The twentieth century recurrence of the tradition of animal characters in drama

Linda Jean Brant
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
Brant, Linda Jean, "The twentieth century recurrence of the tradition of animal characters in drama" (1982). Retrospective Theses and Dissertations. 14408.
https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/14408

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
The twentieth century recurrence of the tradition of animal characters in drama

by

Linda Jean Brant

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English

Copyright © Linda Jean Brant, 1982. All rights reserved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERVIEW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SATIRIC ELEMENT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALIENATION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMAN BEINGS AS ANIMALS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIMALS AS ANIMALS</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIMALS REPRESENTING MAN</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIMALS AS SUPERNATURAL</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVOLUTIONARY CHARACTERS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE USE CONTINUES</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historically, literature has made frequent use of speaking animals, but more commonly in fiction than in drama. From ancient times, there are Aesop's Fables and, from the Middle Ages, beast fables, such as Reynard the Fox and Chanticleer the Rooster. In the early eighteenth century, Jonathan Swift used the technique in book five of Gulliver's Travels. The refined, educated horses, the Houyhnhnms, contrasted with the subhuman Yahoos. In this century, George Orwell brought the evils of totalitarianism to life using pigs and other domestic animals in Animal Farm. The movie industry has handled animal characters in a variety of ways: disguised, such as the apes in the Planet of the Apes series; animated, as in numerous Disney productions; or real, such as Benji the dog or Francis the talking mule.

However, in stage drama, the device of animal characters is not prevalent through the ages. It is certainly one of the oldest dramatic techniques — begun in prehistory when some primitive hunter donned an animal skin and ritualistically implored the god of the hunt to endow him with the hunting prowess of the wolf or the lion. James Frazer, in The Golden Bough, points out that a primitive in religious thinking could hardly conceive

... the distinction commonly drawn by more advanced peoples between the natural and the supernatural. To him the world is mostly worked by supernatural agents, that is, by personal beings acting on impulses and motives like his own, liable like him to be moved by appeals to their pity, their fears, and their hopes.1

Thus, animal characters are as common as human characters in many mythologies. The animal device continued in use in Greek comedy by Aristophanes in The Birds, The Wasps, and The Frogs. Other Greek titles indicate that
playwrights may have written choruses of birds, insects, or animals, but none of those scripts from the Golden Age have survived. Roman playwrights, such as Plautus and Terence, tended to pattern their comedies after the later Greek, Menander, and did not try the device.

During the Middle Ages, when the church in Europe was the primary method for keeping theatre alive, didactic scripts became the mode. The Bible was inaccessible to the illiterate churchgoers, and the church rituals were not delivered in vernacular. Mystery and miracle plays were a method of teaching biblical stories to the populace. While the miracle plays most frequently depicted the Resurrection and the Nativity, a few dealt with the fall of man. These plays seem to be the exception in the use of animals in plays between ancient Greek times and twentieth-century.

Genesis calls for the devil to take the form of a serpent to tempt Eve. Artistic tradition pictured the temptor variously: as a serpent with many legs and the head of a woman, as an angel, as a gentleman, as a furry beast, and as a winged dragon. Different miracle cycles followed the various traditions. In the York and Chester plays, Satan first appears as himself (probably with tail and horns) to deliver exposition on his fall and his envy of man; then he changes costumes. Stage directions do not tell us clearly how the serpent was acted. In the Chester play, the devil states that he will put on his "adders coate" which has "wynges like a byrd," indicating perhaps the dragon tradition. In the York play, the devil says "in a worme liknes wille y wende," but the execution of that was not defined by the author. In the Wakefield cycle, the temptation pages are missing. A grocer's pageant from the Norwich cycle describes its serpent as "handsomely attired in a 'cote with hosen,' a tayle stayned' and a
crown and wig."³ Demons and devils frequently appeared in church plays, and their common description emphasizes the beast aspect: bristling with horsehair and wearing ugly beast-like heads. The Devil was "as shaggy and beast-like as possible, black, horned, clawed, with cloven feet and a forked tail, and, sometimes, with pipes of burning gunpowder in his ears."⁴

In the later Middle Ages, morality plays developed characters which were allegorical representations of human vices and virtues. These plays, such as Everyman and The Castle of Perseverance, portray man's struggle to journey through life and to achieve redemption. The Christian emphasis on man and his relationship as a son of God created in God's image prevented the writers (mostly churchmen) from personifying human qualities in less godly animal forms. Only contemptible demons and devils were portrayed as beasts.

There was one use of a real animal in the Medieval and earlier church pageants -- an ass. Numbers 22 tells the story of Balaam's talking ass, who refuses to carry Balaam into sin and who rebukes his owner for beating him. Baalam and his ass were included in processions of the prophets, and, in all likelihood, a donkey was used to carry the Virgin for the flight into Egypt and to carry Christ on the Palm Sunday procession into Jerusalem. Charles Gayley suggests that the donkey played havoc with the sacredness of the festivals, since "once the donkey thrust his head within the church-door, liturgy, festival, and drama were lost in the stupor of his ears or the bathos of his braying."⁵ The ass came to be a central character in some burlesques of ecclesiastical ceremony, such as the Feast of Fools. The donkey seems to have been tolerated by the church since the novelty of seeing the beast at mass brought many to the services.
Elizabethan-Jacobean drama did not use actual animal characters, but toyed with the concept. In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom is magically given the head of an ass as a prank. Ben Jonson used animals metaphorically in *Volpone* by naming the major characters with the Italian names that described their personalities: fox, vulture, raven, fly. Jonson's symbolism is much like the allegory of morality plays.

Other than in metaphor, animals do not seem to be used in drama of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries. The Restoration and eighteenth century demand for drawing room comedy limited the characters to familiar social types. The nineteenth century bent for melodrama likewise limited the types of characters. In the later nineteenth century, when realists like Ibsen and Chekhov took the stage, the issues and treatment demanded realistic human characters facing life as it is. Naturalism followed with playwrights trying to be even more true to life -- to show a slice of life on stage as man battled against forces beyond his control.

As a reaction against these centuries, the early twentieth century saw several new schools of thought: surrealism, German expressionism, and what Martin Esslin labeled the Theatre of the Absurd. Esslin points to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and its pronouncement that God is dead as a starting point for most of the new schools. The Theatre of the Absurd confronts the fact that

... for those to whom the world has lost its central explanation and meaning, it is no longer possible to accept art forms still based on the continuation of standards and concepts that have lost their validity; that is, the possibility of knowing the laws of conduct and ultimate values, as deducible from a firm foundation of revealed certainty about the purpose of man in the universe.
As society lost its former religious and social rigidity, playwrights rejected the well-made characters of well-made plots to experiment with fantasy and symbolism to more clearly define the human condition. Writing for a more literate and sophisticated audience than any previous age of writers, the modern school may have seen the use of animals as a way of shocking the audience into seeing a point. Ionesco, for example, could have discussed the conformity and cruelty of Nazis, but he chose to portray them as rhinoceroses — a herd of huge, gross, unthinking beasts. A new age of social satire was born and, for the first time since Aristophanes, playwrights began to really experiment with animal characters in plays. The practice spilled over to writers not considered absurd or expressionistic.

In France, Maeterlinck wrote his Peter Pan-like fantasy, *The Blue Bird*, and Edmond Rostand revived *Chanticleer* from Medieval fables. Shaw, in England, was likewise updating a fable, *Androcles and the Lion*. In Czechoslovakia, the Capek brothers tested out their theories of governments and societies with insects in *The Insect Comedy*. Romanian Ionesco also had politics in mind as he penned *Rhinoceros*. In the United States, Eugene O'Neill experimented with a symbolic human/animal in *The Hairy Ape*, and Arthur Miller contributed an amusing talking cat in *The Pussyfoot and the Expert Plumber*. It is interesting that, after the device had been dormant in drama for so long, writers in so many countries should experiment with it in the twentieth century.

There are several reasons which may have contributed to the use of the device in Greek and modern theatres and seldom in between. Ancient Greek theatre used nonhuman beings frequently, for example, gods and satyrs. With pantheism part of their social memory, the Greeks accepted animism.
Their legends allowed their gods to take human or animal forms and their nymphs and naiads to inhabit the woods and waters. James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, explains that to early man the world in general is animate, and trees are no exception to the rule. He thinks that they have souls like his own and treats them accordingly. Even the Greek father god, Zeus, would take animal forms on his many romantic escapades, such as his bull disguise to lure Europa. It was not unusual to the Greek mind to accept such entities, even though sincere belief in the pantheon was diminished by the time of Aristophanes.

As Christianity took its hold on feudal Europe, the Church discouraged pagan worship, especially belief in the Greek and Roman pantheons. Even though the converts incorporated many pagan traditions into early Christian celebrations, the Church writers refused to pattern their dramatic productions on the Greek or Roman theatres. Aristophanes and his use of animals was considered a pagan view of the world. Feudalism and the Catholic Church imposed order on society with the philosophy that every element of creation had its place in God’s hierarchy. This Great Chain of Being encompassed all of creation from God to inanimate objects. The chain placed man above and distinct from animals. That view of the world remained prevalent in literature through the Renaissance, making the use of animal characters unlikely. The chain was shaken when Copernicus challenged the Ptolemaic theory that man and earth were the center of the universe.

Another church doctrine affected the theatre for centuries. Even while the church was the site for miracle and morality plays, there was always a religious element in opposition. The Lollards, and later the Puritans, cited Deuteronomy 22:5 and the second commandment as arguments
against all drama, religious or not. Deuteronomy prohibits men dressing in women's clothes and vice versa; the second commandment prohibits graven images, which some groups interpreted to mean any form of pretense. Considering the resistance to human characters on stage, how much more furor would there have been if writers dared to represent people as inferior and ungodly animals.

The Elizabethan stage and the Renaissance in general began moving away from the abstractions of the morality plays and put more emphasis on man and his society. The emphasis stayed on man through comedy of manners, melodrama, and realism. During those centuries, there was little thought of men being part of the animal kingdom. A notable exception is essayist Michel Montaigne, who wrote the "Apology for Raymond Sebond" in 1575-80. In it, he admonishes man to be humble, since in every quality and accomplishment man has been equalled or excelled by a species of the animal kingdom. His essay laid groundwork for thinking of man as a member of the animal kingdom.

In the realm of science, the idea of causal changes in life forms dates back to St. Augustine. The idea was pursued by Thomas Aquinas (13th century), G. W. Leibnitz (17th-18th century), J. B. P. Lamarch (18th-19th century), Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), and Alfred R. Wallace (late 1850s). It was Charles Darwin who solidified that position by presenting it in the scientific hypothesis of evolution by natural selection in his Origin of Species (1859) and Descent of Man (1871). This link of man to animals made human beings less sacred and, once again the animal device appeared in plays. A modern audience, with a background in evolutionary theory and
less attachment to religion, can accept a talking ape or lizard as a representation of human nature.

In spite of its more frequent use now, still only a handful of playwrights have tried the device and usually only in one of their works. The reason may well be in the nature of drama -- that scripts are intended to be acted. The use of animal characters frequently classifies the script as closet drama, to be read, not performed. Rostand's Chanticleer, for example, is virtually unstageable because it calls for over eighty barnyard and forest animals and birds. Auden and Isherwood's Dog Beneath the Skin poses numerous production problems, calling for one character to play the entire show on all fours as a dog. Realizing the difficulty of staging the script, the playwrights added some unstageable and somewhat extraneous scenes, such as a discussion between a character's upper-class right foot and his Cockney left foot or a soliloquy by the dog skin disguise. Stage directions indicate that such scenes would be deleted in production. The use of the dramatic form chosen by Rostand and by Auden and Isherwood seems to be a stylistic decision by writers who viewed these plays as much as literature as scripts to be acted.

Playwrights who are closer to the theatre and who want their ideas to be transmitted by actors must take into account whether the animal characters can be costumed realistically or suggestively and whether a serious theme can then be conveyed. Putting an actor in a gorilla suit or even in tights and a feline mask can welcome a comic response from the audience, even if the script is not comic. Henri Bergson explained in his essay "Laughter" that an animal or animal form will evoke laughter if the audience sees in it some human attitude or expression. This explains why we
find it amusing to see a small animal in captivity held like a baby and
nursed with a bottle. A costume designer must consider Bergson's state-
ment when attempting to costume a human being as an animal character who
will then act anthropomorphically. One way of dealing with the problem is
for some authors to minimize any degree of realism — to make fun of the
device. Shaw does this when he has Androcles and the Lion waltz about the
stage together. In *The Insect Comedy*, a pregnant cricket costume is sure
to evoke laughter. In *Too Many Thumbs*, Robert Hivnor gives these direc-
tions regarding the ape's transformation to man: "Although beastlike, the
face is a funny one, carrying with it the implication that at every stage
in his development and with all his variations man has always appeared ri-
diculous." Bergson's statement does not apply to all animal characteriza-
tions, though. A certain awe can be provoked by the horse chorus in
Shaffer's *Equus* with no audience thought of laughter. The major distinc-
tion is that the horses in *Equus* are not portraying any human qualities.

This thesis will look at a variety of plays which use anthropomorphic
animals as primary elements of the play. Little critical work has been
done on this facet of drama, so this thesis relies minimally on published
criticism. The main concern is with seriously written scripts by major
authors, although some lighter works will be mentioned to illustrate cer-
tain points. This is not a study of adaptations of fairy tales or of chil-
dren's theatre scripts, although many of those employ speaking animals and
could fit into the categories and trends discussed in this paper.

In looking at the twentieth century scripts, especially, there are
several prevalent elements: satire, alienation, and optimism. All of the
plays are satirical, but their tones vary from playful to embittered,
depending on their authors. Alienation is a prevalent theme in plays after 1920, and an inability to communicate is emphasized by the interplay of animals with human characters. Optimism is not found in the conclusion of all the scripts and at times appears only weakly, but man does tend to learn from these animal encounters, and learning to face life anew is optimistic. These three trends will be discussed in depth in the next chapters.

The technique used in employing animal characters tends to fall into five categories:

1) The character is a person but takes on animal characteristics through symbol as in Volpone, The Hairy Ape, and The Wasps, through disguise as in The Dog Beneath the Skin, or through transformation as in The Birds and Rhinoceros.

2) The animal is an animal in form with animal characteristics. There may be some anthropomorphism, often with an element of fantasy. Some examples include The Blue Bird, The Skin of Our Teeth, and Androcles and the Lion.

3) The animal is an animal in form with human characteristics. Plays that fit into this category include Chanticleer, The Insect Comedy, The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber, and You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.

4) The animal represents the supernatural as a god or devil as in Orphée, Equus, and The Apple Tree.

5) The animal acts or is treated as a human equal, frequently with evolutionary overtones. This category includes Edward Albee's Seascape and a lesser known play by Robert Hivnor, Too Many Thumbs.

These categories will be discussed in individual chapters.
A number of playwrights have experimented with the animal device, among them Aristophanes and Ben Jonson, and in the twentieth century Maurice Maeterlinck, Edmond Rostand, G. B. Shaw, Karl Capek, Eugene O'Neill, Jean Cocteau, W. H. Auden, Arthur Miller, Eugene Ionesco, Peter Shaffer, and Edward Albee. In spite of the diversity of the authors, the common element in the plays is satire.

The use of animals is not automatically satiric. For example, many fables and legends use animal characters to explain animal habits through a human perspective. Also, there are animals in plays that are just animals or pets. To qualify as satiric, the animals need to take on anthropomorphic qualities, either in their actions or in their treatment by other characters. This anthropomorphism may range from Maeterlinck's technique in *The Blue Bird*, where the cat and dog remain animals but are magically given the power of speech, to Hivnor's technique in *Too Many Thumbs*, where an ape makes a total transformation to look and act like a man.

Leonard Feinberg, in his *Introduction to Satire*, explains why animals are an effective satiric vehicle to represent man or human qualities:

> Readers who would resent being told unpleasant truths about themselves seem quite willing to accept the same indictment about donkeys, foxes, pigs, roosters, horses, penguins, wasps, birds, butterflies, beetles, ants, cats, cockroaches, whales, elephants, rhinoceroses, monkeys, and apes. This is the reason for using animals in satire: it is much easier for the reader and the spectator to attain detachment -- and consequently amusement -- toward animals than toward men.¹

For example, in *The Insect Comedy*, a spectator may watch an overly proud papa fly working constantly to provide the best for his larvae, or a beetle who is worried about accumulating more and more riches which he then
worries about protecting. The spectator may be just as materialistic as the insects, but Feinberg contends that the spectator can be more accepting of human faults in characters which are not in human form.

Each of these plays makes a comment on the human condition, generally using the animals to point out faults in specific human qualities or behaviors. A limited definition of satire will not apply to all of them. In *Equus*, Peter Shaffer employs embittered Juvenalian satire. He asks what kind of a society, what kind of a homelife would lead an Alan Strang to worship an equestrian god in a fervor of passion and sex. He asks if the sterile normalcy Dr. Dysart can return the boy to is worth taking away Alan's energy and excitement for life. The Doctor's final address over the sleeping Alan, as he describes what "normal" life will be for the boy, becomes more of a curse than a promise. In opposition to Shaffer's Juvenalian satire, some of the plays reaffirm the human condition with cheerful Horatian satire. Musical comedy presents man's faults as acceptable and amusing, such as in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *The Apple Tree*. Some other positive affirmations are in Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*, Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and Edward Albee's *Seascape*.

With the use of animals, characterizations tend to be exaggerated and single faceted. It is much the same as the allegory of morality plays which gave one virtue or vice to each character and then labeled them accordingly: Hope, Despair, Good Works, or Pride. In *The Insect Comedy*, each insect bears the characterization most fitting: the beautiful butterflies are frivolous and vain, the dung-gathering beetles are materialistic, the parasite is grasping, and the chrysalis bears the hope and optimism of youth. In *Chanticleer*, Chanticleer the Rooster is dedicated to his
crowing, the lovely Pheasant Hen is proud and vain, the farm dog is loyal
and protective, and the White Pile Game Cock is merely the fighting vil-
lain. With stereotyped characters, the playwrights can emphasize themes
about types of men and yet maintain a distance from the satire. Also, ex-
aggerated characterizations are more palatable in animal form since the
reader or spectator has already accepted the convention as unreal. A simi-
larly single-sided human character would elicit criticism as not true to
life, and thereby make the satire seem less true to life. Of the plays
being considered in this thesis, the only one which develops the animal
characters beyond stereotypes is Albee's Seascape where two lizard people
mirror the human characters they encounter on a beach.

The playwrights also vary the number of animal characters in their
satires. Rostand's Chanticleer contains the only all-animal cast, but has
a human stage manager in the prologue. The Insect Comedy is mostly animal
except for transitional scenes with the Tramp and a few human walk-ons.
Aristophanes transformed the human characters for a mostly feathered cast
in The Birds. In most of the plays, however, the interaction of and con-
trast between the human and animal characters is important to the satire.
Gilbert Highet pointed out in The Anatomy of Satire that "a deft satirist
can produce the right effect by introducing only one animal, and showing it
as equal, or in some ways superior, to its human associates." This was
the course chosen by Hivnor in Too Many Thumbs and Albee in Seascape. As
the ape, Too Many Thumbs, evolves through Neanderthal stages to become
man and eventually superman, he is in direct contrast with the scientist,
Arthur Smith, and the religion professor, Macklebee. Hivnor satirically
shows how protective the scientists are of their preconceived notions of
science and of man's superiority as they are threatened by the illogical evolution in their laboratory. Their dedication to learning wanes as they feel threatened by the unexplainable evolution of the ape to a human intelligence superior to their own.

In *Seascape*, the contrast between the human beings, Nancy and Charlie, and the lizards, Sarah and Leslie, is the satiric method. For example, the lizards have laid seven thousand eggs and have watched them float away to unknown fates. They cannot comprehend the human desire to nurture a single child for eighteen years! Similar misunderstandings surface as the people attempt to define words such as "clothes," "love," "bigotry," and "death." The satire is based on the human beings' difficulty in explaining their everyday emotions and behaviors.

The use of satire in these and other plays will be discussed in later chapters on the types of animal characters.
Alienation is another prevalent theme in the animal plays, especially those written after 1920. Although typically considered a modern phenomenon, alienation has occurred throughout history and is evident even in the animal plays of Aristophanes. Alienation has become a catchphrase in psychology, sociology, and philosophy to describe "estrangement, separation, withdrawal, indifference, disaffection, apathy, noninvolvement, neutralism . . . the increasing distance between men and their former objects of love, commitment, loyalty, devotion, and reverence." Many philosophers, including Karl Marx, have pointed to technological growth as a factor in the dehumanization of man. As man becomes a cog in mass production, he loses his understanding of how his work affects the whole and, thereby, loses the feeling of importance to his society. Modern man has lost many of his former support systems: daily reliance on the land, a strong family unit, and the authority of organized religion. This has led to his detachment from nature, his inability to communicate meaningfully with his fellow man, and his uncertainty of the existence of God.

The religious aspect of alienation could have existed in ancient times. Erich Fromm points out that idolatry and many methods of worship alienate the individual from himself. If a man creates an idol or develops a god in his mind, he then worships a projection of himself rather than realizing those positive qualities as his own. The ancient Greeks, in developing their pantheon, projected into their gods the best and the worst of human qualities. The ancient Greeks thereby forfeited control of their lives by accepting fate and the dominance of the gods. This sets the stage
for alienation as man feels that his life is out of his control. By the time Aristophanes was writing, there was a general movement away from belief in the gods, so he was writing in a climate with religious alienation that parallels modern times.

There is also a relationship between alienation and anthropomorphism which is observable in ancient and very modern times. Man began in most cultures by defining himself as part of the societies of nature. James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, cites numerous examples such as Tonquin villages that chose guardian spirits in the form of an animal such as a dog, tiger, cat, or serpent. The practice of sympathetic magic also linked the natural and human kingdoms. Bechuanans seeking protection would wear a ferret because it was an animal difficult to kill. Another might use frog skin or ox hair because a frog is slippery and an ox with no horns is hard to catch.

Religious legends have often allowed human characters to communicate with animals or trees. Notice that the Hebrew tradition has a talking snake, Balaam's talking ass, and God's voice from a burning bush. Greek myths abound with metamorphic changes of man to flora or fauna or vice versa. James Frazer notes that it is the "general tendency of early thought to clothe all abstract spiritual beings in concrete human form." The type of soul that would inhabit a tree was essentially the same as the soul that would inhabit a man. In art, the souls tended to be pictured in human form whether they were called elves, naiads, or leprechauns.

All this may show that, as an extension of man's place in nature or from an innate loneliness, man has tended to anthropomorphize objects in his world and thus make himself belong. The idea of belonging is most
apparent in Aristophanes' *The Birds* and *The Wasps*. In *The Birds*, Peisetairos and Euepides reject the values and goals of their human society and isolate themselves from it, seeking instead a new community with the birds. In *The Wasps*, the old men have given up personal identities in banding together as jurymen, rendering unquestioning obedience and dedication to the group and to Cleon. Bdelocleon, the son, imprisons his father, Philocleon, attempting to deprogram the old man from his blind obedience. The situations in these plays fulfill opposing criteria of alienation: social rejection of norms in *The Birds* and unquestioning obedience to a cause in *The Wasps*. The symbolism of the birds and wasps adds to the humor and reinforces the themes.

Animal characters did not reappear in plays commonly again until the twentieth century. A brief summary of theatre history suggests some of the reasons. After the pinnacle of Greek drama and its parody in Rome, the theatre lapsed as a dynamic art form until the Renaissance. During the interim, the Church kept drama alive in Europe as a method of teaching the illiterate masses lessons from the Bible. The miracle and passion plays used Biblical personages or allegorical personifications. Man was not treated as a part of nature, but superior to nature as a son of God. Writing in the sixteenth century, Michele Montaigne commented on man's glorification of his own image:

In short, whatever is not as we are is worth nothing. And God himself, to make himself appreciated, must resemble us. . . . Whereby it is apparent that it is not by true judgment, but by foolish pride and stubbornness, that we set ourselves before the other animals and sequester ourselves from their condition and society.
William Barrett points to protestantism as a societal force which further alienated man from nature by depicting it as "hostile to the spirit and to be conquered by puritan zeal and industry. Thus protestantism, like science, helped carry forward that immense project of modern man: the de-spiritualization of nature, the emptying of it of all the symbolic images projected upon it by the human psyche." Thus, the protestant movement further inhibited man's tendency to anthropomorphize the natural world surrounding him, and, for several centuries in drama, animal characters were seldom used. But, in the twentieth century, as religion relaxed its hold, man seemed to return to his ancient tendency to anthropomorphize.

Charles Darwin must be given credit for making modern man think of himself again as a part of nature -- an animal, if more intelligent than other species. Once man could be freely termed an animal, it was natural for writers to use such symbolism when comparing human qualities to those shared by the animal kingdom.

The extent to which modern America has anthropomorphized animals and nature is humorous. Man's "best friend" is a dog, pets are like "one of the family," people talk to their plants and buy posters and knick-knacks with cutesy captioned animals. Americans made a television hit of Mister Ed, the talking horse, and they glued eyes on "pet" rocks. These everyday practices seem harmless, but compare them to Jerry's serious impassioned explanations of an alienated existence in Albee's Zoo Story: "... it's just that if you can't deal with people, you have to make a start somewhere. WITH ANIMALS! Don't you see? A person has to have some way of dealing with SOMETHING, if not with people . . . SOMETHING." Because man needs to feel that he belongs in a society, he seeks constant reenforcement,
if not through people, then with something -- a pet or an animal poster on the wall.

With alienation as a prevalent twentieth century theme, animal characters in drama have become a natural way of demonstrating man's problems with communicating and belonging. The examples are numerous. In The Hairy Ape, Yank is unaccepted in the society of top hats and spats he meets in Sunday morning New York. He turns instead to the gorilla at the zoo -- needing to feel he has something in common with some other creature. In Rhinoceros, Beringer tries to communicate but finds it impossible as each of his friends becomes a rhinoceros. In the final scenes, he feels so lonely that he wants to join the company of pachyderms. Unable to conform to that degree, he reaffirms his lonely individuality as he yells, "I am a man, I am a man." The Tramp of The Insect Comedy has left society and, in observing all of nature in the round of eternal mating, laments, "In all this great forest, I'm the only one in solitude." In his final monologue, he determines to return to society, having gained a better understanding of men from watching the insects.

Each of these plays uses the animals as a society the human being approaches for communication. As Jerry found in Zoo Story, the attempt to reach out to just "SOMETHING" is not enough. Jerry's ultimate need was to communicate with a fellow man, and he did so with Peter, even though it meant Jerry's death. Yank also died in his attempt to communicate with the gorilla, but little was gained because no one was enlightened by the experience. The gorilla crushes him and Yank dies with the desperate realization that "Even him didn't think I belonged. Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in?" Beringer never communicates with the
rhinoceroses, but he finds that being a man sometimes requires separation from the majority and communication is not worth the price of conformity. In *The Insect Comedy*, the Tramp, like Jerry, learns from his experiences with the animals but dies before he can apply his enlightenment to human society. The Capek brothers did write an alternate, more positive ending to the play in which the Tramp awakens as from a dream and fulfills his intent to return to society. The key to each of these plays is that man overcomes alienation only if he can communicate meaningfully with his fellow man.

Other plays look at man's alienation from his social group. In *Seascape*, Nancy and Charlie, approaching retirement, are unsure of their place in society. Nancy suggests spending their retirement as seaside nomads from California to the Riviera. She speaks disgustedly of their peers who settle into the purgatory of old folks' homes waiting for the real purgatory. When Leslie and Sarah, two lizards, climb from the ocean, they similarly lack a society, no longer belonging with the fish and not yet having a place on shore. In *Too Many Thumbs*, the chimp, Too Many Thumbs, evolves during the play into a superman. At only one level in his evolution does he correspond with the human beings and find love and acceptance from them as their equal. The rest of the time he is caught on the evolutionary ladder -- too intelligent to belong to the chimps and eventually too intelligent to belong with man.

The alienation of man from God is also dealt with in several plays. In *Equus*, young Alan, confused by the fanatical Christianity of his mother and the silent strictness of his father, turns for companionship to the
society of horses at the stable. He then transfers his mother's religious fanaticism from Christ to the horses.

These plays then deal with the wide range of man's detachment from God, nature, society's rules and values, community, other people, one's emotions and desires, and one's actions. They also show the characters dealing with alienation in the same ways George Victor discusses in Invisible Men: confronting it actively by trying to adapt, seeking a new community to belong to, becoming resigned, or being a revolutionary.
HUMAN BEINGS AS ANIMALS

One use of the animal technique in plays uses characters who are or begin as human beings but then take on animal qualities through symbolism, disguise, or transformation. These plays emphasize the beastliness of man, the evolutionary relationship of species, or the ideal of the animal society over man's.

Three plays illustrate the symbolic use of animal qualities imposed on human characters: Volpone, The Hairy Ape, and The Wasps. The use of animal metaphors has been common throughout literature, but these plays use more than just metaphor. In Volpone, or the Fox (1605), Ben Jonson named several characters with the Italian names of animals. In much the manner of Medieval morality plays, the characters are allegorical representations of their names.

Volpone, the fox, is a sly swindler who, by disguising himself as a wealthy invalid, is duping greedy characters into bargaining to become his heir. Mosca, the fly, Volpone's parasite, deals with the gulls, who hope through gifts of gold and jewels to win the favor of the dying Volpone. The three, Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino, are named for birds of prey, and so Volpone refers to them:

I shall have instantly my Vulture, Crow,
Raven, come flying hither, on the news,
To peck for carrion.¹

The three are led by Mosca to gamble far more than wealth. Carbaccio (Raven) willingly disinherits his dutiful son, Bonario, in favor of Volpone, hoping Volpone will make a reciprocal will and die first. Corvino (Crow) had earlier called his wife, Celia, a whore for being seen at her
Volpone, disguised as a mountebank. When Mosca tells Corvino that the doctors have prescribed that a lovely young lady sleep with the invalid to warm his blood, he offers Celia. Even though intercourse was not anticipated, it is still a case of qualified prostitution for the greedy Corvino to sell the services of his good wife in hopes for the invalid’s inheritance. Voltore (Vulture), an advocate, compromises his legal reputation by falsely accusing the innocents, Celia and Bonario, of adultery and the attempted murder of Volpone.

Volpone manipulates the action through his disguises: an invalid, a mountebank, and a commandatore. The disguises are just one of the traditions of Medieval fox lore used by Jonson. D. A. Sheve points out the "attributed ability of that animal to catch birds by feigning death."\(^2\) Volpone’s feigned illness is just such a trap:

. . . now my clients
Begin their visitation! Vulture, kite,
Raven, and gocrow, all my birds of prey,
That think me turning carcase, now they come.\(^3\)

Another Medieval symbol of the fox’s cunning and covetousness was the depiction of the fox in the religious dress of a priest, friar, or other holyman. Jonson could have had that in mind in scene i, when the Fox is praying to his money.\(^4\)

What makes Volpone worth mentioning in this thesis is its use of the animal metaphors to the point of allegory. In Act V, there are seven references to Volpone as the Fox. The other main characters are referred to as frequently as vulture, crow, raven, or parasite as they are called by name. Their personalities emphasize the beastly greediness of their namesakes, as the technique emphasizes the bestial as a dominant trait in
mankind. The innocents, Celia and Bonario, lack the animal drives of the less desirable characters, and are thereby ineffective in dealing with the evil characters manipulating them or in offering hope for a better society to come. Comedy traditionally ends with a celebration of life and fertility, a marriage or reconciliation of antagonists with the values of the protagonists. Celia and Bonario hold no such comic promise and the evil characters are not reconciled, but sent off to their various punishments. In drawing his animalistic characters in the allegory of Volpone, Jonson comes as close to using a cast of animal characters as any major play from Greek times to the twentieth century.

The second play in this category, Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape (1922) is further discussed in Chapter 8 on evolutionary characters. Yank, a ship's stoker, is the symbolic "Hairy Ape." Stage directions for the early scenes in the hold of the ship emphasize the animal aspect of the men, especially Yank. The low ceiling of the set is to accentuate the natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and the resultant over-development of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes. This is the lowest echelon of mankind, the drunkards and brawlers who operate on brute strength with little knowledge of "civilized" society. Yank rules this domain because he is the strongest, the best, the most disdainful of bosses and women. Paddy compares them all to animals laboring in the stokehold, "caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo!" Paddy remembers the days of the sailing ships when seamen were part of nature as they watched the sky and waves throughout the
vessel. With the advance of technology, the steamship has deprived them of their previous association with nature and human society.

Into this underworld of the ship comes social do-gooder Mildred Douglas, the daughter of a chairman of the steamship line. She enters during Yank's tirade against an engineer who keeps blowing a whistle for more coal to be shoveled. Yank "brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest, gorilla-like, with the other." As Yank curses the unseen whistle blower, Mildred listens, "paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face," she shrinks from him whimpering, "The filthy beast!" and faints.

The rest of the play is Yank's attempt to prove her description wrong as he struggles with his inability to fit into any society outside the stokehold. The symbol of him as an animal, something not quite human, is reinforced by dialogue and stage directions throughout the play. The ape symbolism is not just for Yank, but for all his shipmates, and in a larger sense for all mankind. The qualities of mankind that Mildred Douglas had never confronted before were always there, not only in men such as Yank, but in her father, in her aunt, and in herself. The insults and slap she gives her aunt in scene ii indicate the brutal nature hidden under her white exterior. This type of symbolism enforcing man's animal nature is common in post-Darwinian writing. The evolutionary aspect of O'Neill's symbol will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The third example of human beings as symbolic animals is Aristophanes' The Wasps (422 B.C.), a satire on the Athenian judicial system. Philocleon
(I love Cleon) is an old man obsessed with following the demagogue, Cleon, and serving on the jury every day, to the neglect of his family, health, and individuality. His son, Bdelocleon (I hate Cleon), tries to break the father's habit by locking him in the house under guard. Philocleon attempts escapes through the window, through the roof, and beneath a donkey. The chorus is composed of other old men who also pass their days serving as jurymen. They are costumed as wasps with sharp stingers to symbolize their action as a swarm in dealing pointedly with law cases.

When the chorus first appears, they wear bulky robes. Later they remove the robes to reveal their wasp costumes and erect stingers. A contemporary audience could find the costumes amusingly like the bees from a running skit on the Saturday Night Live shows of the 1970s. Although the costumes of the wasps identify them as animals, they are in their activities and behavior old men. The animal metaphor is taken a step further than in Ben Jonson or Eugene O'Neill, because Aristophanes has reinforced the metaphor with recognizable animal costumes. Jonson and O'Neill only hinted at the metaphor visually: Volpone wore fur robes and Yank used the posture of a Neanderthal.

Aristophanes' satire was against faults in the legal system of the day. The jurors were paid a paltry sum, too little to allow young men to leave their work to serve; therefore, the jurors were mostly old men, like Philocleon and the wasps who looked on the pay as a sort of old age pension. Philocleon, perhaps like many other old men, has turned over the support of his family to his son. With the financial control goes the decision making and power. Stripped of their former strength and vigor, the wasps vindictively mete out sentences in the law courts, the only place
they still have power. Their erect stingers are ironic phallic symbols of the virility they have otherwise lost. The motives of the wasps are clearly explained in the play:

We on whom this stern-appendage, this portentous tail is found, . . .
Many a time have fought for Athens, guarding her in hours of need . . .
Fought the memorable battle, primed with fiery hardiment;
Man to man we stood, and, grimly, gnawed for rage our underlips.9

Now that the old wasps have lost their sting in battle, they protect their manhood by wielding power in the courts. Unknown to them, the demagogues are preying upon that need and using them to subvert true justice. The wasp chorus confirms that Cleon has instructed them how to vote in a trial against Laches. They make other statements indicating that their votes are subject to pity or to bribes as much as to the law.

Bdelocleon believes the juries have become mere puppets of the demagogue, Cleon, resulting in the loss of true democratic juries. Bdelocleon tries to reason with his father and the wasps as he points out the disparity between the tributes and taxes collected for Athens and the paltry three obels paid a juror. The wasps begin to see how they are being taken advantage of by the demagogues and plead with Philocleon to accept his son's facts:

Don't be a fool: give in, give in,
Nor too perverse and stubborn be;
I would to heaven my kith and kin
Would show the like regard for me.10

While Philocleon heeds the advice, he still misses the enjoyment of being a dicast.11

Bdelocleon tries to satisfy his father's mania for the court and to demonstrate further the existing corruption by staging a domestic trial
for Philocleon to judge. The situation parodies a contemporary Athenian case brought by the demagogue Cleon against General Laches who was charged with accepting bribes from Sicilian states. In Aristophanes' parody, the cur Cyon (Cleon) charges another dog, Labes (Laches), with stealing fine Sicilian cheese from the kitchen. Two actors portray the dogs while the case is prosecuted by the slave Xanthias and defended by Bdelocleon. After the prosecution, Philocleon has already decided on his guilty verdict. Bdelocleon then argues the defense brilliantly, even bringing the defendant's starving puppies in to whimper for their father. Philocleon is tricked into voting his emotions, realizing as he does how often the wasps have ignored justice in their decisions.

Philocleon is cured. He turns from his waspish ways, abandons his dicastic robes, and determines to enjoy life. In a comic celebration of life he throws off his age, taking up a hedonistic life style of drinking and sex. Lois Spatz concludes that

*Wasps* seems to offer this parallel as the comic truth about human nature: that we are all animals operating according to our own interests, always motivated by our instincts and acting with animal cunning, despite our pretensions to high ideals.¹²

There is an acceptance in comic conclusions of man, flawed though he is. Aristophanes used the wasps as a humorous visual effect which identified a group alienated from the norm as established by Bdelocleon. In this ancient animal play, the same elements are observable as in the twentieth century animal plays: the animal image is used to point out alienation, there is satire of man's society, and there is a generally optimistic or accepting conclusion.
Animal symbolism imposed on human characters is fairly common, ranging from metaphor to allegory. The next category of human beings as animals is through disguise. *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935), by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, uses the farfetched idea of having a man, Sir Francis Crewe, be disguised in a dog suit to view life from a new angle and learn the true motives and actions of his countrymen.

Ten years before, young Sir Francis quarreled with his father and then ran away. Sir Bingham Crewe left a clause in his will that every year the village of Pressan Ambo should choose a man by lottery to search for the missing heir. Success would mean half of the Crewe land and marriage to the daughter, Iris Crewe. The lottery winner this year, Alan Norman, is given the usual five hundred pounds travel money and is joined by a dog named George. The dog seems familiar to the townspeople. The General notes that he has been taken in for a week or two in most of the village homes, but he has never become loyal to one family. For luck, Alan renames the dog Francis and decides to take him on the quest. The dog, of course, is the missing heir who has been spying on his people for years as an Irish Wolfhound.

The journey takes innocent Alan through a literal Vanity Fair of temptations, showcasing the corruptions of mankind. Their first stop is the palace of Ostnia on execution day, where the King offers cake and champagne to the bereaved as the court admires the corpses of the executed. The King suggests that Alan look in the Red Light District where many heirs have gone astray. Alan resists the temptations of the madames and pimps and even discovers one of Pressan Ambo's previous lottery winners, Sorbo Lamb, now a dope fiend in a whorehouse.
The next try is the Westland Madhouse where Alan is mistakenly admitted. Francis and Alan have been accompanied by two journalists they met in the ship's bar after leaving Pressan Ambo. The journalists trick the inmates and rescue Alan. Next, on a train, the journalists point out the rich financier, Grabstein, and set up Alan to ask Grabstein about his illegal business activities involving extortion and murder. Although Grabstein likes Alan and so admits his illegal activities, he laments that people never like him. He offers Alan a large bribe to buy Alan's friendship. Money is the only way Grabstein knows to operate. No matter how many hospitals and rest homes he founds with his ill-gotten gains, he can never buy the happiness and friendship he seeks.

The next location is Paradise Park, the grounds of a hospital where they encounter another quester, Chimp Eagle. Chimp has been shot during a dock strike and is being wheeled away to surgery as he informs Alan that Francis is probably back in England. The dog attacks the nurse, rips off her dress, and dons it. The dog then takes the nurse's place in surgery, a switch none of the doctors notice until Francis administers deadly hydrochloric acid to the patient.

Auden next inserts a scene that would be deleted in production: an argument between Alan's right foot, speaking standard British, and his left foot, speaking Cockney. They disagree on the relative merits of their owner and his quest, and suggest that they have solved the mystery. Someone else has been wearing Alan's shoes.

Back in England, Alan seeks Francis at the Nineveh Hotel, a decadent watering spot of the wealthy. A cabaret showcases a variety of girls, one of which is chosen by a diner as if she were a fowl to be roasted. Next,
Destructive Desmond, a degenerate dressed as a schoolboy, slashes a Rembrandt, much to the horror of an art expert he has called on stage. The next act is Alan's downfall: the lovely vamp, Miss Lou Vipond. She charms Alan to her room where he is shown proclaiming his love to a mannequin, a representation of the emptiness of sex or heterosexual love. In his rapture over the meaningless vamp, Alan tears up Iris' picture, forgets his quest, and runs up an extravagant bill. In the morning, Alan faces reality: Miss Vipond is a fake and there is no way he can pay for his night of revelry.

During the hotel room tableau with the mannequin, the audience hears an unusual soliloquy by the dog skin disguise. As a dog, George had been owned by an author who blamed himself and other learned men for allowing war to occur. Auden's political sentiments are interrupted when Francis returns to don the suit. Alan catches Francis and the truth is out. To rescue Alan from the police, they exchange places and escape from the Nineveh Hotel with Alan in the dog suit.

Upon their return to Pressan Ambo, they find the village celebrating the forthcoming marriage of Iris Crewe to a munitions manufacturer. The General gives a lengthy speech on the glories of war and Iris promises to give away her estate as a barracks and marching field to train young men for the militia. When Alan and Francis appear, Francis still wears the dog suit, "but with the head thrown back, like a monk's cowl. He walks on his feet, not on all fours." It takes a young child to recognize him as the dog the villagers had taken into their homes. They are uncomfortable at the thought of all Francis has observed in their homes, suffered at
their anger, and recorded in his diary. His rage pours out as he puts
into words what he has learned about his fellow man while disguised:

After the first six months I didn't really want to come back. You
see, I had begun to regard you in a new light. I was fascinated and
horrified by you all. I thought such obscene, cruel, hypocritical,
mean, vulgar creatures had never existed before in the history of the
planet, and that it was my office and doom to record it. As a dog, I
learnt with what a mixture of fear, bullying, and condescending kind-
ness you treat those on whom you are dependent for your pleasures.
It's an awful shock to start seeing people from underneath.\textsuperscript{14}

He then responds to the General's previous tirade on war by calling the
people insignificant units in an immense army who "will die without ever
knowing what your leaders are really fighting for."\textsuperscript{15} Francis, Alan, and
five companions leave together in protest.

The Press has observed the fiasco of Francis' return, but determines
that it did not really happen. "And since all events are recorded by the
Press, what the Press does not record cannot be an event."\textsuperscript{16} Thus, the
unlikely and embarrassing story of a Baronet disguising himself as a dog
can be dismissed and life can continue under the General, Vicar, and other
leaders of Pressan Ambo. Auden makes a vivid statement about that leader-
ship when a journalist photographs the assemblage. After the smoke clears,
the actors are seen masked: the General as a bull, the Vicar as a goat,
Iris as a cat, and Mrs. Hotham as a turkey. In the curtain call:

... the villagers wear various animal masks. The General is address-
ing them, but only a bellowing is audible. His hearers respond with
various animal noises, barking, meowing, quacking, grunting, or
squeaking, according to their characters. Gestures and cries become
more incoherent, bestial and fantastic, until at last all are drowned
in deafening military chords.\textsuperscript{17}

The satire of \textit{The Dog Beneath the Skin} points out the bestiality of
man, his inhumanity to others and his cruelty to those creatures less for-
tunate than he. The drives which tempt him in any of the situations, the
brothels, the cabaret, or the military, bring out those qualities that make him less the man: the sexual drive, greed, excess, and hatred. The masks at the end show mankind's dominating bestiality as Francis had observed during the years of his masquerade. The use of the dog parallels Arthur Miller's use of the talking cat who spies on man and sees his failings in "The Pussycat and the Plumber."

Auden strains theatrical convention in his use of the dog skin disguise. He asks the actor to be on all fours for much of the play, yet he has the dog act anthropomorphically throughout. The dog drinks whiskey and lifts the bowl in both paws to join in a toast. He plays and cheats at cards. He tears off a nurse's dress and dons it to follow Chimp into surgery. The play is generally closet drama, designed for reading rather than presentation. When produced, certain scenes are generally deleted, such as the scene between the two feet and the soliloquy by the dog skin disguise.

The play does display the criteria seen in most of the animal plays. The animal device is used to show the alienation of Francis from his society, to set him apart for an objective look at his fellows. Auden is clearly satirizing the vices and failings of man, taking Alan to one den of iniquity after another, and exaggerating the failings of businessmen, doctors, religious and military men. Finally, while the ending does not speak well of society in general, Alan, Francis, and their five companions represent the slight hope of a better society as they go off together.

Auden's use of disguise is an unusual approach. Several playwrights have gone one step further to have human beings actually transform into animals. Examples of this use are Aristophanes' The Birds and Eugene Ionesco's Rhinoceros.
The plays of Aristophanes (circa 450-387 B.C.) are our only extant examples of Greek Old Comedy. Records credit him with forty titles, with only eleven scripts surviving. Of those, three provide examples of animal characterizations: The Frogs (405 B.C.), The Wasps (422 B.C.), and The Birds (414 B.C.). We can only assume that his use reflects that of other playwrights whose titles also seem to indicate animal characters.

The Frogs has a brief chorus of frogs as Dionysus journeys to the underworld to bring back the best tragedian, Euripides or Aeschylus, to provide Athens with good tragedy again. This chorus could have been invisible, merely heard as the croaking of frogs tends to be. An invisible animal chorus is possible since there is another standard chorus for the bulk of the play. The Wasps takes the animal character a step further by dressing the wasp chorus as insects with stingers. The Birds is the best example of Aristophanes' animal plays. Most of the characters are birds. Into the domain of the birds come two men, Pithetaerus and Euelpides, disgruntled with Athenian society and seeking refuge and acceptance by the birds. The men are transformed into birds and later in the play hand out wings to other men seeking a utopian life. The transformation does not change the personality of the men. The birds in general represent types of people in Athenian society.

The dissatisfaction Pithetaerus and Euelpides show with Athenian society is vaguely explained by Euelpides: "the town's full of lawyers. Always suing everybody. Government men, too. And inspectors!" They also complain of prophets and long-haired poets, whom they consider bores. They are looking for Epops, the King of the Birds, who was once a man.
Because of Epops' disloyalty to his wife, Apollo changed her into a revered nightingale and Epops into a hoopoe. Pithetaerus and Euelpides describe their Utopia to Epops as a city where the most important business transacted would be an order from a friend to gorge themselves at a feast. Epops assures them that the birds' life is a comfortable one; they have no money, but neither do they have money problems.

Pithetaerus then proposes that the birds build a city, claiming the space between the earth and sky. They would then be in control of all sacrificial smoke or prayers sent to nourish the gods and in control of all heavenly visits to monitor and affect human kind. The birds would thereby rule the universe, starving the gods into submission and threatening to help or harm man's food supply by pledging to eat either the bugs or the seeds for man's crops. Epops thinks the proposal a stroke of genius and has the nightingale call the birds together.

Angered at the King's trust of enemy man, the birds take military formation for attack. Euelpides and Pithetaerus have only their eating utensils to serve as weapons and shields: stewpots, a ladle, and a fork. Epops stops the battle, allowing Pithetaerus to charm the birds with his claim that birds were once emperors over all creation until their power was usurped by the gods. He cites proof in Mercury's winged feet, Cupid's wings, and the rooster's red crown and awesome ability to make all mankind arise and begin their workday. He then angers the birds against man with the mention of snares and banquets. The birds are ready to accept his proclamation that the birds begin building their barrier city, thus stopping impromptu lovemaking visits to earth by the gods and demanding the sacrifice of mosquitoes for the birds with all offerings to
the gods. The Herald to mankind reports that earthlings are stricken with
tbirdmania and ten thousand are on their way to the mountain top to receive
their wings from Pithetaerus.

Thus, Cloud Cuckoo-Land is born. Soon Iris arrives as a messenger
from Zeus. Pithetaerus is impressed with her, but frightens her off with a
proposition that they check out his nest. Next arrives Prometheus, always
a friend to man, to warn Pithetaerus of the bad state of affairs on Olympus
since the building of Cloud Cuckoo-Land. Prometheus suggests that, when a
committee from Zeus arrives, Pithetaerus should stand firm, demanding bird
superiority and sealing the bargain through marriage with a goddess.

The birds are roasting a pig when the messengers from Zeus arrive:
Neptune (Poseidon), Hercules, and a Barbarian God. The gods are totally
inept: Hercules ready to bargain away Zeus' sceptre for the roast pig and
the Barbarian God hardly sure why they are there. Neptune appeals to the
weak-headed Hercules by bribing him with his potential inheritance from
Father Zeus. Pithetaerus destroys that argument by revealing to Hercules
his illegitimate origins, a delicate point that the gods had never told
him. With Hercules reduced to tears and all three gods drooling over the
roasting pig, the pact is sealed. A quite reluctant Iris appears for the
joyous marriage feast which ends the comedy.

The production of The Birds would prove a monumental costuming task.
When the nightingale calls the birds together, a catalogue of twenty-four
bird species is called to correspond with their entrances. With those
birds already present, that is close to thirty distinct bird costumes.
There are references to the size of beaks, indicating the use of masks
typical of Greek theatre.
The Birds is not a direct satire on a contemporary issue as is The Wasps with its references to Cleon and Laches. The Birds instead is a general jibe at Athenian types and the zealots who can sell the masses on a grandiose proposal, be it a military expedition or some other Cloud Cuckoo-Land. Aristophanes also pokes fun at the Greek pantheon, full of inferior types and as susceptible to manipulation as mankind.

Lois Spatz explains the use of birds as a symbolic flight of imagination. The wings that man receives in Cloud Cuckoo-Land allow his imagination to soar. It is through words and persuasion that Pithetaerus succeeds in his flight of fancy, rising from a nobody to a ruler of the universe wedded to a goddess. The Birds fulfills the criteria we see commonly in the animal plays. It is satire, light and general, finding amusement in the foibles and desires of man. It begins with characters alienated from the society of Athens, going to the birds for acceptance. As traditional comedy, it ends optimistically with the celebration of life, a marriage and the beginning of a new society. It is questionable whether the new society is really better than the old. Pithetaerus even mentions roasting birds who had been traitors to the building of the new Cloud Cuckoo-Land. It certainly is not clear why this mania is better than those which caused the two men to leave Athens originally. Regardless of the satiric point made, the pattern for animal plays was set during the Golden Age of Greece. It took the twentieth century to reach for the symbolism of animals to make satiric points in a fresh but paradoxically very old way.

Ionesco's use of transformation in Rhinoceros is similar to Aristophanes' use in The Birds. Pithetaerus and Eupldides become birds physically to show their affiliation with their new society, the Cloud Cuckoo-Land of
the birds. Likewise, Ionesco transforms human beings into rhinoceroses to symbolize their disaffection from the community of man. As more and more human beings transform, herds of the great thick-skinned pachyderms destroy society as it had been. In this absurd play, which has many parallels to Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Ionesco examines man's motives in conforming to a social movement such as Nazism. The story, and later the play, began as a 1940 diary entry about Nazis:

> The police are rhinoceroses. The magistrates are rhinoceroses. The rhinoceroses ask themselves how the world can have been run by men. You ask yourself: is it true the world once was run by men?^21

The play focuses on Berenger, a weak-willed, confused young man who drinks too much and admits he "can't get used to life." In contrast, his friend Jean is fastidiously dressed and sure of himself to the point of pomposity. Their Sunday morning meeting at an outdoor cafe is disrupted by the trumpeting of a galloping rhinoceros. Everyone on the street stares in amazement toward the audience, the site of the imaginary animal's charge, exclaiming chorally, "Oh, a rhinoceros!" Their initial shock and dismay changes to anger and outrage when a second charge tramples the housewife's cat. A Logician had been instructing an Old Gentleman on syllogisms:

```
All cats die.
Socrates is dead.
Therefore, Socrates is a cat.  
```

Now he turns to the question of whether the rhinoceros was African or Asian, uncorned or bicorned, and whether there were two animals or one sighted twice. After the Logician considers the numerous possibilities (including whether the rhinoceros might have lost a horn between sightings), Berenger points out that the question is still not answered.
However, the Logician points out, the problem is now correctly posed.
Ionesco is satirizing the scientific approach as a method of dealing with
social problems, in this case rhinoceritis.

The Sunday's phenomena become the object of discussion in Berenger's
office Monday morning. The scholar, Botard, refuses to believe the non-
sense even though Berenger and the secretary, Daisy, saw the rhinoceros
themselves. Neither will he believe the report in the dead cat's column
in the newspaper. The young lawyer, Dudard, is willing to listen to the
reports since some very reliable people believe in the rhinoceros sighting.
The office discussion is interrupted by an absent employee's wife, Mrs.
Boeuf, who claims to have been chased from her home by a rhinoceros. The
same beast proceeds to destroy the stairway to the second floor office,
clouding the stage with dust and filling the air with his trumpeting. As
they look out the upstage windows and door at the imaginary beast, Mrs.
Boeuf recognizes it to be her husband. Ionesco's symbolism begins taking
shape. Dudard had mentioned a "furtive underground organization," and
Daisy's call to the fire station for help reveals that there have been
thirty-two rhinoceroses reported. Others, like Boeuf, have been striken
by rhinoceritis and have joined the loud and forceful band. Mrs. Boeuf,
out of loyalty to her husband, leaps out of the door and conforms.

In Act II, Berenger visits his ailing friend, Jean. Before Berenger's
eyes, his stalwart friend becomes a rhinoceros. Physically, this is accom-
plished through Jean's several trips into the bathroom; each time he
emerges with greener skin and a more perceptible horn on his forehead. The
horns are celastic and acetone masks molded to the actor's forehead. His
voice becomes more rasperish and his ideas more inhuman and dogmatic. When
Berenger locks Jean in the bathroom, a rhinoceros horn pierces the door behind him. Expressionistic stage directions suggest that rhinoceros heads appear at the windows and from all sides as Berenger realizes the extent of rhinoceritis in society if Jean has been transformed. The streets are full of them when Berenger flees screaming.

In Act III, Berenger has sequestered himself in the safety of his apartment, anxiously rubbing his forehead out of fear a lump might appear. Dudard and Daisy arrive separately. They inform Berenger that the religious office manager, Papillion, the scholarly Botard, and the Logician have all become rhinoceroses. Berenger is awed that someone as firm in his thinking as Botard or as reasonable as the Logician would conform. Neither science nor religion can shield one from society's demands for conformity. As the act progresses, Dudard's statements become more and more favorable toward the rhinoceroses. As the beastly minority seems to become the majority, Dudard finds joining the movement the discreet and proper action to take.

Daisy and Berenger seem to be the last human survivors. Berenger ideistically plans for himself and Daisy to withstand the pressure and rebuild the human race as a latter day Adam and Eve. Daisy begins to show some resistance. Although she claims to love Berenger, she lacks the courage to face a future of isolation from society, even though it is now made up of rhinoceroses rather than of human beings. When she rushes into the street, Berenger's anguished cry maintains that "I am a human being." Then he wishes fervently that he too could belong; he tries to trumpet as they do, but he can only howl. He looks in a mirror and observes the
ugliness of man compared to the rough green skin of the rhinoceroses, but no change occurs. In a final statement of defiance, Berenger pledges:

I'll take on all of them. I'll put up a fight against the lot of them, the whole lot of them. I'm the last man left, and I'm staying that way until the end. I'm not capitulating.  

The difficulty of man withstanding social pressures to conform, even to ideas he disbelieves, is embodied in Berenger's "I am a human being." Ironically, the dissipated Berenger is the one who stands as a revolutionary, while the stronger characters succumb. The ending has been interpreted variously by critics, some seeing it as optimistic, a heroic stand of the individual's moral obligation to himself. Martin Esslin did not see it this way, calling Berenger's defiance farcical and tragicomic:

"His final defiant profession of faith in humanity is merely the expression of the fox's contempt for the grapes he could not have." The interpretation of the play as farcical or tragic can depend upon its production.

The problems with staging Rhinoceros are apparent. An audience will accept the theatrical convention of imaginary rhinoceroses and their destruction offstage through the aid of a realistic sound tape. They will even go along with the partial transformations of Jean and Dudard accomplished by green make-up and horned masks. However, a director must decide whether to follow Ionesco's suggestions of using rhinoceros heads in Act II, since the effect could come across as either nightmarish or comic. Ionesco has said that, though Rhinoceros is a farce, it is above all a tragedy:

Which mood predominates depends partly on how the play is directed. The odd thing is that when you don't use any props the play becomes blacker, more tragic; when you do use them, it's comic, people laugh.
The horns and the rhinoceros heads affect the audience reaction and their empathy for Berenger.

_Rhinoceros_ is the only script in this study (with the possible exception of _The Hairy Ape_) that clearly evokes a tragic catharsis from the audience. Berenger is an alienated man who is cut off from society and can find no one to share his traditional value system. His near fall as he thinks of joining the rhinoceroses is followed by enlightenment that he never will; he is a human being. This joining of tragedy and farce has become a category of Absurd Theatre, seen in works such as _Waiting for Godot_ by Samuel Beckett. In _Godot_, the clownlike characters act out the tragedy of life, always waiting for meaning and hoping for something better to come. Ionesco has said this of the blending of moods:

> It seems to me that the comical is tragic: and the tragedy of man, derisory. For the modern critical spirit nothing can be taken entirely seriously, nor entirely lightly. I have tried . . . to oppose the comic to the tragic in order to join them in a new theatrical synthesis. But it is not a true synthesis, for these two elements do not mix completely with each other, they coexist, they repulse one another constantly, each setting the other into relief; they criticize each other, mutually deny each other, constituting through this opposition a dynamic balance, a tension.  

This new tragicomic form sees the enlightenment of a tragic conclusion as more optimistic than the comic acceptance of a flawed society.

_Rhinoceros_ has been called a propaganda play. Ionesco clearly made his point with the gross symbolism of the rhinoceros herd for conformity and rhinoceritis as the power that draws people toward the group. Ionesco recognized this transformation as he saw acquaintances being drawn toward fascism before he left Rumania in 1938.
People allow themselves suddenly to be invaded by a new religion, a
doctrine, a fanaticism . . . . At such moments we witness a veritable
mental mutation. I don't know if you have noticed it, but when people
no longer share your opinions, when you can no longer make yourself
understood by them, one has the impression of being confronted with
monsters — rhinos, for example. 28

Berenger's isolation from and defiance against society is exaggerated when
the opposition is pictured as monstrous, unfeeling, destructive beasts. It
is the same isolation Kafka achieves when Gregor Samsa is portrayed as an
enormous beetle, an object of scorn. As being a rhinoceros becomes the
norm, Berenger likewise becomes the isolated object of derision. Martin
Esslin notes that Ionesco has since argued that:

... the theatre must work with veritable shock tactics; reality it-
selves, the consciousness of the spectator, his habitual apparatus of
thought -- language -- must be overthrown, dislocated, turned inside
out, so that he suddenly comes face to face with a new perception of
reality. 29

The use of animal characters has allowed Ionesco, as well as other writers,
a new shock tactic to use against audiences they fear will be too compla-
cent to think about their themes.

This shock tactic is frequently simplistic or exaggerated, with no need
to be logical. As mass media have bombarded modern audiences with daily
rations of violence and reasons to fear the world around them, a message
has to be blown out of proportion to make its effect. Seriously satiric
plays seem to show that confrontation with the bestial in each of us is
still shocking. This is true in nonanimal plays as well, such as the ston-
ing of the baby in Edward Bond's Saved.
One treatment of animals in plays is for the animal characters to be just animals. The characters may do fantastic things like talk, but they do so as animals given magical powers. There is some anthropomorphism, but there is no symbolism of the animals representing human qualities. Some examples in this category are The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder, Androcles and the Lion by George Bernard Shaw, and The Blue Bird by Maurice Maeterlinck.

The Skin of Our Teeth, a Pulitzer Prize winning drama, celebrates man's stamina in surviving the great obstacles of history: the ice age, the flood, and war. The Skin of Our Teeth uses animals only in Act I as the Antrobus family faces the oncoming ice age. Their Flintstone-like pets are Dolly the mammoth and Frederick the dinosaur. Mrs. Antrobus speaks to them, but only in the way one might carry on a monologue with a pet cat or dog. Frederick makes occasional comments, such as, "It's cold." The mammoth and dinosaur are just animals, representing all those that could not withstand the glaciers, while man was ingenious enough to adapt to the climactic changes.

In costuming the dinosaur or mammoth, the designer could use paper cut-outs, paper mache, or any other gimmick. They are an obvious theatrical effect along with the moving of scenery during the show, the use of a narrator and slides, or Sabina, the maid, breaking character to discuss the play with the audience. The show is presentational, as is Wilder's Our Town.
The animals have little importance in the plot or theme, but they further the point made in Act II that man is also part of the animal kingdom. Act II takes place in Atlantic City (a Vanity Fair) as the mammals of the world hold their convention with Mr. Antrobus as their president. Antrobus is representing mankind's superiority to the animals while still being one of them. The act shows the moral problems facing mankind, which lead eventually to the Flood, with the Antrobus family taking the part of Noah and his clan.

The play is didactic, but not as clearly drawn as Our Town. The audience never accepts these characters as real people like the Gibbses and Webbs. The Antrobus family is by turn the Biblical representation of man (Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah), humankind in general, and the modern American family. These are intertwined for an abstract effect. The son, Henry, for example, is just the son of the family until misbehavior is mentioned and then he is Cain with a mark branded on his forehead. Wilder is showing that the faults and foibles of mankind have continued to be with us since the ancient patriarchs, but he is optimistic that the good qualities and the animal desire for survival will continue the species and hopefully refine it.

In 1913, G. B. Shaw renovated the old fable of *Androcles and the Lion*. Intact is the story of the gentle animal lover, Androcles, who befriends a lion with a thorn in its paw. Years later, that same Androcles is ironically thrown to that same lion in the coliseum. The lion returns the favor by declining to eat his former benefactor.

Shaw's lion is a comic figure in a furry costume with retractable claws and movable tail. He makes a range of feline noises: roaring,
whimpering, and purring. Although he does not talk, he communicates in a charade-like manner, such as when he limps in the coliseum to identify himself to Androcles as the animal he had befriended. The lion is treated by all but Androcles as a ferocious beast. Androcles speaks to him with baby talk, soothing him while removing the thorn. The lion remains a lion and does not represent more than the creature did in the original fable.

There are two aspects to the humor. One is the lion acting like a domesticated tabby. When he is pleased, he rolls on his back hoping to have his stomach tickled. He rubs against Androcles and licks his face affectionately. The other humorous aspect is the anthropomorphic quality. When the thorn is removed, the lion joyously waltzes about the stage with Androcles.

Although the lion is integral to the story, the fable is a small part of Shaw's work. The lengthy preface on Christianity is twice the length of the play. The thorn in the paw is acted as a prologue to the play. The body of the play focuses on a group of Christians under arrest and on their way to the arena to face gladiators or lions. Shaw portrays Christianity as the Romans saw it, a heretical belief which threatened the peace of the state. He also shows the struggle of the early Christians to adhere to principles demanding their martyrdom. The fable becomes a practical joke on the Romans who take Androcles' taming of the lion to be a Christian miracle at the same time the Christians one by one fail to live up to their principles.

The satire is typically Shavian. It parallels Major Barbara of the Salvation Army or the revolutionary minister in Devil's Disciple, who discovers that ideals are not the most expedient ways to change the world. In
the end, Spintho turns from martyrdom, only to be accidentally eaten by a 
lion, Ferrovius joins the Pretorian Guard, Lavinia accepts the courting of 
the Roman Captain of the Guard, and Androcles leaves unimpeded with the 
lion. The time for the Christian movement was not come for them, but they 
felt there would be a "coming of the God who is not yet." That is as op-
timistic as Shaw could be on the subject.

Shaw's choice of characters shows an understanding of alienation. 
Each of the Christians under arrest is a misfit who was unable to follow 
the accepted religion and society of the day. Androcles was a naturalist 
who preferred animals to people. Lavinia could have lived comfortably in 
her upper class, but rejected it. Spintho was a blackguard and coward who 
could not be dedicated to any cause. Ferrovius tried to put his conscience 
to ease by denying his natural tendencies to fight and bully others. 
Shaw's purpose need not have been to draw alienated characters. It is 
typical for those following new religious movements to be estranged from 
society; thus, many early Christians fit that mold. It also fits the trend 
of the animal plays because Androcles forms a close attachment to animals, 
communicating better with them than with human beings.

In fantasy, the animal and inanimate world can spring to life. Lions 
can dance and dinosaurs can speak. In The Blue Bird, two children take a 
Peter Pan-like journey through the Land of Memory, the Palace of the Night, 
the Realm of the Forest, the Garden of Happiness, and the Kingdom of the 
Future. The purpose of their journey is to obtain the bluebird, the symbol 
of elusive happiness and the secret of existence. A fairy sends them on 
their journey with a magic diamond that allows them to see into the souls 
of their companions: Dog, Cat, Bread, Sugar, Water, Fire, and Milk. This
fantasy trip is a natural for children, who, like primitives, live closer to nature: "civilized man with his overpowering rational outlook is cut off from nature and cannot venture forth in the fantasy world."1  

The cat and dog are the most important animal characters in *The Blue Bird*. At the beginning of the play, Maeterlinck suggested the use of a real cat and dog near the hearth of the children's cottage. When the fantasy begins, the animals would disappear down a trap door and masked actors would take their places. The actors would act as the animals, Cat washing herself and Dog jumping about excitedly. At the Fairy Palace in Act II, Cat dons a Puss in Boots outfit and Dog dresses as one of Cinderella's footmen.  

The personalities of the animals are as we would stereotype them. The dog is extremely loyal, willing to follow Tyltyl and Mytyl even though the fairy threatens death to those who journey with the children. Repeatedly on the trip, the dog sacrifices himself in an attempt to protect his young masters. The cat is independent, sneaky, less trustworthy, and hypocritical. She is an enemy of the children, a point discerned only by man's best friend, the devoted dog.  

Another way of interpreting the stereotyped cat and dog is in the Medieval tradition of a good and bad angel. The cat is the bad angel who plots with the trees and animals against the woodcutter's children and who leads them into the danger of the Palace of the Night. According to Cat, "Light has taken sides with Men; she is our worst enemy."2 Since Dog has also taken sides with man, the animals conspire to tie him up in the roots of a tree. The Bull plans to butt the children, and the Pig wants to eat the little girl. The animals' revenge against man indicates they are
representing animals given the human qualities we usually associate with them. The children are led into danger and would have been killed had the dog not broken his bonds and protected them against the multitude of dangers: wolf, bear, pig, bull, and ass. The dog holds off the attackers until Light arrives. The devious cat then dupes the children by claiming to have been injured while protecting them in the dark. The cat further proves to be wicked by choosing to visit the chief Miseries while Light, Dog, and the children go to the Palace of Happiness.

The bluebird remains elusive. The one from the Land of Memory proves to be a blackbird; the bird from the future turns pink. Those from the Palace of Night die in the light, and those in the forest cannot be caught. Once back home, the children find that the real bluebird may all the time have been the turtledove from their home, the true seat of happiness.

Upon returning home, the cat and dog lose their magical ability to speak, but not before having one last verbal cat and dog fight. The dog howls with despair at the thought of losing his voice and pledges to be very good and clean and to learn to read and write. The cat’s enigmatic farewell promises only to love the children "as much as you deserve. . . ."³

The final scene is back in the woodcutter's cottage. The real dog and cat are back at the hearth as in the opening scene. The children awaken from their fantastic journey, anxious to tell their parents. The mother, listening to their ranting, fears they are drunk or ill. Yet not all the magic has disappeared from the dream, for the children see their humble woodland home as much prettier than before, their bed more
comfortable, and their parents more precious. Especially, they find that
the elusive bluebird could be found around their own hearth, or, as a later
fantastic traveler stated, "There's no place like home."
There is a special group of plays in which the animal characters are
animals with clearly human abilities to reason, speak, and act. Satire is
very strong in this group. Two lighthearted American shows are of this
type: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *The Pussycat and the Expert
Plumber*. Two European plays are among the most challenging scripts with
practically all animal casts: *Rostand's Chanticleer* and *Capek's The Insect
Comedy*.

*You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was an off-Broadway hit musical in
1967. It is adapted from Charles Schulz's comic strip, "Peanuts," with
book by John Gordon and music and lyrics by Clark Gesner. The characters
are the familiar Charlie Brown, Lucy, Schroeder, Linus, Peppermint Patty,
and Snoopy. Snoopy, Charlie Brown's pet beagle, is played without an ani-
mal costume. The actor is dressed much like the other children, perhaps in
black pants and a white turtleneck. No special make-up is necessary, al-
though a dog collar and a pair of floppy black ears might hasten audience
identification of the character. The only other costume pieces could be
hats as Snoopy portrays his World War I flying ace or plays softball with
the team. The script relies on audience familiarity with the "Peanuts"
characters and situations for audience acceptance of the actor as a dog.
He lays atop his dog house, carries his supper dish, fights the Red Baron,
and perches like a vulture.

The comic strip Snoopy has delighted readers for years and this musi-
cal showcases his multifaceted personality. What other dog plays softball
and aids the team by biting a runner and catching a flyball in his teeth?
One musical number has him spotlighted atop his doghouse, flying his Sopwith Camel in search of the dreaded Red Baron. In another rousing dance number, he sings of the glories of super duper "Suppertime." In a more pensive moment he shares the aphorism that "Cats are the crabgrass on the lawn of life," and then he admits that he's also scared to death of them! In the song entitled "Snoopy," he enumerates the simple pleasures of a dog's life and then slips into one of his many fantasies:

Pleasant day, pretty sky,  
Life goes on. Here I lie.  
Not bad. Not bad at all.  
Cozy home, board and bed.  
Sturdy roof beneath my head.  
Not bad. Not bad at all.  
Faithful friends always near me  
Bring me bones, scratch my ears.  
Little birds come to cheer me,  
Everyday, sitting here on my stomach . .  
With their sharp little claws --  
Which are usually cold and occasionally painful  
And sometimes there are so many  
That I can hardly stand it.  
RATS!  
(bolero rhythm) I feel every now and then that I got to bite someone.  
I know every now and then what I want to be:  
A fierce jungle animal crouched on the limb of a tree.  

So Snoopy talks, sings, and dances his way through the musical.

The writers of the musical were clearly capitalizing on the popularity of the "Peanuts" strip and, thereby, included the dog character. To find the purpose of the character, it is necessary to go to his originator, cartoonist Charles Schulz. Many writers have published analyses of "Peanuts" as a cultural or religious parable. Schulz says he is "usually very flattered by these interpretations -- but my chief purpose is to get the strips done in time to get down to the post office by five o'clock when it closes." When he began the comic strip in 1950, the children were a way
to express some of his childhood fears and frustrations, and to remind readers how their perceptions of the world had changed as they aged. A pet dog was at first just a natural element of the world of Charlie Brown and the children. Schulz notes,

The mere fact that we could read Snoopy's thoughts was funny in itself when "Peanuts" first began. Now, of course, it is the content of those thoughts that is important, and, as he progresses in his imagination to new personalities, some of the things which he originally did as an ordinary dog would no longer be funny.³

Schulz once added a cat to the comic strip, but dropped it for two reasons: he could not draw a decent cat, and it limited Snoopy's character.

I discovered that by having a cat in the strip it was turning Snoopy too much towards being a real dog, and Snoopy in the comic strip is definitely not a real dog. He just doesn't act like a real dog. Snoopy acts and thinks like we animal-owners like to "think" our pets react in our wildest fantasies... but, no, he's not a real dog.⁴

Through the years, Snoopy has become more and more anthropomorphic, living out the fantasies that many children and adults might have — to be a wartime hero or a famous novelist. The character has become a part of modern Americana, honored with a balloon in the Macy's parade and numerous product logos. Snoopy was even named mascot of the third Apollo moon mission and was the namesake of one of the lunar landing modules. Snoopy appeals to the childlike fantasy left in each of us. We laugh, as Bergson cited, when we see an animal paralleling human actions. This is best shown by Snoopy's unsuccessful race for the presidency in 1968, which provoked California legislators to pass a law prohibiting the write-in of fictional characters on election ballots! Snoopy even received his own musical in 1976, a sequel to You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, aptly entitled Snoopy!!!
The Pussycat and the Plumber Who Was a Man is a radio play written in 1939 for CBS by Arthur Miller. It is the delightful political satire of a talking cat, Tom, who blackmails his way into being mayor of a town and plans to become governor of the state and maybe even president of the country! Tom assumes that in every man's life there is something he is ashamed of, something he would sell his soul to keep secret. Tom's ring of feline spies finds out those secrets and soon his owners, the mayor, and the leading figures in town are supporting a phantom candidate in the mayoral election — Tom Thomas. With the media on his side, Tom portrays himself as the publicity hating crusader, the unseen marvel. The voters, easily swayed by the media descriptions of the tall, blonde miracle man who was an air ace in the war, elect Tom as mayor.

His next step is the gubernatorial race. He enlists the ex-mayor's support with the assurance that the blackmailing will continue to work:

The one thing a man fears most next to death is the loss of his good name. Man is evil in his own eyes, my friends — worthless — and the only way he can find respect for himself is by getting other people to say he's a nice fellow. The only man who'd expose me is one who really believes he's upright and clean, really in his secret heart, and such a man does not exist in this world. I will be governor.

His strategy succeeds until the political convention, when Sam, the plumber, discovers the mystery candidate is really a cat. Tom tries bribery and threats to Sam's reputation, but Sam is the exception that Tom thought did not exist. Sam refuses to join the cover-up, even if no one ever speaks to him again. He proclaims that no pussycat could ever become an expert plumber and no pussycat will ever be governor of the state. Sam carries the cat to the convention floor and finally forces a confession from Tom after a severe tail twisting. Tom barely escapes alive, and when last
heard from he is back home, sadly perusing the bookshelves for some appro-
appropriate reading material: *Paradise Lost* or *The Decline and Fall of the
Roman Empire*. And so ends the political history of one candidate — Tom,
the cat.

Since this was a radio play, Miller had no worries about staging the
animal character. The plot could have worked with any animal with access
to men's homes, such as dogs or mice, but the devious character suited a
cat. Tom plays with the men he blackmails in the same way a cat will har-
ry a mouse it has trapped. The use of an animal blackmailer and candidate
makes Miller's satire more extreme. Besides, as Tom tells the mayor, "No
prospective blackmailer has a clean enough record to dare to do what I've
done. And the only reason I succeeded is because I'm a cat with nothing
to hide."^6

Miller's satire is blunt. He questions the American voter's reliance
on the media, and the media's ability to distort facts and mislead the pub-
lic. He also suggests the corruption possible in political machines when
conformity is easier than honesty. For a light, humorous piece, *The Pussy-
cat and the Plumber* asks serious questions about American politics.

These two American plays use a single animal character interacting
with humans. Two European plays use almost entire animal casts. Edmond
Rostand spent ten years writing *Chanticleer*, only to have it coldly re-
ceived by Parisian society and critics on its premier in 1910. It has sel-
don been staged and literary critics have deemed it virtually unstageable.
The cast consists of some eighty barnyard and forest animals and birds. If
done with any degree of realism, the variety of species makes the play far
more difficult to costume than Capek's *Insect Comedy* which uses only a few insect types. Consider this partial cast list from *Chanticleer*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Animal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chanticleer, the Rooster</td>
<td>The Woodpecker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patou, the farmdog</td>
<td>The Turkey and Hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blackbird</td>
<td>The Duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peacock</td>
<td>The Young Guinea Cock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nightingale</td>
<td>The Pheasant Hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Screech Owl</td>
<td>The Guinea Hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Game Cock</td>
<td>The Hens: Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hunting Dog</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Carrier Pidgeon</td>
<td>Grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cat</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gander</td>
<td>Speckled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Capon</td>
<td>Tufted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Cockerel</td>
<td>A Spider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Swan</td>
<td>A Guinea Pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Cuckoo</td>
<td>Chickens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Goose</td>
<td>Chicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Garden Warbler</td>
<td>Barnyard animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits</td>
<td>Woodland Creatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
<td>Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Birds</td>
<td>Toads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy Cocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only human being in the play is a stage manager who appears in a prologue and orders the curtain to stay down. He then desires the audience to listen to the rural sounds and picture a window into the farmyard. Through an invisible screen of magnifying glass, we will see the souls of nature. The prologue sets the scene and prepares the audience to understand the animal characters.

The characters are symbolic of mankind and his societies. Rostand affirmed this:

*Chanticleer* is a symbolic poem in which I have used animals to evoke and relate the sentiments, passions, and dreams of men. My Cock is not, properly speaking, a comic hero. He is the character I have created to express my own dreams and to allow a bit of myself to relive before my eyes... *Chanticleer* is, if you will, something like the story of the human effort: the creative effort locked in struggle with the evil of creating, and all that this evil contains in the form of disappointments, hopes, sorrows, gratifications, great or small.
There are three locations in the play. The farmyard represents structured society with its pecking order. The tea garden of the Guinea Hen is the artificial and hypocritical high society. The forest is the world of freedom, away from social restraints, but exposed to danger.

The plot of *Chanticleer* is a struggle of idealism. The cock is poultry's Orpheus, who thinks he charms the sun into rising with his sonorous crowing. A dismal morning means he must not have crowed clearly enough. Chanticleer, then, is a symbol of light and beauty. His enemies are worshippers of night: the cat, the owls, and the other night birds. Into the farmyard comes the tempting Golden Pheasant Hen whocharms Chanticleer and, following his battle with and success over the villainous White Pile Game Cock, lures him to the forest. Chanticleer's first love remains the dawn, a fact which makes the Pheasant Hen increasingly more jealous. To prove to him that the sun will rise without his crow, she plots with the creatures of night to continue their nighttime sounds while she shields his head beneath her wing until the forest is becoming light. Not to be dissuaded from his ideal and duty, Chanticleer remembers the admonition of the murdered Nightingale to sing on, so he crows melodiously to improve the dawn as best he can. He determines to return to the farmyard where he is needed, since his duty to wake others remains even if his ideal of raising the sun has been dampened. Impressed by his nobility, the Pheasant Hen sacrifices herself to a hunter's snare in an attempt to save the cock's life.

The characters of the play could be variously interpreted. There are the stock types of melodrama: the hero Chanticleer, the villains, the Game Cock, the Blackbird and the Night birds, and the heroine, the Pheasant Hen.
Chanticleer is very much the hero and guardian of the farmyard: assigning work, warning the inhabitants of danger, and providing them with a leader who evokes pride and respect. But he has the faults of excessive pride and gullibility, refusing to heed the warnings of Fatou, the dog, regarding the traitorous Blackbird and Peacock.

A more important interpretation of Chanticleer concerns ideals. Chanticleer greeted each day because his duty was to awaken the world to work, to raise the beauty of the sun and to banish the darkness and evil of night. That faith in himself and his importance, whether real or imagined, contributed to his success in the barnyard. When he was losing the battle with the White Pile Game Cock, it was his brave action to protect the flock of chicks from a threatening hawk that invigorated him and caused him to return to the fight and to defeat the White Pile. Chanticleer was driven by his duty, but his ego was fed by the adulation of the poultry yard. When he felt that admiration weaken at the Guinea Hen's garden party, he struck out verbally at them all. He then followed the Pheasant Hen into the forest, but freedom and love could not make him forget his duty to make the sun rise. He retained faith in himself. Even when the Pheasant Hen proved to him that the sun would rise with or without his crowing, Chanticleer would not abandon his duty; he redefined it. There was still a corporeal world to awaken and a workday to begin. The place destiny had put him was in the farmyard where he was useful, and so he returned, optimistic and with continued faith in himself. Chanticleer is a tribute to the optimistic human spirit, having learned "that he who has witnessed the death of his dream must either die at once or else arise stronger than before."
Because of the large cast, the satire is wide ranging. The numerous
game and show cocks who attend the Guinea Hen's garden party portray every
possible vanity of looks, breeding, and social position. The Guinea Hen's
pretence of high society, having names announced at the gate and her fawn-
ing over each illustrious guest, pokes fun at the whole teacup-cocktail
party scene. Many of the characters are drawn to satirize particular
foibles. The Blackbird affects Parisian slang and is anxious to know all
the gossip. The Pheasant Hen has vainly denied her gender and chosen in-
stead the colorful plummage of the male bird. Rostand even poked fun at
his animal technique, referring to Aristophanes by having the Woodpecker
repeatedly affirm that "Birds have talked Greek ever since Aristophanes."\textsuperscript{9}

Rostand had some trouble in determining the amount of his symbolism.
Some of the animals are very much animals, others are clearly human in
spirit; suffused throughout is the element of fantasy. The best example of
fantasy is the woodland telephone which allows Chanticleer to keep up on
events in the barnyard: "the blue morning-glory opening in his cage amid
the wisteria, communicates by subterranean filaments with this white con-
volvulus trembling above the pool. . . ."\textsuperscript{10} So, literally "through the
grapevine," Chanticleer learns how much he is missed at the farm.

\textit{Chanticleer} was one of Rostand's later dramatic works. It was con-
sidered a liability to his dramatic career, although critics praised his
poetry and use of words. Like Rostand, other playwrights who have tried
the animal technique in the twentieth century, have seldom been praised
for the work. At the time Rostand was writing, the theatre was in the grip
of realism, which relegated animals to the realm of fantasy with \textit{Peter Pan}
and \textit{The Blue Bird}. 
One of the best examples of an animal play was written by the Czechoslovakian brothers, Josef and Karel Capek, in 1922. *The World We Live In (The Insect Comedy)* is written as three one-act plays with insect characters representing the vices of mankind. The acts are loosely tied together with a prologue and epilogue featuring a vagrant who has drunkenly wandered into the woods. The outcast from society observes the insect world and, with his new knowledge of life, resolves to rejoin society; however, his newfound dedication to improve his life and society is cut short by death.

The Capeks had no precedent to follow in their collaboration. The three twentieth century animal plays preceding theirs were adaptations of style or plot: *The Blue Bird*, in the fantasy trip pattern of *Peter Pan*, *Chanticleer* and *Androcles and the Lion* renderings of the Medieval fables.

According to their production notes, the Capeks' immediate motive came from the reading of J. H. Faber's works, "La Vie des Insectes" and "Souvenirs Entomologiques" in 1919. In Faber, the Capeks found such surprisingly peculiar and strong resemblances of the forms of human life, especially in regard to the struggle for life, the cruel cleverness of instinct, the care for making its kind secure, so that at the time of war, with its many accompanying incidents, it was impossible in pondering upon the insects not to think of the human race. Another work that the Capeks seem to have been inspired by is the Russian story "What Never Happened,"
a philosophical dialogue of the beasts and insects by Vsevolod Garsin.
The Garsin story also uses the dung beetle treasuring its ball of manure
and the chrysalis struggling to be reborn.\textsuperscript{14}

The play was first produced at the National Theatre of Czechoslovakia
at Prague from scenic designs by Josef Capek and M. Hilar, the Director of
the National Theatre at Prague. Several technical suggestions help to con-
vey the animal characters. During several set changes, the script suggests
that the figures of trees, flowers, animals, beetles, and other insects
be thrown onto a front scrim. The set colors suggested also match the in-
sect world. The butterfly scene is done before rayon silk drops with pil-
lows and furniture in bright butterfly colors. The costumes are equally
colorful for the "social butterflies." Act II represents a sandy hillock
with caves and large blades of grass. Here live the beetles, crickets,
and wasps. Act III represents an ant heap where the ants wage their war
for the space between two blades of grass. The oversized elements, such
as the huge blades of grass, indicate the visual perspective into the in-
sect realm. The costuming instructions do little to aid the designer,
stating only that "The actors impersonating the insects should be chosen
with an eye to personalities that can be made up to suggest the various
types they are portraying. The coloring of the costumes should be the same
as the insects portrayed."\textsuperscript{15} Colored tights and leotards could be the
basis for most of the costumes for the more than sixty characters.

The play begins in a forest glade as the tramp encounters a professor
chasing butterflies. The tramp is an Everyman; he drunkenly stumbles and
claims he was "performing the fall of man."\textsuperscript{16} He identifies himself as
"Just man! Everybody knows me. I'm just a man. Nobody calls me anything
else. 'Man,' they say to me, 'don't do that!' 'Man, I'll have you arrested!'... The Tramp begins with a pessimistic view of life and an alienation from society: "What's a man anyway, any more than a butterfly, or a beetle, or an ant?" The Professor makes a direct parallel between the two worlds by claiming that "If you know life you know them [Butterflies]. They are very like us." The sullen Tramp sits on a log to watch "Nature's answer to life's greatest riddle," but he doubts that he will understand much, since "life so far hasn't taught me how to live or how to die."

Act I, "The Butterflies," is a satire of drawing room society with the social butterflies flitting carelessly from one flirtation to another. Even death is taken lightly by these insects, who laugh when Victor is eaten by a bird while pursuing Iris, the over-the-hill siren. Meanwhile, Felix spouts inane poetry reminiscent of a Restoration fop. The Tramp finds the butterfly society frivolous and disgusting, filled with self-serving creatures.

Act II, "The Marauders," shows the society of beetles, crickets, parasites, and wasps in constant pursuit of gain. The chrysalis hangs in her cocoon on a blade of grass waiting to be born. She represents youth and its idealism: "I only know I want to do something great." Contrasted with this idealism is the capitalistic materialism of the dung beetles who roll their pile of manure with them.

FEMALE BEETLE: Oh, what a lovely little pile, what a treasure, what a beautiful little ball, what a precious little fortune.
MALE BEETLE: It's our only joy. To think how we've saved and scraped, toiled and moiled, denied ourselves, gone without this, stinted ourselves, . . . ."
Their treasure is never big enough— they want another pile — and maybe three. When the pile is stolen, the male beetle is more concerned over the loss of his treasure than the location of his wife. The Vagrant notes that "at least these creatures are human, even if they are not fashionable. The desire for possession, even if it's for nothing but a ball of manure, is real enough."\textsuperscript{23}

Next, the Tramp encounters the predatory ichneumon fly or wasp. While the dung beetles' materialism was miserly, just for the sake of gathering treasure, the wasp lives and works for his child, a spoiled little larva who joys in eating the soft parts of papa's victims while they are still kicking. Into the neighborhood move the expectant parents, the Crickets. They fawn over each other, plan for curtains at their window, and dream of the happy chirping their little ones will soon make. The wasp's next victim is Mrs. Cricket. The Vagrant laments that he "stood there like a log" and allowed the murder. The Vagrant puzzles over the killing:

Here's a funny thing — he wants to provide for his family, natural enough — if a man doesn't do that they call him a lazy brute — so he goes out after live crickets — that seems all right — and yet even a cricket wants to live!\textsuperscript{24}

The Vagrant is acknowledging the inequity of life. Reenforcing those ideas is the socialistic Parasite who thinks the answer is equality:

I say all things are born equal, or at least they should be. . . . Collecting things shouldn't be allowed. You eat your fill and you've got enough. Collecting things is robbing them who can't collect things. Eat your fill and have done with it. Then there'd be enough for all, wouldn't there now?\textsuperscript{25}

However, the hypocrisy and laziness of the Parasite is soon apparent. His philosophy is "Why should I work when someone else has more than he
can consume?" When the wasp's nest is unattended, the Parasite shows his idea of equality by eating all of the wasp's stores as well as the larva. The Tramp realizes that "Life is the prey of life" and is disgusted that "this is the World We Live In."

By the beginning of Act III, "The Ants," the Vagrant has learned of life from the insects.

I have seen all creatures sucking like lice at the great body of creation in a fearful craving to increase their share! To increase it, as we humans do, by depriving others! I wonder if I am any different from these insects... This insect greed of self knows only self, and doesn't know that there is anything beyond! The Vagrant realizes "the price we owe for life, [is] not to ourselves, [but] to others." With that understanding, he resolves to return to society, but first he observes the ant kingdom. The ants are the antithesis of the selfish individualism he had observed in Act II. The ants work unquestioningly, striving for efficiency and speed, even though workers fall dead of exhaustion on the job. Under their communistic system, "all have to work. All for Him... The Whole! The State! The Nation!" Their Inventor creates an enormous war machine which the engineers must use. The Vagrant then observes the military dictators order the slaughter of women, children, and whole regiments for the space between two blades of grass. This unselfish sacrifice of life by the soldier ants is not the answer the Vagrant had sought. Their lives are thrown away to the whims of totalitarianism, while each military commander prays to the god who has allowed him to massacre the other side in the name of Justice. The Vagrant can take no more and crushes the yellow commander beneath his boot.

In the epilogue, the Chrysalis finally is born, only to die after her brief life as a moth. The Vagrant is saddened to see such beauty and hope
live so briefly. He wants to carry his own hope back to society, that all
"who live could only join forces -- against destruction, against death."\(^30\)
Death has no mercy, though, and the Vagrant is denied his opportunity to
rejoin life. He dies and is found by a woodcutter. A woman enters carry-
ing a child to be baptized. Though individual lives end, others begin and
society continues.

Capeks' insect play was greeted with criticism for its pessimism, a
view the writers denied. To appease the critics, though, they offered an
alternative ending in which the Vagrant awakened after a dream of death to
accept a job from the woodcutter. This would seem to imply that work is
the answer to society's problems, but that does not follow from the self-
serving examples of the beetles, wasps, and ants.

The Insect Comedy is a morality play where the vices of mankind are
symbolized by insects rather than by abstractions. It is true that the
allegory lacks virtues to balance the vices. The Capeks remarked:

> The play should be, to a certain measure, a moral, criticism, and
> mirror, therefore it is natural that there are chosen more dismal,
> more loathsome examples. But it is also necessary to confess that
> Faber's images from the insect life applied to humans did not even
> encourage to anything more cheerful.\(^31\)

The Vagrant becomes the positive element in the play. He is disgusted with
the vices he sees played out by the butterflies, beetles, wasps, parasites,
and ants. He remains hopeful that human society can achieve more than the
insects. With the Chrysalis, he regains ideals he had long since lost.

Even though the Vagrant's return to society is stymied by Death, the hope
he embodied lives on with each new life. The brothers wrote to the editor
of the *New York Herald*:
You, the public of our play, you are neither butterflies, beetles, or ants if you can see the futility of insect life; you yourself are Tramps; you are the living, enduring, truth-seeking consciences, just like our own Tramp.\textsuperscript{32}

These four plays use animals symbolically to make statements about man and human nature. The technique works well by taking the satire a step away from a direct picture of man. It is the same theory used in science fiction satire where the beings may be polka-dotted or three-eyed, but they make the same mistakes common to human nature. Animal characterizations may never be prevalent and the animal plays may meet with critical objections, but they will continue as an effective mode for satire.
Since prehistory, animals have been linked to man's explanation of the supernatural, whether demonic or angelic. Examples include the talking snake of Genesis, every witch's familiar, her cat, Pegasus the flying horse, mermaids, and Cerberus, the guard dog of Hades. One of the uses of animals in plays has been to represent the supernatural. This was common in Greek and Medieval mystery plays. In the twentieth century, it has been done in *The Apple Tree*, *Orpheus*, and *Equus*.

The Genesis story is the basis for the first act of the musical *The Apple Tree*, a 1966 production by Bock, Harnick, and Coopersmith. Act I is adapted from Mark Twain's "The Diary of Adam and Eve," Act II is adapted from Frank Stockton's "Lady or the Tiger," and Act III is a modern Cinderella tale, "Passionella," by Jules Feiffer.

The animal character in *The Apple Tree* is the snake who tempts Eve to sample the apple. He is portrayed by a handsome actor dressed in a tuxedo who suggests slithering movements with his gestures, poses, and perhaps a lisp. His temptation preys on Eve's desire for the aloof Adam to love and need her. The Snake promises that the apple holds the seeds of knowledge that will allow her to teach Adam plumbing, philosophy, pottery glazing, woodcraft, first-aid, and home economy. Even better, Adam will find her indispensable and relish every conversation. Since Adam had tended to avoid her and her constant chattering, Eve was lured to try the apple.

*The Apple Tree* takes a whimsical look at the traditional seduction story. At the sentimental conclusion as Adam and Eve grow old together and Eve dies, little thought is given to the devil, except perhaps to give him
credit for their happy life together. Adam ponders, "I used to think it was a terrible tragedy when Eve and I had to leave the garden. Now I know it really didn't matter. Because, wheresoever she was, there was Eden." As can be expected in musical comedy, there is no need to think very far beneath the surface of the romantic story or songs.

Cocteau's Orphee (1925), another play using a demonic animal, is a more thoughtful work. The story entwines several Greek myths about Orpheus, the musician who journeyed to the underworld to recapture his love, Eurydice, from death, and the story of his being torn apart by frenzied Bacchantes for refusing to believe in Bacchus. There is also a guardian angel, Heurtebise, an idea from Christian rather than Greek legend.

In Cocteau's plot, Eurydice had been a Bacchante before her saving marriage to Orphee. Her ties to the old group and its leader, Aglaonice, are one source of tension in the house. Another is Orphee's obsession with a white horse which followed him in the street and now occupies a niche in their apartment. Orphee believes the horse has communicated with him by tapping with its hoof to indicate letters of the alphabet and by nodding in agreement to yes-no questions. Orphee is fascinated by his equestrian ouija board and the single enigmatic sentence the horse has spelled: "Madame Eurydice reviendra des enfers" (Madame Eurydice will return from Hades). Orphee has given up his work and fame to sit for hours waiting for further messages. He submits the horse's sentence in a poetry contest, not noticing that the acronym is "Merde," the French word for excrement. The Bacchantes who are judging the contest are so insulted by the submission that they kill Orphee. Translator Carl Wildman managed a clever play on words in English by translating the horse's message as "Orphee hunts
Eurydice's lost life," which has the acronym of "0 Hell." In each play, the horse seems to tap the innocent "Merci" (Merde?) or "Hello" (0 Hell?) to further gull Orphee.

The rest of the plot loosely parallels the Orpheus legend. Eurydice is poisoned by the Bacchantes and is taken by Death, who in Cocteau's play is a lovely woman wearing a pink evening gown and surgical gloves who travels through mirrors. Heurtebise tells Orphee to pursue them through the mirror. Eurydice is allowed to return to life for as long as Orphee does not look at her, which is only a matter of minutes. Eurydice returns to the mirror, Orphee is torn apart by the Bacchantes and joins her in the Underworld.

The supernatural in the play might be interpreted as a bad and good angel. The horse represents the demonic force which tempts Orphee away from creativity and success. The horse is kept in a niche, a place in homes often reserved for an object of reverence. The head and curving neck of the horse are seen atop an actor wearing tights, with a partial door covering the upper legs and breast.

There are several hints that the horse is supernatural and evil. Early in the play, Orphee states that "we are up to our necks in the supernatural. We are playing hide and seek with the gods." When he receives the threatening letter from the Bacchantes regarding the offensive acronym of the horse's poem, Orphee laments, "the horse has befooled me." The stage directions then read "The horse's spell is ended." At the close of the play, Orphee offers a prayer when they return to life that affirms that Eurydice "killed the devil in the shape of a horse."
The good guardian angel is in human form as Heurtebise, a glazier, who for much of the play seems like the "other man" for Eurydice's attentions. Cocteau developed this aspect in his movie version of Orpheus. Heurtebise is revealed to be supernatural when Orphee absentmindedly moves a chair on which Heurtebise is standing, leaving him hanging in midair. Eurydice is frightened and states, "you are complex. I thought you were of my race, but you are of the race of the horse." This statement also helps to define the horse as supernatural.

Heurtebise is a device for furthering the action of the play, but some of these actions confuse his purpose in the play. For example, he carries messages between Eurydice and Aglaonice, including the poisoned sugar cube and poisoned envelope from Aglaonice that kill the horse and Eurydice. Since the Bacchantes cause the death, Heurtebise is either an inept guardian angel or an agent of Bacchus.

Bacchus or Dionysus was the final god of the Greek pantheon, the son of Zeus and the Theban princess Semele. Originally, the god of wine, Bacchus could inspire men to innocent merriment or vicious drunkenness. In myth, the Bacchantes were women frenzied with wine who would tear to pieces wild creatures and devour the bloody shreds of flesh. Later in history, Bacchus was honored for his inspiration of poetry at yearly festivals of plays. Because Orphee, the poet, has turned away from true creativity to call the horse's tapping poetry, he dies at the hand of Bacchus, being dismembered by Bacchantes. Another facet of the worship of Bacchus was the belief in resurrection. As the vine is pruned with the winter and seems dead, it leafs again in spring to bear fruit. So Orphee, though dismembered, is reunited in a new life with the dead Eurydice and their guardian
angel, Heurtebise. They close the play drinking wine and saluting their
god who is poetry.

Orphee contains the elements of satire, alienation, and optimism found in most of the animal plays. The satire is against a person singlemindedly following a false hope, be it an intelligent horse, a demagogue, or a religious cult. Orphee becomes so engrossed in his false god, the demon horse, that he becomes alienated from his true creative god, from his followers and family, and from the values he had held. With his death, he sees the truth and is sent back to his apartment with his wife to enjoy his paradise of wine and poetry — truly an optimistic conclusion.

The finest example of an animal as a supernatural agent is Peter Shaffer's Equus. In the 1974-75 theatre season, Equus received the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award, the Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for best play, the Outer Critic's Circle Award, and the Los Angeles Critic's Award.

Equus is set in Rokeby Psychiatric Hospital where Dr. Martin Dysart, a child psychiatrist, is treating Alan Strang, a seventeen-year-old who has blinded six horses with a steel spike. Six actors wearing tracksuits of chestnut velvet and symbolic metal and leather horses' heads and hoofs appear during the action of the play in a manner reminiscent of a Greek chorus. The actors' heads are seen beneath the silhouetted horses' heads. Shaffer asks costumers to avoid any literalism which could suggest the cosy familiarity of a domestic horse. The actor stands erect and creates the animal effect through mime, using the legs, knees, neck, and horse's mask. The masks are put on ceremonially before the audience. The audience does not hear the horses speak words, but the script calls repeatedly for the
"equus noise," a combination of humming, thumping, and stamping to show reactions of fear, approval, or disapproval.

Young Alan, however, in his fascination and reverence for horses, imagines he has heard them speak. Flashbacks throughout the play show Dysart's analysis of Alan, revealing the inner turmoil that caused Alan's attack on animals he loved. Shaffer weaves a bizarre collage of experiences as Dysart interviews Alan and each of his parents. The father, an atheist who calls religion "so much bad sex," blames the mother who constantly read the Bible to Alan. Alan was attracted to the violence of the Crucifixion story; a favorite picture in his room portrayed Christ in chains being whipped by centurions. Alan's only sexual instruction came from his mother who associated sex with love and love with God. In his mind, Alan, therefore, linked sex and violent passion with God. As the puzzle pieces fall into place, the mother tells how the father had torn down the Crucifixion picture, and Alan had replaced it with a picture of a horse whose eyes seemed to look everywhere in the room. The father embarrassedly reveals to Dysart that he had observed Alan kneeling before the picture, chanting Biblical sounding geneologies ending with "Equus my only begotten son," and whipping himself with a wooden coat hanger.

Through these clues, Dysart finds that Alan has substituted horses for God in his mind, but that does not explain his attack on the horses at the stable where he worked weekends. Under hypnosis, Alan tells of his naked midnight rides on his god Equus who told him to mount and ride. The rides, as demonstrated by Alan and the horse Nugget, followed a ritual of service, masochism, and masturbation. First, Alan puts "sandals of majesty" on the horse's hoofs. Next comes the "chinkle-chankle," the bridle and
The horse does not want, but Alan says Equus takes "for my sake." The riding field is the "place of Ha Ha." Once there, Alan disrobes before his god, suffering the stinging mist and nettles against his nakedness. In a hollow tree, he hides his clothes and takes the stick for his own mouth, "the Manbit." Next, Alan touches the horse all over and offers him "His Last Supper," a sugar lump signifying Alan's sins. They ride against their foes: the Hosts of Hoover, Philco, Remington, and other representatives of the material world of the hardware store where Alan works, and the Hosts of Jodhpur, Bowler, and Gymkhana, those who ride for vanity instead of passion and worship. The riding hurts; there is no saddle and the horsehair is like "knives in his skin" as Alan works himself to an orgasmic frenzy. "I'm stiff! Stiff in the wind! . . . Feel me on you! . . . I want to be in you! . . . I want to BE you forever and ever! — Equus, I love you! . . . Make us One Person!" Alan desires to join with his god almost as a centaur or as the single godlike creature South American Indians thought horse and rider to be.

Alan will only reenact the night of the crime after he believes Dysart has given him a truth drug. On that Saturday night, Alan goes to a skin flick with Jill, a girl who also works at the stables. Alan has never before seen a naked woman, but his enjoyment of the movie halts abruptly when he sees his father in the audience. The three embarrassedly leave the movie, making excuses to one another for their attendance. It is through this experience that Alan first sees his parents as sexual beings: his mother as a woman who gives her husband little physical satisfaction, and his father as a man who sneaks off secretly to see porno movies in the same
way Alan has his late night secrets with Equus. After this unnerving realization, Alan accepts Jill's offer to find a place to be alone.

Alan objects to going to the stables, to the presence of Equus, but he cannot explain his reason to Jill. He insists the doors be closed between the stables and the tackroom. As the two disrobe, Alan cannot erase Equus from his mind; Mother had always taught that God knows and sees everything. As he tries to touch Jill, he feels horseflesh instead of skin, he hears Equus taunting him and knows He is watching his impotence. Equus will always see him, will always prevent his success with a woman. Alan orders Jill to leave and then blinds his god, pledging "Thou -- God -- Seest -- NOTHING!"

Shaffer is critical of the normalcy psychiatry can impose on Alan. Speaking through Dysart, Shaffer contrasts the passionate involvement in life and worship that Alan has achieved against the "dead stare in a million adults" who plod through life with no excitement or energy governing their actions. While Alan lives his passions, Dysart spends his evenings reading about ancient Greece and watching the wife he has not kissed for six years knit for other people's children. Dysart's life is an example of normalcy — of passionless, sterile normalcy. Dysart questions the ethics of his treatment of Alan: "Can you think of anything worse one can do to anybody than take away their worship?" Dysart is Shaffer's central character for his satiric criticism of what we accept as "normal."

Alienation is also apparent. Obviously Alan is estranged from typical sexual and religious behaviors. Dysart explains the boy's isolation:

"What else has he got? ... He can hardly read. He knows no physics or engineering to make the world real for him. No paintings to show
him how others have enjoyed it. No music except television jingles. No history except tales from a desperate mother. No friends. Not one kid to give him a joke, or make him know himself more moderately. He's a modern citizen for whom society doesn't exist."

Such estrangement from society is reinforced when Alan, like Jerry in *Zoo Story* or Yank in *Hairy Ape* turns to an animal for confirmation of his own importance. The horses in *Equus* are just that — animals. The costuming and acting suggests only animal qualities. They do not represent man or human characteristics. Only in Alan's mind are they more than beasts. This sets *Equus* apart from the other plays in this section. The snake in *The Apple Tree* is supposed to be the bestial representation of a devil. In *Orphee*, the horse could be just a horse that coincidentally stops tapping its hoof when Orphee gets to certain letters of the alphabet. The horse dies in a mortal way, so he could be supernatural only in Orphee's mind. But, after Orphee returns from death, he still refers to the horse as a devil, so that is probably Cocteau's intent.
There are certain animal plays that could not have been written prior to this century. These plays exhibit a clear understanding of Charles Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection. The animal characters are not just animals — they are man or what man may have been on the ladder of evolution. As the human characters encounter their primeval counterparts, the human beings must recognize a familial relationship and then decide whether to accept them and help them on up the ladder or to deny them. Eugene O'Neil's *The Hairy Ape* (1922) fits this mode symbolically. The two plays that best exemplify this type are Robert Hivnor's *Too Many Thumbs* (1947) and Edward Albee's *Seascape* (1975).

O'Neil explained his creation of *The Hairy Ape* to be "a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal and has not yet acquired in a spiritual way." Yank, a ship's stoker, is the symbolic animal who cannot belong to civilized society nor regress to belong with the gorilla at the zoo. He is in the same predicament as Too Many Thumbs, the intelligent chimp in Hivnor's play, and Sarah and Leslie, the lizards who emerge from the sea in Albee's *Seascape*.

The story line of *The Hairy Ape* is Yank's attempt to belong somewhere. He proclaims his importance to the ship early in the play: "It's me makes it roar. It's me makes it move." Into his secure world of the stokehold comes lily-white Mildred Douglas, the rich daughter of one of the directors of the steamship company, intent on patronizing the lower classes. When she sees and hears Yank, she calls him a "filthy beast" and promptly
faunts. Her revulsion is in reaction to the beastliness in mankind that she had never confronted or acknowledged in herself. Mildred could no more accept Yank as her human equal than Professor Smith could with the chimp in *Too Many Thumbs*. Mildred's description is picked up by Yank's shipmates as "hairy ape." Yank is deeply hurt by the insult and vows to revenge Mildred by forcing his way into her society. In Sunday morning New York, Yank meets civilized society: a street full of spats, top hats and masks — a modern world of unfeeling automatons who refuse to acknowledge him. O'Neill's stage directions call the churchgoers "A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached mechanical unawareness." Yank's frustration at being ignored by them causes him to strike a man: Yank "lets drive a terrific swing, his fist landing full on the fat gentleman's face. But the gentleman stands unmoved as if nothing had happened." Yank's next attempt at being noticed is to offer his services to the International Workers of the World, who Yank thinks wants to blow up a steel mill belonging to Mildred's father. Yank's enthusiasm seems suspect and he is thrown into the street. Having exhausted his hopes of aspiring to society, Yank symbolically regresses to the company of the gorilla at the zoo. Yank is impressed with the gorilla's strength and realizes the affinity he has with the animal: "So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her." He releases the gorilla from the cage with the invitation, "Come on, Brother," only to have the animal crush him to death. Yank dies, never having found a place to belong.

Yank is the modern alienated man in a play whose manner is comparable to German expressionism. O'Neill subtitled the play "a comedy of ancient
and modern life." Yank is trapped somewhere between ancient and modern, somewhere between the gorilla and a top hat. He aspires to go forward and that aspiration makes Yank an optimistic character until the final scenes.

O'Neill's use of the gorilla has clear evolutionary meaning. The gorilla is in a furry suit and mask and acts only as an animal. His purpose is to force Yank to confront himself. Yank recognizes himself in the ape and reaches the friendly hand to the animal that society had denied Yank. Yank's final act need not be taken as a step backward, but as a helping hand forward, paralleling the final word of Seascape, as the human beings "begin" to help the lizards adjust to their new stage of development.

Evolution is the plot of Too Many Thumbs. Professor Arthur Smith is experimenting on the intelligence of chimpanzees and receives a new arrival from the jungles of Africa. The new chimp, dubbed Too Many Thumbs, has an unusually large brain area and advanced tooth structure. Within weeks, Smith realizes that the chimp is somehow evolving, physically advancing into a more human creature. Too Many Thumbs progresses through various stages of expression: mimicry, painting, and finally speech. His evolution occurs in spurts, seizures Dr. Smith calls "growing pains." From his arrival in the lab, Too Many Thumbs is attracted to Jenny Macklebee, Smith's fiancee and the daughter of the department head, G. E. Macklebee. Macklebee, as a professor of comparative religion, is fascinated by Too Many Thumbs as a way to test his theories of ancient religion on a true primitive. This he does without the knowledge of Dr. Smith, taking Too Many Thumbs
from tree worship to totemism, from totemism to ancestor worship, from ancestor worship to paganism, from paganism to Egyptian monotheism, then to Indian monotheism, from the Indian to the Hebrew, from the Hebrew to Episcopalianism, and finally to a belief in himself as a man-god.

The ape eventually evolves to the modern human level, becomes educated, and wins the heart of Jenny Macklebee. But the evolution does not stop there. His next seizure takes him to the advanced level of a Christ, Buddha, or Maharishi. Professor Macklebee calls him "Master" and is sure a new world church will be founded to follow his teachings. But evolution takes another step—turning Too Many Thumbs into a superman who cares nothing for the human race, who reads their thoughts and pities them. The final spurt enlarges his head three times, and, with his advanced knowledge, Too Many Thumbs chooses death, hanging himself on the same brace that had held bananas as bait in his chimpanzee intelligence tests. Perhaps he had advanced beyond any acceptance of God and was unable to face life without that psychological crutch.

Too Many Thumbs undergoes several physical changes during the play. When he first arrives in the lab, he wears a chimpanzee suit and mask and moves accordingly. A second chimp, Psyche, "is played by a small, agile woman wearing a suitable costume and mask and is the kind of animal that would amuse rather than frighten children." By Act II, he has evolved into the early primitive man with jutting brows, large ears, and bent-over, swift walk. Hivnor admits that "precisely what kind of primitive man for these intermediate changes will depend more on the costumer than on any -ologist." His third change advances him halfway between chimp and Homo sapiens, with long body hair and a powerful physique:
His position is almost upright and he apes many of the posturings of his keepers. His head and thick neck are rather modern but his face is gross with conspicuous brow ridges and two large fanged teeth.\(^8\)

At this stage, he first wears clothes (although they fit ludicrously) and proclaims his love for Jenny. By Act III, Too Many Thumbs (Tom) appears as "a medium-sized, normal-looking young man with well-brushed hair and a charming smile."\(^9\) He is educated and proposes that he and Jenny marry and go away to start a new life. His next change is one of attitude only as he rises above human emotions and loses interest in his marriage plans. Several years pass before Act III, Scene 2. Tom returns to ask Smith to halt his evolution. He is taller than before and his face "has the newly minted, composed, and ascetic look of a painting of Adonis or a Pagan Christ. He has a small beard" and wears an unusual costume.\(^10\) Macklebee calls him "master," but Smith accuses him of "Trying to make yourself into a folk hero. Some religious swami. Christ with a crew cut. A saint with a sliderule."\(^11\) Tom's next change is again in attitude. He now scoffs at Macklebee's vision of him as a man-god, and the figurehead of a superior new religion. The final evolution requires a costumed dummy. Hivnor's directions read

\[\ldots\text{hanging on the gallows-like contraption, where the cluster of bananas had once hung, is the latest Too Many Thumbs. His body is much shrunken and by a much less acceptable miracle his clothes are too. On the other hand, the head has increased in size three times and the features of Too Many Thumbs of the last scene seem dwarfed as in a skull. In fact, the total impression is that of death, but with an enormous head.}\]

\(^8\text{These numerous physical changes make the play a challenge technically.}\)

\(^9\text{There is little subtlety of meaning in Hivnor's play. The characters are not fleshed out; they serve as stereotyped spokesmen for their differing philosophies. The point best made is the fear science has of the}\)
unexplainable or unscientific. The philosopher Macklebee accepts the evolution and tries to formulate his beliefs to fit the facts. Smith, the scientist, keeps copious diaries on the evolution, but would prefer it not to be happening since it could destroy his scientific reputation. Professor Block, an authority called in by Smith, offers no help and leaves stating that, as far as he is concerned, "the episode has not happened."\(^{13}\)

Jenny's type is an old-fashioned girl who wants a husband and children.

Too Many Thumbs (Tom) is used as a contrast both to Psyche, the other chimp, and to the human beings. In Act I, Psyche and Too Many Thumbs are chimpanzees. Although perceived as animals by the audience and by the other characters, they have anthropomorphic qualities. Some of the actions could pass as anthropoid behavior, but are pointed out by Hivnor as a clear monkey/man comparison. One such direction Hivnor gives is "Sometimes when Psyche utters profound and elaborate 'hmms,' symptomatic of thought, she assumes a simian adaptation of Rodin's thinker."\(^{14}\)

Hivnor also makes his chimpanzees talk. In Act I, the apes talk to themselves and to each other, while the human characters ignore the speeches as asides or acknowledge them only as simian grunts. When Psyche and Too Many Thumbs meet, they carry on a typical girl-boy conversation, but a distinction between them is clear. Psyche is shallow, lazy, and interested mostly in sex. Too Many Thumbs finds her a bore as he questions "What does life mean?"\(^{15}\) and profoundly states "The mind will know because it wills to know and it will know what it wills."\(^{16}\) Psyche thinks the men must be gods, but Too Many Thumbs disagrees. As he understand the power of the human beings over himself, he fearfully queries, "There couldn't be any race greater than chimpanzees, could there?"\(^{17}\)
The contact Too Many Thumbs has with the human beings seems to inspire him toward evolving. He passes their preliminary tests adeptly and questions "Why all this trouble to tempt me upward? I will aspire." Aspire he does -- to solve the tests, to find a purpose for life, and to possess Jenny. When the scientists leave for the night, they remove from the cage one of the building blocks necessary to build a pyramid to some hanging bananas. Anxious to solve the banana test, Too Many Thumbs strangles Psyche and uses her body as another block in the pyramid. Thus, violence and murder are relived as a prelude to humanity. By Act II, Too Many Thumbs has advanced to articulate speech, has developed wrinkles on his forehead and a dissatisfied look. He prays to be delivered from his captors.

The idea of evolution and what man has been is handled obviously. Too Many Thumbs does not want to accept that chimps are inferior to man any more than Smith wants to admit to Tom's superiority in Act III. Smith questions where he himself is on the evolutionary ladder:

Other men [are thinking] about some law of physics, so abstract, so beautiful, so hairless, so pure. And as the days pass their minds must become more abstract, more hairless, purer. But I ... month after month ... have in my mind the image of a beast ... myself? No -- that ... (sighs) my mind is the product of an evolution of a billion years, yet it has to think of only that which it has left behind -- the beast.

Elements of the beast are displayed in Smith: anger and violence when he hits Psyche, and cruelty in his treatment of the almost-human Tom, who wants a normal life that his looks deny him. This is also seen in their attraction to Jenny. Tom's initial advances are through pure animal passion. Smith is equally insensitive: his passion is based on her exceptional skull and body measurements.
So Hivnor experimented with his ideas of monkey-man and superman. Smith showed man's discomfort at being confronted with what he was, as well as with what he might become. Religion professor Macklebee, an object of ridicule by Hivnor, was more comfortable with man's history as the soul in various stages of religious enlightenment, but Macklebee's approach was simplistic and smug. When Too Many Thumbs had progressed to Tom Smith, normal young man, Macklebee congratulates him: "Now you've caught up with us all. Member of a good middle-class church. Possessor of a respectable degree. Why should you change further? . . . Yes, now you've reached the top." This statement reflects man's pride by denying that he has limitations. Yet Macklebee displays a fascination for the superman, seeing him as a messenger from God of what man might be. Science could not forget what Tom had evolved from; therefore, Smith could not be swayed to believe in any divine intervention. Hivnor humorously handles the science versus religion theme, allowing neither to be satisfactory in comprehending or dealing with life.

Alienation is a strong facet of this play. Too Many Thumbs is alienated in the beginning by being above other chimps, yet inferior to human beings. At all his intermediate stages he remains a novelty. Because he wants above all to be accepted, he learns to talk, wears clothes, joins a church, and becomes educated. The Macklebees and lab assistant Johnson accept him at the human level; to Smith he is always an experiment gone berserk. Once he advances above human level, he again feels an estrangement and begs Smith to halt his evolution before he gets too far to be able to communicate with man or to accept a being superior to himself.
Smith is also alienated from society by his singleminded devotion to science which prevents him from marrying Jenny or from enjoying life. It also prevents him from considering other attitudes on life, as represented by Macklebee and his constant discussions of comparative religions.

Although Hivnor belaborsthe obvious in his play, it is an enjoyable script and one of the best examples of evolution from monkey to man. Edward Albee took evolution back further to have man confront his ancestors as they emerged from the primordial soup. In Seascape, two green lizard people confront two human beings on the beach and there humorously discuss the merits of humankind and life above the waves. In 1975, Seascape won Albee a Pulitzer Prize and the Elizabeth Hull-Kate Warriner Award, which is given for a play dealing with controversial political, religious, or social mores. The play also received very mixed reviews, ranging from the New York Times' declaration of it as "a major dramatic event," to Time Magazine's indictment of it as "bland and innocuous, a two-hour sleeping pill of aimless chatter."

The show is wordy and philosophical, with a minimum of action and plot variety. The setting is a seaside beach where an older couple, Charles and Nancy, bicker about their retirement years. Charlie looks forward to doing nothing, a purgatory of dullness that Nancy refuses to condone. She suggests they travel, become seaside nomads, anything but accept that life ends at retirement. A jet rumbles overhead, eliciting Charlie's statement, "They'll crash into the dunes one day; I don't know what good they do." The discussion then changes to Charlie's childhood passion of weighting himself with stones and sinking in seaside coves to observe the bottom. These three things, the desire to do nothing, the disgust with technology,
and his childhood fascination, represent Charlie's regression and difficulty in facing life and moving forward. This desire to regress, figuratively to return to the womb or to childhood, contrasts with the evolution of the two creatures who at the same time are crawling out of the waves to encounter their distant cousins. The audience sees the anthropomorphic lizards, Sarah and Leslie, before Nancy and Charlie do. Act I ends with the confrontation of the lizards and the human beings. Nancy's initial reaction is one of enthusiastic curiosity, crawling toward them for a better look. Charlie is fearful and orders Nancy to find him a weapon, a stick or a gun. The twig Nancy finds is humorous contrast to the club Leslie chooses for protection. An other jet overhead frightens the animals into seeking cover. Charlie cannot believe what they have seen and wonders if the liver paste at lunch poisoned them and they are now dead. When the lizards reappear, Nancy suggests she and Charlie should look submissive, so the act ends with them on their backs, feet and hands in the air, with teeth bared in smiles. The males remain aggressive and apprehensive throughout the act. It is the females who establish the friendship, exhibit curiosity, and maintain...
goodwill. In terms of beastliness, the two males show similarities, each ready to protect his own and admitting that what frightens him is what he does not know.

Although the lizards speak English, there are many new concepts for them to learn. Their curiosity about clothes leads to Nancy's offer to show her breasts. Charlie's jealousy surfaces before Leslie has an opportunity to see what Nancy is hiding. Nancy's sincere attempt to communicate and teach is hampered by Charlie's petty moral objections. The best description Sarah can give to Leslie is to compare Nancy's breasts to a whale's mammarys, provoking Leslie's astonished, "That's what you have?"

The discussion moves on to reproduction. The females are relieved to find that each species couples. Sarah has laid seven thousand eggs, most of them floating away to fates unknown. Sarah and Leslie find it incomprehensible that the human race could perpetuate itself with couples reproducing one offspring at a time. They are further shocked to think of keeping a child for eighteen or twenty years. When Nancy tries to explain love as the reason, it is clear that the lizards lack emotions in their vocabulary. Charlie asks how they met, thinking thereby to explain love to them. The attempt reveals the lizards' relationship to be based on love and fidelity, but the abstractions mean nothing to them. A frustrated comment from Charlie that they "Might as well be talking to a fish," very nearly leads to physical violence. The lizards also share man's bigotry, and the object of Leslie's hatred happens to be "stupid" fish. Only Leslie's fear of new objects in the sky, birds and another airplane, prevent the insult from escalating.
Again, the gender distinctions are obvious. While Sarah admires the
disf inctions are obvious. While Sarah admires the beauty of the seagulls and marvels how they "swim" about up there, Leslie
growls at them apprehensively. The act moves toward its weak climax with
a discussion of why Leslie and Sarah had emerged from the sea. Sarah tries
to explain:

We had a sense of not belonging anymore. . . . We had changed. . . .
Everything . . . down there . . . was terribly . . . interesting, I
suppose; but what did it have to do with us anymore? 23

Their alienation with the undersea world parallels the Act I questioning
by Nancy and Charlie of where they belonged in a society which shoves its
older people aside. Alienation, especially that of the elderly, has ap-
peared in numerous Albee plays. The difficulty Sarah experiences in ex-
plaining the feeling indicates alienation to be a painful and unsettling
feeling. Nancy and Charlie have recognized Leslie and Sarah as distant
relatives throughout their encounter; now Charlie tries to explain their
need to come ashore as an inevitable step in the evolutionary process:

. . . there was a time when we all were down there, crawling around,
and swimming and carrying on . . . some . . . slimy creature poked
his head out of the muck, looked around and decided to spend some
time up here . . . came up into the air and decided to stay? And
as time went on, he split apart and evolved and became tigers and
gazelles and porcupines and Nancy, here . . . . 24

Leslie cannot believe the human beings' story. Frustration makes Charlie
lash out using the term "brute beast," which Leslie demands he define.
"Brute beast? It's not even aware it's alive much less it's going to die!"
Charlie then cruelly forces Sarah to a realization of mortality by asking
what she would do if Leslie left and never returned. Her tears and recog-
nition of mortality constitute the weak climax of the play. The lizards
have found the world they have entered to be too unsettling and decide to
return to the familiar sea. But there is no regression possible. Yank could not go backwards, Too Many Thumbs could not, and neither can Leslie and Sarah. The play ends with the human beings extending their hands to help the lizards adjust and Leslie commanding them to "Begin."

The setting of the play represents the sand dunes of a seaside. Albee eliminated a large section of the script which took place at the bottom of the sea, deciding that it "was not necessary, too fantastic and very hard to construct a set that could transform itself. It was turning into a play about set changes." Albee faced other problems in bringing his characters out of the sea. He admitted that one of those problems was language: "If they were going to speak English, it had to be grammatically correct and without much accent. They shouldn't speak pigeon English or . . . lizard English." In directing the first production of Seascape, Albee had his lizard actors, Frank Langella and Maureen Anderman, speak with very precise diction. The biggest technical difficulty was costuming them. Albee wanted them

. . . to be halfway between creatures and humans. . . . Of course there had to be a certain amount of anthropomorphism. They should be so real that in a sense we can smell them. They should be quite frightening. Seeing them for the first time, the audience should have that shock of recognition. After all, it's what we all were. Walter Kerr described Fred Voelpel's finished costume designs as "two humanoid lizards in breast shells, Harlequin scales, and avocado ridges to mark their exterior spines." The actors were choreographed to use their tails and to writhe in lizard-like movements, sometimes on two legs and sometimes on all fours.

As has been true for many of the animal plays, critics were reluctant to take Albee's play seriously. Harold Clurman termed it a flight of
"'philosophical' whimsy," "a 'little' play."^{29} Stanley Kaufman thought the idea too weak to deserve development:

He cooked up an idea — worth maybe a half hour instead of a bloated hour and a half (including intermission) — and then forced some arbitrary trite points into it in order to justify using it. In character, in texture, in theme, *Seascape* is an echoingly hollow statement of bankruptcy.^{30}

Even Clive Barnes, who liked the show, commented on the animal characters as a gimmick: "It is very nearly a foolish trick on the playwright's part. After all, anthropomorphic monsters from the nether depths, who wear scales but talk English in a stilted accent, should by all rules of the game be childish."^{31} Barnes' mention of "childish" may be the key to the reaction of many contemporary critics who are accustomed to animal characters in the Disney tradition. No one expects to learn great lessons of life from a Mickey Mouse or a Daffy Duck. Added to that is the tradition of realism on stage, not fantasy, conveying themes about life. In spite of all the symbolic movements away from box set reality, many audiences and critics continue to be critical of forms that are nontraditional and uncommon.

Albee showed his understanding of that fact in a *New York Times* interview: "The most important thing you can ask from an audience is that it approach a new play with an open mind — without having predetermined the nature of the theatrical experience it will accept."^{32}

Critics who could accept the anthropomorphic animal characters found a satire on mankind and the theme of optimism. Samuel Bernstein explained it this way:

*Seascape* does ridicule our bigotry, selfish pride, and technological ugliness; it holds the human animal up to scorn and mockery; and it shows that isolation is a part of life, and that death, all too quick in coming, is an unknown terror . . . underneath the barbs lie very affirmative statements: that human love is beautiful, that life has
wonders and prospects for us all if we will search, and that we all belong to a magnificent grand system of evolutionary development. The optimism is a mood seldom observed in Albee's earlier works. *Seascape* evolved in his mind as a companion to *All Over, All Over* dealing with death and *Seascape* with life. Life and its continuation is what Clive Barnes observed:

Mr. Albee is suggesting that one of the purposes of an individual human existence is quite simply evolution — that we all play a part in this oddly questionable historic process. So that the purpose of life is life itself — it is a self-fulfilling destiny.

Thus, Charles Darwin's theories have opened a new avenue for playwrights such as Albee, Hvnor, and O'Neill. They have been able to confront the animal nature of man, not in a devilish sense as in morality plays, but as an affirmation that man is progressing and moving forward to ever greater levels. Albee has Charlie state, "It's called flux, and it's always going on; right now, to all of us."
The use of animals as speaking characters in plays has been tested by a variety of twentieth century authors in many countries. The device has served their satiric purposes well by representing human foibles and loneliness in an indirect manner. As more important playwrights in drama try the device and succeed with it, it may achieve more critical acceptability than it has historically. In 1976, Seascape contributed to Edward Albee's receiving a Pulitzer Prize. In the early 1980s, an animal play is achieving financial success on the London and New York stages.

Cats is a musical extravaganza based on T. S. Eliot's whimsical book of children's poems, Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (1939). His widow, Valerie Eliot, brought to the attention of composer Andrew Lloyd Webber previously unpublished cat poems. Webber had been toying with the idea of putting the iambic septameter poems to music, but he had conceived no plot structure. One of the unpublished fragments, on a downtrodden former Glamour Cat, Grizabella, gave him the idea. Cats of all types would meet at an annual moonlit revelry, culminating in their patriarch, Old Deuteronomy, choosing one cat to receive a tenth life, to be whisked away to kitty heaven.

The setting, which at New York's Winter Garden Theatre, contributed toward a four million dollar production cost, takes place in a junkyard. The debris, oversized to a cat's perspective, represents a collage of modern civilization: a wrecked car, discarded tires, unstrung tennis rackets, liquor bottles, cereal boxes . . . .
The personalities of the thirty cats are also comments on modern civilization: Rum Tum Tigger is played as an insolent rock star, Grizabella as a glamour girl past her prime and forced to walk the streets, and Gus, the Theatre Cat, an aged and drunken actor, fantasizing about his past.

Jack Kroll praised the satiric element in his *Newsweek* review:

The cosmic dump becomes a benign wasteland of civilization in which these "practical cats, dramatical cats, pragmatical cats, fanatical cats . . . romanti cal cats, pedantical cats, hypocritical cats . . . cynical cats, rabbinical cats" (an Eliotic variation by writer Richard Stilgoe) all strut their stuff, revealing characters very much like the human beings who are never seen -- except for signs of annoyance like a gargantuan shoe that comes flying into their midst at a particularly noisy moment.¹

Grizabella's transcendence is the redemption of mankind, the hope for another life beyond the refuse pile. The costuming is an inventive display of tights and fur. The choreography by Gillian Lynne features feline prowling, stretching, clawing, rubbing, and grooming, as well as constant movement from ballet to jazz, gymnastics to boogie.

Critical opinion of *Cats* has been mixed. The lavish spectacle is praised, but T. E. Kalem calls *Cats* "less than purr-fect. *Cats* is a musical that sweeps you off your feet but not into its arms. It is a triumph of motion over emotion, of EQ (energy quotient) over IQ."² The show is full of gimmicks: the oversized set, the animal characters and costuming, gymnastic dance numbers, and a truck tire that carries Grizabella heavenward as it belches white smoke. It is still unknown whether the script and music will hold up without the multi-million dollar staging to allow the show to tour and be used in regional and college theatres. It is likely, though, that *Cats'* success may spawn further use of anthropomorphic animals on stage.
Another British libretto, written by Edward Bond, uses an all-animal cast. *The English Cat* is set in London about 1900, with a cast of over twenty animals: cats, dogs, birds, a fox and a mouse. Old, aristocratic Lord Puff considers marrying to get an heir, much to the objection of his dissolute nephew and current heir, Arnold. Lord Puff is a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Rats (R.S.P.R.), a fascist group who hopes to discourage their fellow cats from the disgusting practice of eating rodents. Puff’s bride-to-be is an innocent country cat, Minnette, who falls in love with young Tom upon arriving in the city. Although she marries Puff, the R.S.P.R. exposes her attachment to Tom, putting her on trial for adultery, conspiracy, and other trumped-up charges. The cynical judge is a mad dog and the jury quacking birds. She is put in a sack to be drowned later, exactly as Puff’s villainous mistress, Mrs. Halifax, had plotted the whole thing. Tom is stabbed by a fox, the lawyer’s clerk. The final duet is by the ghosts of Tom and Minnette. Phillip Roberts calls the libretto "ironic, savage, deliberately melodramatic and very funny. . . . Its setting in the world of beast fable is neither winsome nor sentimental, for its frame of reference is so clearly human affairs."³ Roberts was lent a copy of the still unpublished libretto by Bond for Roberts’ article in *Modern Drama*.

These recent plays indicate that playwrights are continuing their use of animal characters as a symbolic satiric technique, just as the ancient Greeks were doing twenty-five centuries ago. The twentieth century authors have rediscovered the technique to be a useful way to express their moral and ethical remarks about mankind. Since the ancient device has been
revived in so many countries, it may have a future of more prevalent and critically acceptable use.
NOTES

Overview


4 Bates, 44.


7 Frazer, p. 59.


The Satiric Element


Alienation


2 Burrows, p. 65.

4 Frazer, pp. 11-12.


Human Beings as Animals


3 Jonson, p. 10.

4 Peter Hyland, *Disguise and Role Playing in Ben Jonson's Drama* (Salzburg, Austria: Institute for English Language and Literature, 1977), pp. 63-64.


6 O'Neill, p. 11.

7 O'Neill, pp. 32-33.
O'Neill, p. 33.


10Aristophanes, Five Comedies of Aristophanes, p. 248.

11Dicasts were the 6000 Athenian citizens chosen annually to perform the functions of both judge and juryman at trials.


14Auden and Isherwood, p. 173.

15Auden and Isherwood, p. 174.

16Auden and Isherwood, p. 177.

17Auden and Isherwood, p. 178.


20Spatz, p. 86.


23Ionesco, p. 129.

24Ionesco, p. 131.


26Hayman, p. 77.

28Esslin, p. 150.

29Esslin, pp. 113-114.

Animals as Animals


Maeterlinck, p. 265.

Animals Representing Man

Clark Gesner, "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown," *Original Cast Album*, MGM Records, SIE-9 00 X.


Mendelson, p. 157.

Mendelson, pp. 76-77.


Miller, p. 25.


Rostand, p. 241.

Rostand, p. 246.


Capek and Capek, p. 98.

Capek and Capek, p. 98.
Animals as Supernatural


3Cocteau, p. 36.
Evolutionary Characters


3 O'Neill, p. 57.

4 O'Neill, p. 84.

5 Robert Hivnor, Too Many Thumbs (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1949), p. 70.

6 Hivnor, p. 1.

7 Hivnor, p. 54.

8 Hivnor, p. 54.

9 Hivnor, p. 69.

10 Hivnor, p. 79.

11 Hivnor, p. 80.

12 Hivnor, p. 90.

13 Hivnor, p. 51.

14 Hivnor, p. 2.


17 Hivnor, p. 33.


34. Barnes, p. 20, col. 2.

35. Albee, Seascape, p. 53.
102

The Use Continues


Primary Sources


**Secondary Sources**


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to Dr. James Lowrie, who guided each step of my thesis work. I also appreciate Mrs. Lowrie's hospitality and proofreading assistance. Robert Lux, my principal at Charles City High School, has been very supportive, personally and professionally, of my divided interests during the last two school years. Three special friends, Jerry Larsen, Jean Walker, and Robert Frascht have given me the encouragement and love I have needed to finish my degree.