

Animal Rights - An Introduction by Tom Regan

Regan's argument for animal rights can be summarized as follows.

Part 3/5 (1:28 – 10:30): Definition of crucial terms

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik9EnqE4H0&feature=related>

What does it mean to say that an individual has "moral rights"?

- (1) The individual's most important goods (i.e., their life, body, and liberty) deserve to be protected: Moral rights *limits what others can do* to the individual who has the rights.
- (2) Moral rights are *trumps*: They take priority over other important considerations, such as social customs and public good.
- (3) Moral rights are *equal*: my moral rights are no greater than yours, yours no great than mine.

Part 4/5 (4:12 – 5:44): Empirical claims

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx_V0BdxRno&feature=related

Are animals like us?

- (4) Like us, animals are "subjects-of-a-life" – i.e., complicated psychological creatures in that they have memories, form intentions, experience a variety of emotions, have preferences and plans, and they are aware of what happens to them, and what happens matters to them because that makes a difference to the quality of their life as they experience it – independently of whether others care about it or not.

Part 4/5 (5:44 – 10:50) & Part 5/5 (0:00 – 2:10): Counter-argument against a popular view

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLjVn5FMjic&feature=related>

Who has moral rights? And why?

- (5) Young children are not moral agents – i.e., they are incapable of making moral choice.
- (6) The popular view that only moral agents have rights rules out moral rights for young children. (from 5)
- (7) Young children do have moral rights, despite the fact that they are not moral agents.
- (8) To be consistent, we should reject the view that only moral agents have moral rights. (from 6 & 7)
- (9) To be consistent (and to avoid using a double standard), we cannot argue that animals do not have moral rights because they are not moral agents. (from 8)

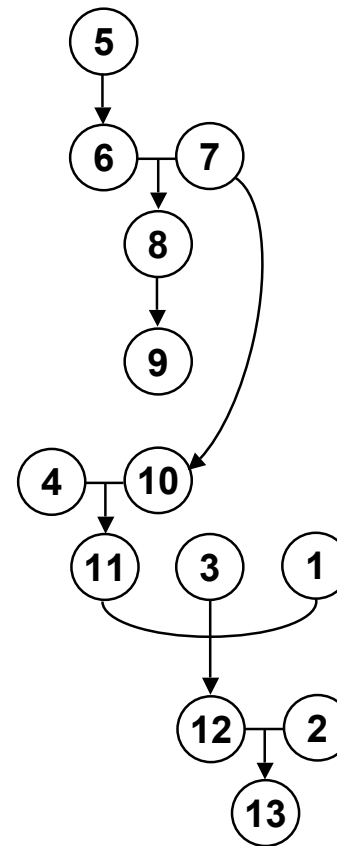
Part 5/5 (5:50 – 8:13): Argument for animal rights

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLjVn5FMjic&feature=related>

Who has moral rights? And why?

- (10) Being subjects-of-a-life is the foundation of moral rights: it is the real reason why human beings, like you and I, are fundamentally the same and have the same moral rights. (from 7)
- (4) Like you and I, animals are subjects-of-a-life.
- (11) Like you and I, animals have moral rights (from 10 & 4)
- (12) Like you and I, animals have equal moral rights to have their body, life, and liberty protected. (from 11, 3, 1)
- (13) Like you and I, animals have equal moral rights to have their body, life, and liberty protected which trump consideration of social customs and public good. (from 12 & 2)

Argument Map



Standard Form

- (5) Young children are not moral agents – i.e., they are incapable of making moral choice. (*empirical claim*)
- (6) The popular view that only moral agents have moral rights rules out moral rights for young children. (from 5)
- (7) Young children do have moral rights, despite the fact that they are not moral agents. (*evaluative claim*, popular opinion)
- (8) To be consistent, we should reject the popular view that only moral agents have moral rights. (from 6 & 7)
- (9) To be consistent (and to avoid using a double standard), we cannot argue that animals do not have moral rights because they are not moral agents. (from 8)
- (10) Being subjects-of-a-life is the foundation of rights: it is the real reason why human beings, like you and I, are fundamentally the same and have the same moral rights. (*evaluative claim*, from 7, by *argument to best explanation*)
- (4) Like us, animals are "subjects-of-a-life" – i.e., complicated psychological creatures, in that they have memories, form intentions, experience a variety of emotions, have preferences and plans, and they are aware of what happens to them, and what happens matters to them because that makes a difference to the quality of their life as they experience it – independently of whether others care about it or not. (*empirical claim*, Darwin's expert opinion)
- (11) Like you and I, animals have moral rights (from 10 & 4)
- (3) Moral rights are *equal*: my moral rights are no greater than yours, yours no great than mine. (*evaluative claim*)
- (1) The individual's most important goods (their life, body, and liberty) deserve to be protected: Moral rights *limits what others can do* to the individual who has the rights. (*evaluative claim*)
- (12) Like you and I, animals have equal moral rights to have their body, life, and liberty protected. (from 11, 3, 1)
- (2) Moral rights are *trumps*: They take priority over other important considerations, such as social customs and public good. (*evaluative claim*)
- (13) Like you and I, animals have equal moral rights to have their body, life, and liberty protected which trump consideration of social customs and public good. (from 12 & 2)