

# THE ETHICAL DIVIDE

## A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF ANIMAL INDIVIDUALISM AND ECOLOGICAL HOLISM

PRIYA GUPTA

Doctoral Researcher, Department of Philosophy, University of Lucknow, India

### INTRODUCTION



"What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

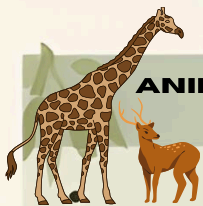
Modern development is a double-edged sword, where the heights of material progress are increasingly undercut by the depths of environmental destruction.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS



- Modern development is based on anthropocentric ethics that view non-human entities as having instrumental worth in relation to human beings.
- Environmental ethics counters anthropocentrism via:
  - Animal Individualism - honors animal sentience.
  - Ecological Holism - protects ecosystem integrity.

### ANIMAL INDIVIDUALISM



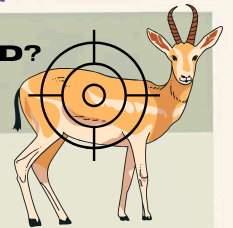
- Focuses on sentient animals with the capacity to experience pain and pleasure.
- Philosophers- Jeremy Bentham, Peter Singer, Tom Regan.
- Moral priority- protect animals from suffering and ensure equal consideration of interests. Subject-of-a-life.

### ECOLOGICAL HOLISM



- Focuses on ecosystems and ecological wholes.
- Humans are members of a biotic community: animals, plants, soil, water.
- Philosopher-Aldo Leopold
- Moral priority- preserve integrity, balance, and sustainability of ecosystems.

### IS CULLING JUSTIFIED?



Case Study: Nilgai culling in Bihar, India

Farmers support culling Nilgai to protect crops and ecological balance (eco-holism), but animal rights groups argue killing individual animals violates their moral worth (animal individualism).

### CONCLUSION

A balanced approach that minimizes harm while protecting ecosystems is best suited. This includes prioritizing non-lethal methods, culling only when essential, and ensuring humane, regulated action. This ethical approach bridges animal welfare and ecosystem health, guiding responsible scientific wildlife management.



### REFERENCES

- Peter Singer (2015). Animal Liberation. London: Vintage.
- Aldo Leopold (1989). A Sand County Almanac. Oxford University Press.
- Tom Regan (1983). The Case for Animal Rights. University of California Press.

