



# Nature Protection – an ethical obligation

Erika Stanciu, Bad Urach 2011

## ETHICS

The basic concepts and fundamental principles of **right human conduct**. It includes study of universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment. See also morality.

<http://www.businessdictionary.com>

## MORALITY

Conformance to a recognized code, doctrine, or system of rules of what is right or wrong and to behave accordingly.

No system of morality is accepted as universal, and the answers to the question "What is morality?" differ sharply from place to place, group to group, and time to time. For some it means conscious and deliberate effort in guiding one's conduct by reason based on fairness and religious beliefs.

For others it is "... what the majority then and there happen to like, and immorality is what they dislike." (UK mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead)

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Morality is "... what the majority then and there happen to like, and immorality is what they dislike."

Protecting Nature – a moral obligation?

What if Protecting Nature means:

- to reconsider some economic interests?
- to use natural resources in a much more responsible manner
- to lower our comfort?
- acting ALWAYS with respect for Nature?

**Environmental ethics** is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of, the environment and its nonhuman contents.

Clear distinction between

- **instrumental value** - the value of things as *means* to further some other ends
- **intrinsic value** (non-instrumental value) - the value of things as *ends in themselves* regardless of whether they are also useful as means to other ends..


Only intrinsic value generates “direct moral duty on the part of moral agents to protect it or at least refrain from damaging it”

(see O'Neil 1992 and Jameson 2002 for detailed accounts of intrinsic value).

Many traditional western ethical perspectives are *anthropocentric* (human-centered):

- they assign intrinsic value to **human beings alone**, or
- they assign a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings than to any nonhuman things. Protection or promotion of human interests or well-being **at the expense of nonhuman things is nearly always justified.**


For example, Aristotle says that “nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man” (*Politics*, Bk. 1, Ch. 8)



**Environmental ethics** - a new sub-discipline of philosophy that emerged in the early 1970s, by posing a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism:

1. it questioned the assumed moral superiority of human beings to members of other species on Earth.

1. it investigated the possibility of RATIONAL arguments for assigning intrinsic value to the natural environment and its nonhuman contents.



RATIONAL arguments for  
assigning intrinsic value to the  
natural environment and its  
nonhuman contents?

Still questioning the intrinsic  
values of Nature!!!

Kemeri , Latvia

Cairngorms, Scotland

Jostedalsbreen Norway

When you work in your Protected Area or you just enjoy Nature do you question the Value of Nature?

Piatra Ciailui Romania

Do we really need RATIONAL arguments for assigning intrinsic value to the natural environment and its nonhuman contents?

Cevennes, France

Ferto hansag Hungary

Can we assign instrumental values to everything in Nature?

Skaftafell Iceland


Goreme Turkey

La Albufera Spain

Triglav Slovenia



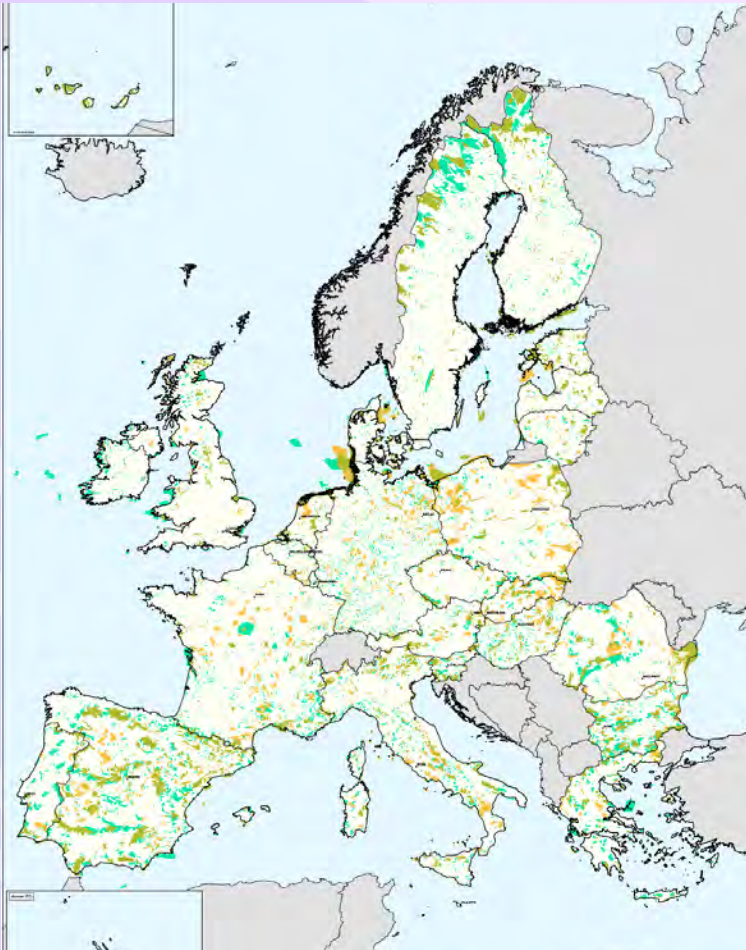




If only intrinsic value generates “direct moral duty on the part of moral agents to protect it or at least refrain from damaging it” (O'Neil 1992 and Jameson 2002).

**Everything in Nature has intrinsic value!!!**

# The protected areas of Europe – critical for generating the moral obligation for protecting Nature!



**Natura 2000 sites – 17% of EU**



**Protected Areas of national interest  
18% of EU39 + non – EU countries**

IF WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT NATURE  
PROTECTION IS AN ETHICAL OBLIGATION

We have the Power of Changing

“The impossible arrogance of human being who believe that Nature was made only and only for their own benefit, like if one could think that the sun was put on fire just to grow apples for humans and to grow their cabbage.

(Cyrano de Bergerac)

Changing the Future of the World!




**in 1900**



**in 1990**

Forests of Philippines



Neusiedler See / Fertő-Hansag  
(A / HU)

Maas-Schwalm-Nette  
(D / NL)

If we do not have the power,  
who does?

Oulanka / Paanajärvi  
(FIN / RUS)

Alpi Marittime / Mercantour  
(I / F)

Krkonoše / Karkonosze (CZ / PL)

**Protected Area People, Nature Conservation organizations, Nature Conservation Institutions**

**Promoters of a the moral obligation for Respecting and Protecting Nature for its intrinsic and instrumental values**



**In our everyday work ...**





Change



Future

Together

“Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens.”

Khalil Gibran



*Would that you could live on the fragrance  
of the earth, and like an air plant be  
sustained by the light.*

*But since you must kill to eat, and rob the  
newly born of its mother's milk to quench  
your thirst, let it be an act of worship.*

...

*And when you crush an apple with your  
teeth, say to it in your heart, "Your seeds  
shall live in my body, And the buds of  
your tomorrow shall blossom in my  
heart, And your fragrance shall be my  
breath, And together we shall rejoice  
through all the seasons."*

Khalil Gibran – The Prophet