

Animals, History, Culture

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*Elephant Slaves
and Pampered Parrots*

Exotic Animals in
Eighteenth-Century Paris

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FIGURE 2.3. Charles André Vanloo (1705–65), *La chasse de l'autruche* (Ostrich hunt), 1738. One of a series of eight paintings commissioned by Louis XV and displayed in the Versailles palace. Note the hunters' costumes and the palm tree, evocative of the "exotic" Near East. Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, N.Y. Courtesy of Musée de Picardie, Amiens, France.

laughter there. Increased visibility came at a price, however; the menagerie became a target for critics of absolutist pomp, who urged it to become more utilitarian. Even Buffon, who occasionally observed animals at Versailles, joined the circle of critics.

Animal Acquisitions

The menagerie acquired several spectacular new residents during Louis XV's reign with little effort on the part of the king or his ministers, since most of them were gifts. Despite the disruption of shipping during the Seven Years War, one animal, a zebra, made it through right in the middle of the war. The young zebra, the first to be seen in France, arrived in 1760 as a gift from the Dutch governor of the Cape of Good Hope, who supposedly had paid 30,000 livres for it.²⁵ During the one year it survived, it drew huge crowds to the menagerie.

The 1763 Treaty of Paris brought temporary peace to the seas and an influx of new animals. Most of these were from India (tigers in 1765 and 1770, a rhinoceros in 1770, and an elephant and a Tibetan musk deer in 1772)—a puzzling fact, since the treaty had forced France to relinquish her colonial ventures in India. The major French settlement, Pondicherry, had been razed by the English, and the commander of the French troops in India, Lally, had been publicly beheaded for his ineptitude. France still maintained a presence in the subcontinent, however, at the handful of trading posts allowed by the treaty. The substantial animal gifts offered up to the king by the governors of those posts, Jean Law de Lauriston and Jean-Baptiste Chevalier, may well have expressed in material form the elephantine ambitions of these two men. Both constantly tried to destabilize the English hold in India by making alliances with rebellious Indian princes. They sent to Paris numerous memoranda and proposals for political and military ventures and chafed at the lack of response. Chevalier in particular was known as aggressive and crafty. Perhaps he hoped that by positioning impossible-to-overlook, giant-sized animals right in front of the king's nose, he was improving the chances that the king would give a favorable hearing to his requests. Jean-Bernard Lacroix, who has documented the travels of these animals, suggests that Indian species dominated menagerie acquisitions because Indians, unlike Africans, had a menagerie tradition of their own.²⁶

Although this may help explain availability, it does not take into account the fact that procuring and shipping the animals required the active involvement of people who had to have strong reasons for undertaking such projects.

These "gifts" entailed considerable expense and effort. The cost of fresh meat for the ten-month sea voyage and twenty-four-day overland journey to Versailles for the tigers sent in 1770 came to about 4,500 livres. The rhinoceros, being vegetarian, posed fewer provisioning problems, and the six-month voyage from India seems to have been uneventful; the captain's log for the day it was loaded, for example, tersely notes, "north wind, cool, good weather, in the afternoon we loaded a rhinoceros for the king." During the trip, however, the young (probably two-year-old) rhinoceros had grown big and bad (*fort et méchant*), and it was not unloaded from the ship until a made-to-order cage was ready. It then took two and a half months to prepare the animal for the trip to Versailles. Preparations included fashioning a horsehair-stuffed leather collar studded with four strong iron rings and constructing a sturdy cart. Despite a cumulative effort of seventy-two days of labor by wheelwrights, fifty-seven by blacksmiths, thirty-six by locksmiths, and two by carpenters, the cart and wheels still collapsed and had to be repaired en route. During the twenty-day trip to Versailles, the rhinoceros was tended by two butchers and a "chief conductor," who fed it and kept its skin supple by rubbing it with fish oil. Total cost for sea and land transport: 5,388 livres, 10 sous, 10 deniers.²⁷

Two years later an elephant and an Indian mahout named Joumone followed in the footsteps of the rhinoceros. This time, however, the navy minister ordered that the animal be transported to Versailles from Lorient "in the most economical way possible." Joumone and the elephant walked the whole way, thus sparing the expense of a cart; the trip took somewhere between four and six weeks.²⁸

Louis XVI's reign, which began in 1775, brought many political and economic reforms, including revival of the menagerie. Despite the recent influx of Indian animals, physical maintenance had been neglected. In 1774, a list of needed repairs warned of numerous impending disasters: the elephant wouldn't last through another winter unless its enclosure was repaired; the aquatic birds' pond was almost filled in with silt; the rhinoceros was about to knock over a crumbling wall in its pen. By 1785 the animal

pictures in the chateau had faded so much that they could hardly be made out.²⁹ The state of the menagerie must have been an embarrassment, especially when visiting dignitaries asked for tours. More crucial than decent menagerie lodgings, however, were the animals to fill them; this became something of a crisis in the late 1770s and early 1780s, for the American war disturbed regular trade and prevented replenishment of the constantly dwindling stock of animals. The menagerie suffered a serious loss in 1782 when the elephant, the menagerie's "most beautiful ornament," who "continually attracted crowds," broke out of her enclosure at night and died after falling into a canal.³⁰

That the king was not keeping up with other sovereigns is suggested by the observations of foreign visitors. In 1782, the baronne d'Oberkirch remarked on the dearth of rare animals, and two years later an English visitor sniffed that, despite the presence of the rhinoceros and other curious birds and animals, the menagerie was "not very well stocked."³¹ The Dutch were far ahead: in the 1776 and 1782 supplements to the *Histoire naturelle*, Buffon often quoted Dutch naturalists' observations of animals from the prince of Orange's menagerie that had never been seen alive in France.³²

The 1780s was a decade of economic crisis and reassessment. The controller-general from 1783 to 1787, Calonne, responded to the financial troubles by spending lavishly, taking out loans, financing public works, and trying to create the impression of a robust state. The fact that the menagerie received high priority rather than being left to deteriorate attests to its important symbolic role. The king himself accorded the menagerie a central role in reviving the tarnished monarchy and asked the governor of Versailles (the duc de Noailles, prince de Poix) to oversee its replenishment. The prince wrote to the navy minister, the maréchal de Castries, in January 1783,

Please allow me, Monsieur le Marquis, to contact you on a matter of concern for the king's menagerie, where for several years many animals, both quadrupeds and birds, have not been able to be replaced because of the war. Since His Majesty has decided that the menagerie will be maintained as a manifestation of royal magnificence [*comme tenant à la magnificence Royale*] I wish it to be in good order. Because some of the animals that are lacking are found in India and because you send a convoy there every year, I am attaching a list

duke was at once a student of natural history, a connoisseur of luxury, and a fond friend of his old favorites in the menagerie. His multiple, sometimes conflicting, responses bring out the particular tensions in the menagerie's meaning during this time. Was it entertainment or education? Extravagance or necessity?

The duke's admiration for the menagerie was damped by his concern that the king was spending too much on his many small chateaus and gardens (1:135, 148).⁷⁸ But the desire for exotic display seduced him as well: when he put his own financial affairs in order in 1773 and decided to economize, the duke vowed to cease all projects "except for a menagerie that my daughter-in-law is making, a work more pleasurable than expensive, for which we just sent from Paris . . . a carriage full of rare birds" (3:51).⁷⁹

Observers like the duke distinguished themselves from common menagerie observers, as we see in the duke's description of the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II's tour of the menagerie in 1777. When the emperor, who conducted much of his visit incognito, arrived at the menagerie in the morning, the guide would not admit him as a sole individual. So he waited until, shortly after, a large group arrived, then he followed them in. The guide later told the duke that the single gentleman had stood out from the crowd because of the discerning comments he made about the elephant and the rhinoceros and because he paid attention only to "very rare, large objects." The guide's admiration was no doubt improved retrospectively when the mysterious man slipped 15 louis into his palm on his way out (4:16–17).

After talking to the emperor about the menagerie, the duke paid his own visit, concluding that it was more worthy of a visit than one would think. "I examined with the greatest pleasure the elephant which, although female, is very large, being more than seven feet tall. . . . The rhinoceros looked larger [he had last seen it six years before] . . . the camels, dromedaries, lions, tigers, etcetera, make a fine collection, and I made note of everything that is lacking" (4:16). Three years later he went to the menagerie in the early morning, "which always gives me pleasure." He approved of the collection, noted that the rhinoceros, the sight of which gave him "greatest pleasure," had grown, and although he again regretted that the elephant was a female, he marveled that she did things with her trunk that one could hardly believe. The thirty-five-year-old pelican also earned his praise ("remarkable"), but he dismissed the rest of the collection as "ordinary" (4:216).

In 1782, two years before his death, the duke visited his old friends one last time. "All in all, [the menagerie] is most beautiful, and the rhinoceros, as well as the elephant, both bigger, gave me great pleasure. I learned that the elephant, though female, who was almost nine feet tall, could no longer get up after lying down, which confirms what was thought to be a fable. It rests by leaning against ^{the} fees" (4:263).

The duke's musings suggest that the king had succeeded in turning the menagerie into a place for both study and contemplation, and some commentators have indeed described it as an important scientific site: a former page in Louis XVI's court remarked that the barbaric animal fights of the past had been superseded by a collection of animals useful for the progress of natural history, and a nineteenth-century history of menageries claimed that "it is to [the menagerie at Versailles] that we owe the Natural History of Buffon and his coadjutor Daubenton."⁸⁰ Naturalists, however, continued to criticize the menagerie both for its attention to display rather than utility and for its unsuitability as a place to study animal behavior. In his 1784 volume on birds in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, for example, Mauduyt urged travelers to bring back to France species that could be bred for food, for their hides, or as beasts of burden; they should then be acclimatized in suitable habitats rather than being shut up in menageries, which are too confining.⁸¹ Buffon and Daubenton did observe about a dozen species at Versailles, but, as Jacques Roger has noted, Buffon preferred to stay at Montbard, where he had his own small menagerie.⁸² Moreover, they criticized the menagerie as an insalubrious spot where the animals were kept in conditions unsuited for observation. The caracal and the serval lunged so fiercely at the bars of their somber cages that the naturalists could not even get close enough to accurately describe the exact shade of their fur.⁸³

Deaths supplied corpses to Daubenton's measuring implements and dissecting tools, but these only confirmed the pernicious effects of menagerie life. Buffon contended that the tiger skeleton they examined was not as large as a full-grown one from the wild would have been because the animal had been kept since cubhood "enclosed in a narrow cage /loge/ at the menagerie, where the lack of movement and space, the boredom of prison, the constraint of the body, [and] unsuitable food shortened its life and retarded its development, or even reduced the growth of its body." The caracal, which died six months after baring its teeth at the naturalists and so appeared in an

attempted to extinguish it again in 1790, after it had been reestablished by a sieur Martin (probably the same person who had run it in midcentury, or his son), on the grounds that the bloody spectacle would corrupt people's morals (see chap. 8). Martin avoided the ban by moving the arena just outside the city limits. After several more incarnations, it disappeared for good in 1833.

Entrepreneurs and Their Animals

Animal exhibitors ranged from well-known entrepreneurs like Laurent Spinauta and sieur Leleu to the obscure Martin Endric, who toured with a performing monkey and is known to us today only because his name ended up in a police report. Celebrated or unknown, they all had to manage the practical concerns of life with wild animals as well as the business side, attracting customers. Most of them have left behind few traces, but it is possible to sketch out some aspects of their lives from references in natural history texts, transcription of handbills, and police records (collected and published by Émile Campardon), which often include detailed testimonies.

Unlike the king, animal exhibitors did not have their own armies and agents to get animals for them, but they managed to acquire an impressive number through commercial channels. Unfortunately, we have little information on how they did so. It appears that, rather than setting their sights on particular species, they picked up animals from wherever they could find them—usually in one of the colonial ports. Paris was not a primary port, and so it would have been cheaper to get the animals from cities such as Marseille, Le Havre, Bordeaux, or Amsterdam, where ships arrived daily from abroad and sailors hawked their exotic wares.¹⁰ Martin Endric bought his monkey in Toulon sometime around 1710 from an animal merchant (*marchand ou traficant des animaux sur mer*) for 10 livres; a serious investment for him, but much less than it would have cost in Paris (see chap. 5). The owner of a large baboon from Ceylon purchased it in Marseille; a touring American buffalo was bought in Holland; and a ram supposedly from the Cape of Good Hope was acquired in Tunis. The proprietor of a fierce genet bought the animal in London but had no idea where it had originally come from.¹¹ In a few cases, the person who brought the animal to Europe also traveled

around showing it.¹² Exhibitors may also have picked up cast-off exotic pets: sieur Soldi let it be known that "he buys all rare and curious animals that anyone would like to get rid of."¹³

Once bought, the animals had to be tamed and trained, fed, and carted around. Elaborate modes of transportation could even be part of the attraction. The publicity poster that circulated when the rhinoceros came to town in 1749 announced proudly, "It is necessary to transport this monster in a wagon and to cover the wagon. It is necessary, sometimes, that is when the roads are bad, to use up to twenty horses to pull it."¹⁴ The proprietor of a seven-foot-long seal hauled it in a huge container, which he refilled with fresh water every time the animal defecated. At night he drained the water and slept next to the sleek beast.¹⁵ Although we do not know how Endric transported his monkey Petit-Jean (were tame monkeys welcome in public carriages?), the two were constantly on the road: in a five-year period between buying Petit-Jean in Toulon and arriving in Paris, Endric toured southern France, visiting Marseille, Arles, Boquère, Bayonne, Bordeaux, and elsewhere. At first he kept his job playing in the orchestra of an itinerant acting troupe while he trained the monkey. He taught Petit-Jean to tumble and dance to the drum but, unable to excite the public with such routine tricks, he spent six months teaching the monkey a tightrope act and then struck out on his own.¹⁶

In Paris, lodging had to be found and permission of the police obtained. Animal owners probably often lived with or near their valuable charges; Endric had a room in the unappealing sounding *Entrepôt de la Mercière* (merchant's warehouse) just off the Saint Germain fairgrounds. Joseph Manfredi, Ogimbel Toscan, and their wives, who between them owned several animals, rented a boutique together on the quai Pelletier, which they furnished with wall coverings, chairs, and benches; they were to split the profits from showing Manfredi's lion and Toscan's "rare and strange bird." As far as I can tell, the two couples also lived there (probably on the second floor), but not very amicably: Toscan started badgering Manfredi to sell his lion, refused to pay his share of expenses, and even threatened the lion's life. Conditions sound atrocious enough, even before we hear what else was going on in the boutique: Manfredi tattled to the authorities that Toscan was conducting an unlicensed tooth-pulling business on the side and had not ob-

tained permission for two monkeys he owned, which had already bitten several people because they were not confined—a precaution Manfredi said he always took with his own monkeys.¹⁷

Lions and monkeys may have caused trouble, but at least they were relatively tough. Investing in more delicate species must have been a risky business. Although many died, it is only in a few cases, such as that of Laurent Spinacuta's cassowary, that we have an account of their miserable last minutes. The bird was being shown at the Saint Ovide fair, but, because of a dispute, it had by police order been left temporarily in the care of a horse merchant, M. Duchemin. Duchemin made a little hut for the bird in a shed off the courtyard of his lodging and fed it what he had been told: some bread, apples, and pears. Half an hour later, however, the bird "released from its belly a large quantity of greenish water and then, after having lain down on the floor, trembled and died." Duchemin, worried that the death would be blamed on him and that he would not be able to collect the 12 sous per day that he was owed for its care, hurried to get the *commissaires* to his house to attest that he had cared adequately for it.¹⁸

A few traces remain to give us a sense for the emotional connections that the exhibitors formed with their charges, and vice versa. Unlike other business assets, animals could be companions, too, and could provoke affection as well as anger. The seal exhibited "an extreme tenderness" for its master and even seemed to talk to him, reported the duc de Croÿ.¹⁹ The monkey Petit-Jean showed affection for Jean Vallet, who protected him from his master's beatings. Vallet, one of Endric's fellow fair performers, reported that he had snatched Petit-Jean away several times to keep him from Endric's blows, and, according to the police report, "the animal always recognized the witness [Vallet] as a dog would his master, because the witness had caressed him in the different sites where he had encountered the said Endric and he had several times given him something to eat."²⁰

What were the animal displays themselves like? Imagine a couple deciding to spend an evening and a day's wages at the Saint Germain fair. They are drawn in by a crier announcing the arrival of a unique animal never before seen in Paris, with the head of a this, feet of a that, and tail of something else. They pay their money. Do they now go inside or stay outside? Is the animal on a stage or in a cage? Are they rubbing shoulders with the dukes and countesses there or, since they paid the lowest admission fee, are

they on tiptoe looking over wigs and coiffures? Do they care if the marvel is real or fake?

A fairgoer with enough spare change to view only one or two of the animal displays might have trouble deciding among the alleged marvels. Exhibitors hyped their animals with epithets such as "remarkable," "very remarkable," "very rare," or "never before seen in Europe."²¹ The entrepreneurs described unfamiliar species by comparing parts of the animals' bodies to those of creatures the audience would be familiar with. The poster describing the 1749 rhinoceros, for example, explained that it had skin like an elephant, ears like an ass, swam like a duck, and was as tame as a gentle dove.²² Or the animal might lend itself to only a schematic but tantalizing description: sieur Soldi had on display in 1775 an animal "unknown to all naturalists," two feet long, fifteen inches high, with a lion's mane and a thirty-one-inch tail.²³ Handbills claimed that mythical animals could be seen in the flesh: the rhinoceros was "said to be apocryphal until now," and the pelican, renowned for tearing open her breast to feed her young with her own blood, "doesn't exist at all, according to history; yet you can see it at the Saint Germain fair," just brought to Paris from Turkey by sieur Chequer.²⁴ Biblical animals, too, came to life. The "Verus bubalus," suggested its proprietor, might well be the very behemoth from the book of Job, chapter 40.²⁵ In the strongest appeal to visual witnessing, a creature was simply described as indescribable.²⁶

Exhibitors played up not only uniqueness but also the monstrous and bizarre: a beast with a beard trailing to the ground; an animal that moves so slowly it takes six months to climb a tree.²⁷ The amount of food consumed by large animals was a constant source of wonder: the rhinoceros was said to eat sixty livres of hay and twenty livres of bread per day, and to drink fourteen buckets of water and beer, and the "amphibious bear" from the Arctic required thirty-five livres of meat per day and, in summer, twenty livres of cooling ice.²⁸ A description of the *diable des bois du Perou*—the devil from the Peruvian forest—combines the bizarre, the unique, and the apocryphal: "Their faces are flame red, their ears are pointed like horns, their arms are two times as long as their bodies, their tail is of an extraordinary length and width and they move it like a snake, they have claws at the ends of their fingers; in a word, they are so misshapen that one would say that painters had used them as models to represent the devil."²⁹ *Diable des*

bois was only one of the imaginative names that animal entrepreneurs invented or borrowed. The *belzbut*, *satyre*, *couxcoussou*, and *subsilvania* vied for audiences that had no idea what they might be about to view. They knew they hadn't seen them anywhere near Paris, however, for they came from such places as the Indies, White Russia, the African island of Gorée, and "the Amazon mountains."³⁰

From the few accounts that exist, it seems that large animals such as elephants and rhinoceroses appeared outside in pens where one would pay for a viewing spot, whereas other animals were kept inside, chained or caged in enclosures (*loges*) that were, as a contemporary periodical put it, "small, cramped, and badly lighted."³¹ Enclosed booths or cages protected the animals from the weather and might double as wagons, and their shadowy interiors must have been a boon for charlatans passing off run-of-the-mill species as marvels.³²

The only illustrations I have seen of the booths are two engravings that the animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry made to illustrate the fable "Le singe et le léopard" (The monkey and the leopard) in an eighteenth-century edition of La Fontaine (figs. 3.1, 3.2). The two fair animals in the fable compete to draw in customers: the flashy appeal of a leopard's fancy coat is contrasted with the skillful performance of a hoop-jumping monkey (moral: "Oh, that great nobles, like leopards, had more than just their dress as accomplishments!").³³ The illustration of the leopard's booth shows a banner waving outside the building, with a picture on it of a fierce beast, that would have lured both the literate and the illiterate. Narrow alleys and neighboring booths evoke the tight quarters of the fair environment, although Oudry does not depict the crowds. Artistic license may also explain why the leopard (which seems in fact to be a tiger) growls behind bars that face the street (why would you pay to enter if you could see the animal from outside?). The other engraving, of the agile monkey, shows an interior scene: the monkey performs on a crude stage; rough wooden benches seat an audience of eight people; and a small hole, high in the ceiling, supplies light. These two illustrations capture a dichotomy in the way stage animals were presented. Trained monkey and fierce leopard, the tame and the wild: exhibitors often presented their animals as being at one of these two poles, both of which celebrate human control. "Good" animals learn and obey; "bad" animals are kept in prison.³⁴



FIGURE 3.1. A wild "leopard" (which looks more like a tiger) in a fair booth. Jean-Baptiste Oudry, illustration for Jean de La Fontaine's fable "Le singe et le léopard" (The monkey and the leopard) in *Fables choisies mises en vers* (Paris, 1755-59), vol. 3. Bancroft Library #ff PQ1808.A1 1755 (vault). Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



FIGURE 3.2. A performing monkey in a fair booth. Jean-Baptiste Oudry, illustration for La Fontaine's fable "Le singe et le léopard," in *Fables choisies mises en vers* (Paris, 1755–59), vol. 3. Bancroft Library #ff PQ1808.A1 1755 (vault). Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Tame or accomplished animals gave evidence of the human ability to control and teach. They might be caged, but only for convenience. Lions, tigers, and leopards were said to be as obedient as dogs, and the mysterious subsilvania was described as extremely gentle and tame. The 1758 Saint Germain fair featured a tiger that was "astonishingly" gentle; according to the poster advertising it, the animal could read, write, and do arithmetic, knew the playing cards and colors, ~~and~~ could point to them with its paw.³⁵ Fairgoers in 1775 marveled at a pair of cockatoos that raised their crests on command, answered questions (such as, How many francs are there in an écu?) by nodding their heads, and indicated the time of day and the number of people in the crowd.³⁶

Trainers played with their tamed animals and often let the crowds touch or feed them. Twelve-foot-long snakes twisted around their mistress's neck and arms and kissed her on command, and "the spectators could also hold, touch, and stroke them."³⁷ A trained seal exhibited by the same woman offered its paws to the duc de Croÿ, just like a dog.³⁸ When the crusty rhinoceros licked people's hands, they were surprised to find that its tongue was as soft as velour.³⁹ The kinkajou, too, offered its soft tongue, but after a couple of months of pestering it began finishing off its licks with a bite.⁴⁰ The hyena's master constantly touched its back with a staff to make it raise its mane and demonstrated its gentleness by putting his hand in its mouth.⁴¹ Although in a large cage with its head restrained by four ropes, the American buffalo let itself be stroked by its handlers.⁴² Little boys could take rides on the back of a tame cougar.⁴³ Best of all was a chimpanzee (called an "orang-outang"), which led visitors by the hand, sat at a table, wiped its lips with a napkin, poured and drank a cup of tea—after stirring in sugar and letting it cool—and ate so many bonbons presented to it by the crowds that, a year later, in London, it died.⁴⁴

At the opposite extreme, exhibitors exploited the image of some animals as fierce and even untamable, playing on the fantasy of danger by detailing the strength of the bars or chains that "for public safety" restrained the ravenous beasts.⁴⁵ A verse attached to the polar bear's cage read:

I am always dressed in white
My suit is all I own:

compared his observations with those available in natural history texts. At the 1771 fair he took detailed notes on the elephant, the polar bear, and other species “for my own *Histoire naturelle*, especially because M. de Buffon was extremely ill.”⁷⁰ Buffon recovered from his intestinal abscess, and the duke never published his work of natural history.

Buffon was himself attracted to the fairs and boulevards, although more often it was his collaborators and illustrator who visited, as well as other authors of natural history works on quadrupeds and birds. These specialists examined the animals and pumped their owners for information. Historians have underestimated the importance of such popular venues for naturalists, perhaps because of the unscientific-sounding hype that accompanied the displays.⁷¹ Buffon did, indeed, criticize the inaccuracy and sensationalism of some of the exhibitors, for example the owner of the violent Ceylonese ouanderou, who advertised the large baboon-like monkey under an incorrect name and geographical origin: “This happens frequently, especially among the bear and monkey exhibitors, who, when they do not know the origin and the name of an animal, do not hesitate to give it a strange name that, whether true or false, is equally good for their purposes.” To his surprise, however, he found that an animal described as “unknown to naturalists” turned out in fact to be new to him—a kinkajou. Not knowing that the animal was a South American species, he passed along the proprietor’s claim that it was from Africa and had possibly been named after the country or island that it inhabited.⁷² Other exhibits also provided important material. In addition to the ouanderou and the kinkajou, Buffon or his collaborators observed at the fair and on the boulevards a rhinoceros, an elk, a pair of ocelots, four kinds of monkeys and apes, a bison, two exotic rams, a marten from Cayenne, a hyena, a genet, an elephant, a seal, sieur Ruggieri’s tapir, a tiger, a porcupine from Malacca, cockatoos, and Laurent Spinacuta’s condor.⁷³ Naturalists not only looked, they also listened to the keepers’ behavioral observations (presumably more reliable than information about names and origins): the snake woman showed the duc de Croÿ how she removed venom; Mauduyt learned from the cassowary’s owner that it defended itself by kicking; and Buffon related stories gleaned from the exhibitors of the ocelots, the elephant, the seal, and the cockatoos.⁷⁴

The combat d’animaux also proved a useful source for behavioral information and, sometimes, bodies to dissect. Buffon tapped sieur de Saint Mar-

tin, the proprietor, for notes on the lifespan of lions (Saint Martin said he had kept some lions for sixteen or seventeen years), and roaring behavior (they gave voice five or six times per day, but more often when rain was on the way). The lions, one African and one Asian, were apparently too valuable to be sacrificed for dissection, but Saint Martin allowed Daubenton to take measurements of ~~one~~ of the old warriors. Daubenton also recorded the color differences among the three bears kept at the combat; but for internal anatomy, he and Buffon bought and killed a bear in Burgundy. The naturalists were luckier with a female black wolf that a navy officer had brought back from Canada and had given to the combat d’animaux when it became too fierce to remain a house pet. It yelped and lunged at its chain when they approached its cage and they could not even measure it, but its dismal performance in battle soon brought it to the dissecting table; Buffon remarked that “[it had] ferocity without courage, which made it cowardly in combat, despite having been trained” (fig. 3.6).⁷⁵

In acquiring what they considered to be data from entertaining animal displays, naturalists believed they were winnowing the wheat from the chaff—discarding exaggerations while retaining confirmed observations. Confirmation is in the mind of the judge, however, and often the reports that naturalists passed on about animals’ behavior seem to us now to be frivolous or sensational. A typically titillating description of an ocelot pair, for instance, made its way with only minor changes from fairground to natural history tome. The description from the *Almanach forain*, probably drawn verbatim from the poster, reads, “The ocelot is naturally perfidious and ferocious. In 1764 two were on show at the Saint-Ovide fair. . . . Ungrateful and cruel, at the age of three months they tore off the nipples and sucked the last drop of blood from the dog that had nursed them. The male is so brutal and savage that he has no regard for [the female]; she waits patiently until he has satisfied his voracious appetite.”⁷⁶ Buffon’s article on the ocelot reported these facts, slightly toned down (the cubs simply “killed and devoured” their dog nurse).⁷⁷ Valmont de Bomare, Duchesne and Macquer, and the abbé Sauri all passed on more or less gruesome versions in their natural history texts, and Sauri concluded his description with a little moral commentary: after describing how the male wouldn’t let the female eat until he was done, Sauri remarked, “It is not rare to find men who, in that regard, have the morals of the ocelot.”⁷⁸

could at least observe their stature, form, and external appearance, which was better than nothing. The article described a dozen species and corrected mislabeling, especially of the cougar, noting “we have described this animal at some length so that it will be easy to recognize; because those who display it announce it as a kind of monster, and do such a good job in their ridiculous description that one would not be able to find it among the quadrupeds that naturalists have spoken about.”⁸²

These criticisms were part of a larger trend among contemporary commentators to ridicule the credulity of the masses. As historian Arlette Farge has pointed out, however, this rhetoric tells us more about the attitude of the elite toward popular culture than it does about gullibility, a slippery concept that could be applied to many beliefs of the elite as well—belief in blood-sucking ocelots, for instance.⁸³ And indeed it seems that rather than feeling duped, many spectators enjoyed a battle of the wits as part of the fun of fairs. Several anecdotes suggest that the crowd often responded with admiration rather than anger when they—or better yet, others—were cleverly tricked. People were said to be impressed, for example, when they found out that a fierce animal growling from the depths of a dark cage was actually a skillful human mimic.⁸⁴ A story that highlighted a charlatan’s quick thinking told of a young educated man at the Saint Ovide fair who contemplated a monstrous animal for a minute and then yelled out, “Hey, that’s nothing but a pig!” “Monsieur,” responded the master, “since you know each other so well, you must have been a pig-keeper in the past.”⁸⁵ Even so, the proponents of enlightenment were probably right to suspect that for many exhibitors and spectators, amusement took precedence over education.

Critics who accused fair exhibitors of sensationalism and spreading misinformation also faulted the combat d’animaux for exalting cruelty and inciting base passions, and some proposed transforming it into a more edifying spectacle. A typical commentary comes from Mercier, who described the combat d’animaux as a show where animals were made to rip each other to shreds so that people could enjoy their torments: “Eh! It is on the most holy days that the church allows the celebration of such horrors! What shameful barbarism, for public order [*la police*], for the Parisian nation, supposedly so humane!”⁸⁶ Guidebooks referred to it as “a spectacle worthy of butchers” and a site of “horror and ferocity.”⁸⁷ A 1780 edition of Valmont de Bomare’s dictionary of natural history remarked that animal dis-

plays are “more enjoyable for people of a gentle and humane nature when they take place without bloodshed.”⁸⁸ The *Almanach forain* called the fights a “bloodbath,” but asked, “Wouldn’t it be possible to make a more rational amusement, by imitating those Nations that make animals fight for only a minute, and only to study their forms of self-defense?”⁸⁹ A letter to the *Journal de Paris* in 1781 also recommended a more instructive study of animal behavior:

Man can use animals for diversion and amusement because his skill gives him absolute dominion over them, but not in making them tear each other to pieces. In large cities I’ve seen monkeys strike a light and light a candle, and a lion put it out with its paw; an elephant uncork a bottle of wine, grasp it in its trunk, empty it in its mouth, etc. If a man wants to make use of public curiosity and educate the most intelligent animals, let him set up a studio, a circus, well supplied with tricks and singeries; the people will come running, and honest men can amuse themselves there for a quarter of an hour.⁹⁰

Such criticisms parallel a widespread trend in Europe away from public displays of the suffering and death of both animals and humans, one of the results of which was the animal-protection movement of the nineteenth century. These criticisms of brutality were often directed at the lower classes, and they had political as well as humanitarian motives; “Love for the brute creation was frequently combined with distaste for the habits of the lower orders,” remarks Keith Thomas.⁹¹

The Rhinoceros and the Elephant

Two genuinely novel animal visitors to Paris that attracted both the low and the high, the ignorant and the educated, were the rhinoceros of 1749 and the elephant of 1771. The contrast between the reception of the two animals shows us how much changed in a space of only twenty-two years. In 1749, when the rhinoceros arrived, the natural history fad was just beginning to catch on. The animal was represented as a rarity and repository of curious facts, mostly culled from the ancients. The elephant, too, stirred up classical tales, but was greeted explicitly as an item of interest to natural historians. In addition, it carried more political symbolism, in accord with the growing tendency to see exotic animals in terms of metaphors of tyranny.

Both animals, unlike many other exotic imports, were already familiar from classical as well as more recent history. Everyone knew of the legendary enmity between the two titans. The rhinoceros supposedly used its horn to gore the elephant's underbelly, while the elephant retaliated with its mass, falling on the rhinoceros and crushing it.⁹² In 1517 the king of Portugal had reportedly attempted to provoke such a battle of the titans, with anticlimactic results (the animals snorted and postured, but then the elephant ran away).⁹³ A rhinoceros had visited London as recently as 1739, but had never been seen in France. Elephants had lumbered into France several times—appropriately, during the celebrated reigns of Charlemagne, Louis IX, and Louis XIV—but the last one had died in 1681.

Douwe Mout, the Dutch ship captain who escorted the young female rhinoceros around Europe, headed first for Versailles, expecting an audience with the king. When he found himself put off, he set up at an inn in town; a few days later members of the court paid a visit, and, finally, the king. After having saluted the royalty, Mout and his rhinoceros went into Paris for the Saint Germain fair, preceded by rumors that the king would have bought the animal for the menagerie had the captain not quoted a tremendous price.⁹⁴

The poster announcing the rhinoceros's arrival in Paris began with the equivalent of a drumroll: "In the name of the King and of Monsieur the Lieutenant General of police, Messieurs and dames, you are notified that there has recently arrived in this city an animal called Rhinoceros, which was believed until the present to be apocryphal." Its attributes, as outlined in the poster, practically guaranteed that it would be a sensation: it was exotic (from Assam), bizarre (ears of an ass, skin like seashells, swims like a duck), fabulous (sworn enemy of the elephant), enormous (five thousand livres in weight and twelve feet wide), naturally fierce (gores elephants' bellies), but raised to be tame and gentle as a dove (at the age of two it ran around in the house like a dog).⁹⁵

The chronicler Barbier predicted that the Dutch captain would make lots of money because few people failed to satisfy their curiosity to see the animal. Indeed, it seems to have become the dominant attraction of the day: a dramatist whose play was being performed at the same time complained that the monster was stealing away his audience. Tastemakers capitalized on

the novelty, generating a "rhinomania" of poems, coiffures à la rhinoceros, engravings, and fancy clocks with rhinoceros bases (fig. 3.7).⁹⁶

Among the curious onlookers were naturalists and scholars who had never had an opportunity to see a live rhinoceros before. The anatomist Petrus Camper made drawings and a clay model from the animal when it was in Leiden, and its Parisian visitors included Daubenton and the animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry. Buffon, who was busy seeing to the publication of the first three volumes of his *Histoire naturelle*, does not seem to have joined the rhinoceros-watching crowds. Volume 11 of the *Histoire naturelle*, published fifteen years later, included the animal's portrait, engraved from a drawing made from Oudry's life-sized oil painting, and an anatomical description by Daubenton, also based on the 1749 animal. Most of the material in Buffon's account, however, came from observations of the 1739 London animal by the naturalist James Parsons.⁹⁷

Amazingly, the first scholarly account of the animal appeared within a month after the opening of the fair, published in pamphlet form and offered for sale at the entrance to the booth. This anonymous, thirty-page pamphlet, written in the form of a letter to a friend at the Royal Society of London, filled a gap for those who wanted to read up on the rhinoceros; the era of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and manuals of natural history was still a decade away, and there really was nowhere to turn for information.⁹⁸ The author, later identified as the abbé Ladvocat, librarian at the Sorbonne, used his own observations to assess the credibility both of Douwe Mout's claims and of rhinoceros lore from travel accounts and sacred and classical texts. Although he accepted some of the claims of the animal's keepers—concerning its gentle character, its ability to swim like a duck, and its love of having tobacco smoke blown in its nose and mouth—he questioned or corrected others. His own measurements proved it to be smaller than reported, and he thought it sounded more like a wheezing cow than a squealing calf. He dismissed as a fable the claim that other animals stand aside with respect when the rhinoceros drinks from a river, but found the famous enmity between the elephant and rhinoceros plausible, based on reports that Jesuits in Abyssinia had often seen elephants that had been gored to death by rhinoceroses. However, he could not confirm Pliny's assertion that the rhinoceros sharpens its horn on rocks to prepare for these fights. The Paris rhinoceros

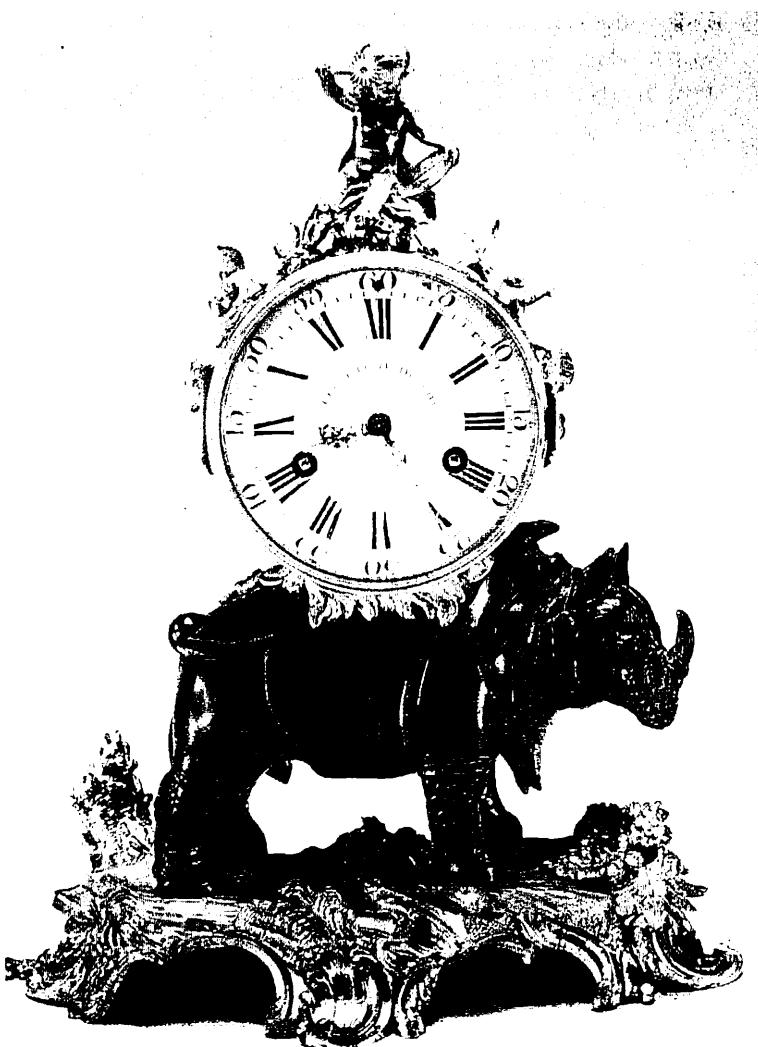


FIGURE 3.7. Bronze and ormolu rhinoceros clock (Paris, ca. 1749). Although produced at the time of the rhinoceros's visit to Paris, this clock is modeled on Dürer's 1515 woodcut. Sotheby's, New York.

often rubbed its horn on a board, but this must be simply a "natural motion," he concluded, for it obviously was not preparing for a battle against an elephant. And finally, the rhinoceros was much too big to be crushed by an elephant after goring it.⁹⁹ Buffon made no reference to Ladvacat's pamphlet, but another leading natural history encyclopedia, by the popular lecturer Valmont de Bomare, copied the *Lettre sur le rhinocéros* almost word for word.¹⁰⁰

The next big hit was a young male elephant (the one with which this book opened), the first to be seen in Paris since 1668, shown at the Saint Germain fair in 1771 and 1772 and on the boulevard. As it had on the street, the elephant demonstrated its agile trunk at the fair by grasping, uncorking, and downing bottles of beer. Another elephant, a young female, was on display in 1773, but the *Avant-coureur* noted that she would probably receive less attention—presumably the novelty had already worn off.¹⁰¹

In 1771, in contrast to the situation in 1749 when the rhinoceros was in town, one could now educate oneself before observing the beast: Buffon's long and complimentary history of the elephant had appeared as the lead article in volume 11 of the *Histoire naturelle* (1764). The *Affiches de Province* advised its readers to read the description in the portable edition of Buffon before going to see the animal; dandies who might otherwise consider its ugliness unfit for their regard were particularly urged to do so. The *Avant-coureur* recommended either Buffon or Valmont de Bomare's *Dictionnaire d'histoire naturelle* for further reading.¹⁰²

Buffon himself visited the male elephant in 1771 and the female in 1773, and he used his observations for a supplemental article published in 1776. He conveyed the information he got from their keepers in a description that confirmed behavioral differences between the sexes as well as the elephant's notorious sense of justice:

In elephants, as in all species, the female is gentler than the male; this one was even affectionate toward people she didn't know; on the contrary, the male is often fierce [*redoutable*]. The one we saw in 1771 was prouder, more aloof [*indifferent*], and much less tractable than the female. . . . He even tried to grab with his trunk people who came too close, and he often snatched away the pocket books and caps of onlookers. His keepers even had to take precautions with him, whereas the female readily obeyed. The only time she

clergy, after condemning them in mock trials as enemies of the people. Some nobles' estates were ransacked, including, in a few cases, their animal collections.

One of the locations pillaged during the uprisings in September was Chantilly, north of Paris, former home of the prince de Condé. The prince, who had already emigrated and was forming a counterrevolutionary army, was one of the most reviled enemies of the republic. On 15 August 1792, a group of national guardsmen from Paris went to Chantilly, where they first killed a local miller and paraded his head on a pike. The prince's retainers fled. On the next day, the soldiers ransacked the chateau and bombarded the menagerie with cannons. Only one enclosure, containing a tiger, a sheep, a civet, two eagles, and five peacocks, remained intact. All of those surviving animals, except the eagles, which were adopted by a sieur Colmache, were later executed. An official report on the state of the menagerie after the assault described one after another the broken statues and fountains, including a figure of Narcissus that had fallen into the basin it had been gazing into.²¹

The menagerie at Versailles may have been ransacked sometime between 1789 and 1792, but almost certainly not in the manner described in 1868 by historian Paul Huot. Huot claimed that a band of Jacobins had marched up to the director of the menagerie and declared that they had come "in the name of the people and in the name of nature to order him to liberate the beings that had emerged free from the hands of the Creator and had been unduly detained by the pomp and arrogance of tyrants." The director supposedly replied that he was perfectly willing to accede to their request, but that some of the inhabitants were insensible enough to feelings of gratitude that they might make use of their freedom to devour their liberators: "as a consequence, he declined performing this role personally, and offered the society the keys to the cages enclosing the lions, tigers, panthers, and other large carnivores." After reflecting and taking a vote, the society decided that the dangerous animals should be taken to the Jardin des plantes in Paris and that the harmless ones be released. Although this story has been repeated a number of times, it is most likely an antirevolutionary tall tale, perhaps based on an earlier, more haphazard pillaging.²² For one thing, no animals were taken to the Jardin until 1794; for another, a visitor in April 1791 found it already reduced to almost nothing: he remarked that the menagerie, which

had deteriorated a great deal since 1785, now housed only a rhinoceros, a lion with its dog companion, a hartebeest, and a "hybrid derived from a zebra and an ass" (the quagga).²³

The few remaining menagerie residents almost contributed to science as skeletons rather than living specimens. In September 1792, the general overseer for Versailles wrote to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, director of the Jardin des plantes, informing him that "the menagerie is going to be destroyed." He asked the intendant to come to Versailles to indicate which of the animals he would like for the natural history cabinet, noting especially the presence of a "superb rhinoceros." Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's trip to the menagerie along with the botanists André Thouin and René Desfontaines spurred him to write the impassioned *Mémoire sur la nécessité de joindre une ménagerie au Jardin national des plantes de Paris*, which he printed at his own expense and sent to the minister of the interior in December.²⁴ Although the animals remained at Versailles for another year and a half (during which time the rhinoceros died), this memoir probably saved them from the taxidermist. More important, in the long run, it played a part in convincing members of the revolutionary government that an institution that had been excoriated as an example of tyrannical luxury and waste should be supported by the new republic. Converting this scornful attitude to one that would allow scarce resources to be accorded to a new menagerie required breaking both the connection between exotic beasts and aristocratic decadence and the connection between caged animals and slavery. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's memoir, along with the work of several other proponents of the menagerie, helped cement the new imagery.²⁵

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's memoir is a masterpiece of persuasive prose. He presents and then demolishes one by one all of the arguments against maintaining a menagerie, subtly appeals to feelings of national pomp and pride, and weaves a thread of populism through the whole. Using the same sentimental language that earned devoted fans for his widely read novel *Paul et Virginie*, he exalts the tenderness of natural virtue and beauty in a way guaranteed to appeal to Rousseau-loving revolutionaries. He dispenses easily with two objections to keeping a menagerie in Paris—its expense and its possible danger. Funds should be derived partly from the state and partly from public dues for courses, he recommends, remarking that people always give greater esteem to things they have to pay for. Escaped wild animals do

not need to be feared; this has never been a problem with animals shown on the streets, and besides, the animals will become more gentle during their sojourn in the menagerie. Observing this effect on the animals' temperament would be good for the people, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre explains, turning to the major objection to the menagerie, that of its utility.

The menagerie at Versailles was indeed a useless luxury, admits Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, but he argues that the new menagerie would be useful for the nation, for naturalists, and for the people. As a national institution, a menagerie is necessary for one very practical reason: foreign dignitaries like to give live animals as diplomatic gifts. Such animals can neither be killed nor refused; therefore, "foreign relations require the existence of a menagerie" (402). The menagerie would also draw visitors. Artists would come to use the exotic species as models, and crowds would be attracted. People are naturally curious about animals, he remarks; anyone who wants to make a fair successful knows that all they need to do is bring in some exotic (*étrangers*) animals (403). These arguments would have been attractive to the National Convention, eager to see itself as the government of an established and proud nation.

But live animals are also important for scientific study, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre argues. Here he pits himself against those who claimed that naturalists could do their work from preserved specimens. The study of animals' tastes, passions, and instincts is in fact the most important part of natural history, he claims. "It was this study that made Buffon interesting, not only to scholars, but to all people" (397). Just think what Buffon could have done if there had been a menagerie at the Jardin des plantes! The new director also has an answer for those who argue that naturalists should study animal behavior in the animals' native habitats, because they lose their character when displaced and confined. "If animals lose their character in captivity, they lose it even more in death," he retorts, but he then goes on to argue that their characters are not in fact ruined by captivity, if they are treated right (415).

Here, as elsewhere, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre evokes the concept of the good master that I described in the preceding chapter. "The animal under man's power still shows his instinct; if it is altered by bad treatment, it seems to become perfected by kindness/*bienfaits*/" (416–17). As evidence he points to the lion and the rhinoceros that he observed at the Versailles menagerie.

The lion showed tenderness toward the dog friend with whom he was confined, and the rhinoceros came up to the bars of his enclosure for a pat when he saw visitors coming (400–401). (Presumably the menageric animals had been receiving good treatment since the departure of their former tyrannous master.) Furthermore, traveling naturalists are not a solution. Is it right for only a few people to observe real animals, while the nation that is paying their expenses has to be content with pictures and descriptions? Besides, these voyagers would not observe the animals' natural habits anyway: since they would be hunting the animals to acquire specimens, they would see them only "fleeing and trembling" (416). Better to bring the animals to France, along with their native vegetation. There, in an Eden-like setting, the trust between animals and man would be reestablished, and the animals would forget their captivity so thoroughly that they would happily begin to reproduce (408–9).

Critics of the Versailles menagerie in the 1760s had suggested that menageries should be used for acclimatizing useful exotic species and breeding new varieties, not for superficial display of rarities. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre echoes those recommendations, suggesting that, to start with, mates could be acquired for the African antelope and the Asian pigeon still at Versailles. The menagerie could also be used for research on nutrition and disease in domestic species. Slipping momentarily away from the practical, he suggests that "charming" species, like the hummingbird, might also be acclimatized and become lovely new denizens of the French countryside (407–10).

It was a little harder to justify keeping animals that could clearly never become naturalized in Europe, like carnivorous lions and tigers or spectacular but unwieldy rhinoceroses. But even these species would be useful, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre argues, for they would provide lessons in philosophy and moral training for citizens. In observing animals at the menagerie, the people would see how society softens even the fiercest character. They would see how wild animals are calmed by spending time with humans and even in the company of other animals (404–5). Indeed, he himself observed this phenomenon. He happened to have been a passenger on the ship from île de France that transported the rhinoceros to France, where he saw this intractable beast become friends with a goat, whom it allowed to eat hay from between its legs (406–7).

The lion's story was even more remarkable. It had arrived from Senegal in 1788 with a dog companion. "Their friendship is one of the most touching sights that nature can offer to the speculations of a philosopher," writes Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, "Never have I seen such generosity in a lion, and such amiability in a dog" (400, 401). This story of the friendship between the lion and the dog was often told during this period, in a way that clearly connected the lion with a repentant, benevolent king and the dog with the loyal people.²⁶ In late 1792, however, when this memoir was composed, the king's reputation had plummeted (he would be placed on trial in December), and the king of animals seems to have suffered along with him. While watching the lion play with his dog friend, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre noticed that the dog had an inflamed scar on its side, which it kept licking "as though to show us the effects of an unequal friendship" (401). Still, the lion was much more friendly than solitary ones are and thus suggested a new model for the relationship between man and animals: although man initially used the dog to subjugate other species by force, he might now use the dog and other domesticated species to attract them to him by kindness. Such a gentle relationship between animal and human would provide a good example for the people, whose violent tendencies are often aroused by watching the cruel treatment of animals (419). Finally, as a place where natural laws are both studied and displayed, the menagerie would promote universal brotherhood. For "nature alone brings together people . . . who are divided by religion and patriotism" (424).

The memoir ends on a flourish that masterfully appeals both to the delegates' authority and to their populist sentiments. Support the Jardin des plantes, he urges, and "the people will regard you as gods who hurl lightning bolts with one hand and sprinkle fertile dewdrops with the other" (425).

As Yves Laissus and Jean-Jacques Petter noted in their history of the menagerie, it is unlikely that many members of the Convention read the sixty-three-page memoir cover to cover.²⁷ Its major messages, however, could have come to them through other, more easily traversed avenues. A review of the memoir that appeared in November 1792 summarized its main points and quoted crucial passages. It went even further than Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had in unlinking aristocrats from their animals: "Common observers scarcely considered the menagerie at Versailles as anything other

than one of those objects of luxury and curiosity with which kings love to surround the pomp of the throne. It was necessary for tigers and lions to live next to the sanctuary of despotism and for monkeys to associate with courtiers; but just because we have thrown down tyrants of the human species, do we also need to abolish those other kings of the animals, who are much less terrible than the first?"²⁸

Another report that came out in December 1792 was written by a committee of three members of the recently formed Société d'histoire naturelle de Paris. The authors reported that they had been asked by the society to give their opinion on Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's proposal. They admitted that royal menageries were nothing but costly and useless imitations of Asiatic ostentatiousness, but argued that a "ménagerie sans luxe" would be important for advancing the study of natural history. Although less certain than was Bernardin de Saint-Pierre that all of the animals would become tame and happy in their new home, they believed that observations on captive animals could still be useful. One could note how they drank and ate, when their colors changed, and so forth. And if they were slaves, well, that allowed for study of the effect of slavery on their characters. It had already been observed, for instance, that lions and tigers can be tamed, but jaguars cannot.²⁹

One person who responded to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's memoir was Couturier, the official who had warned that the menagerie was to be destroyed. In January 1793, he reported that the minister of the interior had suggested he consult with the director of the Jardin about the fates of the remaining animals at Versailles, in particular the rhinoceros. Someone had offered to buy it, he wrote, but "I would rather it become an object of public instruction in the hands of a philosophe like you."³⁰ Transporting a rhinoceros was a major undertaking that may have been impossible during this chaotic time; in any case, the animal died nine months later and arrived at the museum as a corpse to be dissected by the anatomists. The professors had to ask the commissioner of public instruction for extra funds to pay for preparing and mounting the animal's bones and hide, estimated to amount to 3,000 livres.³¹ The funds were found, the animal was preserved, and it can be seen today, looking smaller than one expects, staring impassively out of a glass case at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris.

In the meantime, the trial and execution (on 21 January 1793) of the tyrant

coachman: order signed by Jean-Charles Clouet, king's councillor, 24 June 1786, AN Col C/2/285, f. "Animaux," 180–81. Percheron described the starling(s) (two were embarked, one arrived) as "extraordinary" in his letter to Castries, 25 Feb. 1786, *ibid.*, 175; receipt signed by L'Aimant, 12 July 1786, *ibid.*, 182. I do not know if the captain presented the animals to Castries. On use of the coach service, see J.-B. Lacroix, "L'approvisionnement des ménageries," 163.

52. Trublet to Monseigneur [Castries?], 11 May 1789, AN Col C/5B/6, no. 4. The cost of the zebra and its food was 689 livres, 15 sous, 6 deniers.

53. On historical accounts of the quagga, see P. Tuijn, "Historical Notes on the Quagga Comprising Some Remarks on Buffon-Editions Published in Holland," *Bijdragen tot de dierkunde* 36 (1966), 75–79. On the quagga's role in nineteenth-century hereditary theories, see Richard W. Burkhardt Jr., "Closing the Door on Lord Morton's Mare," *Studies in the History of Biology* 3 (1979), 1–21. The British expressed (belated) regret about their role in the disappearance of the quagga: Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 283–84. See also Reay H. N. Smithers, *The Mammals of the Southern African Subregion* (Pretoria: U of Pretoria, 1983), 566–77, 696–98. The quagga is now classified as a subspecies of the plain's zebra; the Quagga Project at the South African Museum is trying to re-create the quagga (i.e., a genetically similar variety) through selective breeding.

54. Castries to Percheron, 30 June, 1787, AN Col C/5B/5 bis, no. 198 (1). Comparison with a draft of this letter (*ibid.*, no. 198 [2]), which shows deletions and insertions, suggests that Castries may have vacillated about how strongly to stress economizing (e.g., "not always" in the quoted passage is an insertion).

55. Percheron to Castries, 28 July 1786, AN Col C/5B/7, no. 137.

56. Cassowary: Mistral to Monseigneur [Castries?], 11 July 1788, AN Col C/2/285, f. "Animaux," 190, and subsequent letters, 191–200. Serval: Pouletier to Monseigneur [Castries?], 25 May 1789, *ibid.*, 202, and subsequent letters, 203–6.

57. Noailles [prince de Poix] to Castries, 5 Aug. 1787, AN Col C/2/285, f. "Animaux," 199.

58. Noailles [prince de Poix] to M. le comte de la Luzerne, 8 June 1789, *ibid.*, 206.

59. *L'encyclopédie*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 10 (Neuchâtel: Faulche, 1765), 330.

60. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries*, 2:159; Henri F. Ellenberger, "The Mental Hospital and the Zoological Garden," in *Animals and Man in Historical Perspective*, ed. Joseph and Barrie Klaits (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 64–65; Bob Mullan and Garry Marvin, *Zoo Culture* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 107.

61. Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Versailles," *L'encyclopédie*, 17 (1765), 162.

62. Steven L. Kaplan, *The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France*

Soc., 72), esp. 47–51.

63. [Louis-Antoine de Caraccioli,] *Dictionnaire critique, pittoresque et sentencieux* (Lyon: Duplain, 1768), 2:48.

64. Francis Bacon, *Essays and New Atlantis* (Roslyn, N.Y.: Black, 1942), 291–92.

65. A.-c., 7 Dec. 1767 (no. 49), 777–78 (emphasis in original).

66. [Louis-Sébastien Mercier,] *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante* (London: n.p., 1772), 250 (chap. "Le Cabinet du Roi"). On this book, see Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: Norton, 1996), 115–36, and excerpts, 300–336.

67. *La cour de Louis XV: Journal de voyage du comte Joseph Teleki*, ed. Gabriel Tolnai (Paris: PUF, 1943), 124–25.

68. *Aff. de Prov.*, 18 June 1760 (no. 25), 99–100.

69. Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, quoted in Daniel Roche, *La culture des apparences* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 137–38 (men's fashions); [Henri-Gabriel Duchesne and Pierre-Joseph Macquer,] *Manuel du naturaliste . . .*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Rémont, an V [1797]), 4:310–11 (zebra in Cabinet du roi).

70. In his first article on the zebra, Buffon contended that the animal could be domesticated and could eventually replace the horse: Buffon, "Le Zèbre," *HN*, 12 (1764), 9–10. In a subsequent article he reported the rumor about the Dutch: "Addition aux articles de l'Âne, tome IV; & du Zèbre, tome XII," *HNS*, 3 (1776), 53–54. He rescinded the rumor in a final article, "Du Czigitai, de l'Onagre & du Zèbre," *HNS*, 6 (1782), 40.

71. Duc de Croÿ, *Journal inédit*, 2:485–86. The duke called the bird a *Tatoua*; the editor guessed that it must be a toucan. Bertin was *secrétaire d'État*, 1763–80. The rhinoceros was from India but sailed via the Cape of Good Hope. Others who remarked on the rhinoceros are Cradock, *Voyage en France*, 80; J. A. Dulaure, *Nouvelle description des environs de Paris* (Paris: Lejay, 1786), 2:309; François Cognel, *La vie parisienne sous Louis XVI* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1882), 61.

72. Duc de Croÿ, *Journal inédit*, 4:16.

73. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries*, 2:149–50.

74. *Correspondance secrète, politique et littéraire . . .* (London: Adamson, 1787), 13: 384–86 (14 Nov. 1782).

75. For references in guidebooks see [George-Louis Le Rouge,] *Curiosités de Paris . . . et des environs*, new ed. (Paris, 1778), 2:222; Dulaure, *Nouvelle description des environs de Paris*, 2:307–9; [Pierre-Thomas-Nicolas] Hurtaut and [Pierre] Magny, *Dictionnaire historique de la ville de Paris et de ses environs* (Paris: Moutard, 1779), 3:525. Reference to a tour group from Brittany is in duc de Croÿ, *Journal inédit*, 4:16.

76. On the concierge, see Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 23 July 1782, cited in

74. Duc de Crojy, *Journal inédit*, 2:269; Mauduyt, *Encyc. méth. ois.*, 1 (1782), 573 (probably Spinacuta's cassowary; when the bird died, Mauduyt took its body for his cabinet); Buffon, "L'Ocelot," *HN*, 13 (1765), 239–40; "Les Kakatoës," *HNO*, 6 (1779), 91; "Addition à l'article de l'Eléphant . . .," *HNS*, 3 (1776), 292–95; "Le Phoque à ventre blanc. Seconde espèce," *HNS*, 6 (1782), 310–12.

75. Buffon, "Le Lion," *HN*, 9 (1761), 17–22; Daubenton, "Description du Lion," *ibid.*, 27–28; "Description de l'Ours," *HN*, 8 (1760), 263–64; Buffon, "Du Loup Noir," *HN*, 9 (1761), 362–63 (at 363); Daubenton, "Description d'un Loup Noir," *ibid.*, 364–70.

76. *Alm. for.* (1777), 54.

77. Buffon, "L'Ocelot," *HN*, 13 (1765), 239–44 (at 239). The observation about the male's superiority is given in a quotation from a letter from M. l'Escot (the ocelots' owner) to a member of the Académie des sciences (243).

78. [Jacques Christophe] Valmont de Bomare, *Dictionnaire raisonné universel d'histoire naturelle*, ed. augmented by the author (Yverdon, 1768–69), 7:416–17; [Duchesne and Macquer.] *Manuel du naturaliste*, 350; Sauri, *Précis d'histoire naturelle*, 5:74. For information taken from an exhibitor, see also Buffon, "Le Phoque à Ventre Blanc. Seconde espèce," *HNS*, 6 (1782), 310–12.

79. Martin Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698*, ed. Raymond Phineas Stearns (repr. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1967), 182–83.

80. [François] Le Vaillant, *Voyage de Monsieur Le Vaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique . . .* (Paris: Leroy, 1790), 1:42–43.

81. *J. de Paris*, 27 Feb. 1781 (no. 58), 232–33 (excerpt from letter reprinted in *Alm. for.* [1787], 60); [Louis-Sébastien Mercier,] *Tableau de Paris*, rev. ed. (Amsterdam, 1782–83), 3:35–36. The *tartala* is also mentioned in *Correspondance secrète*, 11:122; and [Henri-Gabriel Duchesne and Pierre-Joseph Macquer.] *Manuel du naturaliste*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Rémont, an V [1797]), 3:219–20.

82. *A.-c.*, 22 Mar. 1773, 179–84 (at 182). See Isherwood's discussion of charlatanism, *Farce and Fantasy*, 46–48. Colin Jones identified a similar pattern in the realm of medicine: the *Affiches* criticized medical charlatans but disseminated information about their remedies anyway: "The Great Chain of Buying," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 13–40.

83. Arlette Farge, *Fragile Lives: Violence, Power and Solidarity in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, trans. Carol Shelton (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993), 226–29.

84. *Alm. for.* (1773), Foire Saint Laurent (n.p.).

85. *Ibid.* (1777), 200; this expression, still in use, means something like, "It takes one to know one."

86. *Parallèle de Paris et de Londres*, ed. Claude Bruneteau and Bernard Cottret (Paris: Didier Érudition, 1982), 104. Mercier compares Sunday revelry in Paris with the calmer and more edifying sabbath pursuits of Londoners.

87. Dulaure, *Nouvelle description des curiosités de Paris*, 1:534; *Les numéros parisiens* (Paris: Imprimerie de la Vérité, 1788), 79. See also Bertin, "Les combats de taureaux."

88. [Jacques Christophe] Valmont de Bomare, *Dictionnaire raisonné universel d'histoire naturelle*, 4th ed., "en Suisse, chez les libraires associés" (1780), 10:23 (s.v., "rhinoceros"). New material in this edition was indicated in brackets; this comment was inserted in a description of Roman animal displays and fights. The edition was probably a pirated one, however (the legitimate fourth edition appeared in 1791), and so it is possible that the inserted comments were not by Valmont de Bomare. See entry in list of primary materials.

89. *Alm. for.* (1775), 153. I do not know what "Nations" these might be.

90. *J. de Paris*, 19 Apr. 1781 (no. 109), 442.

91. Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 143–91, 287–300 (at 186). See also Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, chap. 3. On sentiment against cruelty to animals in France, see Hester Hastings, *Man and Beast in French Thought of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1936), part 3; Maurice Agulhon, "Le sang des bêtes: Le problème de la protection des animaux en France au XIXème siècle," *Romantisme* 31 (1981): 81–109.

92. One of the classical authors often cited as an authority was Pliny the Elder. See Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1938–63), 3:53 (bk. 8, chap. 29).

93. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries*, 1:217–20. This rhinoceros became the model for Dürer's famous woodcut.

94. On the reception at Versailles, see *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la cour de Louis XV*, 1735–1758 (Paris: Firmin-Didot frères, 1862), 9:288. The duke doubted the validity of the rumor that the captain had asked 50,000 écus (150,000 livres) for the animal. The rumored asking price doubled to 300,000 livres in Edmond-Jean-François Barbier's account (*Journal anecdotique d'un parisien sous Louis XV*, 1727 à 1751, ed. Hubert Juin [Paris: Livre club du libraire, 1963], 227).

95. For transcription of handbill, see Campardon, *Spectacles de la foire*, 2:312–13; also Laurence Berrouet and Gilles Laurendon, *Métiers oubliés de Paris* (Paris: Parigramme, 1994), 104–5.

96. Barbier, *Journal anecdotique*, 227–28. The rhinoceros was also mentioned by other contemporary chroniclers; see Franklin, *La vie privée d'autrefois: Les animaux*, 2:137–38. Barbier recorded the fees as 3 livres for first rank places, 1 livre for second, and 12 sous for third, but Campardon lists them as 24, 12, and 6 sous; he also notes that servants were required to pay, whereas usually they were allowed in free with their masters (*Spectacles de la foire*, 2:314 [see also for dramatist]). On "rhinomania," see Clarke, *Rhinoceros*, 58.

97. Buffon, "Le Rhinocéros," *HN*, 11 (1764), 174–197; Daubenton, "Descrip-

tion du Rhinocéros," *ibid.*, 198–203. Parsons's article appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. Buffon also included, in a footnote (179–81), the observations of a M. de Mours on the 1749 rhinoceros—all straight from the handbill. On the 1739 rhinoceros and Parsons's description, see Clarke, *Rhinoceros*, 41–46; on Oudry's painting, *ibid.*, 64–68. On Buffon's activities in 1749, see Roger, *Buffon*, 95–96, 115–17.

98. The two most general works of natural history available at the time, "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire naturelle des animaux" (in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale des sciences* [The Hague: Gosse & Neaulme, 1731]) and abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche's *Spectacle de la nature* (Paris, 1732–50) did not mention rhinoceroses.

99. [Ladvocat,] *Lettre sur le rhinocéros*. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries*, 2:279 reports (with no source) that one could buy Ladvocat's booklet from the rhinoceros's keeper at the booth (no price given), as well as the poster (30 sous). Loisel, *ibid.*, cites the *Dictionnaire de Richelet* (s.v., "Rhinocérot" [sic]) for identity of the author; also see Ant.-Alex. Barbier, *Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Dassis, 1872–79), 1:815.

100. Valmont de Bomare, *Dictionnaire . . . d'histoire naturelle* (1768–1769), 10:17–34.

101. *A.-c.*, 14 Jan. 1771 (no. 2), 23–24 (male elephant); *ibid.*, 22 Mar. 1773 (no. 12), 182 (female elephant). Loisel (*Histoire des ménageries*, 2:281–82) states (with no source) that Louis XVI bought a female elephant from the fair in 1774 or 1775. Although this elephant may have been shown at the fair for several years (the duc de Croÿ remarked in 1775 that he was going to "look again" at the female elephant he had seen in Paris; *Journal inédit*, 3:173). I do not think that it could have been acquired for the menagerie because then there would have been two elephants there (one arrived from India in 1772; see chap. 2), and the duc de Croÿ never mentioned more than one elephant during his visits to the menagerie.

102. *Aff. de Prov.*, 6 Feb. 1771 (no. 6), 23; *A.-c.*, 14 Jan. 1771 (no. 2), 24.

103. Buffon, "Addition à l'article de l'Éléphant," *HNS*, 3 (1776), 293–95.

104. Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries*, 2:281. The print was from a drawing by Watteau.

105. [Jean-Marie Marchand,] *Mémoires de l'éléphant, écrits sous sa dictée, et traduits de l'Indien par un Suisse* (Amsterdam; Paris: Costard, 1771), 8 (observing people), 18 (bending knees), 20 (reason), 70 (mating), 77 (simple ways).

106. *A.-c.*, 8 Apr. 1771 (no. 14), 222–23. *Aff. de Prov.* was more complimentary, describing the *Mémoires* as "amusing and even instructive" (3 Apr. 1771 [no. 14], 55).

Chapter 4. The Oiseleurs' Guild

1. AN Z/1E/1166, packet IV, f. 4, subf. 2, doc. 8, testimony of Jean Baptiste Gautreau. The documents regarding this fight derive from an inquiry following the complaint against their attackers made by Bertin, Adam, and René Bourrienne, the three jurors of the oiseleurs' guild. For all documents cited from Z/1E/1166 in this chapter, only the first two or sometimes three levels (through subfolder) had been numbered by an archivist; I assigned numbers to documents according to their order in the folder.

2. *Ibid.*, testimonies of Pierre Bernard Thuillier and Philippe Carabin. Because of conflicting stories told by the witnesses, various details remain unclear, such as who started the fight.

3. Thuillier stated that "he had given 20 sous two different times to the jurors of the oiseleurs' guild, that they had requested it in return for the liberty to sell birds at his whim, . . . that his business was inconsequential, that he sold only linnets and sparrows." A Henry Thuillier was a master oiseleur in the early eighteenth century. Pierre Thuillier, if related, may have been keeping up a family tradition on the side. For mention of Henry Thuillier (or Tuillier), see AN AD/XI/22, f. E, doc. 7 (1708), 13–14; *ibid.*, doc. 10 (1698), list of signatories; AN Z/1E/1166, packet II, f. 2, doc. 2 (1696), list of signatories.

4. The only treatment of the guild by a historian is in Alfred Franklin's encyclopedic work on eighteenth-century life and does not use archival sources. See Franklin, *La vie privée d'autrefois: Les animaux* (Paris: Plon, 1897–99), 2:223–54; and Franklin, *Dictionnaire historique des arts, métiers et professions* (Paris: H. Welter, 1906; repr., Marseilles: Laffitte, n.d.), s.v., "oiseliers." Contemporary dictionaries usually included an entry for every guild; see, e.g., [Philippe Macquer,] *Dictionnaire portatif des arts et métiers . . .*, 2 (Paris: Lacombe, 1766), s.v. "oiseleur." Sometimes the terms *oiseleur* and *oiselier* were differentiated, the former meaning bird catcher, the latter, bird seller (see Mauduyt, *Encyc. méth. ois.*, 2 [1784], 280–81). I use *oiseleur*, which was more common, for the guild masters.

5. See note on secondary sources for literature on guilds. Membership in guilds among all workers (including day laborers) has been estimated at about 44 percent around 1700 and 55 percent around 1780: Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris*, trans. Marie Evans and Gwynne Lewis (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987), 73.

6. The statutes of 1600 were revised in 1647 and again in 1697. The king confirmed the latter in 1698 *lettres-patentes*, but they were not registered by Parlement until 1712 because of complaints by a group of bourgeois who raised and sold canaries and did not want their business interfered with by the oiseleurs. Some eighteenth-century dictionaries stated that the guild operated according to the 1647 statutes, but official documents for most of the eighteenth century refer to the