Chapter 9
Reconciling Individualist and Deeper Environmentalist Theories? An Exploration

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Abstract This chapter discusses whether an individualist environmental ethic can be combined and reconciled with an ecocentric or holistic ethic. Versions of individualism include anthropocentrism, sentientism and the variety of biocentrism that I favour. In particular, I consider the value-pluralism advocated by Alan Carter, which seeks, with the aid of multi-dimensional diagrams, to honour a large range of currently held (and supposedly incommensurable) values, including both individualist and ecocentric ones. Carter's description of his own theory accidentally involves contradictions, but even if these are circumvented, there turn out to be problems with endorsing his kind of pluralism, including the absence of reasons or criteria for prioritising values. Arguably, the value of ecosystems depends on that of present and future individuals, and diverse values such as flourishing, achievement, freedom and health can, at least in particular contexts, be prioritised in terms of their value. With the help of arguments adduced by Elinor Mason, I show that, while single-value monistic theories are unsatisfactory, more sophisticated monistic theories for which the values honoured are commensurable are preferable to pluralistic theories such as Carter's for which they are not.

In this paper, I tackle one of the more recurrent issues in environmental ethics, that is, whether an environmental ethic can combine ecocentrism and recognition of holistic values with more traditional approaches such as individualism. While individualism can restrict the purview of morality to human beings (as is the case with anthropocentrism), it is sometimes extended to include sentient creatures; let us call this version of individualism "sentientism." And it is sometimes further extended so as to include non-sentient living individuals as well, a biocentric position. So the question becomes whether an environmental ethic can combine

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ecocentrism with either anthropocentrism or sentientism, or indeed with the individualist biocentrism that I favour. As I shall explain, I have recently been challenged to say why, if at all, this cannot be done.

Although, as Peter Singer has argued, we cannot imagine what it is like for a tree to be harmed, since there are no feelings to imagine, creatures such as trees still have a good of their own and should not be harmed gratuitously, not only for our sakes but also for theirs; or so I (and many others) hold. But sooner than defend this view, I want to consider here an objection to it that would also prove to be an objection to the positions of individualists such as Sober and Regan and Singer as well. Is it not possible and desirable (the objection runs) to combine in some structured manner a plurality of normative theories, and in this way to honour the values stressed by each to a degree that exempts the resulting pluralist theory from the objections to which each is subject? Such a pluralist position will be expounded, discussed and criticized, with a view to shedding further light on value pluralism.

9.1 The Recent Context

I should next explain how I came to be challenged to respond to pluralism in ethics. This challenge arose when Alan Carter reviewed in *Mind* (2001) my 1999 book *The Ethics of the Global Environment*, bringing into the review my more theoretical 1995 work *Value, Obligation and Meta-Ethics*. While a cursory scan could suggest that both books were receiving favourable notices, Carter was in fact arguing that biocentric consequentialism, even if preferable to other monistic theories, fails like all other monistic theories to cope with some of our values, and that a pluralistic theory was to be preferred instead. To do this, Carter purported to find some unpalatable implications of biocentric consequentialism, and claimed that although it could cope with potentially fatal pitfalls such as the Repugnant Conclusion and the Non-Identity problem, its implications actually made it unacceptable to environmentalists, in matters of both population and species preservation (Carter 2001).

Since there were a number of misinterpretations in the review, and since I wanted to correct these and to challenge the supposed unpalatable implications, I published a reply to the review in *Utilitas* (Attfield 2003). In this paper, besides seeking to set the record straight about the matters just mentioned, I argued that ethical pluralism was inherently unlikely to cope with ethical dilemmas because it generates contradictions, and cited with some degree of approval J. Baird Callicott's arguments for a parallel conclusion (Callicott 1990).

To this, Carter has more recently replied in *Utilitas* (March 2005) in "Inegalitarian biocentric consequentialism, the minimax implication and multidimensional value theory." The editor also allowed me a very brief counter-response, which appeared in the same number (Attfield 2005), and which proposes to make that the last word as far as *Utilitas* is concerned, and to close the discussion therewith. In his *Utilitas* paper, Carter makes important distinctions between kinds of moral

pluralism. There is (i) theory pluralism, or subscribing to a plurality of normative theories, and also (ii) principle pluralism, or subscribing to a plurality of ethical principles. These are the positions that are challenged by the charge of generating contradictions. But there is also (iii) value pluralism, or subscribing to a plurality of values, and this position is not subject to that charge, involving instead subscribing to a number of distinct, and possibly incommensurable values (Carter 2005, 75). Indeed, each of the major normative theories seeks to maximize one value that it cherishes, and consequently generates one or another "counterintuitive implication by flouting one or more of the other values we hold" (*Ibid.* 75). (Strangely, Carter suggests that biocentric consequentialism gives considerable – and implicitly excessive – prominence to autonomy, and too little to wild species that are inessential to humanity [*Ibid.* 70–71, 76], but I have answered and rejected these charges in *Utilitas* 2005 [see page 86], and need not go over that ground again here.) In order to avoid getting into this kind of position, Carter holds, we "need to give due consideration to each value" (Carter 2005, 75), as his kind of value pluralism supposedly does.

But since "the various values that we hold cannot all be maximally satisfied simultaneously, . . . we need to trade them off" (*Ibid.* 76). Carter has come up with an ingenious method of doing this. But before we consider that method, it is worth considering what he supposes that an adequate environmental ethic might look like.

9.2 Carter's Proposed Environmental Ethic

One set of values that an environmental ethic may need to consider, says Carter, includes autonomy, and generally "the way in which we value certain human features, aspirations and projects." These he suggests, "purely for convenience," that we "indiscriminately lump together . . . within the category of anthropocentric values" (*Ibid.* 76). But we value other things too. "Many moralists also value, and have been persuaded to value, the interests of all sentient beings. Let us, for convenience, indiscriminately lump all such values within the category of zoocentric values" (*Ibid.* 76). (This passage skates over the possibility that there are animals that lack sentience, but let us ignore this possible problem.) "But – continues Carter – a growing number have also come to value the interests of all living beings. For convenience's sake let us indiscriminately lump together all such values within the category of 'biocentric values'." "Finally", he writes, "some prefer to value the integrity, stability and beauty of the so-called biotic community. A number also value species over and above their members. Let us, for convenience, indiscriminately lump together all such values within the category of 'ecocentric values'" (*Ibid.* 76). To be fair to Carter, the passage quoted is equipped with several footnotes attesting that one or other of these positions is actually held. It should also be noted that nothing more is done to persuade readers that these values really are valuable, let alone that each category is valuable on an irreducible basis. Carter simply proceeds to write as if all this were the case (and thus as if these values are all irreducibly valuable).

To see what kind of pluralist theory Carter regards himself as presenting, it is worth looking at the succeeding passage. First he notes the problem that several ecocentrists have shown that "there appear to be insuperable difficulties in maximally satisfying zoocentric and ecocentric values simultaneously." Here he alludes to Callicott's early paper, "Animal liberation: a triangular affair," and to Mark Sagoff's paper, "Animal liberation and environmental ethics: bad marriage, quick divorce," and seems to accept the relevant common conclusion, but not necessarily the other views argued for in those papers (Callicott 1980; Sagoff 1984). This common conclusion is now contrasted with the easy solution of the problem of relating all these values, which treats anthropocentric values as a subset of zoocentric ones, which are a subset of biocentric ones, which might be held to be a subset of ecocentric ones. As Carter rightly remarks, the various values are not valued on this kind of basis, as if subsets of one another; and as he adroitly adds, ecocentric values are in any case collectivist, while the others are individualist. Thus we cannot integrate respect for all these values on some kind of inclusivist basis. This is why Carter's account of how trade-offs are possible is shortly to be brought on stage (Carter 2005, 76–77).

The reasoning just recounted on Carter's part, however, opens the way to a form of criticism to which Carter's sketch of an adequate environmental ethic may well be vulnerable. For Carter's reasoning shows that he is not treating "anthropocentric," "ecocentric" and the rest as mere meaningless labels, despite his repeated talk of "for the sake of convenience." His conclusions about ecocentric values being different in kind from individualist values are based on the views of actual ecocentrists, etc., and the meanings of these various terms. And this authorizes critical comments to be made about attempts to reconcile values of these heterogeneous sorts. Certainly no suggestion is made by Carter that these terms are being used in any different manner from standard senses, and there is no trace of a definition of any of them, let alone of a new definition. Hence it may be presumed that standard senses are being employed, senses that in fact restrict moral standing and the location of intrinsic value to the relevant classes.

But this means that Carter is trying to reconcile anthropocentric values, which in the standard sense means "values according to which none but human interests matter and all and only humans have moral standing," zoocentric values, which in the standard sense means "values according to which none but animal interests matter and all and only animals have moral standing," biocentric values, which in the standard sense means "values according to which none but the interests of living creatures matter and all and only living creatures have moral standing," and ecocentric values, which in the standard sense means "values according to which either the interests of wholes such as ecosystems and species alone matter or these interests matter independently alongside the interests of one or another set of individuals" (Attfield 2008, 2012). But these four kinds of values are all mutually exclusive and incompatible; not a single pair of these kinds forms an exception or supplies an instance of compatibility. Hence the categories used by Carter make his particular form of value pluralism riddled with contradictions, even if generic value pluralism can be shown not to be subject as such to the charge of generating contradictions in general.

In order to make his method of trade-offs even begin to function, Carter should be using terms that are not by definition contraries: terms such as "autonomy," "freedom from suffering," "health" and possibly "integrity," rather than terms such as "anthropocentric values," "zoocentric values," "biocentric values" and "ecocentric values." Since he actually persists in using the latter terms, we shall need to continue using them, but let us try to do so in a spirit of setting aside the implicit contradictions. For it remains important to see whether a theory of value pluralism of something like the kind that he advocates is possible.

9.3 Carter's Method for Trade-offs

Carter begins by suggesting that the very same environmentalists might refuse to accept some losses to ecocentric value to accommodate anthropocentric value, but also might refuse to accept some losses to anthropocentric value to accommodate ecocentric value (Carter 2005, 77). Let us play along with this suggestion, despite its implausible implication that these environmentalists subscribe to at least two value systems, and seem not to have noticed the incompleteness of either, and the further implausible implication that anthropocentrists would accept anything as compensation for losses to anthropocentric values. What Carter suggests allows him to propose plotting an indifference curve on a two-dimensional graph, with one axis representing anthropocentric values and the other ecocentric values. The resulting indifference curve, he tells us, would be "asymptotic" (*Ibid.* 77). One assumption here is that this trade-off is a little like trading off grapes and potatoes; one would not give up the last of either, but might give up some of one for the sake of some of the other (*Ibid.* 77). It is also assumed that different trade-offs would be accepted for different amounts of each variable, or we would not get a curve at all, as opposed to a single point.

The next issue is how to understand and represent trade-offs between four sets of values. Carter believes this could be done, but for ease of argument and presentation prefers to attempt to present a three-dimensional graph, representing "anthropocentric values along one axis, zoocentric values along another, and ecocentric values along the third" (*Ibid.* 78). [See Fig. 9.1.]

Figure 9.1, Carter tells us, "represents the manner in which we might be indifferent between all points falling on plane 'abc,' and between all points falling on plane 'def.' But we would prefer all points falling on 'abc' to any falling on 'def,' given that all points on the latter plane are closer to the origin than any points on the former" (*Ibid.* 78). So the assumption here is that we have multiple values (values of at least three kinds), and prefer some satisfaction of all of them to higher levels of satisfaction of some combined with negligible or no satisfaction of one or two of the others. If we were relating "values" such as freedom, health and security, this might be a cogent approach.

What Carter may be inviting us to consider is whether, if we set aside categories such as anthropocentric, zoocentric and ecocentric, his multi-dimensional

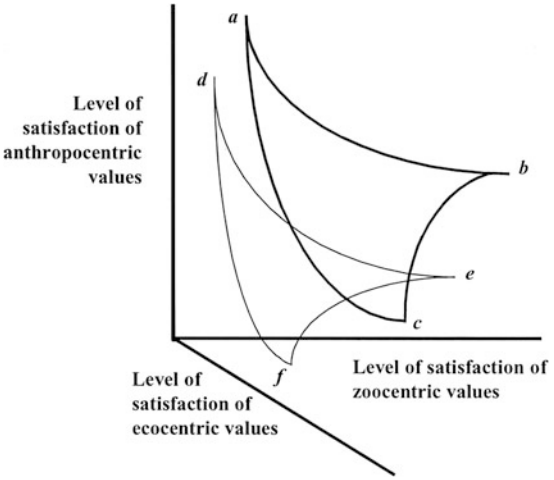

Fig. 9.1 From Carter, *Utilitas*, 17, 1, March 2005

indifference curves are a reasonable way of relating values such as human autonomy, animal welfare and ecological integrity. This approach might well be resisted not only by anthropocentrists, who might well refuse to accept any gains for non-humans as compensation for losses to humanity, but also, for example, by rights theorists, who might hold that rights theory already strikes a proper balance between human rights and animal rights, without needing to be weighed against external factors. This approach would certainly be resisted by biocentric consequentialists committed to a theory of degrees of intrinsic value, for on this view all the different valuable items that need to be considered can be compared in terms of their value and/or disvalue. Probably other kinds of consequentialists would maintain this too.

However, Carter has a further card to play. For not "all points on either plane 'abc' or plane 'def' may represent possible outcomes. The frontier of all possible outcomes could be constituted by plane 'αβγ' as in Fig. 9.2." [See Fig. 9.2.] (Carter actually declares that it *is* so constituted, but since he cannot know this, I am interpreting him as conveying that this is a possibility) (*Ibid*. 79).

Whereas the planes 'abc' and 'def' are concave, plane 'αβγ' is, as we learn from Fig. 9.3, convex, and meets plane 'abc' at just one point, point 'T,' or so Carter claims (*Ibid*. 80).

Thus 'T' represents the only possible outcome that is also desirable on balance once our values have been traded off, and is therefore the outcome that we ought to aim for. Moral pluralism, it emerges, "can generate determinate moral answers" (*Ibid*. 79). If we allow Carter his method, and ignore the framework of contraries that he uses to set it up, then his charts do seem to demonstrate this, even though agents could seldom be in a position to know what any of these planes were like, or to know whether the possible intersects at all with the overall desirable. Indeed, there must be considerable doubt about whether it ever would so intersect, and

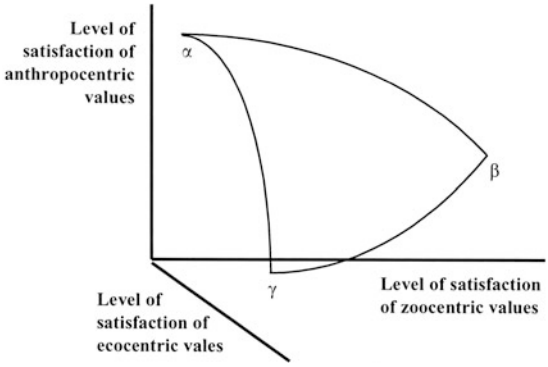

Fig. 9.2 From Carter, *Utilitas*, 17, 1, March 2005

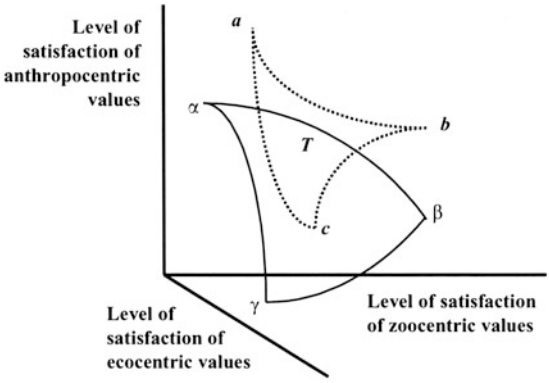

Fig. 9.3 From Carter, *Utilitas*, 17, 1, March 2005

whether this could be known, and again whether if it did intersect there would not usually be a whole arc of options to choose between, rather than a determinate point. Granted that agents would simultaneously be struggling with a sea of probabilities, uncertainties, risks and dangers, the chances that they would ever be assisted by such multi-dimensional analysis seem slender. But I do not intend to pursue these points further here, in order to reflect instead on value pluralism and rival theories. I turn to Carter's comments on monistic theories in the next section.

Here it is worth inserting that Carter envisages adding several further dimensions to his theory. To use his own words, "A fully adequate environmental ethic would need to incorporate what is of value in each theory – namely the values each prioritizes – and successfully combine them" (*Ibid.* 81). In particular, he wants to introduce and trade off against other values not only total human welfare but also average welfare (contrary to the views of those of us who regard average welfare as a derivative value, if a value at all) and, again, its distribution, and, there again, "rights violations and the number of beings with interests who stand to benefit greatly from them." (Indeed, Carter adds that it is this aspect that makes his own views not to be purely consequentialist) (*Ibid.* 81). Here Carter cross-refers to

another paper of his in which such trade-offs are set out in greater detail (Carter 2002). The need to take all these values into account explains, he claims, why "all monistic theories are bound to be inadequate," and "why a truly acceptable environmental ethic, as with any acceptable moral theory, will need to be a pluralist one" (Carter 2005, 81). And with these words, Carter seems to be claiming superiority for value pluralism not only over biocentric consequentialism, but equally over sentientist or zoocentric consequentialism, over anthropocentric consequentialism, and at the same time over deontological theories concerned to minimize rights violations, and over Kantian theories too. Indeed, at one point he claims its superiority over Rawlsian theories too, recognizing that they are not monistic, but holding that, granted their lexical ordering of values, they are defective in being unable to enjoin outcome 'T' (*Ibid*. 80).

However, even if these claims were unproblematic and proved to be vindicated at the theoretical level, Carter's theory would make most if not all decision-making extremely complex and contentious. Thus it could be best to stay with more conventional approaches, such as ones that seek to maximize well-being or quality of life among both humans and non-humans, until they are actually shown not to do the work required of them. Yet Carter's stance involves a challenge to all monistic theories, at least at the level of theory, and so it is worth further investigating whether, at least in theory, value pluralism is superior.

9.4 Pluralism and Monism

Just after introducing Fig. 9.3, Carter tells us how he believes monistic theories fare in terms of their outcomes when subjected to multi-dimensional analysis. Here are Carter's words:

> But the outcome enjoined by any monistic theory, in maximizing one value regardless of the rest of the values we hold, will be represented by a point on 'αβγ' that is close to one of the axes. Hence, the outcomes enjoined by monistic theories are bound to strike anyone with a richer sense of values as morally unacceptable, given the practicability of obtaining an outcome that better satisfies her particular combination of values, such as that represented by point 'T' (*Ibid*. 80).

Monism, then, is here supposed to be seeking to maximize one value among the others that we hold, for example, autonomy or animal welfare or justice or equality. This is why it is thought to select a point close to at least one of the axes, for monism supposedly insists on maximizing one value, and through refusing to accept compensation in exchange for sacrifices to such a maximizing project, selects outcomes that will often happen to satisfy other values to a very slight extent indeed. Of course, a monist may attain a very high level of satisfaction of her favoured value, if that is possible, and in making no mention of this, Carter could be held to dismiss monism too readily. But his remark about the views of people with a richer sense of values could well seemingly stand up; and if we concede that the plane 'αβγ' faithfully represents the frontier of possible outcomes, then we automatically forfeit

the right to claim that there are any practicable outcomes beyond it. However, what this discussion brings out is that we should not accept that 'αβγ' faithfully represents possible outcomes in all possible worlds in the first place, as opposed to representing a range that would in some possible world be the range of the possible.

So are Carter's interpretations of monism fair to those he regards as monists? They could be fairly applied, it seems to me, to hedonists who seek simply to maximize pleasure and the absence of pain. For it is implausible that values such as autonomy and achievement are adequately recognized within hedonism, however ingenious hedonists may be in reducing these other values to pain or its absence or to pleasure. But it is much less obvious that Carter's remarks apply to theorists such as Derek Parfit, who write about maximizing whatever-makes-life-worthwhile, or to George Edward Moore, who urges us to maximize intrinsic goodness, but holds that a plurality of things are intrinsically good. Similarly, theories such as my own, which commend maximizing the balance of intrinsic value over disvalue, but locate intrinsic value in different degrees in different sources of value, could also elude Carter's adverse comparisons. Indeed, by now it is difficult to tell whether they are, in Carter's terms, monistic or not.

All of this raises large issues about how Carter defines "monism." Thus if monism is restricted to theories seeking to maximize just one value from among the range of values that most people recognize (let us call this "exclusive monism"), then few of the traditional theories of normative ethics are monistic. (Nor, it might be added, do we need multi-dimensional indifference curves to expose such exclusive monist theories as inadequate.) In the passage just cited, Carter does seem to be using "monism" in this exclusive sense; and this might allow theorists such as myself to reject the ascription of monism in his sense, or even to claim to be pluralists, if of a different sort from Carter.

But in holding that most theories of normative ethics are monistic, and that these include anthropocentric, zoocentric, biocentric and ecocentric theories, Carter seems also to employ a broader sense of "monistic." He seems to include among monistic theories (but this is conjectural) ones that recognize more than one value (autonomy and health, for example), but claim that rational preferences are possible between them, or rather between conflicting options in cases where these values are in potential conflict, and where neither can be satisfied without some sacrifice of the other. But he probably also holds that monistic theories do not recognize some of the range of values that one or another set of theorists purport to recognize. Thus anthropocentrists neglect intrinsic value in the lives of non-human creatures, sentientists deny intrinsic value in the lives of non-sentient creatures, and biocentrists, such as myself, deny *intrinsic* value of the kind that ecocentrists purport to recognize in ecosystems and in species. And if this is what Carter means by monism (let us call this sense "inclusive monism"), then I (and probably many others) will be correctly depicted as monists (and inclusive monists at that), despite recognizing a plurality of locations of value (in autonomy and health, for example, for the same examples will serve again).

Yet it should at once be remarked that affiliation to inclusive monism need not commit a theorist to selecting an outcome on Fig. 9.3 closer to any of the axes than point 'T.' For an inclusive monist may hold that the satisfaction of human interests such as autonomy has a degree of intrinsic value smaller or greater than or equal to that of the health or wellbeing of an animal or of a tree, and may reach outcomes not by seeking to maximize just one of these sources or locations of value, but by weighing possible outcomes in terms of their degree of value, or the balance of value over disvalue involved. Such a theorist can be seen as engaged in comparisons and appraisals in which not all the kinds of value are maximized, but in which more than one are honoured. Hence such a theorist need not prioritize one kind of value at the expense of all others, despite Carter's claims that this is the invariable tendency of monism. This being so, the inclusive monist can escape Carter's claim that her chosen outcome in the terms of Fig. 9.3 is bound to be less satisfactory than that of the value-pluralist, and relatedly his claim that it shows value pluralism to be superior to the various kinds of monism (*Ibid*. 81).

Another significant difference between monism and Carter's kind of pluralism should now be noted. For Carter's pluralism seems committed from the start to regarding what he calls "the various values that we hold" as one and all of them values to be separately honoured, as if each of them (as he puts it) "continually exercises its pull" independently of the others, and as if none of them might be derivative values, or not values at all. For example, the value of ecosystems is assumed to be an independent value to be taken into account, without consideration of the view of individualists that the value of such systems, important as it is and remains, is dependent on the value of the individuals (present and future) whose existence these systems make possible. By contrast, monisms of every stripe draw the line somewhere, and reject some of the claims made about the range of independent values. (Those ecocentrists who recognize value solely in collectivities and not at all in individuals are here just as monistic as their individualist opponents.)

Thus Carter's value pluralism is in this regard broader and more tolerant than any of the stances of the theorists just mentioned; according to Carter, the whole proposed spectrum of values are to be honoured as both genuine, independent and deserving of recognition. But this aspect of his theory is as much a danger as an asset. For if he is wrong about the independent value of ecosystems, but proceeds to factor this into his multi-dimensional decision-making procedure, then every outcome, verdict and judgement emerging from that procedure will be skewed. And this is a possibility with regard to every value that he endorses; thus if biocentrists are wrong about there being intrinsic value in the flourishing of trees, then Carter's value pluralism is equally in error, and so on. (It could further be asked how Carter could resist including within his range of values the values that, say, moon-worshippers might advocate; if seleno-centrism became widespread, would he not be obliged to include seleno-centric values within his multi-dimensional analysis? If not, on what basis could he justify excluding them?)

What this suggests is that it is possible to construct an ethic that combines ecocentric values with individualist values (including individualist values of the anthropocentric, sentientist, and biocentric kinds), but that the resulting ethic will remain implausible unless it can be equipped with some kind of rational defence. The various monistic theories each put forward some kind of defence for drawing the boundary of moral considerability and of the location of intrinsic value where they do, and could each be held to be in this respect preferable to Carter's value pluralism. Carter, for his part, assumes that the grounds that the various monisms supply for drawing the line where they do are one and all misguided. But this places the onus on him to show that this is the case, and why it is. Otherwise there are plentiful grounds for holding that Carter's whole-spectrum approach is vulnerable, and that the multi-dimensional decision-procedure based on it is not only unduly complicated but probably profoundly misleading.

At this point, it is salutary to remember the exclusionary meanings attaching to anthropocentrism, sentientism, biocentrism and, for that matter, ecocentrism of the purely holistic kind. While each of these theories can be held in inclusive versions (to use the terminology introduced earlier) through recognizing a range of values, each of these has some kind of coherence because it monistically affirms that moral standing and intrinsic value are located only where it says, and not where rival theorists suggest. We have already seen the problems of commitment to potential contradictions that Carter generates for himself by seeking to combine the values of all these contrary kinds of theory. The question now is whether, even if these labels are set aside, combining all these monisms in a whole-spectrum pluralism generates a theory that is defensible, and that anyone would be motivated to hold.

9.5 Elinor Mason on Monism, Pluralism and the Comparison Thesis

In this final section, I want to relate the above issues to a paper in which Elinor Mason defends monism against foundational pluralism. Mason's paper, "The High Price of Pluralism", is unpublished, and so it is inappropriate to mention more than its main thrust.

By foundational pluralism, Mason means theories that represent values as irretrievably plural and beyond comparison. But if morality is not to be an impossible enterprise, comparisons must be possible. Hence foundational pluralism is a wildly implausible position, and monism, the kind of value-theory that allows of comparisons, is to be preferred.

Mason illustrates her thesis with plentiful examples drawn from the history of ethics, but it is more important to make it clear that she is not defending what I have called exclusive monism. She recognizes that several kinds of thing may be valuable, just as inclusive monists (in my terminology above) are prepared to do. For example, knowledge and friendship were both examples of goodness for Moore. This being the case, Mason suggests that we call knowledge and friendship

"sources of value" (as I have occasionally done above) or "non-basic values" rather than simply "values"; for the monist invariably wants to go on to hold that there is something by virtue of which they can be compared, and for that we may reserve the term "value" (although Moore employed the term "goodness"). And here the monist is, according to Mason, fundamentally right, in virtue of what she calls "The Comparison Thesis." This is the thought that "if A is better than B, it must be with respect to something. If there is no relevant feature in terms of which to compare A and B, then A and B ... cannot be compared at all" (pp. 3 and 6 of unpublished manuscript). Thus someone who recognizes several values (which we should rename "sources of value") must hold that there is something in virtue of which comparisons are possible, or, in other words, value.

In expounding her position, Mason explains that comparisons are not achieved simply by expressing either preferences or approvals. Some ground or basis must be available on demand to justify any rational comparison. (Relevant criteria will sometimes be plural, and may need to be combined or blended, but the monist can readily cope with such complexity, holding that various combinations or proportions of desirable features can be ranked and are better or more valuable than others.) Here, and in her general defence of value-monism (which is much more detailed and sophisticated than I have space to mention here), she seems to me correct (although when she comes to list possible sources of value, her inclusion of "the environment" [pp. 32–33 of unpublished manuscript] seems to lack specificity). What is less clear is how her arguments should best be applied to Carter's value pluralism.

Carter could be held not to be a foundational pluralist in Mason's sense, because he allows the various values that he recognizes to be compared in multi-dimensional indifference curves and valuations. On the other hand, none of the verdicts that generate the planes that form these indifference curves seem to involve any basis of comparison; rather, it is held that "we" will select the plane 'abc,' prefer it to the plane 'def,' etc. Admittedly, there is some rational basis for these preferences; more rather than less of what we value is preferable, and those outcomes are preferable which respect all the values that we hold rather than just one or some. But is this, in the end, a form of rational comparison, as opposed to a systemizing of preferences (either of one person or, if we are lucky, of several people with the same preferences)? Remember that the axes of the diagrams represent autonomy or flourishing or ecosystem integrity or the like; no attempt is made to chart rational preferability or (as we might re-express that concept) value.

But reflection on rational preferability is surely just what is needed, and it has been seen to be lacking from the kind of whole-spectrum pluralism that Carter advocates. Within Carter's system of thought, it is his very inclusiveness that takes the place of such reflection. Thus Mason's stress on the need for rational comparisons to have a clear basis may be just the kind of corrective to Carter that is needed. This granted, inclusive monists are free to recognize a wide range of environmental and other values, or rather sources of value, and to reason about which of them embody value intrinsically as opposed to derivatively, and to recognize a variety of degrees of value, and to attempt to arrive at ethical

judgements and principles accordingly. What facilitates all this is the reasoned approach common to monisms but effectively rejected by pluralisms that deny comparability. It is because value pluralism of Carter's kind by-passes all this that its procedures and deliverances fail to show how rationally to combine multiple normative theories, and thus how rationally to combine ecocentrism with individualism.

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