

The Dingbat Craziness of the Latest PETA Proclamation

I've said it before and I'll say it again: Each morning's internet headlines bring a new version of crazy.

This morning was no different.

In her article "PETA: Using Animal Names as Verbal Insults Is Supremacist Language," Catherine Smith [reports](#) that People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is decrying the use of insults and anti-animal slurs when applied to people. "Words can create a more inclusive world, or perpetuate oppression," PETA recently posted on Twitter. "Calling someone an animal as an insult reinforces the myth that humans are superior to other animals & justified in violating them. Stand up for justice by rejecting supremacist language." This message adds, "Using animals as insults perpetuates speciesism."

So, no more "chicken" when referring to a coward. Forget "snake in the grass," "a bull in a china shop," or "crazy like a fox." Scratch "sloth" when referring to laziness, and nix "cat burglar," "low as a worm's belly," "slow as a turtle," "bats in the belfry," or "silly as a goose." "He's gone ape," is also out, as is "He's happy as a hog in slop."

Really?

Let's look closely at PETA's statement.

"Words can create a more inclusive world, or perpetuate oppression" is definitely true these days. On many college campuses, the shutdown of free speech has indeed created a more inclusive atmosphere and a place of oppression. That same lockdown on language has entered our places of business, our government, and social media. Step out of line and you'll be cancelled, or shouted down as a speaker, or even lose your

business. This suppression now occurs on a regular basis, so no arguments with PETA on this point.

The second sentence contains “the myth that humans are superior to other animals.” Here a common sense question arises: are those who own a cat superior or inferior to that feline? Cats are notoriously independent, they clean themselves, and they can catch mice, if necessary, for food. But do cat owners really regard their cats as their superiors or even as equals? Perhaps one could if a cat shopped at the market for his owner’s food and treats, and then lovingly served up the meal in a bowl for the humans in his household. But does your cat scrub the bathtub? Does your cat reason? Did your cat fly men to the moon, build a cell phone, or even wash the supper dishes?

In some respects, certain animals are superior to humans. A cheetah can outrun a human being, the tiniest sparrow has wings, a trout can live underwater, but do those qualities make them the equal of human beings? Once we believed, as Genesis 1:26 of the Old Testament teaches, that man was on earth as a caretaker for animals and to have dominion over them. Now we’re supposed to regard them as equals?

As for being justified in violating animals by including them in insults, we must ask once again where the common sense has gone. Fido doesn’t really care when an enemy calls me a dog. Nor does a black snake pay attention when an actor in King Lear speaks the line, “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.” And seriously, are my neighbor’s chickens going to care two hoots—make that two clucks—when I use the phrase “chickened out?”

This is anthropomorphism suitable for a Disney movie but not for reality.

The phrases “justice” and “supremacist language” in the next sentence made me laugh. Do we really believe that animals from

snails to lions understand justice? If a lioness is stalking a herd of gazelles and takes down a crippled member of that herd, is the lioness being just or just following her natural instincts? Supremacist language sounds as if it was lifted from a manual on systemic racism, which is an equally deluded theory in play these days.

Then there's speciesism, which Spellcheck on my computer doesn't recognize as a word and which most of us don't consider an idea worth a second of our time. I assume the term means a prejudice against another species. Were I ever to own another pet, suppose I'd prefer a cat to a dog. Does that make me a speciesist? Am I an old-time speciesist or a systemic speciesist? Perhaps I'll be forced to enter a reeducation camp or some sort of special counseling group to overcome my prejudice.

Right now, a lack of common sense prevails in America. Theory and ideology have replaced old-fashioned mother wit. Were the theories of so many, whether those of communists, Black Lives Matter, white supremacists, or some in our government not so dangerous, they would be laughable.

One thing is certain: Theories like speciesism are bogus. Some might even call them dingbat crazy.

Oops.

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