

# Animal right

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



Animal Rights Introduction Animal rights are the ideology that animals have certain rights which have to be protected under the law. These animal rights were governed by several philosophical theories which were set up by different theorists about the interests of animals, moral duties towards animals, and why animal rights are important. This paper will assess the views of Tom Regan on animal rights as compared to the utilitarian view of animal rights.

Regan gave the philosophy of animal rights in his famous book *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983). This book greatly influenced the animal rights movement as Regan argued that animals, that are non-human, are also “subjects-of-a-life” just as all other humans (Regan, 2004). According to his theory, when value is given to all other humans regardless of their mental and rational abilities then the same value should be ascribed to the non-human animals as well. His arguments are based on the views of Immanuel Kant that all animals have moral rights but he criticizes Kant’s belief that only rational beings are subjected to respect. Regan rejects this view and argues that humans gain the value and respect regardless of their rationality as with infants and those who are mentally instable thus non-human animals are also subjected to the same value and respect regardless of their rationality. Since all human and non-human animals are subjects-of-a-life, life is the only attribute which would subject to value. Thus every being that is subject-of-a-life must be treated with respect and must be given moral rights (Regan, 2004).

On the other hand, utilitarianism is a theory which proposes that any action will be morally right only when it benefits and provides good to a large

number of people. According to this theory, what's right is determined by the value of pleasure or pain that it causes to other people. If an action causes pleasure to most of the people then it is considered as morally right while if it causes pain and suffering for the people, it will be considered morally wrong. Utilitarianism is often used to justify animal rights as their pain and pleasure is also counted for actions that are morally right or wrong (Brooman, 1997).

Utilitarian theorists believe that biologically it is justified that non-human animals are sentient and biologically they are able to feel pain and pleasure. This is justified also practically as many people have experienced such feelings in animals, especially cats and dogs. There is a lot of evidence that non-human animals are sentient and they feel pain. Biologically and behaviorally, the non-human animals have the capabilities to respond to painful and pleasure seeking situations. This is why utilitarianism argues that non-human animals are also subjected to moral duties and people have to ensure that their actions are causing pleasure not only to humans but also to non-human animals (Brooman, 1997).

Thus, both the views on animal rights have a different approach as Regan talks about the moral rights that non-human animals have because they are subject-of-a-life and regardless of their rationality they are ascribed to value and respect. The utilitarianism view, however, argues that non-human animals are biologically and behaviorally subjected to pain and pleasure which is why an action would be considered morally right if it is beneficial for all human and non-human animals combined.

## References

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Regan, T. (2004). The Case for Animal Rights. University of California Press