

# Animal rights

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Name: Course: Lecturer: Date: Animal Rights In recent times, many issues have arisen, animal rights being among the critical ones globally, especially in the western countries. Animal rights suggest that animals have feelings, which means they should have rights just as human beings. Animal rights advocate for the idea that animals should be considered to have similar interests just as human beings, which I believe, is not true since animals do not act out of self-consciousness but out of instinct.

It advocates that there should be no products from animals including food, clothing, research subject and even entertainment such as in the circus industry. This is extreme considering that animals kill others for food in order to survive. This further suggests that animals within the domestic homes should be set free to live in their own interests, which would have its consequences. On the other hand, majority of opponents to animal rights advocate for animal welfare, which seeks to free them from unnecessary pain and suffering and give them support. I argue that animals do not act rationally like humans; thus, they are incapable of making life decision and should not be given the same rights as human beings just because they have feelings. There are several reasons why animals cannot have same rights as human beings do. One of the main reasons is the consequence that would arise if animal rights were adopted.

Adopting animal rights means refraining from using anything from them or even killing them (Broom 14). It means treating them as human beings and even respecting their space. This would have devastating effects. For instance, new medicines are tested on animals to find out whether they have the desired effect.

Accepting animal rights would also mean that animals should not be killed for any reason including food, clothes among other reasons. If people would stop relying on animals for food, they would have a nutritional imbalance while some people would starve. Therefore, there would be a devastating effect to humanity if animals were given equal rights to human beings. The key right here is right from being killed. This, as mentioned, would leave human beings with a difficulty of getting enough nutrition for their upkeep since the major source of proteins would no longer be available. This would have a further devastating effect on all animals. If animal rights were to be passed and all had a right to live, the vast number of animals killed every day for food will survive.

For instance, if the number of cattle killed every day was not killed, the number of animals competing for the same food would be increased. It would only be over a duration of time that the pastures would be overgrazed. Effects of overgrazing are well known. Additionally, considering that human beings would be competing for the same food and have no alternative means, it would be obvious that food would be scarce since animal products as well would not be eaten such as eggs and milk. Living without such products would be devastating. The competition for food would heighten, and starvation would face many animals, human beings included. Human beings, being the animals with a capability of changing their environment, might have to do away with livestock in order to plant crops. This would leave one wondering where the animals would go.

Thus, killing of the animals ensures that a balance in nature to the population that the ecosystem can support is maintained. Giving rights to animals does not stop the killing considering that wild animals will continue killing others (Broom 15). More so, suggesting that animals should not be killed means that even animals should not kill.

If we consider animals to have feelings, then animals such as lions would be at a risk of starving to death. However, the fact that they are not aware of any moral code that says it is bad to kill; they do not realize any right given to them. Therefore, stating that animals should not be killed for food is either giving a lion a right that will be denied to human beings, or protecting the hunted animals at the expense of losing the hunter, who happen to be an animal as well. Either option would amount to killing.

Thus, it is not possible to give animals equal rights as human beings. On the same point, when animals are given rights, it means somebody will be punished for violating their right. This leaves one wondering how it would be possible to punish animals that violate the rights of other animals. From this point, it is obvious that animals do not recognize rights given to them.

Therefore, animals do not recognize rights, and it would not make sense to give them equal rights to humans. Additionally, they do not act in accordance to any moral code, which governs rights and creates a border to what one cannot do to avoid violating rights of others. This means that animals do not have rights against the other animals, and act in a selfish way to satisfy their needs, driven by instincts.

Giving rights to animals means that some would have to be protected from others such as the hunted from the hunters. This makes it absurd since both the hunted and hunter has a right to live. It becomes impossible to protect one without losing the other. Therefore, giving animals rights they do not understand does not make sense. It only means protecting animals from human beings, while molestation carried out by animals on animals is not a violation.

However, this remains molestation to the animal whether from another animal or a human being. Concerning duties or obligations, one is left wondering why human beings should have a responsibility and obligation to animals while the animals themselves have no obligation towards each other or even to the human beings. Rights only exist to human beings who have the conscious brain to act rationally and recognize good and bad (Wynne 4). Moreover, giving animals same right as human beings means letting them free to practice what they want.

This also means that domestic animals should be released to go on their own to wherever they want to go. Therefore, animals such as cats, dogs, cows, horses and sheep amongst others that are domesticated should be left to wonder wherever they want. This would bring a serious consequence since most would die of diseases, starvation if they have nobody to take care of them and probably end up in a human-animal conflict, where they would have to intrude people's lives. Having animals loitering around people without any restriction would be dangerous especially from animals such as dogs that can bite. Additionally, animals in the zoo would have a right to be

released. Most of them, such as the reptiles and big cats, would cause mayhem around people considering they do not recognize any rights that would stop them from acting in their own interest. Additionally, if all animals were given rights as human beings, even those in the wilderness have a right and the fences stopping them from moving freely should be removed. If such animals were not let free as well as those in the zoo, then their rights would be violated, since people are not restricted to move freely.

This would obviously cause the biggest human-animal conflict, considering one party does not recognize that respect of boundaries exists. Such a conflict would cause the greatest danger to both animals and humans as well unless both parties can come to a compromise, which is impossible since animals are not capable of acting rationally to make compromises (Wynne 55). Animals are not rational beings and are not capable of thinking consciously as human beings do. Rather, they use instincts to survive. Therefore, animals are not in a position to think morally in terms of what they should do. Rights can only make sense if the being that is given the rights can understand the moral value of them.

However, animal rights proponents argue that animals should be protected from human abuse and their feelings considered. If the rights are based on feelings, it means that human beings have the obligation to ensure they do not hurt the animals. This is the same as concern for animal welfare. Welfare for animals is not the same as the animal rights (Lishak 6). Animal welfare is about ensuring that animals do not endure unnecessary pain in the hands of

the people. If people are to take care of the animals, the animals have to be under their rule considering they are incapable of making decisions.

This is the same for babies and people who are incapable of making decisions. For babies and insane people, their wellbeing is looked after by their caregivers. For instance, a child would not go anywhere without permission from their guardians. However, when they become of age and able to make their own decisions, they are allowed to practice their will and make their own decisions (Waldau 45). Therefore, animals should be treated the same way, given proper care and protected from any harm. Considering they might not be in a position to make their own decisions, they are supposed to be under the custody of their owners. The feelings of the animals should be considered just as the feelings of a child will be considered. However, this does not mean the baby is left to do what it wishes.

There are limits put across where the guardian stops the baby from doing something that might harm them. Additionally, babies should not be treated badly because they lack the ability to make decisions. This should apply to animals as well where human beings are aware of their feelings and treat them with respect. The animal will follow the rules of the master in order to remain under his care. This is the same for children who are at an age incapable of living on their own and have to follow their parents' rules (Waldau 40).

Therefore, animal rights should not exceed this level since giving equal rights to animals, as human beings would be absurd, considering animals are

not capable of thinking consciously as human beings do (Lishak 9). In making decisions on giving animals rights, it should be considered that moral conduct plays a crucial role. Moral codes are the rules that a group adheres to in order to ensure the good of all animals. However, there cannot be a good for all animals; some animals will have more rights than others, in this case human beings having more desires due to their rationality. Other animals have hardly any rationality to govern their behavior and only use instincts to act. Therefore, the animal with a rational thought in this case the human being should be responsible for taking care of the animals.

Therefore, animals cannot have same rights as human beings since it would cause a conflict. Therefore, taking care of the animals is a way of avoiding most of the conflict that could arise between animals. For instance, if human beings did not take care of holding the wild animals in the jungle, a serious problem would arise where many of them would be killed as well as kill people. Therefore, human beings not only address their interests while taking care of these animals, but also the interests of the animals. Thus, animal rights should not advocate for extreme rights that cannot make sense to animals and even majority of human beings.

Rights of the animals should only be concerned about the welfare of the animals and not giving those rights equal to those of human beings. As evidenced above, animal rights would cause a great conflict between the animals and humans as well as to the nature. Therefore, the rights of the animals should not be based solely on their feelings but rather, on the good of all animals including man, which means the man should have higher rights



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