

The Problem of Monocentricity and the New Role of the Human Subject: Toward Pluriperspectivism in Addressing Ecological Crises¹

DOI: [10.58590/leoh.2026.010](https://doi.org/10.58590/leoh.2026.010)

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LIDIJA KNORR *

Abstract

This paper critiques monocentric frameworks (anthropocentrism and corporocentrism) for perpetuating ecological crises by reducing nature to instrumental value. Through ethical theory and case studies (e.g. the Whanganui River, the Rights of Nature movement), it proposes pluriperspectivism, a non-hierarchical paradigm that recognises multiple centres of agency. The study demonstrates how transcending monocentrism aligns ethical action with planetary survival, redefining the human as a responsive agent capable of articulating plural values. The conclusion highlights urgent policy implications, including the need for legal personhood for ecosystems.

Keywords

Monocentrism, corporocentrism, anthropocentrism, pluriperspectivism, Rights of Nature, human subject, legal personhood

Suggested Citation Style

Knorr, Lidija (2026). The Problem of Monocentricity and the New Role of the Human Subject: Toward Pluriperspectivism in Addressing Ecological Crises. *Journal of Animal Law, Ethics and One Health (LEOH)*, Special Issue on Rethinking Ecosphere and Biojustice: Legal Personality and Legal Rights Beyond the Human, 72-86. DOI: [10.58590/leoh.2026.010](https://doi.org/10.58590/leoh.2026.010)

* Dr. sc. Lidija Knorr, Centre for Integrative Bioethics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, email: lidjasknorr@gmail.com

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I. Introduction

This paper argues that monocentric frameworks, particularly anthropocentrism and corporocentrism, perpetuate ecological crises by systematically reducing the complex, agential world, including ecosystems, species, and individual animals, to mere instrumental value. As an alternative, it proposes pluriperspectivism, a paradigm that seeks to recognize a plurality of non-hierarchical perspectives and centres of value. By interrogating how centric thinking (whether human or corporate) distorts the human-nature relationship, reducing complex ecosystems to mere resources or profit streams, this study highlights the urgent need for new paradigms that can accommodate the interests of both collective ecological entities and the sentient individuals within them.

Although monocentrism has been critiqued in isolation (Singer, 2011; Potter, 1996), its systemic entanglement with capitalism (Moore, 2017) creates a powerful double reductionism that remains under-theorised: the reduction of nature to human utility, and the subsequent reduction of both human and non-human life to corporate profit. Through a synthesis of ethical theory and case studies, such as corporate water appropriation, the Rights of Nature movement, and New Zealand's Whanganui River, this study bridges the fields of political ecology and moral philosophy. Moreover, the Whanganui River study case is not used merely as an example, but as a site to explore the practical challenges and tensions of granting legal standing to a non-human entity.

Ultimately, the paper contends that a fundamental reorientation is necessary, from a monologic ethics of human dominion to a pluriperspective ethics of response and responsibility. To justify this shift, we first interrogate the failures of monocentric frameworks (Section 2), focusing on anthropocentrism and

corporocentrism as root causes of ecological reductionism. We then develop the concept of pluriperspectivism, carefully distinguishing its application to ecosystems from its application to sentient beings (Section 3), before putting it to the test through our case analysis (Section 4).

II. Ethical Limitations of Monocentrism

Building on the need to move beyond reductionist paradigms, this section examines how monocentrism, whether human- or corporate-centered, systematically distorts ethical relationships with nature. This critique of monocentrism lays the groundwork for Section 3's proposal of pluriperspectivism, showing why a paradigm shift is both ethically and ecologically urgent.

Monocentrism is a theoretical framework that privileges a single, dominant centre as the primary or exclusive source of value, meaning, or authority. This paper focuses on two manifestations of monocentrism: anthropocentrism, which positions the human individual as the dominant centre, and corporocentrism, which elevates corporate institutions to this role. Within a monocentric framework, all entities, beings, or systems outside the dominant centre are typically understood, valued, or managed only in relation to the dominant centre. This relational subordination fosters reductionism and hierarchical perspectives.

1. Anthropocentrism and Corporocentrism as Monocentric Frameworks

Scholarship has extensively critiqued anthropocentrism, a framework that positions humans as the sole locus of value, thereby reducing non-human entities to instrumental resources (Singer, 2011; Plumwood, 2002). This instrumentalisation overlooks the intrinsic value of ecological systems, thereby excluding them from moral consideration. Historically, moral consideration was usually reserved only for (some) humans, though this circle has expanded over time. As Peter Singer argues:

“The circle of altruism has broadened from the family and tribe to the nation and race, and we are beginning to recognize that our obligations extend to all human beings. The process should not stop there. In my earlier book, *Animal Liberation*, I showed that it is as arbitrary to restrict the principle of equal consideration of interests to our own species as it would be to restrict it to our own race.” (Singer, 2011, 120)

Singer's 'expanding circle' of moral consideration now includes non-human animals, yet he questions whether this expansion should stop there:

“The expansion of the moral circle should therefore be pushed out until it includes most animals. (...) The expansion of the moral circle to non-human animals is only just getting under way. (...) Yet the ecology movement has emphasized that we are not the only species on this planet, and should not value everything by its usefulness to human beings; and defenders of rights for animals are gradually replacing the old-fashioned animal welfare organizations which cared a lot for domestic pets but little for animals with less emotional appeal to us.” (Singer, 2011, 120–121)

Furthermore, Singer talks about a new stage in our moral thinking, just as the “idea of equal consideration for animals strikes many as bizarre, but perhaps no more bizarre than the idea of equal consideration for blacks seemed three hundred years ago.” (Singer, 2011, 121)

What is interesting, especially considering the Rights of Nature project, are Singers following sentences:

“Will this new age also be the final stage in the expansion of ethics? Or will we eventually go beyond animals too, and embrace plants, or perhaps even mountains, rocks, and streams? Since today's enlightened thinking often turns out to be tomorrow's hidebound conservatism

(...) it would be imprudent to say too firmly that with the inclusion of non-human animals we will at last have gone as far as impartial reasoning requires." (Singer, 2011, 121)

In addition, anthropocentric values are embedded in international law, which prioritises protecting human interests over those of non-human entities. This legal framework is why the Rights of Nature movement seeks a paradigm shift. However, this shift is not philosophically straightforward. Singer's utilitarian argument for expanding the moral circle is powerful, but it primarily grounds moral consideration in the capacity for suffering (sentience), which clearly applies to animals but poses a challenge for plants, mountains, and ecosystems. This highlights a crucial tension within non-anthropocentric ethics, between an individualistic animal ethics (concerned with sentient beings), and a holistic environmental ethics (concerned with systemic wholes like species and ecosystems). The Rights of Nature movement often leans towards the latter, advocating for the rights of holistic entities. A truly pluriperspective framework must later grapple with this tension, acknowledging that these different centres of value (the sentient individual and the ecological collective) may have competing claims that cannot be easily harmonised.

2. From Anthropocentrism to Corporocentrism

While anthropocentrism reduces nature to human utility, corporocentrism exacerbates this by subordinating both humans and nature to the pursuit of capital accumulation.

Today, anthropocentrism is eclipsed by corporocentrism, the systemic prioritisation of corporate interests over human and ecological well-being. Under corporocentrism, capital accumulation serves corporations, not people. When understanding how people treat corporations, it is necessary to recognise that there has been a shift in the form of goods accumulation. While previously, the accumulation of goods implied the accumulation of goods to improve human life, today, capital accumulation is carried out to improve the corporation. So, although we still have an anthropocentric understanding of the world, a change is occurring under the pressure of capitalism, and the corporation is being introduced into the previously mentioned centre. For example, under corporocentrism, water is not stolen from communities for people's greed, but for shareholder profit. This is not just unethical; it is a systemic rewrite of value itself. Corporations' appropriation of water resources means that the well-being of humans or nature is no longer at the centre, but the corporation's well-being. Thus, both human beings and nature are subordinated to the needs of the corporation and its accumulation of capital. This corporocentric logic mirrors what Jason Moore (2017) terms the *Capitalocene*, a world-ecology where capitalism organises nature into 'cheap inputs' (water, soil, labour) for profit.

As Moore (2015) asserts:

"Capitalism does not have an ecological crisis; it is and ecological regime." (Moore, 2015, 45)

For example, the privatisation of water rights exemplifies how corporocentrism operationalises Moore's 'world-ecology of accumulation' by subordinating human and non-human life to capital's metabolic demands. At the same time, due to parallel anthropocentrism and the placement of humans at the centre, humans are attributed as being responsible for ecological problems, and the individual is called upon to develop environmental awareness. With this example, we can see how, in today's world, two centricities are beginning to contradict each other: the centricity of corporations and the centricity of humans, both established for appropriation and accumulation of nature or parts of nature, without determining to whom and in what way responsibility for ecological problems belongs.

Moore's ecological regime finds its Southern counterpart in Vandana Shiva's (2016) critique of corporate biopiracy, where transnational patents of seeds erase indigenous agricultural epistemologies. This 'monoculture of the mind' (Shiva, 1993) mirrors corporocentrism's reduction of plural relationships

with nature to intellectual property. Together, Moore and Shiva reveal how corporocentrism operates globally, as a Northern ‘world-ecology’ of accumulation (Moore) and a Southern ‘biopiracy’ of dispossession (Shiva).

Today, anthropocentrism and corporocentrism exist in tension. While anthropocentrism blames individual humans for ecological crises, corporocentrism absolves systemic actors of responsibility. “The perspective of centrality is a perspective that, like all other perspectives, does not see itself” (Amulić, 2019), which is why we need a pluralism of perspectives, not the centrality of one perspective.

Monocentrism’s double failure, both in privileging singular perspectives and enabling capitalism’s ecological regime, leaves us with a pressing question: how might ethical frameworks operate without centric hierarchies? However, as the tension within non-anthropocentric ethics reveals, simply removing the human from the center does not automatically create a coherent pluralism. The challenge for pluriperspectivism, which we will develop in the next section, is twofold. First, to avoid simply replacing one dominant centre (the human) with another (e.g. the corporation or the ecosystem), and second, to develop a framework that can acknowledge and mediate between different types of perspectives (corporate, human, animal, ecosystemic) without collapsing their fundamental differences or ignoring the power dynamics between them. This is the complex gap our proposal of pluriperspectivism aims to fill.

III. Pluriperspectivism

Emerging from the failures of monocentrism, pluriperspectivism constitutes a radical shift from an ethics of allocation to an ethics of recognition. It does not merely propose pluralism but insists that agency and value are already distributed across a network of human and more-than-human actors. The core innovation of pluriperspectivism is its move from integrating others into a human-centric circle to acknowledging the co-existence of multiple, distinct centres of value. The central challenge, therefore, is not just to list perspectives but to develop a framework for engaging with fundamentally different types of agents.

This framework draws theoretical strength from Latour’s (2004) ‘parliament of things’, which grants political standing to non-human actors, fundamentally challenging the anthropocentric claim that agency is a human monopoly. This is complemented by Haraway’s (1988) concept of ‘situated knowledges’, which insists on the partiality of all perspectives, including the human, and Plumwood’s (2002) feminist critique of the ‘standpoint of mastery’, which reveals how rationalism constructs a dominant perspective that denies dependency on the ecological Other. Together, these approaches demonstrate that agency is not a human property but a relational effect, and that all ethical frameworks emerge from specific, embodied standpoints.

However, to avoid a flat pluralism that conflates fundamentally different entities, a pluriperspective framework must be precise in its categories. It requires distinguishing between the systemic, relational agency of ecosystems, and the sentient, individual agency of animals. Furthermore, we must account for the institutional, artificial agency of corporations, which, as our critique of corporocentrism shows, operates as a powerful non-human agent, and the situated, cultural agency of humans, which is always partial, embodied, and shaped by specific historical and ecological contexts. Navigating the tensions between these distinct types of agency is a central concern, and a failure to make these distinctions risks the very theoretical conflation that can obscure important ethical claims, such as subsuming the perspective of an individual sentient being within the abstract category of an ecosystem.

This is exemplified in New Zealand’s Te Awa Tupua Act, where the Whanganui River’s legal personhood embodies both Latourian actor-network theory, as a non-human legal agent, and Haraway’s situated

knowledge, through Māori cosmological frameworks. Historically, moral consideration has expanded from the self to include (some) other humans (family and community), gradually evolving toward a universal recognition of all people's moral worth.

The Whanganui River's legal personhood is not a gift from a human legal system but a recognition of its pre-existing, systemic agency within Māori cosmology. The law formally acknowledges the river as an indivisible and living whole, representing a pluriperspective stance that sees the river as a co-constitutive agent.

When discussing specific forms of centrism, whether that be anthropocentrism or corporocentrism or any other centrism, no single centrism should be prioritised above others, nor should any be deemed inherently superior for understanding or relating to nature. The very logic of monocentrism is flawed and should be discarded. As Potter argues in *Real Bioethics: Biocentric or Anthropocentric?*:

"Anthropocentrism is analogous to geocentrism, believing that humanity is the central element on earth, just as geocentrism placed earth at the center of the universe. (...) The Anthropocentrism of the 'mainstream ethical resources' is today what geocentrism was until Copernicus came along. The problem we face is not the contrast between heliocentrism and geocentrism, and there should be no attempt to promote a contest between biocentrism and anthropocentrism. (...) Similarly, in the intuitive perspective of real bioethics neither biocentrism nor anthropocentrism is central." (Potter 1996, 178–179)

Flores and Clark further illuminate this tension in their analysis of the anthropocentric-biocentric controversy:

"People's perspectives are made up of their *identities* (i.e., who or what they identify with), *expectations* (i.e., set of expected outcomes), and *demands* (i.e., patterns of claim-making). People with perspectives of like kind tend to gravitate toward one another and develop a common, mutually reinforcing cultural outlook, based on similar core beliefs (also called a paradigm, doctrine, framework, outlook, myth, or ideology). (...) Many diverse people participate in processes of deciding about the environment, biodiversity, and other public matters. Participating in these processes compels us to view ourselves in relation to others, and we generally rely on the basic belief systems at the core of our identity to sort or classify perspectives in a given social decision process." (Flores and Clark, 241–242)

Though this paper focuses on anthropocentrism and corporocentrism, the anthropocentric-biocentric dichotomy remains prevalent. Flores and Clark critique this binary:

"In the biological conversation debate some people have suggested that participants tend to fall into two basic perspectives, which are founded on two fundamentally different paradigms, thus giving rise to the widely discussed anthropocentric vs. biocentric dichotomy. (...) As with most characterizations of perspectives, differences are both descriptive and normative, that is they not only pertain to how participants think 'the world is' but also how they think 'the world should be' (...) Dichotomous characterizations of perspectives such as anthropocentric vs. biocentric can be an obstacle to an open, integrative, and adaptive process for finding the common interest. Classification systems include or group together like elements and exclude dissimilar types. In human affairs, this can lead to a 'we vs. they' dichotomy." (Flores and Clark, 242–243)

This framework aligns with Arne Naess' (1973) concept of the *ecological self*, an identity that extends to the broadest web of life. Unlike Singer's *expanding circle*, which absorbs difference into sameness, Naess' *deep ecology* fosters solidarity with the unique needs of mountains, rivers, and species. For example, the Māori worldview governing the Whanganui River does not merely 'include' the river in human ethics but recognises its pre-existing agency, exemplifying Naess' *Self-Realisation*, the idea that ecological harm is self-harm.

Pluriperspectivism thus transcends monocentrism not through expansion but through relational entanglement. It recognises multiple centres of agency, each with distinct starting points, enabling more-than-human others to enter the moral sphere on their own unique terms, rather than being included through expansion from a monocentric point. Pluriperspectivism thus rejects the Capitalocene's reduction of all value to capital accumulation (Moore, 2015). By decentralising agency, e.g. granting legal personhood to rivers or recognising indigenous cosmologies, it disrupts capitalism's ecology of scale that renders plural perspectives invisible. In this pluriperspective ethic, moral sensibility and consideration do not develop by expanding concentric circles that absorb previous stages into a larger, more inclusive whole. Instead, it is composed of separate yet interconnected centres. With this, moral growth involves deepening our experience, rather than simply expanding circles from one central origin. Flores and Clark propose one alternative:

"Move toward a fully integrative classification of perspectives where many conventional divisions are abandoned as a basis for understanding other people and for taking practical, just action." (Flores and Clark, 249)

One might object that pluriperspectivism risks moral relativism by privileging multiple perspectives without a unifying ethic. However, this overlooks the framework's grounding in systemic interdependencies, ecological realities such as climate feedback loops or watershed dynamics that necessitate cooperative negotiation. Unlike relativism, pluriperspectivism recognises that perspectives are materially entangled. The Whanganui River's legal personhood, for instance, emerged not from abstract pluralism but from Māori people's interdependent relationship with the river's ecology (Ruru, 2018). Thus, pluriperspectivism rejects both monocentric hierarchy and relativistic indifference by tethering moral consideration to relations of survival and well-being.

If pluriperspectivism displaces the singular human subject as the sole arbiter of value, what ethical role remains for human agency in this networked ecology? The answer lies in redefining the human subject from a negotiator to a responsible respondent. Our unique capacities impose a profound responsibility, to listen, translate, and respond justly to the other actors in the network. This is not a role of mastery, but one of service and responsibility.

IV. The Value of the Object and the New Role of the Human Subject

Pluriperspectivism's radical decentering of agency does not erase human responsibility but redefines it as a practice of responsive guardianship. Here, the human subject is reconfigured not as a central mediator, but as a capable respondent whose unique faculties impose a duty to listen, interpret, and foster the conditions for plural agencies to coexist and flourish. This involves the difficult work of acknowledging the incommensurability of different values without imposing a false hierarchy. This reconfigured role becomes tangible through New Zealand's Whanganui River governance, where Māori kaitiaki (guardian) embody a relational duty to the river's personhood, through Val Plumwood's (2002) concept of interspecies dialogue that positions humans as translators between corporate, ecological and indigenous epistemologies and through Ecuador's constitutional Rights of Nature provisions that institutionalize a legal duty for humans to balance competing claims as stewards balancing, not sovereigns.

1. The Human as Responsive Agent: From Intelligence to Responsibility

The challenge posed by pluriperspectivism is not to identify a new type of human subject, but to outline a practice of relational accountability. This practice involves human agents acknowledging their perspective as one among many within ecological and social systems, and embracing a role defined not by dominance, but by duty to respond justly to a plurality of standpoints. This approach rejects both

monocentric domination and passive relativism, embracing what Flores and Clark (2001, 249) term *integrative classification*, a pragmatic ethic that grounds decision-making in the material interdependencies of ecosystems.

Potter's (1996) assertion that humanity bears 'the central responsibility is thus transformed from a call for human management into a mandate for coordinated responsibility. This means fostering the conditions for diverse agencies to coexist and flourish. It requires confronting what Moore (2017) calls the *Cartesian dualism of capitalism*, the illusion that human and nature are separate, by rejecting corporocentrism's instrumentalization of nature as a mere resource ideology and advocating for relational policies, such as Ecuador's Rights of Nature.

The practice of accountability embodies what Val Plumwood (2002) termed *interspecies dialogue*, a praxis of listening to and negotiating with more-than-human others (e.g. rivers, forests) as agential stakeholders rather than resources. This aligns with the Whanganui River's legal personhood, where Māori cosmology and British common law co-created governance through reciprocal listening (Ruru, 2018). Unlike monocentric frameworks that instrumentalise nature, Plumwood's dialogic ethic requires the relinquishing of epistemic dominance, fostering what Flores and Clark (2001) refer to as an *integrative classification of perspectives*.

Ultimately, this role reflects an expansion of the self, as Arne Naess' (1973) *ecological self*, where identity extends to the 'broadest web of life' (Plumwood, 2002, 142). For instance, Ecuador's 2008 Rights of Nature constitution legally mandates humans to act as relational stewards, thereby operationalising Naess' vision by recognising ecosystems as kin rather than property.

2. The Ontology of Value

a) Subject-Object Valuation

It is believed that value as a property is never found in the object itself but is always attributed to that object by the subject who evaluates it with their mind. Consequently, it is traditionally held that only the human subject can attribute value to an object. The value of an object depends on the level of interest that the subject who evaluates it has in the object. If we are talking about humans as value estimators, interest in a particular object enables humans to assign a value to that object. For this reason, when discussing the value of an object, we can refer to both instrumental and intrinsic valuation. Intrinsic value means something matters for its own sake, such as a forest's biodiversity. Instrumental value, conversely, pertains to an object's utility, for instance, trees as lumber. The inherent conflict arises because capitalism often prioritises instrumental value over intrinsic value, which frequently leads to the marginalisation or neglect of intrinsic value.

On the other hand, instrumental value is that which an entity possesses because of its benefit to an external subject. If the subject is a human, then such value is also considered anthropocentric, i.e. the value is assessed based on the benefit to humans. Intrinsic valuation typically refers to value that is not instrumental. However, the question arises whether the intrinsic valuation comes from the subject autonomously, whether it is intrinsically 'found' in the specified object, or whether the intrinsic value is attributed to the object only by a human subject. It would be mistaken to understand the value of an object solely as a projection of a human subject. Instead, we must explore whether, and what kind of, evaluation of the object can exist independent of the human subject. Additionally, when discussing intrinsic value, it is essential to recognise two crucial distinctions. First, anthropocentric intrinsic value is attributed when a human subject perceives the satisfaction of a specific desire or need within an object. Second, an anthropogenic intrinsic evaluation occurs when the human subject develops a particular interest in an object, without that interest being tied to the fulfilment of a direct need. Consider

the confluence of a river with a sea. A scientist might attribute anthropocentric intrinsic value through specific research interests, viewing the entities there as crucial for scientific understanding. A tourist, on the other hand, might engage in an anthropogenic intrinsic evaluation; they value the natural spectacle as a notable facet of natural development, appreciating its unique appearance or characteristics, without seeking to satisfy a particular need beyond aesthetic appreciation or general interest. In both scenarios, subjects attribute specific value to the object. However, this does not imply that the object's value exists solely due to the subject's evaluation.

An object possesses value independent of any subject's participation. When value is attributed intrinsically, the object gains nothing from the subject because the subject is not imbuing the object with new qualities. The attributes considered and attributed to the object exist in the object before the human being assesses the value. Still, the very recognition of these attributes as values is subjective. The object sends information to the subject, who translates this information as values, but this does not mean that the subject has added anything to the object because the information he received already exists. Consequently, the subject's participation does not attribute anything intrinsic to the object, as its intrinsic qualities already exist. The subject merely perceives what is already inherently present. For example, an entity in a freshwater-saltwater confluence has objective specificity, whether evaluated for beauty or scientific value. Yet, value attribution remains subjective. The reason for this is that the observed object influences the subject, and through this influence, it transmits certain information to the subject. The subject, then, based on this information, attributes a specific value to the object. The subject's characteristics shape the specific value attributed, but they do not add to the object itself; instead, they only 'read' information already present, independent of observation. For this reason, we cannot speak of humans as subjects that assign value to an object, but rather, we can talk about humans as subjects that locate value in an object, a value already inherent in that object. What a human does as a subject concerning to an object is to assign an external value to it. For this reason, we introduce an additional distinction, the extrinsic valuation of the object. Extrinsic valuation occurs when a subject attributes to an object values that are external to the object itself and may not be intrinsically present within it. Such extrinsic valuation necessarily requires a relationship between the subject and the object. Consequently, we can say that the object possesses inherent properties and relational capacities. The human subject recognises, responds to, and articulates these as value. While the assessment of value is a product of the subject's mind, this does not negate the existence of intrinsic value within the object itself. Instead, the intrinsic value persists independently and is engaged with through the action of the human subject.

b) Beyond Human Valuation: Animals and Other Entities as Subjects

However, the conventional conclusion from this discussion is that only a human can be the evaluating subject in this relationship. We arrive at the absurd situation of an animal's relationship to a particular object. Can we assume that a wild animal does not find a specific value in an object? We cannot. That an animal's determination of value differs from that of humans (or at least we assume that it might differ) does not mean that the animal does not attach some value to an object. While the type of value an animal determines (instrumental, intrinsic, or extrinsic) is debatable, the fundamental fact remains: animals do attribute value to objects. Given that it exists, the discussion prompts us to consider animals as subjects related to some object. However, what about other entities? Can a plant, river, stone and wind be subjects?

We have stated that it is considered that value is always assigned to an object by a subject who evaluates the object with their mind and that it is considered that only a human being can give something value, i.e. attribute the specified property to it. By introducing an animal into the discussion, we have concluded that an animal can also be a subject; therefore, the second claim (that only a human being

can give something value) no longer holds. We are left with the claim that value is assigned to an object by a subject who evaluates the object with his or her mind. When we talk about entities that do not include humans and animals, we are referring to entities that have their benefits but cannot be evaluated because they lack the capacity to feel. It is conventionally held that such entities cannot be evaluators, as they lack the capacity for feeling or expressed interest that human and animal subjects possess. However, upon what basis do we draw this conclusion? Primarily, it rests on the observation that these entities lack a developed nervous system, implying an inability (as far as we currently understand) to comprehend interests and make choices in a manner analogous to humans or animals. From an anthropocentric perspective, such entities cannot recognize value in objects significant to them. However, this human-centric view does not definitively negate their capacity to do so, even if their mode of recognition is unknown or unrecognisable to us.

What we often recognise in such situations is the phenomenon known as natural selection. What natural selection serves is the survival of the entity. Is not the ability to choose some X for survival a property of the entity that is intrinsic to the entity itself? In addition, it is believed that the subject assigns the value of an object (instrumental or intrinsic), that is, that it can only be assessed and appreciated by a particular subject. However, with a biocentric understanding of the relationship between object and subject, things change because biocentrism believes that some values are objectively present, regardless of the subject. So, regardless of which entity we are talking about and whether or not a subject assesses and appreciates the value in an object, that value in that object still exists. It does not matter whether a person, a cat, a tree, a river, or a stone can recognise some value in something outside of it, because the value in the object outside of the subject still exists. The fallacy we are talking about here is the fallacy according to which the value of an object exists only in the subject's experience, and an even greater fallacy is that all the values of any object lie only in the eyes of humans. This reveals a fundamental limitation of the individualist focus. The matter becomes critically clearer, and the fallacies of anthropocentric valuation break down, when we consider the object not as an individual but as a system.

c) Systemic Value: Evaluating Individuals and Systems

A person can value an individual and an entire, specific system because of what that system is, intrinsically and instrumentally. However, the question of whether a system can be an estimator of value arises. If we are discussing a biotic community (Čović, 2009), can that community serve as an estimator of value? A system, be it a biotic community or any other system, consists of individual members. We have already stated that a subject can attribute a specific value to an object (individual). If a system consists of individuals and the subject attributes a particular value to each individual, it is often assumed that the entire system thereby acquires a value. However, this is merely the sum of individual values, not a distinct value of the whole. This distinction lies at the heart of the debate between individual-oriented animal ethics and holistic environmental ethics (Callicott, 1980; Regan, 2004).

Suppose the subject attributes value to each system member but cannot (or does not) encompass the entire system to attribute value to it as a whole. Does this mean that the system as a whole loses value? Is it necessary to assess the value of each individual in the system to assign a value to the entire system? Is it necessary to assign a value to a certain number of units of the system (say 50% plus 1), is it necessary to assign a value to only one unit of the system to consider the entire system valuable, or is it possible to assign a specific value to the system without assessing the units? This line of questioning reveals the core tension between individualist and holistic ethical frameworks.

A system without individuals is not 'alive'; it does not exist; it needs the individual members that make it up to exist. If we determine the value of an individual member of a system, is it possible to determine

the value of that individual regardless of the system to which it belongs? Can an individual be a stand-alone value unit, or is a system needed in which an individual 'gains' its value? Its value can be illuminated and recognised only in comparison to individuals in some relationship to it, or within the system it inhabits. Is an individual without a system and a system without individuals valuable in themselves? The conventional approach assumes it is necessary to assess the value of each (or at least one) individual in the system for the entire system to be considered valuable. However, in doing so, we commit a categorical error by conflating individual value assessments with systemic value. What is taken into account when assessing the value of an individual should not count in the same way when evaluating the entire system.

To evaluate a system effectively, one must consider the multi-perspective interconnectedness of all value centres present among its individual units and within the system itself. This holistic approach is impossible if one only considers values attributed to isolated units. Focusing solely on individual units means our assessment overlooks their interconnectedness within the system. When a subject evaluates a single unit, their focus is on the information *received* from that unit, often disregarding its relationships with other units. This reductionist approach risks excluding crucial mutual connections, leading to a partial, or even entirely misleading, understanding of a unit's actual value, and by extension, the system's value. This reductionist fallacy extends to the system as a whole. Although a subject can positively evaluate each system unit, it does not mean that the subject would also positively evaluate the entire system. In the same way, we can conclude that if a subject positively evaluates 50% plus one individual or if he or she positively evaluates only one individual in the system, this does not lead them to be able to evaluate the entire system positively or negatively because such an evaluation excludes the correlation of individuals and the evaluation is not complete. In this case, we are referring to systemic value, i.e., the value of the system as a whole, regardless of the values of its individuals and members.

However, while intrinsic, instrumental, and systemic values each hold distinct importance, systemic value is arguably fundamental, as a comprehensive understanding of the other two types depends on grasping the overarching systemic context. What certainly exists is value, regardless of which type of value we are talking about, and what is not necessary for this value to exist is a subject that evaluates an object. So, value exists, and when we talk about types of value, we as subjects position ourselves concerning an object from a certain perspective or centre of recognised values, observing the object and judging it based on the properties we perceive. For example, a mountain has value, regardless of whether we, as subjects, evaluate it or not. When specific subjects approach a mountain concerning their centre of recognised values, they will assess it. A builder, a geologist and a mountaineer will not evaluate that mountain similarly. The role of the human, therefore, is not to assign value from a void, but to articulate the value that is expressed by the entity from a specific, situated standpoint. Each of these subjects comes from the perspective of its centre of view, and the mountain can have instrumental, intrinsic, or systemic value for that subject. This complexity deepens when we consider the various '-isms' prevalent in contemporary society. Anthropocentrism, capitalism and corporocentrism, each in their way, and sometimes in the same or similar way, observe a particular object and attribute to that object the values that they have recognised in the object and which correspond to the values recognised concerning their centre of view.

d) The Role of the Human Subject in a Pluriperspective Framework

Let us return to the subject. At the very beginning, we said that the value of an object is always considered to be assigned to that object by the subject who evaluates the object with their mind. We subsequently established that the value of an object can also be recognised by subjects who lack a

mind. Considering these two assumptions, what do we do with the human subject? Within the traditional, monocentric framework, the human has been considered the sole arbiter of value in a given object. However, what new role could be assigned to the human subject if this is not taken into consideration?

Given the multiple types of value (instrumental, intrinsic, systemic) that manifest from an object through information shared with a subject in relationship to it, can an object convey information observable from a global level? As already stated in the paper, today, we are in the so-called global village, and understandably, everything is interconnected in one way or another. While we acknowledge the global interconnectedness of everything, the question arises: can an object, whether as a separate entity or a member of a system, convey to a subject the information necessary to comprehend all its relationships? This includes connections to objects in its immediate or indirect proximity, as well as those with which it is remotely linked. Furthermore, can a non-human subject, lacking this comprehensive information, independently conclude the existence of connections between various objects and determine its appropriate relationship to a directly communicating object?

The answer from a pluriperspective stance must be a qualified no. The human capacity for abstract thought allows us to model complex systems and relationships in a way other entities cannot. However, this capacity does not make us the global arbiters of value, but rather imposes upon us a unique ethical responsibility, to act as facilitators and translators between multiple, incommensurable perspectives. For this reason, throughout human history, several centres of value have emerged (anthropocentrism, capitalism, and corporocentrism, as mentioned earlier), each assessing values in objects in its own way. This diversity also reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between subject and object. The question arises whether it is possible to assess an object without a specific centre, i.e. is it possible to position the human outside any centre so that this human can assess the value of an object independently of the values of any centre? We believe that this is the path that humans should take.

In 2017, New Zealand granted the Whanganui River the same rights as a person. Why? Because the Māori understood that the river is not a thing, it is an ancestor. This challenges monocentric logic by demonstrating how plural perspectives can heal our relationship with nature. This raises a critical question regarding centricities: in our globally interconnected world, do we need centricities at all, or rather, a pluri-perspective approach, a displacement from singular centres of value towards pluriperspectivism? New Zealand's recognition of the Whanganui River as a legal person exemplifies pluriperspectivism in practice, granting the river agency *sui generis* rather than through anthropocentric or corporocentric frameworks.

e) Political and Linguistic Implications of Valuation

The debate about value is philosophical and ethical; however, why does this matter? Because how we value nature shapes how we protect it. Plural perspectives aren't just philosophy; they are survival tools for a planet in crisis. Although the debate about value is critical to us from a philosophical perspective, in terms of establishing the intrinsic value of nature and natural goods (or resources), this debate is also important from a political perspective. Namely, although some philosophers, ethicists and ecologists recognise intrinsic value in nature as such and in natural goods, it is important to view both the theoretical and practical levels from a political perspective. From a practical standpoint, a society where a greater number of individuals recognise the intrinsic value of nature and natural entities can shift the political landscape. An increased prevalence of such thinking will influence society's political image, fostering a demand for nature protection and encouraging citizens to adapt their lifestyles accordingly. This shift implies a re-evaluation of the instrumental understanding of nature and

natural entities, moving towards a framework that considers both current societal possibilities and future opportunities. This political potential is precisely why pluriperspectivism is essential, it provides the ethical foundation for a politics that can acknowledge and negotiate between these multiple, competing values. However, the question remains as to how the intrinsic value of nature can be established.

While in Croatian the term 'natural goods' is still commonly used, the increasingly prevalent term 'natural resources' reflects a shift towards viewing nature primarily in terms of its utility and economic value. This linguistic change signals a more profound transformation in how humans relate to nature, from recognising its inherent worth to emphasising its instrumental use, thus reinforcing the dualism between humans and nature that underpins monocentric frameworks. For this reason, when we talk about the dualism of humans and nature, we see the transformation of the relationship from the dualism of nature and society into a dualism in which humans are no longer subject to the nature that surrounds them, of which they are a part, but becomes the master of everything that surrounds them, of that Other, the object that stands opposite them. This feeling of Otherness towards nature, understood as separation from culture and technology, which are human products, provokes the human need for evaluation. Humans must attribute a value to nature that is distinct from their products, culture and technology. While the attribution of instrumental value has been considered from the aspect of exploiting natural resources, in the relationship between humans and nature, two additional aspects must be considered when humans evaluate nature. These, not necessarily tied to instrumental value, are aesthetic and scientific aspects of evaluation. To deepen our understanding of the subject's assessment of value, we revisit the discussion on centres of value, anthropocentrism, capitalism, and corporocentrism, as a continuation of our critique of monocentricity. However, what needs to be additionally introduced into the discussion is precisely the worrying change in the subject of assessing the value of an object from humans or any other member of nature as a system to the subject of the corporation. Namely, the introduction of the corporation as the subject of assessing the value of an object introduces a double distance between humans and nature as a whole. Although the corporation is a human product and part of human culture, it is completely displaced outside of nature. Humans have created a situation where the corporation is not only displaced outside of nature but also positions itself between humanity and nature, thereby simultaneously opposing both. Confronting this corporocentric capture of values is a primary task for the responsive human agent, who must work to create political and linguistic structures that allow nature's pluriperspective values to be heard again.

V. Conclusion: Critique of Centricity and the Call for Pluriperspectivism

This paper has demonstrated how monocentric frameworks, whether anthropocentric or corporocentric, limit our ethical and ecological understanding by reducing complex ecosystems to single centres of value. Such centricity perpetuates ecological crises by obscuring the multiplicity of moral agencies and relational interdependencies inherent in nature.

For this reason, we contend that centricity in any form, while serving as a human construct to understand the cosmos, is ultimately unnecessary. It is not naturally imposed, and its inherent limitations prevent a broader, more comprehensive view of the world. Transcending any single centricity is not merely an intellectual exercise but an ethical imperative if humanity is to cultivate a more inclusive, responsive, and effective relationship with the natural world. Centricity, as an exclusively human perspective, should not limit humanity's attempt to understand the world. Instead, we should transcend any single centricity, consider the diverse perspectives offered by different frameworks, and thereby seek a more holistic understanding of the world. Centricity, with its inductive reasoning, does not provide sufficient space for multiple perspectives and, as such, does not enable humans to comprehend

the cosmos as a whole. Instead, it leads to the observation of only one or more of its parts at a specific time and space.

Pluriperspectivism offers a paradigm shift that embraces multiple, non-hierarchical centres of value, enabling a more nuanced and holistic understanding of ecological realities. The case of the Whanganui River illustrates this shift. Here, the river is not merely an object for a human subject, but a legal person whose agency is recognized. This was achieved not by a human subject combining perspectives, but through a responsive process of integrating indigenous Māori cosmology and Western legal frameworks, two distinct value centres, into a shared governance model. This respects the river's agency beyond anthropocentric or corporocentric valuations and models the role of the human as a facilitator of pluralistic recognition, not a master of perspectives.

Embracing pluriperspectivism is essential not only for ethical coherence but for the survival of planetary ecosystems, inviting us to rethink our place within the web of life and to act with humility, responsibility, and openness to diverse ways of knowing.

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