
Environmental ethics: The Ethics of Animal Testing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rQi2uNqwxk>



Environmental Ethics

Environmental ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies how humans should interact with the natural world:

What it is

Environmental ethics examines the **moral obligations people have to the environment**, including how to use natural resources responsibly and protect the natural world. It also considers how society can create policies and attitudes to sustain the environment.

Environmental Ethics

What it considers

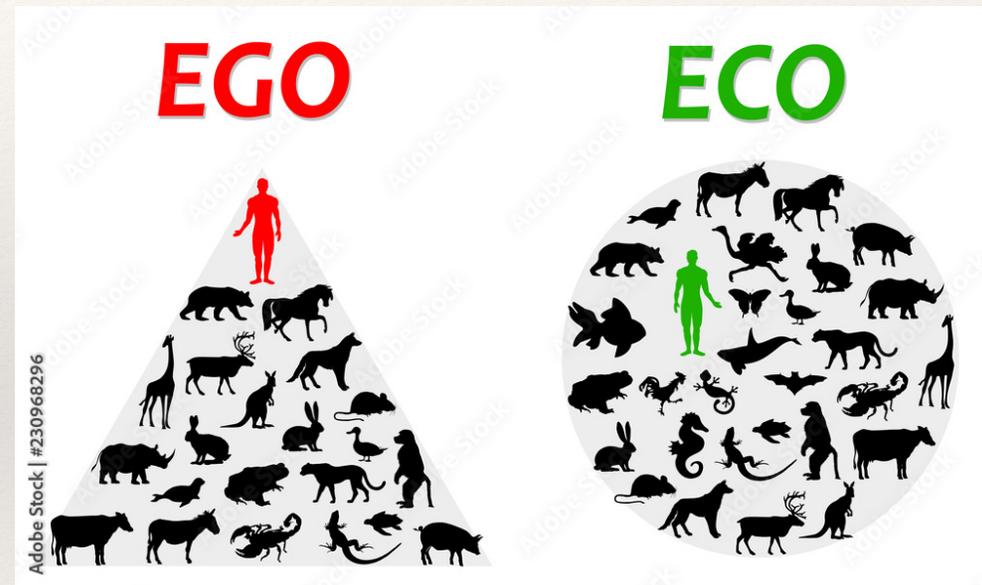
Some fundamental concepts in environmental ethics include:

Anthropocentrism

The belief that humans are the most important entity on the planet, and that nature should be valued only for the benefits it provides to humans. Anthropocentrists believe that humans are morally superior to other living things.

Ecocentrism

The belief that nature has inherent value and that humans are part of nature and are interconnected with all other species. Ecocentrists believe that nature deserves moral consideration because of its intrinsic value.



Environmental Ethics

Deep ecology advocates for a radical shift in our worldview. It contends that humans are part of a larger interconnected web of life, and our well-being depends on the health of the entire ecosystem. Deep ecologists call for a fundamental transformation in our values, emphasizing ecological integrity over economic growth.

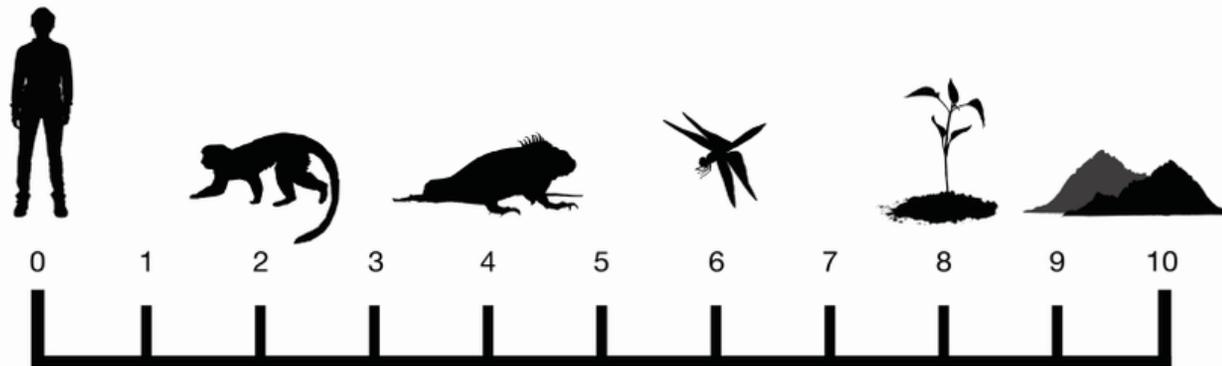
Shallow ecology, in contrast, focuses on pragmatic solutions within the existing socio-economic framework. It aims to minimize environmental harm without challenging the status quo. Shallow ecologists promote recycling, energy efficiency, and conservation but may not question the underlying consumerist culture.

Environmental Ethics

The Deep Ecology Spectrum

**ANTHROPOCENTRISM
(ANDROCENTRISM)**
Humans are at the centre of our
concerns

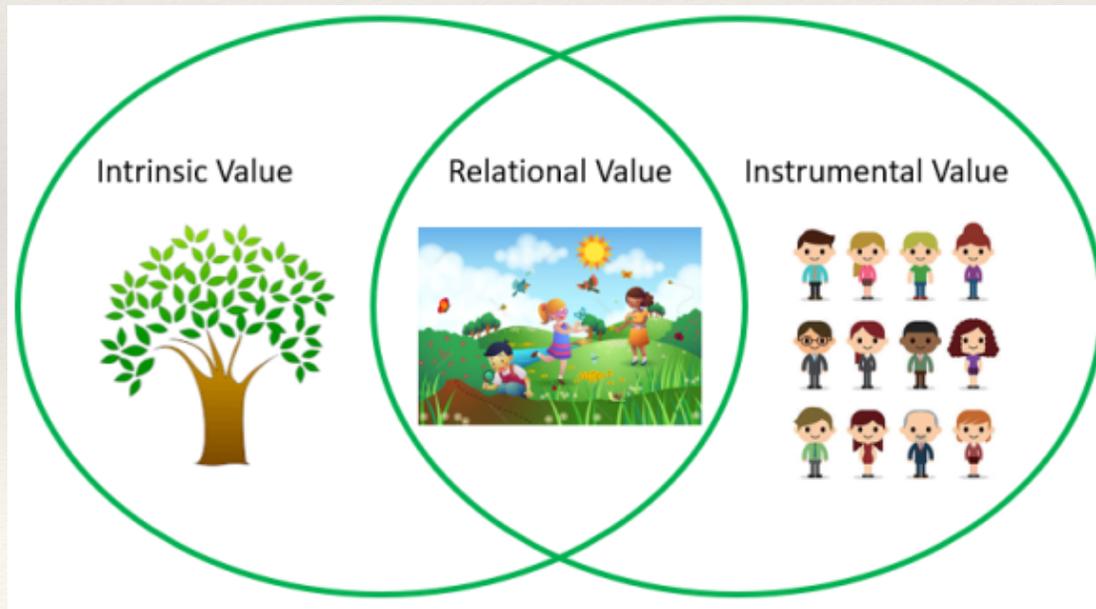
ECOCENTRISM
All living and non-living things
are at the centre of our
concerns



Environmental Ethics

Intrinsic Value and Instrumental Value:

Environmental ethics grapples with the concept of value. While humans often assign instrumental value (usefulness) to nature (e.g., forests for timber, rivers for irrigation), some argue for intrinsic value. Intrinsic value recognizes that nature has inherent worth beyond its utility.



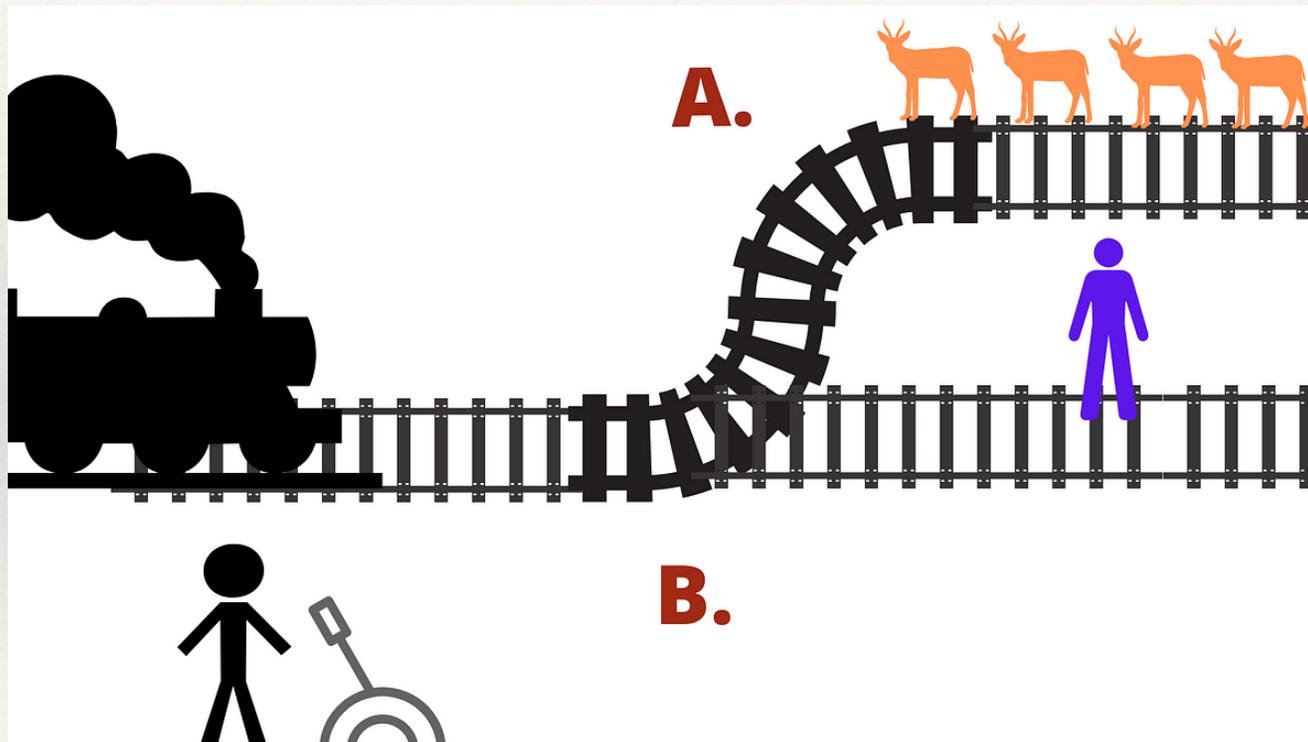
Environmental Ethics

Environmental Virtue Ethics:

Virtue ethics emphasizes character traits and moral virtues. Environmental virtue ethics encourages individuals and organizations to cultivate virtues like ecological wisdom, humility, and reverence for life. These virtues guide ethical decision-making in environmental contexts.

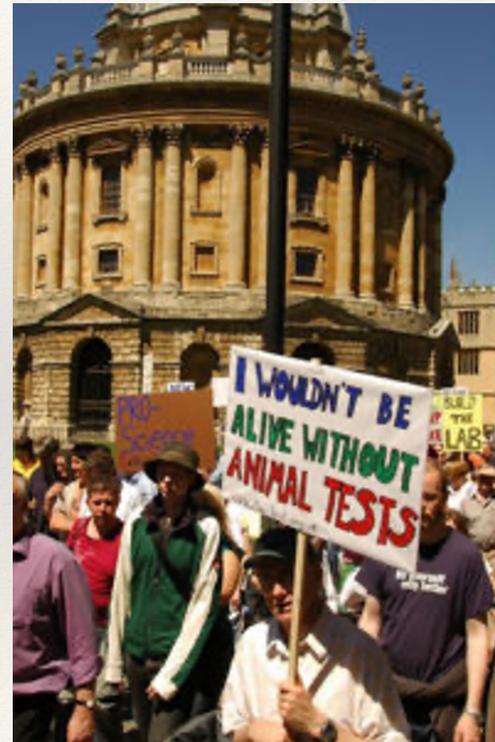
Environmental Virtue: Environmentally Responsive, Environmentally Justified, Environmentally Productive				
Virtues of Sustainability	Virtues of Communion with Nature	Virtues of Respect for Nature	Virtues of Environmental Activism	Virtues of Environmental Stewardship
temperance	wonder	reverence	diligence	benevolence
frugality	openness	compassion	cooperativeness	loyalty
far-sightedness	appreciation	restitutive justice	commitment	justice
attunement	attentiveness	considerateness	optimism	honesty
humility	love	ecological sensitivity	creativity	diligence
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

Is all life equal?



Animal testing

While controversial, it is an unavoidable fact that animal research has allowed the development of medicines and vaccines, surgical techniques and advanced scientific understanding in many areas.



Animal testing

It is estimated that between 50 and 100 million animals are used in research each year.

Some are purposely bred for testing; many are still caught in the wild.



Animal testing

The ethics of animal testing involve considering the welfare of the animals, the potential benefits of the research, and the overall societal impact:

- ❖ ***Respect for life***

The use of animals in research should be appropriate for the species and health status of the animal, and the minimum number of animals should be used to obtain valid results.

- ❖ ***Societal benefit***

The potential societal good of the research should be considered, including the populations affected and the burdens on the research subjects.

- ❖ ***Non-maleficence***

Investigators should minimize the pain, distress, and suffering of the animals.

- ❖ ***Scientific quality***

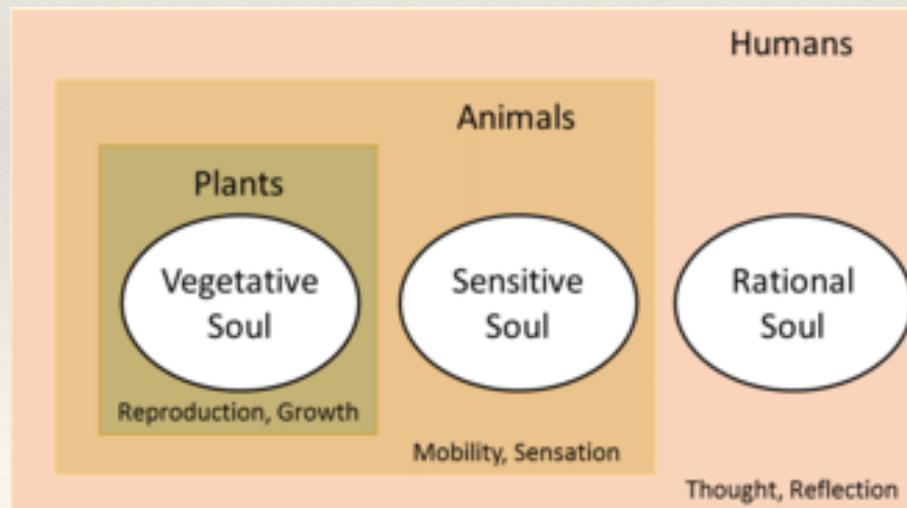
The scientific quality of the experiments should be considered, and the experiments should have relevant scientific benefits.

- ❖ ***Humane care***

Investigators are responsible for providing high-quality care for the animals, including nutritious food, water, and housing. They should also prevent and relieve pain, disease, and injury.

Aristotle's view on animal testing

Scientific research that used animals as models for humans began in ancient Greece. **Aristotle was the first researcher to use animals** systematically for research purposes. **Aristotle attributed feelings to animals but not reason**, placing them below humans in importance. Aristotle's approach became the dominant way of thinking about the use of animals in research.



A Kantian view on animal testing

According to Kant's philosophy, animal testing is generally considered morally permissible because animals lack the capacity for rational thought and autonomy, meaning they are not considered "persons" with inherent moral value, and therefore we have no direct moral duties towards them; however, he does suggest that excessive cruelty to animals can be harmful to our own moral character, implying an indirect ethical concern regarding how we treat them.

Key points about Kant's view on animal testing:

❖ *No direct moral obligation:*

Kant believes that only rational beings have moral standing, so animals cannot be considered as ends in themselves and do not have inherent rights that we must respect.

❖ *Indirect duty to avoid cruelty:*

While not morally wrong to use animals for experiments, Kant argues that being cruel to animals can negatively impact our own moral character and potentially lead to cruelty towards humans.

❖ *Justification for animal testing:*

If the potential benefits to humans from animal testing are significant enough, then using animals for research could be justified under Kantian ethics, as long as it is done with consideration for minimizing suffering.

A utilitarian view on animal testing

Utilitarianism is based on the idea that the best course of action is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain for everyone affected. This includes animals, as they experience pain and suffering.

❖ **How it's applied**

When deciding whether to use animals in an experiment, utilitarians consider the amount of pleasure and pain that will result for both humans and animals. If the experiment will create more happiness than suffering, and there's no better alternative, then it's justified.

❖ **What it means**

Utilitarians believe that all sentient beings are equal and that our current treatment of animals is morally wrong. They argue that animal suffering is not offset by any greater good.

❖ **Challenges**

However, quantifying the harms and benefits of animal experiments can be difficult. For example, the development of open heart surgery involved many animal experiments that caused significant harm, but ultimately resulted in a great benefit.

Animal testing

Advocates for animal testing say:

- ❖ Human life has greater intrinsic value than animal life
- ❖ Legislation protects all lab animals from cruelty or mistreatment
- ❖ Millions of animals are killed every year for food, is medical research not a more worthy death?
- ❖ Few animals feel pain and are killed before they suffer

Thanks to animal research, they'll be able to protest 23.5 years longer.



According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, animal research has helped extend our life expectancy by 23.5 years. Of course, how you choose to spend those extra years is up to you.

Foundation for Biomedical Research

www.fbresearch.org

Animal testing

Opponents to animal testing say:

- ❖ Animals have as much right to live as humans
- ❖ Strict controls have not prevented some animals being abused
- ❖ Deaths for research are unnecessary
- ❖ Animals suffer while they are locked up and how do we know when they do and don't feel pain?



Animal testing

The current guiding principles for the use of animals in research:

Minimizing pain and suffering

Researchers should minimize the pain and distress of animals, and consider that procedures that cause pain in humans may also cause pain in animals.

Assessing the value of the research

Researchers should consider the potential benefits of the research for people, animals, or the environment.

Using the minimum number of animals

Researchers should use the minimum number of animals required to obtain valid scientific results.

Considering alternative methods

Researchers should use alternative testing methods if they would produce equally valid results.