



viewers emotional distress to generate feelings of guilt in people who have little to no experience working with animals, especially livestock and zoo animals. The viewer is told the cure is to donate money to the organization. The hundreds of millions the animal extremist industry raises every year has proven their formula of creating emotional reactions is successful.

Animal Rights Uses Anthropomorphism to Create Legislation That Suits Their Agenda

Animal extremist groups spend tens of millions of dollars each year lobbying and writing legislation so they can get one step closer to ‘animal liberation’. To influence voters and lawmakers, these groups tap into the same anthropomorphic fundraising formula.

Anthropomorphism Needs to Be Recognized

When will the general public realize that anthropomorphism taken to the extreme does not help animals? As our society continues to project human traits more and more onto animals, we will at some time reach a breaking point. The end result is that we will no longer be able to own our animals and make decisions in their best interest. What will happen to the animals we share our daily lives with?

What is Anthropomorphism?

Anthropomorphism has been a part of the human experience since the earliest cultures developed. Pets have been companions for most of our history, but only recently have we begun replacing human interactions for the imaginary dialog animals have to offer.

Universally, anthropomorphism is known as giving human characteristics to an animal or object. Anthropomorphism becomes an issue when we start using it to force human emotions and principles on real life animals, instead of just characters in a book or fable.

We can see anthropomorphism today in almost every household and the trend is growing.

This is evidenced in the billion-dollar pet industry where outfits for dogs and cats are sold, and it is now common in cities and urban areas to see dogs in baby strollers.

These things in and of themselves are not bad, but we need to understand the overall impact.



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Anthropomorphism – The Greatest Threat To Animal Welfare



How Anthropomorphism is Detrimental to Animal Welfare

Anthropomorphism Places Unrealistic and Unfair Expectations on Animals

When anthropomorphism is directed towards animals, it gives humans an unrealistic model for those animals to live up to. Just as we should not expect a human child to act like a dog, we should not expect a dog to act like a human child, as they are not equivalent to the other.

Expecting a pet, or any other animal to live up to the standards of human traits can cause a wide array of problems, which can include:

1. Behavioral Issues

Owners who anthropomorphize their animals expect them to “know better,” “feel guilty,” and never to express their natural instincts. These pet owners view poor behavior from their pet by thinking: “he knows better,” and, “she wouldn’t hurt anyone.” Pets that have behavioral issues due to anthropomorphism can be dangerous in the home, out in public and in a veterinary clinic setting. This can result in harm to the pet owner, visitors, the public, veterinarians, veterinary staff, and even the pet itself.

2. Poor Health

Anthropomorphism has led many animal owners to feed their pets human food.

This can cause a multitude of issues including diabetes, pancreatitis, diarrhea, constipation, vomiting, malnourishment, liver damage, and even death. Some are feeding their pets a vegan



diet. This is not due to the pet’s nutritional needs, but the pet owner’s ideological beliefs. Vegan diets can be very unhealthy for dogs which are omnivores and for cats which are obligate carnivores. Feeding a vegan diet to a cat can be lethal.

3. Loss of the Ability for Pet Owners to Make the Best Decisions for their Pet

If anthropomorphism is taken to the extreme and becomes the norm, it is possible that owners could then be removed from making decisions about what they believe is best for their animal. We believe this is an animal welfare threat because outsiders who do not know anything about your animal or the care it requires could be making the decisions instead.

Animal extremists are using anthropomorphism to change the term “owner” to “guardian” in regards to animals.



The term “guardian” insinuates that the animal is not property and has some form of personhood. This could lead to an increase in malpractice insurance for veterinarians since professional liability insurance currently only covers pets as property. Covering a pet that has “personhood” may include covering the pain and suffering that is often issued in human cases of malpractice. The price for such insurance coverage would be exponentially higher than current rates. This cost will be passed on to the clients and would make providing veteri-

nary care to animals even more expensive. This increased expense, in turn, will either create financial barriers to pet ownership or discourage owners from seeking veterinary care for their animals. Either way, the animals lose.

These are all significant factors to why we believe anthropomorphism is a threat to animal welfare.

Why Do Animal Rights Activists Use Anthropomorphism?

The root of the animal rights ideology is extreme anthropomorphism. Instead of seeing animals as private property, animal extremist ideologues view animals as equal persons to human beings. Animal extremists continuously refer to the human ‘emotions’ of animals. They view animal ownership as ‘enslavement’ and therefore abuse. They make no distinction between pets or livestock in this belief.

Using Anthropomorphism to Generate Donations

Getting someone to believe an animal has human attributes will make that person much more likely to express empathy. Guilt and empathy are powerful motivators. Animal extremist organizations use anthropomorphism in photographs, videos and other media to influence the public. They purposely edit videos and photos to cause

