



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

New Twist to Political Corruption in 4th Republic Nigeria given Non-Human Animals Stealing millions: A Case for the Defense of Animal Rights

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ABSTRACT

Corruption has assumed a new turn in 4th Republic Nigeria, particularly where non-human animals are alleged by human animals to deep their hands into the public tilt for their selfish non-human animal purposes. This is a clear case of hypocrisy on the part of human animals in that, at one instance we contend that non-human animals are inferior to human beings and at the other instance, we affirm though inadvertently that non-human animals are not inferior but equal since they can steal: we, therefore, are unable to steer ourselves out from the dilemma of our ambivalence to arrogate to ourselves a god-like status over non-human animals. We contend that this is another profound inhumane case of violation of non-human animals which is condemnable. We have suggested that the solution to this quagmire is first to admit that non-human animals have basic rights like human animals especially when we understand this notion of *Rights* going beyond its parochial conception. The method we have employed in showing moments of human's inhumanity to non-human animals is what has been conceived as *Ibuanyidanda Philosophy* according to which we aver that *the di nwereisinaodu* (anything that exists serves a missing link of reality). We have argued in favour of the thesis that the federal government should allow justice prevails against acts of theft by either civil or public servants.

Keywords: Corruption, Animal Rights, Non-Human Animals.



INTRODUCTION

What Is A Right? The preceding question seems to be asking for a straight-forward 'one sentence' definition. It assumes that what right is can be given in the form of one-word answer. But obviously, it is not the case that we can give or provide an answer to the question in a brief phrase. The concept 'right' like any other abstract concept in philosophy, does not enjoy a univocal definition which would command a general acceptance; as most of the definitions thus articulated by individual scholars and philosophers appear to be value-laden as emanating from the subjective standpoint of such individual.

However, this is not to say that there are no definitions for the concept of right, what we attempt to argue is that we can only have 'a definition' of right and not 'the definition' of right. It is against this backdrop that we shall consider some schools of thought on the concept of rights. According to Palmer and Sandoe in an article on 'Animal Rights', the animal right view suggests that:

We can think about right in two senses: legal and moral. Legal rights are rights that are created and exist within legal systems. Moral rights, though, are not created by the law; those who argue from a moral right-based perspective give a variety of different accounts of the origin of rights. One traditional, though now-controversial claim depends on the intuition that humans naturally have rights, to be a right holder is just part of what it is to be known. (www.animaethics.net)

The duo of Palmer and Sandoe further argue in the same vein that claims about rights are particularly important here for two reasons. The first is a special force that rights language carries. Although the term 'rights' is sometimes loosely used just to mean moral status, philosophers generally understand rights in a more restricted sense. This according to them, "... is to make a very strong claim that those rights should be protected or promoted". Another reason which they suggested making claims about rights very important is "the fact that some philosophers have extended the idea of moral rights beyond those of humans, arguing that animals also have moral rights. What to my mind informs these latter arguments is strengthened on the premise that the question of a claim to rights should not just be based on just being biologically human—a member of the species *Homo Sapiens* which is pre-textually reflected in the prefix of the concept of 'Human rights'. It was this that Palmer and Sandoe alluded to when they argued that *the question of rights should be seen to include the ability to possess certain particular capacities (such as sentience or self-awareness) that one has as a species-member that underpins humans' rights.*

It was from the foregoing that Jeremy Bentham's view that "... *the question is not, Can they reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they suffer?*" makes sense (Introduction to the Principles of Morals 1789). This, therefore, becomes the position of most if not all animal rights advocates.

A further argument as to the yardstick for ascertaining what qualifies as a right is that put forward by Jeremy Waldron when he suggested that:

There should be a conviction that there are liberties so basic that every society should secure them irrespective of its traditions, history, or level of economic development (Waldron 575).

On the contrary, Fagothey in discussing the components of a right argues that:

A right involves a system of relations in which there are three terms and a basis or foundation in which the relations are guarded. In the example of a workman having a right to his wages, we may generate four elements or components; the workman who has earned the wages, the employer who is bound to pay the wages, the wages the workman has earned, and the work is done whereby the workman has earned the wages. In general, in every right we distinguish the: (i) Subject: the one possessing a right (ii) Term: those bound to respect or fulfill a right (iii) Matters: that to which one has a right (iv) Title: the reason why this subject has this right. (241)

S. J. Fagothey did subsequently argue unequivocally that, the subject of a right can be only a person. According to him, rights exist simply because we are obliged to reach our last end by the observance of the moral law. To this kind of action, rights are essential; because if we must guide ourselves to our end by the use of our free will, we must be guaranteed immunity from hindrance in our choice of the necessary means. Since only persons have free choice and are obliged by the moral law, only persons can have rights. Other creatures, acting spontaneously and without freedom or responsibility need no such guarantee (Fagothey 241).

Fagothey's argument appears logical if viewed on the face value. But inherent in this argument is the inadequacy to properly explicate in clear terms what should serve as the yardstick for ascertaining the concept of right. This problem is what led Fagothey into the waterloo of anthropocentrism which stands to negate the other beings in the world thereby arrogating to humans such misguided reductionist conception of a universe in which He (man) is considered as the 'Alpha and Omega'. Another problem in the above assertion is that it seems to suggest that a right must be empirical and concrete; this to my mind also falls short of and is in exclusion of the Rationalists' idea of knowledge. It approaches the concept of right from the myopic lens of narrow mindedness rather than toeing a more pluralistic dimension. However, the author (Fagothey) to my mind needs sympathy because as Peter Singer suggested in his article "*All animals are equal*" that:

Philosophers are subject to all the preconceptions of the society to which they belong. Sometimes they succeed in breaking free of the prevailing ideology: more often they become its most sophisticated defenders (167).

It was the problems inherent in the yardstick for ascertaining what should qualify as a right that led James Rachel to argue in an article "Do animals have a moral standing" thus: *The concept of "standing" is, of course, borrowed from the law. You have to stand in a court of law if you have the right to be recognized and have your claim heard. You have "moral" standing if, from a moral point of view, you have claims that must be heard –if your interests constitute morally good reasons why you may or may not be treated in certain ways. A person has moral standing but does anything else? (www.jamesrachel.org) James*

Rachel in an attempt to answer the above question reported that:

Some environmentalists have argued that trees should have moral standing. This is not quite as silly as it sounds. It just means that the welfare of trees (and other elements of the ecosystem) should be taken into account when we decide what to do what policies to adopt. And this should be done independently of whether it helps or hurts human beings. We should be concerned to protect the trees for their sakes. If we said that animals have moral standing, it would mean (similarly) that their interests would count from a moral point of view; and their interests would count for their sakes. This is contrary to the dominant tradition which says that we should avoid cruelty to animals only because, if we do not, there may be bad consequences for people as argued by Aquinas and Kant (www.jamesrachel.org).

It was from the foregoing that, Rachel put forward the hypothetical argument below which to my mind proves interesting and informative towards addressing the question of whether animals have moral standing. Below is a lengthy quotation of James Rachel's unpublished lecture note delivered at a conference in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999 which rather seeks a middle-way towards Animal rights, It reads:

...the strategy seems to be this: we begin with a group of assumptions. Persons have moral standing. Normal human beings are persons. Other beings may or may not be persons. Then we ask what it takes to be a person, and we come up with a criterion – what is it that makes us distinctive sort of being that we are? And the answer usually has something to do with self-consciousness. Then we conclude that non-human animals aren't persons but have some sort of lesser status. And then we say that, because of all this, humans have full moral rights and other animals have less than full moral rights. I believe this is a poor way to approach our subject. For one thing, it assumes that whatever makes us the sort of beings that we are equals to what gives us moral standing which equals to what makes it wrong to mistreat us and this seems wrong.

It was therefore from the above premises that the author (James Rachel) argues against the personhood approach to animal ethics to which Fagothey alluded to as discussed previously. She (Rachel) therefore concludes with the likes of Charles Darwin that we should not elevate our human characteristics to a place of supreme importance in determining such things as moral status, rather our treatment of human and other animals should be sensitive to the patterns of similarities and differences that exist between them. But the question that readily comes to mind is: does this mean that we must treat animals in the same way we treat humans going by the principle of equality or possibly Aristotle's conception of justice? To follow this line of thought would create further confusions and possibly lead us to the fallacy of infinite regress, but what was James Rachel's suggestion for escaping this dilemma? According to Rachel, it is not the case that we must treat animals the same way, we treat humans; reasons being that "...not even all people should be treated alike". But on the question as to whether animals have moral standing, she argued in the affirmative and submitted that:

...But this simply means that it is objectionable to treat them in certain ways and that the explanation of why it is objectionable has to do with their welfare. Finally, there is



a perennial question, "But where do we draw all the line?" there is no one line to be drawn unless we wish to be arbitrary (15).

CORRUPTION: A CONCEPTUAL DELINEATION

The attempt to provide a definition for corruption is a herculean task as 'what may be publicly considered as a most reprehensible act in one society may not be given similar treatment in another' due to the fact that as one author observed, what we call corruption has become a hydra-headed phenomenon which has eaten deep into the fabrics of every society and human endeavour so much so that any attempt to give a univocal definition that would command a general acceptance would be just a myopic conception of the word, corruption. Little wonder why Dwivedi argued in the same vein that "the preparation of a list which includes all forms of unethical conduct is difficult and maybe dangerously misleading. However, the following are examples of those activities that are generally considered unethical in many countries: they are bribery, theft, nepotism; conflict of interests (including such activities as financial transactions to gain a personal advantage), misuse of insider knowledge; protecting incompetence; regulating trade practice or lowering standards in such a manner as to give advantage to one or family members, The use and abuse of official and confidential information for private purposes (Dwivedi,1978:8). The foregoing corrupt practices are what stands as a threat to the development of any nation. To properly put in perspectives of their ripple effects, Ekpo cited Samuel Huntington, the latter who succinctly gave a more robust description of the term, corruption. According to him:

By 'corruption' we intend 'the violation of the intent of explicit official laws, rules, and purposes for purposes of personal gain or the advancement of the private agenda'. If, for example, one violates an explicit and public rule to further the interests of a private company or corporation, so that its interests come to replace those of the public, this person is guilty of corruption. (qtd in Ekpo (1979:314). He further posits that corruption is a behaviour by public officials, which deviates from accepted norms to serve their private end. "Corruption, however, is thus, in part, not so much the result of deviance of behaviour from accepted norms, as it is the deviance of norms from the established patterns of behaviour especially when conceived in a modernized society. (Ekpo,1979:315).

What is the issue in all the cases of corruption cited is the existence of a standard of behaviour according to which the action in question breaks some rule, written or unwritten, about the proper purposes to which a public office or a public institution is put. The moralist, for example, has his or her idea of what the rule should be. The actors in the situations concerned create their rules. It may be the same as the moralist (they may regard themselves as corrupt); or quite different (they may regard themselves as behaving honourably according to their standards, and regard their critics' standards as irrelevant); or they may be "men of two worlds", partly adhering to two incompatible standards, and ending up exasperated and indifferent (they may recognize no particular moral implications of the acts in question at all – which obviously is quite



common). Corruption naturally tends to weaken or to perpetuate the weakness of the government bureaucracy. In this respect, it is incompatible with political, social and economic development. "The corruption of one government ... is the generation of another".

Corruption and maladministration are among the most important unethical (wrong) conduct in the public sector (Bassey, 2016: 1550). Current writing about corruption has attempted to challenge the earlier speculation that corruption is a phenomenon with no negative consequences. Huntington (1979:313) has argued that corruption takes place when a civil servant is in defiance of prescribed or accepted norms, breaking the rules to advance his or her interests. Thus it is the behavior that deviates from the duties of one's public role because of private pecuniary or status gains or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private influence. This includes such behavior as bribery (if a public official accepts gifts from thankful members of the public, for services rendered, this does not count as gratitude but as bribery); nepotism (which is a use of the power to advance the interests of friends or of a member of one's family); misappropriation (which is illegal appropriation of public resources for private use); theft (which is taking money or property meant to benefit the public to permanently deprive the public of it) etcetera. All these have no doubt that reflects the nature of corruption in the Nigerian polity with its attendant ripple effects on our socio-economic and political development.

THE NATURE OF ANIMAL RIGHTS

It is worthy of note that we keep ourselves abreast of the fact that works on the area of animal rights have been some form of response to Peter Singer's position on the subject. It is therefore on this premise that we shall discuss the above topic from two respective standpoints i.e., those that want to protect animals from harm otherwise known as Animals Rightists and the those that are of the view that animals should not matter and hence to consider them as having rights is thus sheer propaganda. This latter group is the leftist or Anti-animal rights advocates.

1. **Those that advocate for animal rights**

Peter Singer is considered one of the foremost advocates for the rights of the animal. He is noted amongst the most influential thinkers alive and one that is world-famous for giving the impetus to the animal rights movement. He can be considered as a rationalist philosopher in the Anglo – American fraction of utilitarianism (www.antennae.org.uk).

His 1975 book *Animal Liberation* did make a remarkable influence on the modern movements of animal welfare. There he argues against speciesism, which is the discrimination between beings on the sole basis of their species, and in this way it is almost always practiced in favor of members of the human race against non – human animals. The idea is that all beings that are capable of both suffering and experiencing pleasure, that is, sentient beings, should be regarded as morally equal in the sense that their interests ought to be considered equally. He, therefore, frowned at the human-centric assumption that sees animals as "ours to use in whatever way we please". Professor Singer argues in particular that the fact of using animals for food is unjustifiable based on the premise that it causes suffering disproportionate to the benefits humans derive from such consumption. His submission is that *it is a moral obligation to refrain*



from eating animal flesh (vegetarianism) or even go as far as not consuming any of the products derived from the exploitation of animals (veganism).

(www.antennae.org.uk)

In an article entitled *All Animals are Equal* published in 1989, Singer further strengthens his argument against speciesism by informing that:

In recent years a number of oppressed groups have campaigned vigorously for equality. The classic instance is the Black Liberation movement, which demands an end to the prejudice and discrimination that has made blacks second – class citizens. The immediate appeal of the black liberation movement and its initial if limited, success made it a model for other oppressed groups to follow. We become familiar with liberation movements for Spanish – Americans, gang people, and a variety of other minorities. When a majority group – women – began their campaign, some thought we had come to the end of the road. Discrimination based on sex, it has been said, is the last universally accepted form of discrimination, practiced without secrecy or pretense even in those liberal circles that have long prided themselves on their freedom from prejudice against racial minorities. One should always be wary of talking of “the last remaining form of discrimination”. If we have learned anything from the liberation movements, we should have learnt how difficult it is to be aware of latent prejudice in our attitudes to particular groups until this prejudice is forcefully pointed out... my aim is to advocate that we make their mental switch in respect of our attitudes and practices towards a very large group of beings: members of species other than our own or, we popularly though misleadingly call them animals. In other words, I am urging that we extend to other species the basic principle of equality that most of us recognize should be extended to all members of our species.

Also, in another article “speciesism and moral status” contributed in a journal published in July 2009 with the caption *Metaphilosophy* Singers argues that we should not limit the concept of “equality” from humans alone but that the border should necessarily be extended to include other beings. He puts thus;

Many people believe that all human beings are of equal value. Most of them also believe that all human beings have a moral status superior to that of non-human animals. But how are these beliefs to be defended? The mere difference of species cannot in itself determine moral status. The most obvious candidate for regarding human beings or having a higher moral status than animals is the superior cognitive capacity of humans. People with profound mental retardation pose a problem for this set of beliefs because their cognitive capacities are not superior to those of many animals. I argue that we should drop the belief in the equal value of human life, replacing it with a graduated view that applies to animals as well as to humans (567).

From the foregoing arguments, it appears that Singer is unrelenting in his critic of speciesism. He further maintains in another book, *The Great Ape Project* published in 1993.



The book was a collaborated work with Paola Cavaliere which was aimed at obtaining a United Nations declaration that Apes, Chimpanzees, Bonobos, and Orangutans are members with human beings in the “community of equals”. In an exclusive interview by Giovanni Aloï Editor-in-Chief of *Antennae: Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, Singer commented on the seeming difficulties they (Cavaliere and himself) have faced in an attempt to foster the Great Ape Project to light.

Paola Aloï quoted Singer as saying that:

*Paola Cavaliere and I were the co-editors of the book **The Great Ape Project** and cofounders of the organization, so we played equal roles in it. The main challenge we faced was, of course, speciesism. No legal system, and no UN Declaration, has ever recognized non-human beings as having a similar moral or legal status to humans. Besides, even though people in industrialized nations do not think of great apes as sources of food, Chimpanzees have been used in medical research, and there are some resistances from the scientists who conduct such experiments. (www.antennae.org.uk).*

He (Singer) did, however, rejoice because “in some quarters, the idea that great apes should not be treated as fools for research has indeed made some progress since 1993. Experiments on great apes are now either banned or severely restricted in New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and throughout the European Union” (www.antennae.org.uk).

Similarly, in another book entitled: *Defense of Animals: The Second Wave* published in 2005 as a sequel to that which appeared in 1984, Singer maintains that “**An (animal) experiment cannot be justifiable unless the experiment is so important that the use of a brain-damaged human would be justifiable**”. Singer from the utilitarian perspective argued for the defense of animals on the premise that these animals like a man can feel and respond to pain and suffering.

Tom Regan another major advocate of animal right decides to argue from the intrinsic value (Natural Rights) perspective. He (Regan) considered Singers utilitarian proposition of Animals that as inadequate. Dissatisfied with the defense of animals that is offered by utilitarianism, he, therefore, based his argument on the thesis that “we humans as well as animals. All have a consciousness and a psychophysical identity over time. That makes us all a subject-of-a-life “and to be such a subject of life gives us an intrinsic value that demands unconditional respect” (Ingemar 2). Ingemar informs that Tom Regan’s argument for the defense of animal right is more valid. He quoted Regan as saying that:

...granting that we (humans) face great harm than laboratory animals presently endure if...research on these animals is stopped, the animal rights view will not be satisfied with anything less than total abolition (Animals don’t have Rights 2). Regan is therefore of the view that the idea of moral rights should be extended beyond humans to include animals. His premise is that it is not just being biologically human- a member of the species of Homo sapiens that gives a being rights; rather, it is the ability of such beings to possess particular capacities such as sentience (self-awareness: the ability to feel pain, torture, and distress). According to him, it



is these capacities, not genes, on which rights possession is based, that guarantee some animals as having rights.

In the case of Animal Rights first published in 1983, Tom Regan offered an extended, meticulously detailed, and closely reasoned argument for the rights of animals. Globally, philosophers and animals activists alike recognize this seminal book as groundbreaking premised upon the fact that it did not only extend the rights of humans to animals but it also defended and clarified the Animal Rights view itself. This Rights view according to Regan is *the philosophical basis for principled objections to the most forms of moral prejudice such as racism*. (www.antennae.org.uk : 42).

Tom Regan in his 1975 article *the Moral Basis of Vegetarianism* as published in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 1975 did link the practice of not eating meat with animals right to life. Similarly, in a second article "McCloskey on Why Animals cannot have Rights", published in the Philosophical Quarterly in 1976, together with the earlier essay did hold the origins of his seminal book, 'The Case for Animal Rights', published in 1983. He proposes the following arguments that all experiencing subject of a life is "a conscious creature having an individual welfare that has importance to its whatever its usefulness to others". Such beings "want and prefer things, believe and feel things, recall and expect things". They can and are subject to pain, can experience satisfaction and frustration, and have a sense of themselves as beings that persist, insists, and possibly subsists over time.

Such beings have, on his account, the inherent value of their own, based on their nature and capacities. They are not instruments for someone else's use and benefit. Inherent value, Regan maintains, can't be traded off, factored into calculations about consequences, or replaced. (www.animaethics.net).

Regan appears to be at loggerheads with the utilitarian conception of Rights. According to him, utilitarians are fundamentally mistaken in thinking that harming some beings to bring about good consequences for others is morally acceptable. On the contrary; that would be to sanction the disrespectful treatment of the individual in the name of the social good, something the rights view will not categorically ever allow".

We therefore, argue that even among Defenders of animal Rights, there seems to be areas of convergence as well as divergence. This to my mind goes to prove the fact that *no two individuals think or reason the same way* as there is relativity in objectivity." It is as though each of us are peering through a different window at the same thing but consequently obtaining different perspectives in relation to it"(Sahakian336)

However, it is no gain saying the fact that Tom Regan is universally recognized as a pioneering spokes person for the philosophy of animal rights. In 2009, he was included in the Readers list of fifty visionaries who are changing the world (Antennae 42).

Some of Regan's notable statements in favor of animal rights are contained and scattered across books, articles and Journals on Animal philosophy, some of the excerpts include:



Not only are the philosophies of animal rights and animal welfare...welfare reforms by their very nature can only serve to retard the pace of which animal rights goals are achieved (Ingemar 2).

Against this backdrop, Regan argues that there are times in which the question of Rights can pose a bottleneck that is, would result in a conflict of Rights. In such situations, Regan informs that animal rights defenders must necessarily shift ground and hence to the highest principle which according to him is the principle. This principle asserts that:

Provided that all those involved are treated with respect, and assuming that no special consideration obtain, any innocent individual has the right to act to avoid being made worse-off even if doing so harms other innocents (The Case for animal rights, 331).

The above principle suggests that one is justified in the killing of an animal in such situations in which killing them is necessary for the survival of the human being. But on the other hand, if this is the case, then we can argue in the same vein with Ingemar that the rights of animals are strange indeed. In addition to the above criticism, we are tempted to argue that if according to Regan's 'liberty principle' we could kill animals if their death would necessitate the survival of a human being that speciesism is thus a natural phenomenon inherent in even the most radical animal rightist. Furthermore, such liberty principle as proposed by Regan is a further justification of Joseph Fletcher's situation ethics.

Before the likes of Peter Singer and Tom Regan came on stage to advocate for animal rights, notable philosophers have in antiquity reflected and argued for the consideration of animals possessing similar rights of Man. One of such traditional philosopher who perhaps is worthy of double honor is Jeremy Bentham, the leading proponent of utilitarianism.

Douglass J. Socio reported that Bentham rejected any notion that animals lack moral worth simply because they cannot reason, comparing such thinking to racist thinking. Note how for Bentham seems to have moved beyond simple egoistic hedonism in the passage below: *The day may come when the rest of animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French*

have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprices of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the sacrum (tailbone), are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable course? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as month old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they suffer? (Socio 361).

According to Henry Salt, Bentham alluded to the above arguments for the moral rights of animals in his *Principles of Penal Law*. He (Bentham) informs that:

The legislator ought to interdict everything which may serve to lead to cruelty... it is proper ...to forbid every kind of cruelty towards animals, whether by amusement or to gratify gluttony. Cock-fights, bull-baiting, hunting hares and foxes, fishing, and other amusements of the same kind, necessarily suppose either the absence of reflections or

a fund of inhumanity, since they produce the most acute sufferings to sensible beings, and the most painful and lingering death of which we can form any idea. Why should the law refuse its protection to sensitive being? The time will come when humanity will extend its mantle over everything which breaths. We have begun by attending to the condition of slaves; we shall finish by softening that of all the animals which assist our labours or supply our want (2).

The duo of Asuo and Maduka argue from the foregoing that Bentham statements were both prophetic and social reforming of the relationship between man and other animals. They assert that the current relationship of Man shows a dire need of emotion on the part of man hence the need for change.

To further compliment the animal rightist argument which we have from the foregoing laboured to show as chronicled in the works of foremost philosophers like Jeremy Bentham, Peter Singer and Tom Regan. We shall further review other views of contemporary philosophers who have advocated for animal rights. This will be done in brief and in passing, possibly as highlights as they refer to individuals in the same camp with those afore mentioned. Some of these individuals may be radical advocates or mild advocates, but is essential is that they seem to be in consonance either directly or indirectly to the defense of animal rights.

According to Ingrid Newkirk, National Director, people for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, He is of the view that “Eating meat is primitive barbaric and arrogant” (Ingemar 2). For Henry Spira, Director of Animal Rights International, “My dream is that people will come to view eating an animal as cannibalism”. For Gary Francione, a professor of law and an animal rightist in the camp of Regan, “The theory of animal right simply is not consistent with the theory of animal welfare... Animal rights means dramatic social changes for humans and non-humans alike: if our bourgeois values prevents us from accepting those changes, then, we have no right to call ourselves advocates of animal rights”(2).

Another thought-provoking argument for the defense of animal rights is depicted in the following declarations:

If you haven't given voluntary 'human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a homo-sapiens world mean survival for millions, if not billions, of Earth dwelling species...phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social, and environmental(Knight 72). According to Alberth Schweitzer who was quoted by David A. Nibert as saying that, “anyone who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving also at the idea of worthless human lives” (Society and Animals 1994).

Similarly, Margaret Mead stated that *one of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it* (Nibert 115).

More so, early feminist writers, including Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly, Margaret Fuller, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Candy Staton, and others have highlighted the similarities and relationship between man's domination of human animals and man's domination of women (Donovan 1990).



The supposed fact that animals are a part of the ecosystem is to my mind what made Senator Al Gore argue in chapter thirteen (13) of his book *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* that there is need to keep ourselves abreast of the fact that animals ensure the ontological equilibrium of the ecosystem and we (Humans) must avoid disrupting the tranquility of these animals in their habitat. According to Al Gore who opines that:

It is time we ask a similar question about ourselves and our relationship to the global environment: when giving us dominion over the earth did God choose an appropriate technology? Knowing what we do about our new power as a species to interfere with and even overwhelm the earth's natural system and recognizing that we are now doing so with reckless abandon, one is tempted to answer, the jury is out. Whether we believe that our dominion derives from God or from our ambition, there is little doubt that the way we currently relate to the environment is widely inappropriate (238).

For Ronald Engels and Gibb J. Engels in their book "Ethics of Environment and Development", published in 1990, they argue thus:

That our basic model is wrong is also indicated by what we have done to other species and forms of life...we increasingly destroy other animal species. Vegetation, the chemical sources of life, and the sea beds and rocky lands bounty has been the source of so much imagination, wonder, joy and creativity spring from the unending acquisitiveness of our technological way of life and concomitant decline in our sensitivity to other common organic bond with the whole of creation and thus both our own survival and that of other species (31).

More so, in an article "Abolitionist Animal Rights: Critical Comparison and Challenges within the Animal Rights Movement" which was published in the Interface Journal on November 2012, the author argues that the central thesis behind the abolitionist movement lies in the need to curb the property status leveled against non-human animals. This 'property status is according to the author (Corey Wrenn), the view that animals are "mere automatons" and can therefore be used whatever way we please. She opined that,

The abolitionist movement is an emergent and radical approach to non-human animal rights calling for a complete cessation in non-human animals and an adoption of veganism and non violence, this approach stands in stark contrast to mainstream approaches such as humane production and welfare reforms...

A further argument suggests that:

Despite considerable productivity prior to the launch of abolitionist approach, Francione's work was largely unknown. Rather than advocating an incremental regulatory approach to reform non-human animal use, Francione's abolitionist approach requires incremental cessation of use that culminates in the altogether elimination of non human animal use (438-439).

The importance of animals in balancing the ecosystem cannot be overemphasized. As George A. Olusola informs in the article "Animals in the Traditional World view of the Yoruba"-the Yoruba people attach much importance to their animals and that animal also

occupy an importance place and space in human existence and life as a globe. The Yoruba have resolved to certain acts and have responded to some animal species due to the interactions they have had with them over the time...they explain their restrictions by drawing parallels with the sexual relationship between humans which should also never be disturbed. This is an indication of moral concern for the animals which is a rather logical idea (156).

Having painstakingly examined the views of animal rightists as shown from the foregoing we could argue that there seems to be the evidence that each of these scholars and philosophers tend to hold subjective standpoints. This fascinating discovery goes to prove the fact that there is no univocal straight jacket agreement on a particular issue in philosophy, for which reason we are justified in the statement that philosophy is not a science of rhetoric's but one of argumentation, clarification and mutual criticisms. We shall, therefore, consider the views of those philosophers who do as having rights. There are category of philosophers who are of the view that animals do not have right. They are otherwise known as animal leftists.

2. Those that Resist Animal Rights

For many reasons, some philosophers and thinkers aver that animals do not and cannot have rights. One of the earliest advocates of such as argued by Asuo and Maduka include: Aristotle, Immanuel Kant and Rene Descartes. According to these authors, who cited Korsgaard as saying that:

To Kant, rights originate from human rationality which obviously means that it is not the same thing as intelligence. It is a normative capacity, grounded in what Kant to the unique human ability to reflect on the reasons for our beliefs and actions and decide whether they are good reasons or bad ones. (Oshitta 49).

It is with this in mind that Kant considered animal as not belonging to the domain of rationality, moral consideration and right agents. He (Kant) suggested that animals should be treated as *a means to end rather as an end in themselves*. According to Kant in his *Metaphysics of Morals*, he argues that, *Beings the existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, have only a relative worth, as means and are therefore called things, whereas, rational beings are called persons because their nature already marks them out as an end in itself, that is, something that may not be used merely on a means* (Asuo and Maduka, 49).

However, Kant in spite of the above argument which proves to be detrimental to animals did unequivocally suggest that humans should be sympathetic to animal because *...to ill treat a dog, for example, would matter morally only because this may lead the perpetrator to ill-treat humans, too.* (Papineau 166). Descartes in his *Discourse on Methods*, gave as a reason for us to consider animals as mere automatons due to his belief that “they cannot speak as we do, that is, so as to give evidence that they think of what they say”. It was probably this assertion that has propelled what we now know as vivisection (scientific and biomedical research on animals).

A reaction against Descartes' conception of animals as 'mere automatons' was given by the French philosopher Voltaire in his *Philosophical Dictionary* as cited by David Papineau. In the words of Voltaire:

Barbarians seize this dog which in friendship surpasses man so prodigiously; they nail it on a table, and they dissect it alive to show the mesenteric veins. You discover in it all the same organs of feeling that are in yourself. Answer me, machinist, has nature arranged all the means of feelings in this animal so that it may not feel? (Papineau166).

For John Rawls, another animal leftist who considered animals to be outside the status of right, he argued in his book: *A Theory of Justice* published in 1971 and revised in 1991 that: *animals are outside the scope of justice which is based on the idea of a contract between free and rational equals* (166). Contractarians like John Rawls are of the view that we should be moral because it is in our self-interest and that showing consideration to others is really for your own sake: moral rules are conventions that serve the self interest of all members of the society. In the same vein, the philosopher Narveson puts it thus:

On the contract view of morality, morality is a sort of agreement among rational, independent, self interested persons, persons who have something to gain from entering into such an agreement... A major feature of this view of morality is that it explains why we have it and who party to it. We have it for reasons of long-term selfinterest, and parties to it include all and only those who have both of the following characteristics: (1) they stand to gain by subscribing to it, at least in the long run, compared with not doing so, and (2) they are capable of entering into (and keeping) an agreement. (...) Given these requirements, it will be clear why animals do not have rights (Narveson 56).

A more recent resistance to the advocacy for animal rights was made by Michael fox in his book, *The Case for Animal Experimentation*. As reported by Asuo and Maduka: *Fox held that animals are not members of the moral community hence humans owe them no moral obligation. A moral being understands moral concepts which are recognized. These concepts are enabled by sophisticated language, ability to plan, choose and accepts responsibility for actions. Animals do not have lives that can place them in a moral community, hence can be used by superior beings like man, who happens to be naturally qualified for that community. This does not make man morally culpable in any way whatsoever* (Environmental Philosophy... 50).

Some of the problems inherent in Fox's position were spotted out by Gruen, who argue that if we are to follow the above argument *strictosenso* it means that infants, young children, developmentally impaired people, those in comas... and other disabled persons who are incapable of moral choices are not, should not and cannot be on the same status quo of a moral community as they can therefore be used as we (man) pleases (50).

Philosophers like John Nuttall have decided to argue from another perspective, he informs in his book *Moral Questions: An Introduction to Ethics* published in 1990 that the criterion of the possession of a 'moral sense' is a fundamental distinguishing characteristic between human beings and animals (189). According to him, if we think that a person has rights by virtue of being self conscious and rational then a case can be made for animals having rights. Some animals certainly appear self-conscious; and various experiments have demonstrated least a degree of rationality on the part of animals" (Nuttall, 189).

Nuttall noted that,

...there have to my knowledge been no experiments to demonstrate that animals have a moral sense, a dog might do what it thinks is owner wants but not what it thinks is morally rights (190)

He submits that "...if a moral sense is taken to be the grounds on which someone is taken to be a person, animals are not persons and so do not have rights" (cited in Animal Rights 2). MesembeEdet argued against this position that the possession of a moral sense does not define a person. Unconscious persons, people who are asleep or dead persons have no moral sense but may still have right (2).

From the foregoing, Edet criticized Nuttall of being prejudiced in favor of the human species. He further argues that, it is even debatable to view animals as lacking a moral sense, when we consider how these animals relates among themselves in the animal kingdom and with man when they are domesticated and trained.

In his *Animals don't have Rights: A Philosophical Study*. IngemarNordin cited Richard Conniff, a conservationist and an anti-animal right advocate as saying that we must be mistaken for attributing right to animals and for raising the status of Animals to be equal to those of humans. An excerpt of this article reads:

How could animals liberationists argue on the one hand, that humans were merely a part of nature, no better as worse than other was obliged to give up practices with which it has naturally evolved, like killing and eating animals and wearing their skins? How could they argue that humans have no inherent moral superiority, and at the same time argue that we have a high moral obligation to treat animals more humanely than they would treat us or each other? (Ingemar 9).

For Ingemar who argued against the two main philosophical arguments that have been brought forward as a defense of the animal rights activism, such arguments are namely utilitarianism (Peter Singer) and Natural Rights (Tom Regan). According to him, each of these arguments carries its own difficulties. He opines that *the basic problem, as I see it, is that the dismissal of a moral distinction between humans and animals is rather gratuitous and that they do not pay sufficient attention to the unique position of man as a moral and civilizing being (9)*. He further noted that his aim is to puncture these two arguments and those premises which seem to have stood to strengthen the animal rightist position. Such arguments include: **the analogy between infants and higher primates, and the argument of the extended circle of compassion**. He maintains critically that:

These two arguments fail because there is no tenable ground for dismissing the distinction between man and other animals. My proposal for such a distinction is based on what should be quite evident to everybody, namely that man and only man has the basic properties of reason which are needed in order to give any kind of meaning to moral actions as such (Ingemar 1).

Contemplating on the proposition put forward by defenders of animal rights which asserts that “**there is no moral difference between animals and animals. In particular, that there is no moral difference between animals and the younger and disabled members of the species of Homo Sapiens**”, Ingemar in a more critical but rhetoric language avers that,

Is it not a bit strange, to more or less start out from the non-existence of any morally relevant difference between infants and pigs, between the species Homo sapiens and other species? Is it not, seriously speaking, a bit narrow to look only at the similarities (such as being able to feel pain) between humans and other animals while ignoring the great, astonishing and unique properties of the human species as such? And, from the detected similarities in question, hostility draws the conclusion that there cannot be any crucial differences of importance for a moral demarcation? Should the defenders of animal rights not at least acknowledge the possibility that the basic biological differences between the species that really exists might be of moral importance? (Ingemar 7)

NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC VIS-À-VIS CORRUPTION

From 1960 (actually 1963) through 2017, Nigeria is conveniently divided into four phases of political history or republics. This is as a result of the changes to the federal constitutions that characterized the administration of each of the era. Nigeria’s first republic began in 1st October 1963 through 14th January 1966, and was governed by a constitution (the 1963 constitution) contrived immediately after independence. Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe was the executive president while, TafawaBalewa was Prime Minister. This Westminster constitution republic was sacked by the military coup d’état of KadanaNzeogwu and Emmanuel Ifeajuna in January 1966 on the basis of corruption. Between 1979 and 1983, Nigeria experienced the second republic after a new set of general elections were conducted and Shehu Shagari and Alex Ekwueme emerged as president and vice president respectively. This government was sacked via another set of military coup still on the allegation of wide spread corruption. It was the 1979 constitution that was American-style presidential system. The third republic would be ushered in via the 1993 constitution which was never fully operational but for military administration stints. The fourth republic began in 27th May 1999 with the promulgation of the 1999 constitution.

We understand therefore that Nigeria’s political history has not been smooth-sailing but checkered between 1966 and 1976, after the fall of the first republic 1983 and 1993 sequel to the fall of the second republic and 1993 and 1999 after the downward spiral of the third republic there have been military interventions which justified their influx into political administration by slamming the democratically elected government with corruption allegations amongst other shenanigans. Chinua Achebe best describes the challenge of corruption especially in the first republic thus:

Within six years of this tragic colonial manipulation, Nigeria was a cesspool of corruption and misrule, public servants helped themselves freely to the nation’s wealth. Elections were blatantly rigged, the subsequent national census was



outrageously staged-managed; judges and magistrates were manipulated by the politicians in power. The politicians themselves were pawns for foreign business interests. The social malaise in the Nigerian society was political corruption (There was a Country 51).

The position captured above is just for the first republic. However, studies suggests that from 1966 to date, Nigeria has always found itself amongst the echelons of most corrupt countries in the world; the causes of corruption have been listed to be prolong military rule, poverty and poor work condition, political institutions, low human development indicators, activities of multinational corporation, economic bargain, etc. It is alleged that there are 300 plus established cases of corruption beginning from 1999 through 2013 and between 2013 and 2017 there shall be equal the previous number (Political Party Financing and Corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: The Case of 2015 General Elections 4).

In his appraisal of corruption in the fourth republic as published in vanguardngr.com, Prof. Itse Sagay, the renowned lawyer in an interview observed, in categorical terms, the collapse of the republic under review. He particularly highlighted the pension scam, petrol subsidy and the scandal at the Nigerian security and exchange commission (SEC). The petrol subsidy scam saga has it on record that the sum of N1.17 trillion exchanged hands between the federal government to business men who practically did not supply any petroleum products. He referred to the ugly development of a lawmaker of Nigeria's senate earning annually the sum of N1.7 million when developed climes are a far cry from that especially in the United States where a congress man earns just 200 thousand dollars and America's president earns \$400,000. This is obtainable in a country where the majority of the 180 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. Infrastructural development in critical sectors like power, education, health, road networks, etc is at the lowest ebb. 'Our fourth republic democracy is a complete failure in the sense that the very first threshold of what constitutes democracy has failed. That's free, fair and credible elections. Since the inception of the fourth republic, we have not had any election that can be described as free, fair and credible. What we have had are very bad elections, extremely fraudulent and completely overwhelmed by rigging' Sagay gripped.

In his *Political Corruption and Underdevelopment in the Nigerian Fourth Republic*, Aladayo Awojobi has reflected on the depth of financial corruption at the presidency and the federal executive council, the National Assembly and at sub-national entities between 1999-2014: former vice-president Atiku Abubakar was involved in a corruption scandal of his role in petroleum technology development fund (PTDF) where he was indicted by the senate committee for his role in PTDF; former president Olusegun Obasanjo allegedly used his influence to acquire shares at Transcorp, he influenced the building of a presidential library in Abeokuta. During the presidency of late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Nuhu Ribadu of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission czar was booted out of office by public officers who bankrolled the process and replaced by Fadiro Waziri. A church building was built for President Goodluck Jonathan at Otueke his village by an Italian construction firm. In his presidency, federal ministers like Stella Oduha, Alice Osomo, Sunday Afolabi, Fabian Osuji, etc. were involved in profound corruption scandals (154). At the national assembly, senate presidents



ChubaOkadigbo, and Adolphus Wabara were enmeshed in a corruption scandal; speakers Patricia Eteh, Dimeji Bankole were embroiled in corruption scandal. Eteh was impeached (Awojobi 154). Awojobi further states that the former EFCC Chairman NuhuRibadu in 2006 once said that 31 state governors have corruption cases to answer. However, when Ribadu was replaced by Fadiri Waziri, she let Nigerians know that the case files of the 31 governors in the fourth republic that have corruption cases with EFCC are missing. State governors with corruption cases were Diepreye Alamieyesigha, James Ibori, Uzor Kalu, Gbenga Daniel, Alas Akala, Rashidi Ladija, Samimu Juraki, Jolly Nyame, others are Lucky Igbinedion, Boni Haruna, Attahiru Bafarawa and Adamu Abdulahi (154).

An African Union reports says that, the sum of \$500 billion has been pilfered from Nigeria since 1960. The resultant effect of political corruption has been grave collapse of critical infrastructure particularly education, health, water, power, road which has in turn led to increased unemployment, poor social welfare services, poverty, security threat, loss of public trust, etc.

BUHARI'S EMERGENCE, THE NEW TWIST TO CORRUPTION AND HUMAN AMBIVALENCE

53.96% of total eligible voters amounting to 15,424,921 Nigerians voted Mr. Muhammadu Buhari during the 2015 general elections of March 28. With this, Buhari was sworn-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 27th May 2015. President Buhari, amongst other things, during the 2015 campaigns made 3 promises according to Mr. Femi Adesina the special adviser on media and publicity to include, securing the country, fighting corruption and restoring the economy. Concerning corruption, Buhari while campaigning in 2015 for the highest office in the country in a presidential rally of the All Progressives Party (APC) at Liberation Stadium Port Harcourt said: "If we don't kill corruption, this corruption will kill us. If you make a mistake of voting PDP I assure you, you will regret it". It is therefore obvious that one of the cardinal leg of the tripod stand upon which Mr. Buhari coasted to victory in the general elections of 2015 was the fight against corruption. In fact, Buhari promised to kill the social malaise.

With the inception of Buhari in 29th May, there was a war against corruption that was declared, this anti-corruption war may be said to begin with a sentiment expressed in the inaugural speech president made at the Eagle Square, Abuja during his swearing-in as president of the federal republic of Nigeria on May 27, 2015, 1:37:34pm. It reads thus: "having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as president to all Nigerians. I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody". The emphasis is on the last phrase – I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody. This phrase has been interpreted to mean that as the occupier of the country's top office, he will be president of all irrespective of religious, political, ethnic, regional affiliations, with this expression, Mr. president set the tone and tenor of his fight against the social malaise called corruption.

The handful of alleged corruption cases are being prosecuted under the present administration. Mr. Sambo Dasuki the former national security adviser (NSA) to president Goodluck Jonathan is being prosecuted for allegedly squandering the sum of \$2.5 billion meant



for the purchase of arms for the Nigerian Army to fight the war against Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria's North East. Former Chief of Defense Staff was grilled by the EFCC over the whopping sum of \$930 million in contracts allegedly awarded. Africa Independent Television (AIT) boss, Raymond Dokpesi was accused of laundering N2.1 billion and breach of procurement law. Olisah Metuh, former publicity secretary of the PDP was arraigned for reportedly collecting N400 million from Dasuki's office. He is presently undergoing prosecution. He has even conceded to return a portion of the loot. Again, NIMASA (Nigerian Maritime and Safety Agency). Former boss, Patrick Akpobolokemi was arraigned in court over allegations of diverting N3.7 billion earmarked for the development of the maritime university, Okerenkoko, Delta state. Mr. Government Ekpemukpolo popularly called Tompolo has been on the run being wanted in connection with an alleged fraud amounting to N49.6 billion. EFCC has declared him wanted for conspiracy and illegally diverting N34 billion and N11.9 billion belonging to NIMASA into private pocket. Alison Madueke, former minister of petroleum is currently on the run. She's alleged to have stolen \$90 billion. She has been mentioned in a series of multi-billion dollar fraud and money laundering offences in Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United states.

Again, former head of service of the federation Steve Oronsaye was arraigned on a 24-count charge of allegedly obtaining money by false pretenses, theft and money laundering worth N1.9 billion. Former pension reform task boss, Abdulrasheed Maina has been charged with alleged looting of police pension funds, Femi Fani-Kayode former minister of aviation was quizzed by the EFCC for alleged misuse of N800 million, money meant for campaign funds of the PDP. Dame Patience Jonathan, wife of former president Goodluck Jonathan is presently under scrutiny by the EFCC. In fact, the EFCC has traced the sums of \$6.7 and \$ 31.5m to her bank accounts. According to a news report, the former first lady is offering to settle out of court with the EFCC particularly in respect of \$11.489,069.03. With this litany of arraignment and investigations by the EFCC one would say president Buhari may have made significant efforts in his fight against corruption. Firstly, there has been no high case of corruption allegation that has been convicted in court. Secondly, critics have variously said that Buhari's fight against corruption is one-sided, something resembling a witch-hunt of the opposition PDP and perceived foes of this administration. In respect of the latter, some Nigerians have asked: why has Rotimi Amaechi the incumbent minister of transport, Babatunde Fasola, the current minister of works and housing and a handful of others serving in Buhari's government not been prosecuted for corruption allegations starring them in the face? Again, with the allegations leveled against Tukur Buratai, the chief of army staff, and Abdulrahman Dambazzau, the minister for the interior, etc why are they not arraigned in court? Some have even alleged that Buhari is shielding some and perverting justice. This perceived disposition of the president seem to have polarized Nigerians especially along religious, political, ethnic, etc. lines and by extension undermining the 'I am for nobody and I am for everybody' phrase of Mr. president.

Be that as it may, there has been a new twist to both political and financial corruption in Nigeria by reason of recent developments. On the 10th of February 2018, the Nigerian media was awash with the news of mystery snake sneaking into the account office of the Joint



Admissions and Matriculations Board, JAMB in Makurdi, the Benue state capital, carting away with N36 million. Particularly, “JAMB sales clerk, Philomina Chiesche, told JAMB registrar that her housemaid connived with another JAMB staff, Joan Asen to ‘spiritually’ make away with the stated sum from JAMB vault (Daily Post, Strange Snake Swallows N36 million naira...). On 21st February 2018, it was again reported that monkeys, after raiding the farm of senator Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa – APC stole the sum of N70 million belonging to Northern Senators’ Forum (Premium Times Nigeria, Monkey carted away N70 million). On August 2017, after ailing President Buhari returned from medical treatment in London, Senior Special Assistant to the president, Mr. Shehu Garba, announced that the president’s office had been ravaged by rodents destroying furniture’s, etc. according to him: ‘following the three months period of disuse, rodents have caused a lot of damage to the furniture and the air conditioning units,’ which explained why the president wouldn’t operate from his office at the time (Vanguard, Rodents Ravage President Buhari’s Office).

This new twist to financial/political corruption in contemporary Nigeria constitutes an embarrassment both nationally and internationally. This ignoble turn is to say the least grossly disappointing’. It suggests that we are a state so given to theft so much so that even nonhuman animals; like snake and monkey have been caught in the national web; it also suggests that non-human animals interfere in matters of state, though ignobly.

As researchers the question then becomes, why would Nigerians nay human animals accused non-Nigerians nay non-human Nigerians of inglorious vices such as stealing, selfishness, indiscipline, etc? Conversely, why have we never heard that it was non-human animals who composed the enduring lines of the national anthem? Or it was non-human animals who caused a speedy recovery of President Muhammadu Buhari, thereby facilitating his return from his London sick bed. Why have such beautiful things never been said of nonhuman animals? It is obvious that because Nigerians in the attempt to evade anticipated punishment and demonstrate responsibility have resorted to accusing non-human animals, further using them as legal shields against justice. Another attempt to rationalize this quandary, we may resort to the idea of ‘ambivalence of human interest’ (Asouzu, *The Method and principles* 51-67).

Basically, every human action (and even inaction) is borne out of the need to fulfill fundamental instinct – self preservation. This instinct, as primordial as it is, dictates direct the path the human person takes in embarking on any areas that concerns his/her everyday living, including relationships. Now, it should be emphasized that this relationship is or should not be with fellow human animals alone – non-human animals like rodents, snakes and monkeys etc. are anticipated accordingly. Distinctively, in responding adequately to the law of selfpreservation, the human person is wont to do so with a degree of instinct and insight (*The Principles and Method of Complementary Reflection* 51). This preceding fact, impact our relationships – whether human-human, or human-non-human animal; particularly in asymmetrical situations. More still, because our response to the primordial instinct of selfpreservation is partly reason-based (insight) and emotion-based (instinct) there is the overt tendency not to be aware of the total constitution of our interest. A situation that compels us to think that our interests are homogenously constituted. Thus, our regrettable unilateral perception



of human interest forces us towards exclusivist inclination (the Principles and Method of Complementary Reflection 52). Udoudom David, and Samuel Bassey further buttresses the argument about units existing in isolation of each other which they observed is a negation of the idea of being, implying that distinct units should complement one another to realize their ultimate ontological potential (110). Put differently, human interest is nonhomogenous, it is ambivalent in constitution. The extension to this is that if our interests are things which drive our continued existence, there is then we perceived than as good. However, taking cognizance of the bipolarity of human interest, there is the badness and goodness of human interest: when in the attempt to sustain a unitary interest which is good, one does not capture the interest of other existents one naturally embark on expedition that is counter anti the interest of the existent other – human or non-human. So, the human person can embark on a purpose that is both good and bad all at the same time. What an ambivalence. That which debars us from anticipating the negative dimension to our interest is defined appropriately as the ‘phenomenon of concealment’ (The Principles and Method of Complementary Reflection 61). This afore painted scenario may be seen as a model to rationalize human-non-human inter-relationship.

ANIMAL STEALING AND ITS IMPLICATION TO ANIMAL RIGHTS

In the event where the human animal confines itself as being a higher being especially above other non-human animals (The Method and Principles... 51). There is the natural tendency for us, while embarking on the mission of objectifying his/her interest to negate at the same time the interest of the non-human animals. Within the context of our research, the negation of non-human animal interest by the actions and in-actions of human animals has assumed the form of – abuse.

Perceived corrupt Nigerians, in the bid to fashion out their interest of evading justice or avoid culpability in a crime (or irresponsible act) has decided to refer to snakes and monkeys, creatures deserving of our dignity, as thieves and this without evidence. In a situation where, Nigeria’s presidency paints rodents in negative light just to give an excuse for why a sitting president will operate away from the officialdom of his office in Aso Rock, Abuja constitute a grand violation of the rights of the rodent. The integrity of rodents, snakes and monkeys have been violated as a result of the asymmetrical condition that places the existent other at the receiving end, could this be a situation of giving the dog a bad name just to kill it?

It is one thing for Mr. Garba the SSA to President Buhari on media publicity, to say that the, ‘following the three months period of disuse... (there’s) a lot of damage to the furniture and air-conditioning units in the office of the president which makes it impossible for Mr. President to operate from the office, it is another to say that ‘rodents have caused a lot of damage to... ‘again, it is one thing for one of the JAMB Clark at Benue, Chiesche to say that she cannot account for the money that accrue to her office from sales of scratch card, and it is another thing for her to say that a snake mysteriously compromised the vault and made away with a whooping N36 million; finally, it is one thing for it to be rumoured that N70 million of Northern Senators Forum is missing in the farmland of the said lawmaker, and it is another thing to say that monkeys raided the farm and stole the money – just in time!?! We cannot paint ourselves in positive ethical light by deliberately casting the existent other in negative ethical light. Being a



higher animal 'suggest that we take responsibility for actions and inactions bravely, it should not entail butting the non-human animal down by fixating it continually in bad ethical light. And come to think of it: are snakes, rodents and monkeys, etc. now moral beings?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have argued that President Buhari set the tone for the particular abuse to the rights of animals when he alleged that he won't be working from his Aso villa office because of the intrusion of rodents into his office. From there, snakes and monkeys have been on the run for dipping their hands into the public tilt.

We have further noted that the reason why human animals are wont to accuse nonhuman animals of stealing especially in the case under review is premised on the ambivalence of human interest particularly where there is an asymmetrical positioning of power between the one existent, the human being and the existent other, the non-human animal: we relied heavily on Innocent Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy nay Complementary Reflection. This research commends the ongoing prosecution of Chiesche.

Given this equal opportunity, and eschewing unnecessary sentiment and sympathy which makes people unproductive, a system of taxation could be adopted based on the principle of "the less you earn, the more you pay". The idea is that this would at long run make more richer-men than poorer men.

In this spirit of equality the Igbos would say "egbeberegobere, nkesiibeyaebela, nkukwaya" (let the hawk perch, let the eagle perch, anyone that refuses the other from perching, let the wings be broken). In this same vein, Ujomu has observed that the presence and operation of some core social values such as trust, justice, honesty, and love among different interests and segments of the society, would ensure that Nigeria achieves sustainable development, sanity, peace and prosperity. (Ujomu, 205).

Responsive and responsible governance which would manage our resources to rational ends. (Okoye, 2003) would further help build and reclaim the already eroded trust of the people on the government A recognition of their right and opportunities to have the joy of life, which includes materials and non-material possessions. No nation would survive with her citizenry walking under the label of "Odinduonwukamma" (the walking dead).

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