



Multimedia Library Collection: Environmental Values (journal)

"What is an Animal? A Philosophical Reflection on the Possibility of a Moral Relationship with Animals"

Zwart, Hub

Zwart, Hub. "What is an Animal? A Philosophical Reflection on the Possibility of a Moral Relationship with Animals." *Environmental Values* 6, no. 4 (1997): 377–92. doi: [10.3197/096327197776679059](https://doi.org/10.3197/096327197776679059).

Contemporary ethical discourse on animals is influenced partly by a scientific and partly by an anthropomorphic understanding of them. Apparently, we have deprived ourselves of the possibility of a more profound acquaintance with them. In this contribution it is claimed that all ethical theories or statements regarding the moral significance of animals are grounded in an ontological assessment of the animal's way of being. In the course of history, several answers have been put forward to the question of what animals really and basically are. Three of them (namely the animal as a machine, an organism and a being that dwells in an—apparently—restricted world) are discussed. It is argued that the latter (Heideggerian) answer contains a valuable starting point for an ethical reflection on recent changes in the moral relationship between humans and animals.

— Text from [The White Horse Press](#) website

All rights reserved. © 1997 The White Horse Press

Download:

PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/ev6_4_zwart.pdf

Related links:

- Article on the official website
<http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/EV618.html>
- The White Horse Press
<http://www.ericademon.co.uk/>

Websites linked in this text:

Environmental Values (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal

"What is an Animal? A Philosophical Reflection on the Possibility of a Moral Relationship with Animals"

Source URL: <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5729>

Print date: 04 July 2026 16:53:50

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096327197776679059>
- <http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/EV618.html>