

Marquis on abortion:

1. classic anti-abortion view

1. the view

1. What gives us the right to life is that we're human.
2. So, it's wrong to take a human life.
3. Fetuses are alive and human.
4. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

2. problems

1. It is unclear how a biological property (the property of being human) is sufficient for a moral property (the property of having the right to life).
2. This view would seem to imply that other living human things, such as sperm, eggs, and human cancer cells, also have the right to life. But this is very counter-intuitive.
3. This view fails to explain the wrongness of killing non-human creatures like us, such as aliens that we might think of as friends of ours.

2. classic pro-choice view

1. the view

1. What gives us the right to life is that we're persons.

2. Fetuses aren't yet persons.

3. So, it's not wrong to kill them.

2. problems

1. It is unclear how a psychological property (the property of being a person) is sufficient for a moral property (the property of having the right to life).

2. This view fails to explain the wrongness of killing infants.

3. Future Like Ours view

1. the view

1. What gives us the right to life is that we have futures of value—i.e., that our futures will be valuable to us.

2. So, it's wrong to kill something that has a future of value.

3. Fetuses have futures of value.

4. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

2. problems solved

1. right to life

1. adults

2. children

3. infants

4. individuals in temporary comas or suffering from depression

5. some animals, possibly (if they are deemed to have a future like ours)

2. no right to life

1. cancer cells

2. individuals in permanent comas

3. individuals in severe, untreatable pain

3. when it might be o.k. to kill someone (even if he or she has a future like ours)

1. self-defense, war, capital punishment

2. So the FLO view is not meant to say that all killing is wrong, just that killing a fetus is as bad as killing a normal adult.

4. Why do eggs and sperm not have the right to life?

1. It might be thought that the FLO view would imply that eggs and sperm have the right to life, on the grounds that they have futures like ours.

2. But they do not have futures like ours, since they are not not the same individuals that they combine to form: the egg from which an adult human is formed is not the same individual as that human, and neither is the sperm.