

Peer Review

Review of: "Multiscale Entropic Ethics: A Non-Scalar, Auditable Grammar for Decision-Making Under Irreversibility"

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Ethical proposals aimed at addressing collective challenges—such as climate change, planetary boundaries, or the distribution of environmental impacts—generally arise from a well-intentioned premise: protecting what is shared, even if doing so limits private or individual decision-making. However, when an ethical framework begins to position the “planet,” the “community,” or “future generations” as the primary beneficiaries of every decision, a risk emerges: the individual may cease to be the moral subject and instead become an instrument for achieving collective goals. This shift has been warned of by various philosophical traditions, including that of Ayn Rand, who argues that any ethical system must preserve the agency of the individual as a rational being responsible for his or her own decisions. The issue is not rejecting a collective ethical vision, but preventing the pursuit of a higher good from justifying mandatory sacrifices.

From this perspective, Rand’s warnings allow us to identify three potential risks within the Multiscale Entropic Ethics (MEE) framework.

1. The dissolution of the moral subject.

MEE proposes incorporating non-human stakeholders, future generations, and technical or community-based agencies to determine whether a project should proceed. While the intention is to expand ethical analysis, this may result in diluting the moral subject among multiple representatives and interests. Rand points out that when the beneficiary of a decision ceases to be a concrete individual and is replaced by abstract entities (“the planet,” “biodiversity,” “the common good”), no one assumes direct moral responsibility. The risk for MEE is not the inclusion of more voices, but that the process may end without a clearly accountable decision maker.

2. Non-voluntary sacrifices.

MEE establishes ex-ante limits: if a project violates an ecological threshold or affects collective rights, it is automatically suspended, without further analysis. While this protects against irreversible harm, it may also eliminate the possibility of voluntary agreements, compensation mechanisms, or alternatives negotiated by those directly affected. Rand's warning is simple: an ethical system ceases to be ethical when it demands obligatory renunciations in the name of a superior goal. If MEE does not incorporate mechanisms that allow agency and consent from those bearing the cost, it risks imposing decisions rather than facilitating deliberation.

3. Replacing individual choice with administrative ethics.

MEE relies on ethical cells, adversarial audits, and institutional structures to ensure that decisions are "correct." Rand would argue that when ethics becomes operationalized through committees with veto power, moral reasoning risks turning into decision engineering, shifting personal responsibility to bureaucratic compliance. Ethics should illuminate choice—not replace it.

In conclusion, the contribution of the MEE framework is valuable: it exposes irreversibility, uncertainty, and the hidden distributive effects of complex decisions. The critique informed by Rand's warnings does not challenge MEE's purpose; rather, it emphasizes that an ethics oriented toward collective well-being must ensure that its implementation does not eliminate what it seeks to protect: the agency, freedom, and responsibility of the individual in decision-making.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.