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Spain to Grant Rights to Apes

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The liberal government of Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero is moving to grant certain “rights” to apes. These rights are to include recognition as part of a “community of equals” with humans, according to press reports.

This is a ludicrous proposal, based in the Great Apes Project sponsored by Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri. Singer, a professor at Princeton University, is infamous for arguing that the lives of some animals are more important and worthy of protection than the lives of some humans, including the mentally impaired and the elderly.

The ridiculous character of the proposal is the notion of a community of equals. The Spanish Parliament includes no apes as members. They are not equals. I would wager that if any of these legislators had to choose between the life of his child and the life of an ape, the decision would be easy. The ape is not a human.

From Richard G. Stevens in *National Review*:

It is now nearly 300 years since Rousseau showed us that the defining characteristic of man is not logos, but a sentiment of being. Why parcel out a stingy handful of “human” rights to the apes? Recognizing that all animals are feeling beings, why not have the United Nations look into the formation of a “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Sentient Beings?” If snail darters can be saved, why not rats and roaches too?

Finally, now that affirmative action and the moral cry for “social justice” are on the front burner, let us abandon that favorite of the neocons and the Straussians, the antiquated notion that rights are for individuals, not for groups. We need to recognize that apes are a group with special, cultural characteristics and needs. If it is dehumanizing to suggest that one human culture is less worthy than another, it would certainly be de-being-izing to insist that apes, once freed, be compelled to assimilate their habits to ours.

As the report from [Reuters](#) news service observes, the proposal seems a bit hypocritical coming from a nation known for celebrating brutal bull fights.

From Wesley J. Smith in *The San Francisco Chronicle*:

“I am an ape,” Pedro Pozas, secretary-general of the Spanish Great Ape Project, declared recently.

No, Pozas wasn’t commenting on his appearance. Rather, he was boosting Spanish legislation that would grant human-type rights to apes.

Then:

Spain’s Pozas may think of himself as being merely an ape, but the rest of us should reject his absurd moral reductionism. If we truly want to make this a better world, the answer is not to give apes unwarranted rights, but rather, to embrace the unique importance and solemn responsibilities that are essential aspects of living fully human lives.

