and, consequently, elevated them in his writings while simultaneously relegating man to the position of "the lowest animal." Men became cruel, exploitative, and fanatical as animals assumed the anthropopathic qualities of loyalty, generosity, and reason. This shift in viewpoint did not occur suddenly, but intensified during a lifetime of writing, with Twain modifying his use of animals as his opinion of man sank increasingly lower.

During the early years Twain's animal creations, such as the jumping frog and the bluejays, appear primarily as literary devices to provide entertainment, and although these animals do furnish insight into man's behavior, they serve primarily as vehicles for humor. As Twain wrote to his brother, Orion, during this early period of his literary career, his talent prompted him to "excite the laughter of God's creatures."

With increasing experience and the obvious success of his animal stories, Twain moved from his dependence on stock techniques such as the beast fable and those of Southwestern humor to the more individual technique of sprinkling his novels with negative animals stereotypes to denigrate mankind. Again, as in the first stage of his career, Twain exploits animals but now the goal becomes satire, not humor, and the animals serve as a standard by which to judge man. His satire takes the form of a jocular criticism of man throughout novels such as _Tom Sawyer_, _Huckleberry Finn_, and _A Connecticut Yankee_, and this treatment leaves ample opportunity for humor. Unfortunately, man fails to heed Twain's
warnings, and as man becomes more distasteful to him, animals take on a new role, becoming more than humorous fable creatures and satiric stereotypes, and appearing instead as admirable characters abused by an increasingly insensitive human race. In these late stories such as "A Dog's Tale" and "A Horse's Tale," Twain—now turned cynic—personifies animals to the fullest extent with noble qualities and reduces man to a worthless, unsuccessful experiment. Therefore, as man falls in Twain's opinion, animals rise inversely, and more importantly, animals parallel his movement from humorist to satirist to cynic.

Tracing Twain's chronological progression from humorist to satirist to cynic through the use of animals necessitates a brief review of the beast fable genre, a form to which Twain was indebted, particularly during his early career. In these early works, Twain borrowed features from the established beast fable tradition to aid in his humorous and subtly critical accounts of man and beast. Although scholars disagree over some of the historical data, most simply refer to the early beast stories as Aesopian fables. Fables existed before Aesop's time, but this mysterious man received credit for nearly two hundred early beast tales. In his book, Fables and Fabulists: Ancient and Modern, Thomas Newbigging states that Aesop did not supply, either orally or in writing, the separate moral to his fables. These morals probably were added by later translators such as Phaedrus, who converted Aesop's fables into Latin iambics and added others of his own (T.N., p. 63). The popularity of fables spread to all corners of the globe with variations along the way,
evidenced in such works as the Hindu *Pantschatantra*, the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, and the Bayeux Tapestry of William the Conqueror. Later fabulists, such as France's La Fontaine and England's John Gay, continued the tradition, as did writers such as Russia's Krilof, Britain's Kipling, and America's Joel Chandler Harris in the nineteenth century, followed by such writers of this century as George Orwell and James Thurber, among others.

Despite the variations that beast tales acquired in their course of development, most of them adhered to certain basic characteristics. Newbigging lists a fable's abilities to interest both young and old and to imply a moral as major requirements, both of which must be accomplished with simplicity and humor (T.N., p. 7). He notes that the entertainment offered by a fable softens its criticism, and this was particularly necessary during times when free speech was prohibited (T.N., pp. 19-20). Ironically, many tyrannical politicians patronized and encouraged fabulists who were artfully criticizing their government policies.

In *Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man*, Ellen Leyburn bridges the gap between early, simple fables and more sophisticated satire. Leyburn, like Newbigging, believes that the most artistic fables tell the story, then stop like true allegories, to allow the reader the pleasure of drawing his own conclusion before reaching the tagged moral. This growing sophistication of the fable had been admired centuries earlier by Sir Philip Sidney:

> The poet is indeed the right philosopher. Whereof Aesop's tales give good proof; whose pretty allegories,
stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many, more beastly than beasts, begin to hear the sound of virtue from those dumb speakers. 8

"One gift essential to the teller of satiric animals tales," states Leyburn, "is the power to keep his reader conscious simultaneously of the human traits satirized and of the animals as animals" (E.L., p. 60). She notes the success of this characterization in Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" and Harris's "The Tar Baby." Chaunticleer and Pertelote, the rooster-hen, husband-wife pair, are "at once real as people and real as animals." 9

Do Mark Twain's stories fit the beast fable mold described by Newbigging and Leyburn? They certainly meet the requirement of interesting both young and old. Although critics disagree on nearly every other aspect of Twain, they admit that he appeals to a broad spectrum of readers. This spectrum covers young and old, the sophisticated and the barely literate, or as Van Wyck Brooks calls them, "rudimentary minds." 10 Henry Nash Smith notes the difficulty caused by Twain's popularity in a culture where "it is usually taken for granted that writers of any consequence are alienated from society." 11 Twain appears to have been as universally received as the fabulists who preceded him.

Both Newbigging and Leyburn stress the need for illuminating the reader without didacticism. Wouldn't Twain agree? Consider his notice as *Huckleberry Finn* begins:

Persons attempting to find a motive in this
narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting
to find a moral in it will be banished; persons
attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.\(^{12}\)

Of course, this is Twain's humor in fine form—another prerequisite
for successful fables. A frequent Twain technique is that of
underplaying the moral by having an ingenuous character such as
Huck, or Jim, or an animal convey the essential message, seemingly
unaware of its implications. Having the supposed fool or simpleton
deliver the moral heightens the irony and humor when the reader dis­
covers that he himself has been made the fool. In *Form and Fable in
American Fiction*, Daniel Hoffman notes this same passage from
*Huckleberry Finn* as he explains Twain's humorous approach to moral
truth: "Divine knowledge is disguised by the few who have it and
are burdened with it often under the guise of mirth."\(^{13}\) Hoffman's
use of the term "burdened" is worth considering. Most fabulists view
themselves as society's critics, considering it their duty to
enlighten citizens about governmental abuses and society's short­
comings. This often proved to be a dangerous and unpopular duty.
*Aesop* went to his death telling the fable of "The Eagle and the
Beetle" whose moral indicates that the oppressors of the innocent
will not escape (*T.N.*, p. 35). Like *Aesop*, Twain criticized the
oppressors of the world, writing some of his most bitter attacks
on imperialism after 1900 when he was in his seventies. At an
age when most men are content to rest on past accomplishments,
Twain continued to warm up his "pen warmed-up in hell."\(^{14}\)

In addition to enlightening his audience, a successful
fabulist must entertain. Twain certainly passes this test, especially in his earlier works, such as the California mining camp stories, where he combines the humor, the oral tradition, and the brevity so essential to fables. The average length of Twain's short stories and sketches is approximately 3,500 words. With his early stories Twain discovered his "'call' to literature, of a low order--i.e., humorous," a call to humor which characterized his early stories and the animals who appear as characters in them. Also in these California stories, Twain demonstrates another fabulist trait--the skill of borrowing. Both "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" and "Jim Baker's Bluejay Yarn" are stories Twain had heard in the camps. According to Walter Blair, "Twain resuscitated the doddering jokes . . . during the first fifteen years of his career as a professional writer." Twain simply retold stories as the early fabulists had done, but with some special Twainian elaboration in describing his animal characters.

Now perhaps a tour of Twain's zoo will help both in associating him with other fabulists as well as in differentiating him from them and in tracing, through animals, his changing perspective of man. Twain began his menagerie in 1865 with his most famous animal, "The Jumping Frog." He heard this story while staying at Jim Gillis's cabin in Jackass Hill, in Calaveras County, a sojourn necessitated by his invective against the San Francisco Police Department. As early as 1865, his criticism of public officials had labeled Twain a troublemaker--similar to Aesop centuries earlier. Twain used this cooling off period in the mining camps to develop
his artistry in the use of Southwestern humor. According to St. George Tucker Arnold, Twain departs from the main line of Southwestern humorists who are indifferent to animals. Instead, Twain shares "total identification" (Arnold, p. 195) with his animals by humanizing them, a fabulist technique emphasized by both Newbigging and Leyburn. By personifying the animals in this manner, Twain creates memorable characters in "The Jumping Frog" like the fifteen-minute nag, Andrew Jackson (the dog), and Dan'l Webster (the frog). All three animals share a common trait with their master, Jim Smiley—the ability to outwit naive strangers. They remain as unimposing as Simon Wheeler, preferring to look harmless until the proper moment, reminiscent of Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare." Walter Blair sees this unassuming creature as a special development of the "eiron," an ancient Greek comic type who plays the clever fool. Thus, Blair labels Dan'l an "amphibian eiron" and the mare an "equine eiron" (B and H, p. 311). Similarly, Andrew Jackson, who feigns a mongrel pup appearance until the bets are made and then becomes a different dog, is another example of an eiron in Twain's story. Even the insidious stranger who claims not to see any "p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog" and later fills Dan'l with quailshot, serves as another eiron—a human one. Most scholars claim that this emphasis on hidden rather than obvious talent is Twain's criticism of Eastern pomposity and his praise of Western democracy in which native ability struggles to overcome snobbery.

Twain's description of the pup, Andrew Jackson, gives him
qualities of loyalty and pride outshining that of most humans. Here Twain differs from his predecessors as Augustus Longstreet and George Washington Harris by sensitively portraying animals while at the same time maintaining the characteristic humor of his early stories and avoiding the sentimentality of his final animal tales. This instance also makes an early use by Twain of loyal animals who are betrayed by man, a theme which recurs in his later animal stories, such as "A Dog's Tale" and "A Horse's Tale," in both of which faithful animals are victims of man's cruelty. After Andrew Jackson loses the fight to a dog with no hind legs, he is as pathetic as any betrayed person:

He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was 'his' fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main independence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. (Stories, p. 3)

With his description of Dan'l Webster, Twain exemplifies Leyburn's notion that successful fabulists must portray their beasts as both human and animal:

Quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see
a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. (Stories, p. 4)

Dan'l exhibits the customary frog skills of jumping and fly-catching, but he also displays the human mannerism of scratching his head while thinking, very much like one of Twain's human eirons. Again, as in the case of Andrew Jackson, Twain stresses the human qualities of dedication, responsibility, and modesty, but in an unlikely character—a frog. In "Mark Twain's 'Jumping Frog': Toward an American Ideal," Lawrence Smith recognizes Twain's use of the beast fable and sees Twain's genius as the combination of the fable and the rural character's trick on the city gentleman. These two devices, traditional vehicles for humor, warn the reader against being too optimistic about the American ideal embodied in Andrew Jackson and Dan'l Webster.

The clash between country and city, East and West, pride and experience occurs again in Twain's "The Town Dog and the Cayote [sic]" in Roughing It in 1872. Twain describes the "homely" coyote as "a living, breathing, allegory of want" [emphasis mine] who is "always hungry" (RI, pp. 66, 67). This pathetic appearance remains until someone makes a move against the coyote. Then the transformation occurs, a transformation similar to that of the nag, the pup, and the frog; and the coyote, another eiron or clever fool, dupes someone else by exercising his less obvious characteristics. "By the time you have 'drawn a bead' on him you will see well enough that nothing but an unusually long-winded streak of lightning could reach him where he is now" (RI, p. 67). Even better enjoyment, says Twain,
is to set a "swift-footed dog," especially one with "a good opinion of himself," in pursuit (RI, p. 67).

With the entrance of the dog, Twain incorporates the eiron's counterpart—the "alazon," or pompous braggart. Then Twain goes on to describe "how gently the cayote [sic] glides along and never pants or sweats or ceases to smile" (RI, p. 67). Meanwhile, the dog grows angrier and more disgusted. The coyote escapes so swiftly that the sound is like "the sudden splitting of a long crack through the atmosphere" (RI, p. 68). Even a year later, the dog is so humble that whenever he hears a coyote he observes, "I believe I do not wish any of the pie" (RI, p. 68). The dog, sufficiently embarrassed, refuses another encounter with the coyote and a second serving of humility. The coyote-dog sketch repeats the trick of "The Jumping Frog" and bears a resemblance to the fable, "The Country Mouse and the City Mouse," with its emphasis on the natural brightness and talents of the country cousin when confronted by the sophisticated city dweller. When the dog declines the "pie," he also resembles the frustrated fox in the fable, "The Fox and the Grapes," whose prize, like the dog's, is denied him. The "sour grapes" response is a natural one in the behavioral pattern called "human nature," one that occurs often when pride replaces reason.

According to Harold Aspiz, Twain knew some of the fiction of antiquity and the Middle Ages which would have included some form of Aesopian fables. In addition, Gesta Romanorum (in an English version of 1845 with selected tales), a book containing oriental, classical,
and legendary stories, was popular in the West of Twain's day and may have suggested some of his animal-man comparisons.  

Another animal in Twain's menagerie, Tom Quartz, was also born in Roughing It. In this brief story, Tom Quartz—a cat—is described in loving terms by his owner, Dick Baker:

He was a large gray one of the Tom specie, an' he had more hard, natchral sense than any man in this camp—'n' a power of dignity—he wouldn't let the gov'ner of Californy be familiar with him. He never ketched a rat in his life—'peared to be above it. He never cared for nothing but mining. He knewed more about mining, that cat did, than any man I ever, ever see. (RI, p. 390)

Tom, apparently, is a cat of the old mining school who prefers pocket-mining to blasting. Even though Tom does not like the "cussedest foolishness" of the "new-fangled arrangement" (RI, p. 391), he finally resigns himself to the blasting. Unfortunately, one day Tom is napping in the blasting shaft, and when the smoke clears, he comes down from the sky "the orneriest-lookin' beast you ever see." Tom delivers his indignation to the miners and "turned on his heel 'n' marched off home without saying another word" (RI, p. 392). Possibly Tom is one of Twain's early statements against heavy industrialism. More obviously, however, Tom represents once again honesty and loyalty betrayed and the power of unpretentious common sense. This story, which Twain heard while at Jim Gillis's cabin, is similar in style to "The Jumping Frog." Both contain the frame
narrative, the East-West or old-new conflict, and animals betrayed by their human masters. This idea of the oppressed innocent echoes Aesopian fables such as "The Eagle and the Beetle" and "The Lion and the Mouse" and anticipates Uncle Remus, who was soon to become an American byword with his "Brer Rabbit" stories. Because Twain was influenced by both Aesop and Southern Blacks, both of whom knew slavery and oppression firsthand, it is not surprising that these same themes would recur frequently in his writing, beginning with his early animal tales, moving into his novels, and ending with his bitter attacks on imperialism.

Like Tom Quartz, the Syrian camel who also appears in Roughing It, has some definite opinions. After successfully digesting Twain's clothing, the camel tackles the much tougher main course--the journalist's manuscripts. Twain's satire of critics becomes obvious as the camel fights the urge to smile at the jokes which are becoming "rather weighty on his stomach." Occasionally the camel finds a joke with enough humor to "loosen his teeth" (RI, p. 55). Eventually the desert critic finds some statements "that not even a camel would swallow with impunity" (RI, p. 56).

He began to gag and gasp, and his eyes to stand out, and his forelegs to spread, and in about a quarter of a minute he fell over as stiff as a carpenter's work-bench, and died a death of indescribable agony. (RI, p. 56)

To what does the journalist attribute the cause of death?

I ... pulled the manuscript out of his mouth, and
found that the sensitive creature had choked to death on one of the mildest and gentlest statements of fact that I ever laid before a trusting public. (RI, p. 56)

The camel, this "sensitive creature," serves as another literary device warning us not to take anything too seriously--particularly professional critics and humorists. After all, how many of Twain's "statements of fact" can be labeled merely "mild and gentle"?

A final creature from Roughing It worth viewing on the zoo tour is the "genuine Mexican plug" who continues Twain's theme of the naive character outwitted, found earlier in "The Jumping Frog." Arriving in Nevada, greenhorn Sam Clemens resolves to buy a horse and is duped by the auctioneer's brother into buying "a black beast that had as many humps and corners on him as a dromedary" (RI, p. 172). The gentleman describes the horse to Twain as "a genuine Mexican plug" (RI, p. 173) and, although the newcomer has no idea what that phrase means, the exotic sound of it is incentive enough. Twain becomes the owner of the "very worst devil to buck on the continent of America" (RI, p. 174) and spends his time either sailing into the air or rubbing his bruised anatomy. Apparently everyone in town, even the children and Indians, knew the horse's history--everyone except Clemens. After discovering his predicament, Clemens resolves to sell the plug, but selling the horse proves impossible, as does giving the creature away. Only after paying the $265 livery bill does Clemens succeed in giving the plug to "a passing Arkansas emigrant" (RI, p. 176) whom he hopes never to meet again. Thus Clemens succeeds in fooling another stranger much as he had been
tricked and also succeeds in warning us, through his horse, to beware of false advertising and misleading language.

Although Twain heard the bluejay story while with Jim Gillis during his California mining adventures in the 1860s, he included it only later, in *A Tramp Abroad* in 1880. In discussing this tale, Walter Blair traces Twain's debt to the beast fables of Aesop's time, describing the fable as "a genre that amused audiences, literally, for ages" and one that has flourished from antiquity to the present, especially in the works of Chaucer, La Fontaine, L'Estrange, and Kipling. (B & H, p. 340) Blair points to Twain's knowledge of Ambrose Bierce's fables, particularly one concerning a woodpecker hiding acorns (B & H, p. 341). In fact, when Twain recalled the circumstances of his story in his *Autobiography* in 1907, he used the word "woodpeckers" rather than bluejays. Blair also points out a common trait of both Twain and Joel Chandler Harris, whose *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* appeared as a book in 1880. Both writers possess a talent for realistic descriptions of their animal characters in simultaneous human and animal terms. Motions such as cocking and scratching heads and winking with wings appear in works by both Harris and Twain. Harris called this technique "that incongruity of animal expression that is just human enough to be humorous" (B & H, p. 341). Twain also capitalizes on those features of the jays that are "just human enough to be humorous" when he describes their command of language: "And no mere commonplace language, either, but rattling, out-and-out book-talk—and bristling with metaphor, too—just bristling." What are the
other reasons that make a jay so closely resemble humans? According to Twain, a jay's "gifts and instincts . . . cover the whole ground" (TA, p. 13). Now comes Twain's real condemnation of man:

A jay hasn't got any more principle than a Congressman.
A jay will lie, a jay will steal, . . . deceive, . . . , betray, and four times out of five, a jay will go back on his solemnest promise. The sacredness of an obligation is a thing you can't cram into no bluejay's head. (TA, p. 13)

Once again Twain paints a showy exterior covering insincerity as in his other Western stories. Although bluejays speak quite well, they lack integrity and fail to see the importance of a simple promise. Twain's lumping of bluejays into the same category with congressmen does not speak well for the birds.

After the jay had worked for hours trying to fill the hole, his comrades come to examine the opening and discuss the problem. They "got off as many leather-headed opinions about it as an average crowd of humans [emphasis mine] could have done" (TA, p. 16). With that comment, Twain gets in one of his favorite digs—a criticism of mob psychology and behavior. The jays exhibit the same irrational behavior as do such other characters as the crowd at Colonel Sherburn's door in Huckleberry Finn, the children "playing mob" in A Connecticut Yankee, who by imitating their parents, almost hang one of their playmates, and the printers who mistreat the protagonist in "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger." At least the jays have a sense of humor which may be theirs, and man's saving
grace. Galen Hanson regards this story as a Twainian exercise in understanding man and sees the animals as "a looking glass for our own self-understanding." He praises Twain for exposing "our clan-like and chirping-like ways" which he further labels as man's "incurable gregariousness" (G.H., p. 19). Hanson admires the owl who he claims is the individualist, unimpressed by tourist attractions, whose difficult task is to walk alone and remain unpressed by mass culture (G.H., p. 19). Conversely, some readers regard the owl as another pompous Easterner with no sense of humor. As such, the owl represents a negative facet of man's character as do the jays in Twain's continuing menagerie.

Although Twain's evolving treatment of animals generally follows a consistent pattern, there are a few exceptions. Most of the earlier sketches and stories which were written between 1865 and 1872 parallel the traditions of the beast fable and Southwestern humor. However, "A Fable," written in 1909, fits into this early category. The brief story, written in fable form with the animals speaking, centers upon a cat's description of a picture placed in front of a mirror to highlight the effect. The housecat, who until this time, has been admired by the other animals for his refinement, begins to arouse their suspicions. The animals cannot understand the artist's technique and begin to doubt the cat. The first to voice objection is the ass who says: "when it took a whole basketful of sesquipedalian adjectives to whoop up a thing of beauty, it was time for suspicion" (Stories, pp. 600-01). Beginning with the ass, each animal in turn views the picture, but all make the same
mistake and stand between the picture and the mirror. Of course, the ass sees only the ass, the elephant only the elephant, the lion only the lion, etc. The cat, Twain's favorite animal, supplies the moral:

You can find in a text whatever you bring, if you will stand between it and mirror of your imagination. You may not see your ears, but they will be there. (Stories, p. 602)

Even though this story was written a year before Twain's death, it follows the traditional beast fable form and uses animals as devices to highlight man's prejudice and lack of perception, while at the same time providing humor, and therefore belongs with Twain's earlier animal writings.

Obviously, Twain used animals frequently in his early career, mixing fable technique and Southwestern humor. Many critics think that these early stories are Twain's best and even those who do not agree find praise for the animal characters. In Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor, James Cox, an admirer of the early stories, calls Twain's technique with the tall tale "an act of art." He also notes the paradox of the tall tale--"a lie which exposes the truth" (J.C., p. 103), a statement which echoes what Phaedrus had said centuries earlier about fables--"fiction in the cause of truth" (T.N., p. 26). It is probable that Twain, who, during his early career, seemed more devoted to humor and technique than to message, underestimated the significance of animals as reflecting his opinion
of mankind.

"A Cat-Tale," composed around 1880 and defying easy categorization, is a tale which Twain stated he wrote as a bedtime story for his daughters, Susy and Clara. The narrative, loosely woven around the experiences of a feline family, is interrupted often by the girls who question their father about his catalog of words, all of which begin, end, or base themselves on the letters "c a t." Twain's purpose in this tale appears more satirical than reposeful; the story lampoons Mr. Webster and his dictionary by highlighting "how harmoniously gigantic language and a microscopic topic go together" (LE, p. 114). As the story concludes, the girls seem full of questions and not even faintly drowsy.

Between the late 1870s and the early 1890s, Twain moved from separate animals tales and sketches where creatures serve as fable and tall tale devices to the frequent use of animal comparisons in his novels. Animal references, scattered throughout the longer works, function chiefly as reflectors of man's shortcomings and signal Twain's shift to more biting satire. Although his form in this group of works varies from that of his early tales, Twain continues to picture animals, for the most part, as pawns in a human world. The various narrators, albeit they occasionally speak approvingly of animals, praise them for their own entertainment or that of other men. There are, however, advantages to portraying animals and man as separate creatures, because the aesthetic distance that Twain maintains strengthens both the humor of his early stories and the satire of his novels.
In the novels written between 1876 and 1894, which form the center of his canon, Twain embodied his own definition of humor: "Humor must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever." Twain certainly "teaches and preaches" through humor in these novels, but the humor in them carries the sting of satire. Satire, present in some of the early stories, takes a much more obvious role in the novels, particularly *A Connecticut Yankee* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Even *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a novel many dismiss as a schoolboy narrative, satirizes man through the use of animals.

In *Tom Sawyer* (1876), for example, Twain devotes two chapters to Tom's animal companions. Chapter V, "The Pinch-Bug and his Prey," describes Tom's ordeal in church. After Aunt Polly forces him to release his "prisoner of war" fly, Tom brings out a pinch-bug from his treasure box. At about the same time that the bug jumps into the aisle, a poodle wanders along. Twain's comparison of man and beast is not difficult here. The dog and Tom exhibit the same boredom with and inappropriate responses to institutional religion. Tom, like the dog, is "weary of captivity, sighing for change" (*TS*, p. 48). Tom fares better than the dog, however, and gets to enjoy the diversion of a spectacle in church, while the dog gets tossed out the window.

Later in Chapter XII, "The Cat and Pain-Killer," Tom cures his "indifference" and Peter the cat's curiosity with the infamous "pain-killer." Twain's picture of Peter tearing through Aunt Polly's house "spreading chaos and destruction in his path"
(TS, p. 112) is comparable to a gang of drunken cowboys on Saturday night. Although Peter is tricked in this episode and suffers astonishment and indignity, he does exhibit the human and feline trait of curiosity. As Peter eyes "the teaspoon avariously," Tom warns him, "You better be sure" (TS, p. 112).

Several years after the publication of Tom Sawyer, Twain wrote a much more critical comparison of man and animals in an essay entitled "The French and the Comanches," which, although not included in the published book, was part of the original draft of A Tramp Abroad (1880). This selection deals primarily with cruelty and savagery, traits which Twain argues the French leaders demonstrate with an "ingenious" (LE, p. 146) nature, even outdoing the Comanches. Twain notes the "docility" (LE, p. 149) of rabbits but regards the French people as even more meek. "Are there any rabbits that would allow themselves to be abused a thousand years and never offer to bite" (LE, p. 149)? At last, though, France rises and dons its "other national garment, the tiger skin" (LE, p. 149) to resist Europe. Napoleon's strength, according to Twain, lay in his ability to train the French to fight as tigers, and once the fighting ended, to dress them in rabbit skins again. Twain continues his observation with an interesting paradox of the Frenchman who, with the "rabbit-docility" bred into him, can withstand the government's repression and training which will command in him at times his tiger or "blood-loving, massacring instinct" (LE, p. 150).

Several years later in 1885 Twain also included a rabbit reference in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. In Chapter 16, Huck saves Jim
from the slavehunters with a little quick thinking that might be called reverse psychology. Commenting on this chapter, William Scheick focuses on Twain's phrase, "the spunk of a rabbit." When the slavehunters ask Huck if his companion is white or black, Huck fights to tell the truth "but I warn't man enough--hadn't the spunk of a rabbit" (HF, p. 98). Scheick traces this animal reference to Uncle Remus and the briar patch psychology of "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox." Although Brer Rabbit begs "don't" throw me in the briar patch, while Huck pleads "do" help Pap, Scheick claims that both use the same ploy (W.S., p. 15). He suggests that Twain, who greatly admired Joel Chandler Harris, may have borrowed again. Although Chapter 16 which contains this episode was written in 1876, before the Uncle Remus stories were published in 1880, *Huckleberry Finn* was not published until 1884, and between 1880 and 1884, Twain revised some portions of his novel. So, as Scheick argues, it is possible that Twain could have borrowed from Uncle Remus, or he may have heard a similar story from a slave he knew as a child, named Uncle Dan'l. In his *Autobiography* Twain describes listening to "Uncle Dan'l's" stories at his uncle's farm: I can hear Uncle Dan'l telling the immortal tales which Uncle Remus was to gather into his books and charm the world with, by and by" (Auto., p. 14). Scheick credits both Brer Rabbit (Harris) and Huck (Twain) with forming an accurate estimation of their adversaries' motives and reactions (W.S., p. 16). Again, the idea of the innocent characters oppressed appears. In the introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, Harris discusses the allegorical nature
of his animal stories, particularly Brer Rabbit. "It is a fable thoroughly characteristic of the negro; and it needs no scientific investigation to show why he selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox." 32

Scattered here and there in Huckleberry Finn are references to man's cruelty to animals and his own bestial state. Man's cruelty to animals shows particularly in Chapter 21, where Huck describes Bricksville. Men on the streets would set the dogs on sows who were nursing their litters. When that excitement ended, they would "settle back again till there was a dog-fight" (HF, p. 154). Even more than a dogfight, though, these men enjoyed "putting turpentine on a stray dog and setting fire to him, or tying a tin pan to his tail and see [sic] him run himself to death" (HF, 154). This emphasis on man's cruelty to animals is an obvious divergence from Twain's usual negative animal stereotypes, and is a theme which will appear more frequently in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889).

As in "The French and the Comanches" and Huckle Finn, Twain mentions rabbits in A Connecticut Yankee when describing the people of Camelot. Hank Morgan, Twain's mouthpiece for criticizing Arthurian England, claims the peasants are "nothing but rabbits" in their loyalty to Church and King. 33 He continues the animal references by stating that the nobility view the lower classes with "no more consideration than so many animals, bugs, insects" (CY, p. 54). These are only two of the more than fifty animal references in A Connecticut Yankee, most of which are negative portrayals. Throughout the novel, Hank
berates the peasants for their simplicity and subservience, traits bred into them through years of training. While still imprisoned after his arrival in Camelot, Hank realizes that "these animals didn't reason" (CY, p. 38). After his successful eclipse prediction, Hank continues to see the common people in the same light, regarding himself as a "Robinson Crusoe cast away on an uninhabited island, with no society but some more or less tame animals" (CY, p. 47). He sees himself as "a master intelligence among intellectual moles" who allow themselves to be dominated by any "sheep-witted earl" (CY, p. 56) who can claim royal lineage. Hank chastizes the peasants for their loyalty to the cruel nobility, but he also scoffs at the knights, like Sir Dinadan, the "armor-plated ass" (CY, p. 62), and their tournaments or "human bullfights" (CY, p. 57). The longer Hank remains in Camelot, the more he despises the social order he finds there. The people are "as humble as animals" (CY, p. 81), and he views their loyalty to institutions as "a loyalty of unreason" and "pure animal" (CY, p. 84). Hank discovers that he cannot talk revolution to that "mistaught herd of human sheep" (CY, p. 85); instead he must try to teach reform to these pathetic creatures.

While visiting Morgan Le Fay's castle or "buzzard roost" (CY, p. 122) as he calls it, Hank witnesses harsh cruelty which he records in animal terms. When a young page slips and falls against the Queen's knee, she knifes him as casually as someone else would have "harpooned a rat" (CY, p. 102). Later, on a tour of the dungeon, Hank is able to reverse the rat imagery by using his authority as
The Boss and ordering a prisoner to be released from the rack. The Queen and her guard are displeased by this act, and Hank takes pleasure in noting "the squirming of these rats" (CY, p. 110). The prisoner's wife looks at Hank with eyes "as grateful as an animal's" (CY, p. 110). While in the dungeon, Hank discovers a couple who had been imprisoned on their wedding night nine years earlier. Neither knew the other was there; while "kerneled like toads in the same rock" (CY, p. 117), they had spent nine dark years within fifty feet of each other. Hank finally convinces Morgan Le Fay to release her motley collection of inherited prisoners whose crimes had never been revealed to her. As Hank brings up his "procession of human bats" (CY, p. 121) into the sun, he notes what a spectacle of skeletons, scarecrows, and goblins they make. One of the prisoners had been confined for fifty years, and Hank wonders how a man could survive half a century "shut up in a dark hole like a rat" (CY, p. 127).

One of this novel's most vivid and extended animal references is the hog-princesses episode in Chapter XX in which Hank travels to the ogre's castle to rescue Sandy's supposedly enchanted companions. Sandy's noble ladies, however, are mere swine and, considering Hank's disdain of the nobility, it seems quite an insult to the pigs. Sandy, through what Hank calls "the power of training," (CY, p. 132) fully believes that the pigs are actually transformed aristocratic ladies and insists that he treat them as such. Although Hank humors Sandy during this "enchantment," he is ashamed of her and "the human race" (CY, p. 131) when he sees her caressing the pigs and calling
them by noble titles. Hank, who earlier criticized Camelot's fairer sex for their indelicacies and language sufficiently risqué to embarrass a Comanche, finds these lady-pigs equally distasteful, "fickle-minded, and contrary" (CY, p. 131).

Both the peasants and the nobility remain impervious to Hank's reform efforts with changes being only temporary because of years of superstition and training. For example, despite the Camelot West Point graduate's superior education, the examining board--"these catfish" (CY, p. 176)--choose an incompetent with noble background whom Hank calls a "mollusk" (CY, p. 177). Obviously, the animals fare badly in these comparisons to man, exemplifying some of man's vilest traits. Hank's reforms fail in the face of the Interdict, and the people revert to their former training. Just prior to the electrocution of the knights, Hank realizes, "Ah, what a donkey I was!" The Church and nobles have manipulated the people, once again, and "shriveled them into sheep" (CY, p. 306).

Although most of the animals represent negative stereotypes, there are some obvious exceptions. Interspersed among the cowering rabbits, disgusting rats, and dim-witted sheep are some admirable animals. As in Huck Finn, Twain focuses on man's cruelty to animals, particularly dogs. In fact, the Bricksville scene is repeated almost word-for-word in A Connecticut Yankee:

There couldn't anything wake them up all over, and make them happy all over, like a dog-fight--unless it might be putting turpentine on a stray dog and setting fire to him, or tying a tin pan to his tail
and see him run himself to death. (HF, p. 154)
The storm of howlings and barkings deafened all
speech for the time; but that was no matter, for the
dogfight was always a bigger interest anyway; the
men rose, sometimes, to observe it the better and
bet on it... He [Sir Dinadan] tied some metal
mugs to a dog's tail and turned him loose, and he
tore around and around the place in a frenzy of
fright... at which every man and woman of the
multitude laughed till the tears flowed. (CY, pp. 25, 32)

The so-called ladies and gentlemen of the court amuse themselves
by throwing bones to the dogs and watching the ensuing fight, pre­
ferring a dogfight to a speech. Another cruel trick that Hank
observes is that of tying metal mugs to a dog's tail and watching
the havoc that follows as the other dogs chase him through the
castle. This scene, like the dogfight, is almost identical to
the Bricksville cruelty. Twain must have regarded cruelty to animals
as an important issue since he mentioned it in both Huck Finn and
A Connecticut Yankee, and it later appears in his anti-vivisection
"A Dog's Tale."

Twain, and Hank, also regard horses favorably and admire their
usefulness. During the episode in which Hank destroys Merlin's
Tower, he considers turning the disbelievers into horses. Hank
threatens: "I would turn the murmurers into horses, and make them
useful. Quiet ensued" (CY, p. 49). Hank praises horses for being
practical, unlike the pilgrims en route to the Holy Fountain. Upon
hearing that the fountain no longer flows, the pilgrims continue on
their trip:

They didn't do as horses or cats or angleworms
would probably have done--turn back and get at
something profitable. . . . There is no accounting
for human beings. (CY, p. 144)

Hank also deplores the loss of horses during tournaments. "Well,
that is just the trouble about this state of things, it ruins so
many horses" (CY, p. 93). Horses he mentions; knights do not arouse
the same sympathy in Hank, who even praises the horse's relative,
the jackass, who, until this point, has received bad reviews. Con­
tinuing his tirade against jousting, Hank compares a jackass to
a nobleman:

A jackass has that kind of strength, and puts it
to a useful purpose, and is valuable to this world
because he 'is' a jackass; but a nobleman is not
valuable because he is a jackass. (CY, p. 96)

Near the conclusion of A Connecticut Yankee, Clarence, Hank's
protégé, elevates cats to a royal position. "A royal family of
cats," (CY, p. 285) theorizes Clarence, would be as useful as any
other royal family, less expensive, and of higher character. Although
Clarence finally admits to his joke, he has made his point. Once
again, as with the hog-princesses, the cats suffer by their
comparision to royalty.
The animal references represent incongruities in the book as does the ambiguous treatment of good and evil which many critics note. With its inconsistencies, particularly in animal portrayal, A Connecticut Yankee can be viewed as a turning point in Twain's literary career—a view supported by both Henry Nash Smith and James Cox. Smith states:

At some point in the composition of this fable, he had passed the great divide in his career as a writer. . . . During the rest of his career [Twain] devoted most of his energy to composing variations on the theme expressed in his slogan of 'the damned human race'.

Similarly, James Cox regards the book as "a turning point in Mark Twain's career" which marks the "shift from joy to despair" (J.C., p. 208). A look at Twain's later writing supports this theory, because after Pudd'nhead Wilson (1894), his work appears as fragments with man as a despicable character and animals as admirable creatures who suffer at human hands.

Rather than feature a variety of animal stereotypes as he had done in A Connecticut Yankee, Twain centers his satirical commentary of man on one animal in The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson. Dog imagery begins with the introduction of David Wilson at the novel's outset and continues throughout the novel to describe the scoundrel Tom Driscoll (Chambers). A dog joke earns newcomer Wilson the nickname "Pudd'nhead" which he retains until the novel's conclusion when the
townspeople realize the title should be theirs. When David, perturbed by a barking dog, states that he wished he owned half the dog so that he could kill his half, the dim-witted citizens mistake his humor for the comment of a fool and title him "Pudd'nhead." During the course of the novel, impostor Tom Driscoll, a spiteful villain, is compared to a dog by three observers. Upon hearing that Tom has sought redress in court rather than by duelling, Judge Driscoll, his uncle, calls Tom a "cur" for degrading the Driscoll name. The term "cur" denotes both a mongrel dog and a contemptible person, and considering Twain's view that negative animal traits apply equally well to humans, the word serves as an appropriate epithet for Tom. For the same offense, Roxy, a slave and Tom's mother, chastizes him for "disgracin' our whole line like a ornery lowdown hound" (PW, p. 109). Near the novel's conclusion, when Pudd'nhead discovers through fingerprints that Tom has murdered Judge Driscoll, he refers to Tom as a "miserable dog" (PW, p. 153).

Although dogs were not his favorite animals, Twain wrote several sketches about cruelty towards them which mark his transition from satirist to cynic in the third phase of his career. Perhaps the notion that dogs are renowned for their loyalty inspired Twain to make them the brunt of man's cruelty. That would certainly have put more bite into his satire. Twain's famous comment on the starving dog from "Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar" summarizes this theme: "If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man." In Pudd'nhead Wilson, as in A Connecticut Yankee,
Twain's treatment of animals reveals some inconsistencies, as did the remainder of his writings during this difficult and painful period of his life.

In 1896 Twain started two tales (both published in Which Was the Dream? in 1968) concerning a loyal dog mistreated by man, but he never finished either. "The Passenger's Story" and "The Enchanted Sea-Wilderness" both contain a faithful dog who becomes the pet of the ship's crew, warns the captain of a fire, and then is tied to the ship and left behind to perish. Although the pet is described more fully in "The Enchanted Sea-Wilderness," the two dog sections are almost identical.

In 1903 Twain completed his idea of the faithful dog betrayed in "A Dog's Tale." He wrote this tale to support the anti-vivisectionist movement, and many critics feel that it is his most maudlin story. One of them, James Cox, calls both "A Dog's Tale" and "A Horse's Tale" which followed in 1906 "nauseating" (J.C., p. 265). "A Dog's Tale" is indeed sentimental, and it contrasts sharply with the humorous technique of Twain's early work. Twain's objectivity disappears, and with it go the humor, eirons, frame narrators, and subtle satire of the two earlier periods. Totally disgusted with man, Twain empathizes with the dog, speaking through her as she narrates man's abuse which includes a forced separation from her mother, the master's ingratitude when the dog saves his child, and his killing the dog's puppy to prove a scientific theory. To make matters worse, Harpers bound the thirty-five page story into a small book and added sentimental drawings in 1905.
Although this story of vivisection addressed a contemporary controversy, the tale can be traced to Aesopian sources. In fact, Killis Campbell has traced it to a Hindu tale five hundred years before Christ. According to Campbell, this story is preserved in twenty-five versions in many languages, and he notes the Middle English version of *Gesta Romanorum*, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, and *Fables of Aesop* by Sir Roger L'Estrange (1692) as books containing analogues to this dog fable (K.C., p. 43). L'Estrange presents the briefest form of this story in which the master returns home to find the cradle overturned and his dog's mouth bloody. He draws his sword and kills the dog, only to discover later that the child is alive under the cradle near a snake which the dog had killed to protect the infant. L'Estrange entitles his fable, "A Trusty Dog and His Master," but other titles include "Llewellyn and His Dog" and "The Dog and the Snake" (K.C., p. 43). Twain provides a modern setting for the story but retains the rescue of the child and the father's initial ingratitude. Before the rescue occurs, Twain adds his own touch in the first few pages:

My father was a St. Bernard, my mother was a collie, but I am a Presbyterian. This is what my mother told me, I do not know these nice distinctions myself. To me they are only large words meaning nothing. My mother had a fondness for such; she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised and envious, as wondering how she got so much education. (Stories, p. 491)
The mother dog hears these words by listening to conversations in the dining room when company is present and by going with the children to Sunday school. She practices these words and surprises everyone when a "dogmatic gathering" (Stories, p. 491) occurs in the neighborhood. In spite of her love for bombastic language, the dog teaches her puppy bravery and duty. "And she taught us not by words only, but by example, and that is the best way and the surest and most lasting" (Stories, p. 493).

When the puppy is grown, she is taken from her mother and the two never see each other again. "She [the mother dog] was broken-hearted, and so was I, and we cried" (Stories, p. 493). The parting scene bears a striking resemblance to Twain's earlier "A True Story" (1874) told by the slave, Aunt Rachel, who is separated from her children:

An' dey sole my ole man, an' took him away, an' dey begin to sell my chil'en an' take dem away, an' dey begin to cry; an' de man say, 'Shet up yo' damn blubberin', 'an' hit me on de mouf wid his han'. (Stories, p. 96)

The suffering of both human and animal families seems identical. The puppy, however, fares better than the slave children, at least for a while. A family with a charming home buys the puppy, and the mother, children, and servants are described as loving and affectionate. The mistress fondly uses the dog as a foot-stool, and the plump baby loves to play with the dog's tail. Twain describes the father, Mr. Gray, who is a scientist, as "businesslike
and unsentimental" (Stories, p. 494). In his story, Twain changes the snake in the nursery to a fire, with the dog dragging the baby by its clothing to safety. The father, as in the Aesopian version, assumes the worst and instead of killing the dog, beats her with his cane until one leg is mangled. The dog limps away to hide until the family members call her to return and beg her forgiveness. She is treated like a celebrity, and even Mr. Gray and his fellow scientists admire the dog's abilities. Mr. Gray declares: "It's far above instinct; it's reason" (Stories, p. 498).

While the other family members are vacationing, Mr. Gray conducts a test on the dog's only puppy to determine whether brain damage might cause blindness. The puppy shrieks in pain and staggers while his mother licks his bloody head until he dies. Even the footman who buries the puppy, recognizes the gross injustice:

When the footman had finished and covered little
Robin up, he patted my head, and there were tears
in his eyes, and he said: 'Poor little doggie, you
saved his child.' (Stories, p. 499)

By 1903, when the story first appeared, many were already regarding Twain's writings as too extreme on social issues and too bitter. In a letter to Twain on 20 December 1903, William Dean Howells encouraged him to read Alfred Russel Wallace's book, Man's Place in the Universe. He argued that this book made him feel man's importance in the universe more strongly:

I can be simply and childishly sorry, even for
that heart-breaking bitch of yours in Harpers
[A Dog's Tale] because she has a reflected
importance from the glorious and only human
race. You ought to read that book; then you
would not swear so much at your own species. 40

As Howells suggested, Twain did read Man's Place in the Universe,
but he continued to "swear at his own species." Twain's essay,
"Was the World Made for Man?," is an answer to Wallace's view of
Earth as the center of the universe and the only habitable globe. 41
With humorous perception, Twain traces his evolutionary view of the
earth with animals coming long before man. He concludes:

If the Eiffel Tower were now representing the world's
age, the skin of paint on the pinnacle-knob at its
summit would represent man's share of that age; and
anybody would perceive that that skin was what the
tower was built for. I reckon they would, I dunno. 42

The same cynicism that led Twain to regard man as only a
microscopic part of the universe directed him to write What Is Man?
(1906), a series of Socratic dialogues in which man is reduced to
a machine whose thoughts derive from environmental influences. 43
Of course, there are varying degrees of man-machines; Shakespeare
exceeded the level of the sewing machine and advanced to a Gobelin
loom, but even his work was an imitation of what he observed.
According to Twain's theory, man is merely an impersonal machine--
lower than the beasts--totally determined by environmental factors,
with no hope of improvement. Obviously, Twain has made the complete transition to cynicism. Satire, through its criticism, seeks reform; it "preaches and teaches" through humor as Twain himself acknowledged. In this final phase of his career, Twain ceases to preach and teach through humor. Humor, if existent, is black, and the message Twain pronounces is deterministic; man, an impersonal machine incapable of any original thoughts, can hardly hope to improve the situation.

As executor of the Mark Twain papers, Bernard DeVoto combined many of Twain's previously unpublished later writings in a volume called *Letters from the Earth*. He included "Was the World Made for Man?" in a grouping titled "The Damned Human Race." The last essay of this section, "The Lowest Animal," is more of Twain's swearing at his own species in which he renounces the Darwinian theory in favor of "the Descent of Man from the Higher Animals" (*LE*, p. 176). Then Twain follows with a menagerie of examples showing man's inferiority to the animals. He describes an English earl who killed seventy-two buffalo on a hunt, ate part of one, and left seventy-one to rot. Conversely, when seven calves were left in an anaconda's cage, the reptile crushed and swallowed one and, being satisfied, left the rest to survive. The earl's slaughter of the buffalo is a perfect example of mankind's wastefulness and malice, traits not found in animals. According to Twain, this shows the cruelty of the earl who "was descended from the anaconda, and had lost a good deal in the transition" (*LE*, p. 177).

A similar experiment by Satan proves the superiority of
animals. He places in a cage, one by one, a cat, a dog, a rabbit, a fox, a goose, a squirrel, some doves, and a monkey who learned in two days to live "in peace; even affectionately" (LE, p. 180). Satan had no such success, however, with an Irish Catholic, a Scotch Presbyterian, a Turk, a Greek Christian, an Armenian, a Methodist, a Buddhist, a Brahman, and a Salvation Army Colonel. After two days, Satan returns to find these Reasoning Animals just "a chaos of gory odds and ends of turbans and fezzes and plaids and bones and flesh--not a specimen left alive" (LE, p. 180).

Next Twain moves to roosters for more animal-man comparisons. "Roosters keep harems, but it is by consent of their concubines; therefore no wrong is done" (LE, p. 178). Similarly, cats are unaware of their morals:

Cats are loose in their morals, but not consciously so. Man in his descent from the cat, has brought the cat's looseness with him but has left the unconsciousness behind. (LE, p. 178)

This "consciousness of morality" makes man the only "animal that blushes" (LE, p. 178). In addition, there are numerous other phenonema to which man alone holds allegiance: Cruelty, War, Slavery, Patriotism, Religion, Reason, and most importantly, the Moral Sense (LE, pp. 179-80). Twain labels "the Moral Sense" the "secret of man's degradation" and believes that without this impediment, man "would rise at once to the level of the Higher Animals" (LE, p. 181). Twain deals with the Moral Sense--a major
theme—in other works composed later in his career. In an essay condemning lynch mobs and their psychology entitled "The United States of Lyncherdom" (1901), Twain blames the Moral Sense for man's behavior:

The other animals are not so, but we cannot help that, either. They lack the Moral Sense; we have no way of trading ours off, for a nickel or some other thing above its value. The Moral Sense teaches us what is right, and how to avoid it—when unpopular. 44

This last sentence expresses Twain's disdain for man's cruel behavior. Man knows right from wrong, unlike the animals, and chooses wrong in spite of his reasoning powers. The theme of the Moral Sense appears repeatedly in the various sections of The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts; one that is particularly vivid is Young Satan's defense of the brutes. While observing a priest and executioners torturing a man for his questionable religious principles, Theodor Fischer, Young Satan's companion, sickens at what he labels "a brutal thing." Young Satan then clarifies the term "brute" for Theodor's benefit:

No brute ever does a cruel thing—that is the monopoly of the snob with the Moral Sense.

When a brute inflicts pain he does it innocently; it is not wrong; for him there is no such thing as wrong. And he does not inflict pain for the pleasure
of inflicting it—only man does that. Inspired by that mongrel Moral Sense of his. 45

An additional example of animal superiority to man surfaces in a subsequent excerpt from *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts* in which No. 44 replaces Young Satan as the protagonist. Frau Stein, the master printer's spiteful wife, orders No. 44 to walk the family dog who normally devours strangers. The dog not only treats No. 44 with "civil indifference" (*MSM*, p. 238), but he trots after him "happy and content" (*MSM*, p. 240) as well, proving to be a better judge of character than his human companions.

In "The Fable of the Yellow Terror" (1904-05), Twain resorts once again to fable technique in a diatribe against imperialism in China, but his criticism is so thinly veiled that only the word "fable" in the title suggests subtlety. Twain creates creatures who embody man's hypocrisy and greed; the Butterflies are "insufferably proud" and are ready to cram their civilization "down other people's throats and improve them." 46 Using missionaries, "trader-bugs, and diplomat-bugs" (*DRT*, p. 369), the Butterflies succeed in conquering all the animals except the Bees. When the Bees continue to peaceably resist the benefits of civilization, the Butterflies label them a "Yellow Peril," send in additional missionaries as provocation for war, and subjugate the Bees. Assuming the threat of the Yellow Peril has ended, the Butterflies teach the masses the skills of their advanced civilization, only to discover that the Bees soon exceed their masters in the arts of "land-grabbing and stinging" [killing] (*DRT*, p. 371-2).
In 1906 Twain published his last outburst concerning man's cruelty to animals--"A Horse's Tale"--a story similar in style and purpose to "A Dog's Tale." This story was also in response to a request which Twain agreed to honor in the crusade against cruelty to animals. When Mrs. Minnie Fiske asked Twain to help her in the movement against bullfighting in Spain, she stated: "The story you would write would do more than all the laws we are trying to have made and enforced." Perhaps this plea swayed Twain or perhaps his own regard for animals, a feeling already noted, was sufficient. The story Twain composed centers on the favorite horse of Buffalo Bill and a nine-year-old girl named Cathy who, according to Twain, was patterned after his daughter, Susy.

Although the story rambles sentimentally from the Great Plains to Spain with numerous people and animals narrating, some in epistolary form, it does have some brilliant sections. The horse, Soldier Boy, represents everything his human masters, with the exception of Cathy, cannot display. Soldier Boy is well-educated and well-mannered; he believes that "modesty is the best policy" (Stories, p. 526). One of his outstanding traits is his loyalty. "You can't disguise a person that's done me a kindness so that I won't know him thereafter wherever I find him" (Stories, p. 526). If Soldier Boy has any faults, they are minor and only surface in his fondness for large words and family ancestry, traits found also in the mother dog in "A Dog's Tale." Usually, though, Soldier Boy is much too busy aiding Buffalo Bill or accompanying Cathy to engage in snobbish pastimes. Cathy and Soldier Boy strike an
instant friendship, and after the horse saves his life, Buffalo Bill gives Soldier Boy to her. She invents a special bugle call for her horse and teaches him to lift his right hoof for shaking hello and his left hoof for good-bye. Soldier Boy makes a point of stating that the left hoof is just for "make-believe good-bying" (Stories, p. 543) since neither he nor Cathy expects to part company. That event would make Soldier Boy cry and, although people say that horses do not cry, Soldier Boy admits that "we cry inside" (Stories, p. 549). Mrs. Fiske must have been pleased with Twain's sentimental details and his foreshadowing of an emotional conclusion.

Twain inserts one of his most biting attacks on man and his cruelty in a conversation between two scouts discussing the grandeur of bullfighting. According to Antonio, who has seen a bullfight, the most amusing spectacle is the maiming of the timid bull, especially the sight of the bull "hobbling around on his severed legs" (Stories, p. 558). Thorndike, who has never witnessed the performance, is enthralled and declares that "burning a nigger don't begin" (Stories, p. 558) to compare. The next passage involves a conversation between two horses discussing human nature. Sage-Brush defends man by stating that human beings "are only brutal because that is their make" and that man is kind enough to animals "when he is not excited by religion." When Mongrel questions whether bullfight is a religious service, Sage-Brush replies that it must be since it is held on Sunday. The conversation ends with both horses expressing hesitancy to go to heaven and "dwell with man" (Stories, p. 558). Even without the pairing of these two conversations, it is obvious who constitutes the Higher Animals.

After Cathy, her uncle, and Soldier Boy arrive in Spain, the
horse is stolen and sold numerous times with each change of owner bringing more ill-treatment. Once the pride of the Great Plains, Soldier Boy is now "a scarecrow and despised" and sold "to the bull-ring for a glass of brandy, to make sport for the people and perish for their pleasure." Despite his wretched appearance, Soldier Boy still exhibits an "ironically military" (Stories, p. 563) bearing. As the bull rips Soldier Boy apart, Cathy recognizes him, sounds her bugle, and rushes to the ring where her horse summons enough strength to stagger toward the sound and falls at her feet. Twain carries the story to its sentimental conclusion with Cathy being gored in the ring and dying soon after with her last words being of Soldier Boy.

In addition to his journalistic menagerie, Twain enjoyed his personal animal associations. In the biography she wrote at thirteen, Susy Clemens describes her father's favorite animals:

Papa is very fond of animals, particularly of cats, we had a dear little gray kitten once that he named 'Lazy' (papa always wears gray to match his hair and eyes) and he would carry him around on his shoulder, it was a mighty pretty sight! the gray cat sound asleep against papa's gray coat and hair. (Auto., 209)

Coley Taylor, a Redding resident, recalls a scene from one of his childhood visits to the Twain home. Apparently, Twain had taken the children to the billiard room during a fund-raising party. While he sat in a bay window with a basket containing a mother cat and
several kittens who had been named for characters in *The Arabian Nights*, Twain told the children stories about the original Sinbad and Ali Baba.

As late as 1908, Twain was still enjoying his animal friends, even though man disgusted him. In a letter to Mrs. Mabel Patterson of Chicago, Twain describes his cats:

If I can find a photograph of my "Tammany" and her kittens, I will enclose it in this. One of them likes to be crammed into a corner-pocket of the billiard table—which he fits as snugly as does a finger in a glove and then he watches the game (and obstructs it) by the hour, and spoils many a shot by putting out his paw and changing the direction of a passing ball. Whenever a ball is in his arms, or so close to him that it cannot be played upon without risk of hurting him, the player is privileged to remove it to anyone of the 3 spots that chances to be vacant. . . . 50

This is probably the same kitten seen in several of Twain's last photographs.

"If Mark Twain had extended to people the kind of tolerance he extended to every other species," comments Janet Smith, "he would have been a saint, and possibly a dull one. But, although he loved some people, his own species filled him with horror." 51

And this "horror" grew in Twain's work, changing man from hero to villain and animals from convenient literary devices to admirable
characters filled with kindness and virtue, as it provoked Twain's shift from humorist to satirist to cynic. Realizing success with "The Jumping Frog" in 1865, Twain continued his technique of portraying animals with humorous results in his early work, and the menagerie he left testifies to that success—Dan'l Webster, the sly coyote, Tom Quartz, the Syrian camel, the Mexican plug, and the chattering bluejays. During the middle of his career, Twain dropped his dependence on Greek eirons and stock Southwestern humor, fitting animals naturally into his novels and, although these creatures do not stand alone as do the earlier animals, they serve a useful satiric purpose. These sheep, rats, rabbits, and pigs portray man's negative traits throughout the novels, particularly in A Connecticut Yankee. In fact, it is in this novel that Twain's falling regard for man and his rising regard for animals appear to merge. In addition to the weak animals, Twain included dogs and horses who are mistreated by man and the jackass who far exceeds the nobleman in worth and practicality. After A Connecticut Yankee Twain's opinion of man sinks even lower while creatures rise to assume their position as "the Higher Animals" in "A Dog's Tale" and "A Horse's Tale." Although the public, his friends, and his critics disapproved of many of Twain's later works, he continued to "swear at his own species" through his zoo of higher animals.
Notes

1 Mark Twain, Letters from the Earth, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 176. Further references to this work will be noted parenthetically in the text as LE.


5 Thomas Newbigging, Fables and Fabulists: Ancient and Modern (London, 1895); rpt. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Gryphon Books, 1971), p. 16. Further references to this work will be noted parenthetically in the text as T.N.

6 Newbigging describes the adventure stories contained in the
Pantschatantra and Gesta Romanorum as more complex and elaborate than Aesop's, pp. 81, 89. Joseph Jacobs, History of the Aesopic Fable (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), p. 181 stresses the importance of fables in the total perspective of history. One of the few material relics of William the Conqueror, the Bayeux Tapestry, contains a dozen Aesopian fables on the lower border.

7Ellen Douglass Leyburn, Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 57-8. Further references to this work will be noted parenthetically as E.L.


9Leyburn lists several additional requirements for successful fabulists: limiting satiric concentration to one isolated human characteristic, brevity, swiftness of narrative, and a clear point of view toward the animal characters, pp. 60, 61-62, 65.


13Daniel G. Hoffman, Form and Fable in American Fiction (New


16 Walter Blair and Hamlin Hill, *America's Humor from Poor Richard to Doonesbury* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 306. Further references to this work will be noted parenthetically as B & H.


18 St. George Tucker Arnold, Jr., "The Twain Bestiary: Mark Twain's Critters and the Traditions of Animal Portraiture in Humor of the Old Southwest," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 41 (1977), 195. Further references to this will be noted parenthetically as Arnold.

19 Mark Twain, *The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Bantam, 1957), p. 4. Further references to this collection will be noted parenthetically as Stories.

20 Lawrence Smith, "Mark Twain's 'Jumping Frog': Toward an

21Mark Twain, Roughing It (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), p. 67. Henceforth noted parenthetically as RI.


25Galen Hanson, "Bluejays and Man: Mark Twain's Exercise in Understanding," Mark Twain Journal, 15 (1973-1974), 18-19. Further references to this will be noted parenthetically as G.H.

26Cox, p. 100.


29. Letters from the Earth, pp. 146-151.

30. Huckleberry Finn, Chapter 16.


36. Ibid., p. 122.

Killis Campbell, "From Aesop to Mark Twain," Sewanee Review, 19 (1911), 43. Henceforth noted parenthetically as K.C.


Twain-Howells Letters, p. 369.

Letters from the Earth, p. 166.

Ibid., p. 170.


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48 Ibid., p. 1246.


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