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Chapter 1 The Ethics of Dignity of the Human Person

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Chapter 1

The Ethics of Dignity of the Human Person

Executive Summary

This first chapter explores the basic foundation of corporate ethics: the human person in all its dignity and mystery, its corporeality and emotionality, and its cognitive and volitive capacities of moral development. Four fundamental characteristics of the human person, namely individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence, will be examined for their potential to understand, live, experience, and witness corporate ethics and morals. We explore the profound meaning and mystery of human personhood invoking several philosophies of the good and human dignity as exposed by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas in the West, by the doctrine of Dharma in the East as expounded by Gautama Buddha, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad Gita, and by Prophets Confucius and Tao, in the East. Several contemporary cases of great human personhood are analyzed: for example, Peace Nobel Laureate Nelson Mandela from South Africa (1993) and Peace Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo from China (2017) – cases of human abuse that turned into triumphs of human dignity.

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. We are not physical beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a physical experience.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin¹

1.1. Introduction

The completion of the Human Genome Project at the beginning of the new millennium has generated a great deal of knowledge about human DNA and about the correlation between certain gene sequences and certain phenotypic traits. This advance holds promise for making genetic human enhancement (HE) customized to people's specific needs and desires. For instance, currently,

biomedicine in the form of drug therapies and medical procedures can enhance some of our mental and physical capacities above normal upper limits of the human species. While this biomedical advance is very interesting and a big business market, several moral concerns arise:

- **Is it morally justifiable to alter human nature by tinkering with the genetic code?**
- **Are we playing God with human nature in doing so?**
- **Is it a symptom of our hubris – to improve upon God’s gift of sacred human nature?**
- **Can we morally seek “mastery” over ourselves and others?**
- **Do technologies enhancing human nature have unforeseeable and irreversible evil consequences?**
- **Are these concerns similar to those raised against human reproductive technologies?**
- **Or, are these moral concerns just cognitive biases that interfere with our moral reasoning?**

These are also concerns of corporate ethics of HE. These concerns question our traditional doctrine of absolute human dignity which stems from the claim that God created man and woman in his own likeness unto immortality and eternity – the subject of this chapter. We need philosophically and morally to justify our concerns or psychologically explain away current resistance to HE. We must look carefully at arguments resisting HE as also arguments supporting it. We do this toward the end of this chapter.

Recent advances in the physical, social, biological, neurological, and anthropological sciences have not only spawned radical technological and market breakthroughs, but, more importantly, unearthed tremendous human potentiality for design, creativity and innovation, for invention, discovery, venture and entrepreneurship, for capital accumulation and wealth creation, for individual self-actualization and collective common good. We are experiencing a growing consciousness of the increased power that human beings have over nature and over the future development of the human race. This power can be both a blessing and a curse: it is a blessing if harnessed to do good, to preserve and respect human dignity, to bring about justice, and to promote peace and human solidarity; it can be a curse if the same power is abused to do evil, destroy human worth, generate unjust structures, and provoke war and terrorism, global destruction, and disintegration. We can make or mar our destiny.

What is man? What is being human? What is human personhood? What is corporate human personhood? A related philosophical and more fundamental question is: *what is human?* And what is being good? Aristotle’s balanced formula for man was: *man is a rational animal*.

Within ancient Greek philosophical thought and categorization this definition meant that the human being is endowed with the highest of three types of souls:

- (1) As a vegetative soul, the human is capable of nutrition, growth, and reproduction.
- (2) As an animal soul, the human is capable of movement, sensations, emotions, and experiences.
- (3) As a rational soul that unites the other two, the human is capable of knowledge and choice. That is, this rational soul expresses itself in the twofold activity of thinking and willing.

We are even more: our knowledge is *reflective* (i.e., we know that we know) and our choices are informed and reflective (i.e., we know what we are choosing, and we know why we are choosing it). Our skills and potential for knowledge and choice empower us to be “causes” or “authors” of our own actions, and hence, to be accountable and responsible for the consequences of our actions. Thus, being and action are intrinsically linked in the rational and voluntary nature of our human being.

On the surface, human behavior is basically a set of actions that are governed by one’s feelings, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding proposed ends, ideals, goals, and objectives. In general, most decisions and actions stem from and are affected by our personality or character. To the extent that these decisions and actions are human, they are usually assessed by several dyadic qualifications such as right or wrong, good or bad, ethical or unethical, moral or immoral, just or unjust, and fair or unfair. In general, actions are praiseworthy if good, and blameworthy, if bad. If good, one should be credited for them; if bad, one must accept blame and responsibility for the intended and unintended consequences.

Ethics is concerned with responsible human behavior. Corporate ethics is concerned with responsible corporate governance in relation to decisions, actions, and their outcomes that affect the company as a whole. Good business executives execute good decisions and actions that generate good outcomes and avoid bad decisions and actions that result in bad or harmful consequences.

1.2. Why Ethics of Human Personhood?

Psychology as a science started with two distinct approaches: (1) one emerged as the study of human internal processes that are often difficult to observe directly and (2) single-minded focus on observable behaviors. The former began with the psychoanalytic tradition of Sigmund Freud who believed that the reasons why people act and feel as they do are deep within them; hence, change can be promoted only when people probe their psychic depths and bring to surface and awareness those inner, often unconscious, dynamics. The second approach (2) began with the empirical tradition of B. F. Skinner, its best exponent, called behaviorism, and assumed that the causes of people’s actions are the rewards or punishments, they called reinforcements, they have received; hence, a person’s life can be dramatically changed by precise adjustments in the administration of reinforcements.

From the psychoanalytic tradition of Sigmund Freud emerged two other approaches: (1) humanistic person-centered psychology that included the work of Carl Rogers who pioneered client-centered therapy and (2) humanistic projective psychology that includes the work of Fritz Perls, who pioneered Gestalt therapy. Both psychoanalytic and humanistic traditions, even though much different, understand human behavior in terms of motivational and emotional dynamics, both focus on promoting awareness as the basis for change, and both build theory using observations and direct experience. Both build their theories on clinical experience.

On the other hand, behaviorism focused on observable behaviors and the environmental conditions or contingencies that reinforce them. Citing the rules of science, behaviorism argued that before a phenomenon is accepted as a fact, it must be independently investigated by other scientists and replicated by them. This empirical tradition has evolved through many decades now. During the last five decades or so, the empirical tradition has employed statistical analysis of data collected from scientific experiments to analyze observable behaviors.

Many so-called *cognitive theorists* now focused on individual's thoughts and emotions rather than just observable behaviors via environmental reinforcements. They explain behaviors in terms of people's thoughts, attitudes, expectations, and interpretations about reinforcements. The cognitive psychology theorist seemed to have moved "inside the person" to search for the causes of behavior. Other *volitional psychology theorists* (e.g., Harry Farlow, Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, and Fredrick Herzberg) have gone deeper to probe into human "motivations."

Many so-called *deterministic psychology theorists* (e.g., Frederick Taylor, B. F. Skinner) have continued to view the person in observable mechanistic terms. The latter asserts that humans are information-processing machines that work like computers to solve problems, make decisions, and behave accordingly. By this view, human beings are machines waiting to be programmed by society through homes and schools, colleges and universities, workplaces, and worship places. Sociologist Talcott Parsons proposed yet another view. He portrayed the birth of each infant as the invasion of a barbarian; children are savages who need to be tamed. This infant-as-barbarian view is not too dissimilar to the view of the human person as a passive information-processing machine waiting to be programmed and tamed by society. Both views assert that society must shape and mold the person; both suggest that socializing agents and agencies like parents, home, teachers, school, and managers and the workplace should create the human self. Both view human development as something done by the social world to children, adolescents, and adults at various stages of their life.

Another approach considers humans as vital *organisms*, who, by their nature, explore, develop, and take challenges, and thus develop themselves, of course, supported by parents, teachers, and workplace superiors. Alfred Kohn (1999), Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985, 1990), and Pink (2009), to name a few, follow this approach in understanding intrinsic motivation. Their central thesis is that people develop through the process of organismic integration as they proactively engage their world. They believe that there is a basic tendency within

people to move toward greater coherence and integrity in the organization of their inner world. Inherent in the nature of human development is the intrinsic tendency toward greater consistency and harmony within; that is, people are intrinsically motivated to integration and harmony (Deci, 1975, p. 80).

Even other psychologists have hinted at human organismic integration. Freud spoke of the synthetic function of the ego that suggested that throughout life people work to bring coherence to their experience and thus to the development of their own personality. Child psychologist Jean Piaget hypothesized a similar organizational principle in children, whereby they imbued everything with life. Carl Rogers and fellow humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow spoke of the self-actualization principle within people leading them toward greater internal harmony and integrity. In a similar way, argue Deci and Ryan, people's perceived sense of competence and perceived sense of autonomy enhance intrinsic motivation that empowers organismic integration. The development of integration in personality reveals who you truly are and indicates becoming all you are capable of – these ground and empower the concept of human authenticity.

A further and deeper question is: what grounds intrinsic motivation and organismic integration in us whereby we discover, develop, and enjoy ourselves as a human integrated personality that is truly individual and social, immanent and transcendent at the same time? When Deci (1975, p. 82) rightfully asserts “that intrinsic motivation and the inherent integrative tendency are natural,” my question is what makes them natural and what grounds this nature? The answers to these questions are beyond psychology and empirical measurement, as empirical methods or cognitive theories cannot stretch their horizons too far and deep. Hence, we have recourse to philosophy. [Table 1.1](#) summarizes the taxonomy of research methodologies in psychology, arguing for the necessary complement of a philosophical approach to the human person.

1.3. Philosophy of the Human Person

It is in the philosophy of the human person we discuss transempirical concepts like human nature, human dignity, fundamental human rights, the human soul, and human destiny. We examine such concepts in this chapter so as to enrich our understanding of intrinsic motivation and the inherent integrative tendency that are so natural to us but one that are least lived and experienced. It is the human person (richly created and even more designed and engineered by God) that grounds our unique human nature, human personality, human dignity and authenticity, and human development and potential.

Martin Heidegger claimed that modern technology, with its violent metaphysics, destroys being (Heidegger, 1978). It is not modern technology itself, however, that is dangerous but its wanton and wide-scale implementation by modern-day un-eco-sensitive businesses. With its exclusive focus on profitability bottom line, businesses today tend to violate the integrity and diversity of natural ecosystems, human systems, the autonomy and culture of local communities, and the chance that future generations will lead a decent life (Zsolnai, 2015, p. 3).

Table 1.1: A Taxonomy of Psychological Investigations into Human Identity.

Investigation Domain	Method of Investigation	Methodology of Investigation	Data Analysis	Criteria for Truth	Major Truths about Man
Observable behaviors	Empirical observation and measurement (Skinner et al. behaviorism)	Experimentation and replication of reinforced behaviors (Thorndike, Pavlov, Wolfgang)	Statistical analysis: ANOVA	Independent scientific investigation and replication of findings	Man is a repertoire of behaviors that can be conditioned and programmed
	Speculative deductions on deterministic human behavior (David Hume, Karl Marx)	Deterministic hypothesis of mechanistic behaviors (Frederick Taylor)	Inductive analysis; from semi-deterministic behaviors to the theory of total mechanism	Long-standing tradition of deterministic behaviorism	Man is a machine programmed by the factors of production, history, and society
Non-observable behaviors	Theoretical understanding of non-observable behaviors (e.g., psychoanalysis of unconscious behaviors ruled by ego, superego, and Id (Sigmund Freud))	Humanistic person-centered or personality-centered psychology—client-centered therapy (Moritime Adler; Carl Rogers)	Cognitive psychology theories to understand thoughts, expectations, and interpretations	Multiple scholars within the school of thought confirm or improve findings	Man is an outcome of his thoughts and expectations and interpretations (Jeremy Bentham, JS Mill)
			Cognitive psychology theories to understand inner organismic motivations of behavior (Deci, Ryan)	Multiple scholars within the school of thought confirm or improve findings	Man is organically motivated by a hierarchy of needs, wants, and desires (Farlow, Maslow, McGregor, Herzberg)

	Humanistic projective analysis: structural psychology of Carl Jung; Gestalt therapy (Fritz Perls)	Individual and social structures or Gestalt psychology: man's inner life is unraveled via pictures and their interpretations	Multiple scholars within the school of thought confirm or improve findings	Man is a reflection of individual and social structures expressed in architectures and civilizations; or one's gestalt projections
Philosophical deductions of the human spirit, nature, dignity, and destiny (Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas)	Transcendentalism is a philosophy that seeks to discover the nature of reality by investigating the process of thought rather than the objects of sense experience (Kant, Hegel, and Fichte)	Metaphysical deductions of human understanding and pursuit of truth (Descartes; Spinoza); a search for reality through spiritual intuition (Emerson)	Principle of universalizability (what is truth for me should be truth for all); principle of reversibility (what is truth for all others should be truth for me)	Man is made unto the likeness of God, endowed with sensitive, appetitive, cognitive, and volitive faculties that empower human nature, dignity, intrinsic motivation, and human behavior

Case 1.1: Nelson Mandela Fights for Human Dignity

Nelson Mandela, the freedom fighter who led the emancipation of South Africa from white minority rule, who emerged from 27 years in prison to become South Africa's first elected black president and a global symbol of reconciliation, died, age 95, on Thursday, December 5, 2013, at 8:50 p.m. at his home in Houghton, Johannesburg, South Africa, after a protracted illness. As flags flew at half-mast across South Africa, a sense of loss, blended with memories of inspiration, spread from President Obama in Washington, DC, to the members of the British Royal Family and on to those who saw Mandela as an exemplar of a broader struggle for peace, harmony, and equality.

Pope Francis praised "the steadfast commitment shown by Mandela in promoting human dignity of all the nation's citizens and in forging a new South Africa." President Barack Obama eulogized: "He achieved more than could be expected of any man. I am one of the countless millions who drew inspiration from Nelson Mandela's life. My very first political action, the first thing I ever did that involved an issue or a policy or politics, was a protest against apartheid." Manmohan Singh, then Prime Minister of India, said, "A giant among men has passed away. This is as much India's loss as South Africa's. He was a true Gandhian. His life and work will remain a source of eternal inspiration for generations to come." British Prime Minister David Cameron declared in London: "A great light has gone out in the world." Russian President Vladimir V. Putin added: Mandela was "committed to the end of his days to the ideals of humanism and justice." The French mourned differently: they bathed the Eiffel Tower in Paris in green, red, yellow, and blue — the colors of the South African flag. This is a testimony to the immense love, admiration, respect, and inspiration Mandela evoked across continents.

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918, in a royal family of the Xhosa-speaking Thembu tribe in the South African village of Mvezo. Mvezo was a remote hilltop village, a tiny hamlet of cows, corn, and mud huts in the rolling hills of the Transkei that still is snaked around by Mbashe River in the southeast of South Africa. His mother spent most of her working day drawing and hauling gallons of freshwater using a pair of donkeys to the white master she worked for in the nearest town. His father, Gadia Henry Mphakanyiswa, was a chief of the Thembu people, a subdivision of the Xhosa nation. Mandela was named Rolihlahla, meaning "troublemaker," until his first day at school, when at age 7 his teacher, Miss Mdingane, unceremoniously renamed him Nelson to conform to the British bias in education.

Mandela was drawn to politics in his teens while listening to elders talk about the freedom they had before white rule. Educated at a Methodist missionary school and the University College of Fort Hare, then the only residential college for blacks in South Africa, where two years later he was expelled for leading a student protest. Thereafter, Nelson got arrested several times for treason. He was arrested again in 1962 on the charges of leaving

the country illegally and incitement to strike – sentenced to five years in prison. In 1963, the police raided a farm in Rivonia where the ANC had set up its headquarters. The raiding police found a few documents disclosing that Mandela and his members were planning a conspiracy to overthrow the government. Consequently, the South African white rulers were determined to put Mandela and his comrades out of action. That same year in 1963, Mandela and eight other ANC leaders were charged with sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the state capital. It was called the Rivonia Trial – named after the farm the defendants had conspired.

At Mandela's suggestion, his comrades, certain of conviction, set out to turn the trial into a moral drama that would vindicate them in the court of world opinion. They admitted they had engaged in sabotage and tried to spell out its political justification. The four-hour speech Mandela opened the defense's case was one of the most eloquent of his life. Conducting his own defense in 1963, Mandela spelt out a dream of racial equality. Mandela said in court: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But, my lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die" (The Guardian, 2001; Keller, 2013, p. 11). The Rivonia trial seemingly established Mr Mandela's central role in the struggle against apartheid. He was sentenced to life in prison in 1964.

Under considerable pressure from liberals at home and abroad, including a nearly unanimous vote of the United Nations General Assembly to spare the defendants, the judge acquitted one and sentenced Mandela and the others to life in prison. P. W. Botha, then South Africa's president, refused pardon. He offered to release Mr Mandela if he renounced violence. Mr Mandela refused saying that government should abandon apartheid first. Mandela was 44 when he was escorted on a ferry to the Robben Island prison in July 1963. Robben Island was shark-infested watershed seven miles off Cape Town. Over the centuries, the island was a naval garrison, a mental hospital, and a leper colony. But for Mandela and his comrades, the Island was a university. Mandela honed his skills as a leader, negotiator, and a proselytizer. Both black and white prison administrators found his charm and iron will irresistible. Perhaps because Mandela was so much revered, he was singled out for gratuitous cruelties by the authorities. Still, Mandela asserted that the prison had tempered any desire for vengeance by exposing him to sympathetic white guards.

He left the Victor Verster Prison, on Robben Island, near Cape Town, on February 11, 1990, after spending 27 years in apartheid jails. Nelson was now 71. He walked to an inevitable moral and political victory cheered by much of the then world. Mandela called it the "Long Walk to Freedom" in his 1994 Autobiography.

In 1990, when released from prison, Mandela persuaded the ANC to renounce violence in favor of peaceful negotiation. He won the trust of Frederick Willem de Klerk, the last president of South Africa in a

Whites-only election, in their first meeting. This relationship helped to keep the negotiation on course for the next four years as violence raged on the streets of South Africa's townships. Aside from de Klerk, Mandela won most white South Africans, who were reassured by his words of reconciliation. Mandela and de Klerk shared Nobel Prize for peace in 1993. The ANC won a majority in the election – Mandela assumed the role of the president of South Africa in 1994.

Mandela even established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that granted amnesty to soldiers, policemen, and even assassins, provided they confessed to what they had done. "Our goal was general amnesty in exchange for the truth," said Bishop Desmond Tutu (who chaired the TRC) to *Bloomberg News* in a 1999 interview. The level of endurance, persistence, and altruism displayed by Nelson Mandela was exceptional and brought a major change in human thinking that all men and women are equal in each respect and all persons should live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

Nelson Mandela embodies the spirit of ethics of human personhood. Bearing no grudge even after being imprisoned unfairly for 27 years, he championed the Gandhian way of fighting for freedom. Mandela's humanity, leadership, commitment, and forgiveness are a source of learning for the entire world. He inspired millions of people, from school students to world leaders, to adopt a more peaceful approach, and to practice forbearance and forgiveness. He fought against not only white domination but also black domination, a champion of gender equality.

Ethical Questions

- (1) Nelson explained why he changed his nonviolence stance so abruptly to an armed one: "Forswearing nonviolence was not a moral principle but a strategy; there is no moral goodness in using an ineffective weapon." Do you agree with this ethic, and why?
- (2) Before he would be sentenced for life imprisonment in 1963, Mandela said in court closing a four-hour-long speech, the best of his life: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But, my lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." How do you view the depth of Mandela's human personhood from this statement?
- (3) In 2007, when Bill Keller asked Mandela, "After such barbarous torment, how do you keep hatred in check?" Mandela answered: "Hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy. Leaders cannot afford to hate." How would you deduce Mandela's compassionate human personhood from this statement?

Case 1.2: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo (2017)

Liu Xiaobo died Thursday, July 13, 2017, age 61, fighting liver cancer for more than a month after he was transferred from prison (where he was in the eighth year serving a 11-year term for “subversion”) to a civil hospital in northeast China. Born in December 1955, Liu was the son of a professor who remained a loyal communist party member, while his son was actively disobeying the party line. Liu was an academician and author specializing in literature and philosophy. China’s most famous political activist and prisoner, he was treated for terminal liver cancer in a heavily guarded hospital in northeastern China. Liu was the unsung hero along with other big name dissidents of the twentieth century.

A human rights activist, Liu took active part in the 1989 pro-democracy Tiananmen Square demonstrations and was arrested in 2008, after writing a pro-democracy manifesto titled charter 08 in which he demanded an end to one-party rule and called for improvements in human rights. Liu’s aim was not to trigger upheaval, but to encourage peaceful discussion. Charter 08 was signed by thousands of people in China. After a year in detention and a two-hour trial, he was sentenced in December 2009 for 11 years’ imprisonment for “inciting subversion of state power.” He was held incommunicado since, in an attempt to do away with any memory of him. Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2010 while in prison, and not even his family was allowed to travel to Norway to accept the award. The award was bestowed to an empty chair, which later became a symbol of China’s repression.

In the weeks before his death, Liu’s case got increasing international attention when world leaders such as German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and Taiwan’s President, Tsai Ing-Wen, called upon China to permit Liu to travel abroad to receive palliative care that could extend his life. The government refused Liu and his family when they asked if Liu could be allowed to seek treatment abroad. Instead, the Government posted guards around his ward, deployed its army of Internet censors to rub out any expression of sympathy for him. The Chinese police kept Liu’s wife, Liu Xia, under house arrest and heavy surveillance. She was barred from speaking about Liu’s death and his cancer treatment.

Along with countless others, Amnesty International paid tribute to Liu: “Today we grieve the loss of a giant of human rights. Liu Xiaobo was a man of fierce intellect, principle, wit and above all, humanity” said Salil Shetty, Secretary-General to Amnesty International, in a statement (see *The Statesman*, Kolkata, Friday, July 14, 2017, pp. 1, 10).² Liu Xiaobo represents the best kind of dissent in China. He was China’s conscience. His suffering, death, and repression hold a message for China and the West.

There are good reasons why Western leaders should speak out loudly for China’s dissidents. China cannot retaliate too much as it depends upon the West for trade. Western silence may seem complicity, and Mr Xi may believe that jailing peaceful dissidents is normal. Our silence may encourage him to

lock up yet more dissidents and activists. Moreover, those who risk everything in pursuit of democracy in China may feel discouraged that the West has abandoned them in their struggle for peace. Further, a vital principle is at stake. In recent years, there has been much debate in China about whether values are universal or culturally specific. Keeping quiet about Liu Xiaobo signals that the West tacitly agrees with Mr Xi, and what is worse, that there are no overarching ethical or moral values. China, like Western countries, is a signatory to the UN's Universal Declaration, which says: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." If the West is too selfish and cynical to fight for these universal values when China openly flouts them, it risks eroding such values across the world and in its own countries too (See "Liu Xiaobo, China's Conscience," *The Economist*, July 15–21, 2017, *Cover Page* and page 9).³

Ethical Reflections

- (1) Amnesty International paid tribute to Liu Xiaobo: "Today we grieve the loss of a giant of human rights. He was a man of fierce intellect, principle, wit and above all, humanity." Explain.
- (2) "Liu Xiaobo represents the best kind of dissent in China. He was China's conscience. His suffering, death and repression hold a message for China and the West." Reflect.
- (3) Western silence about inhumanities to Liu Xiaobo may seem complicity, and Mr Xi might have believed that jailing peaceful dissidents is normal. Western silence may encourage China to lock up yet more dissidents and activists. What is your moral obligation in this regard?
- (4) "In recent years there has been much debate in China whether values are universal or culturally specific. Keeping quiet about Liu Xiaobo signals that the West tacitly agrees with this, and what is worse, there are no overarching ethical or moral values." How would you counter this trend?

1.4. The Great Humanity of Nelson Mandela

"Mandela was no ordinary leader; he was a leader of leaders. His life was remarkable for its achievements. [...] During his 27 years in jail, Mandela attained renown for his uncompromising commitment to fighting injustice. This made him an icon of the oppressed. His fight against apartheid was all the more laudable in that he engaged in principled negotiations with the white rulers to end it. [...] When he walked out of jail in 1990, many believed that long decades in jail would have made him bitter and angry with his oppressors and that he would seek retribution. He showed the world there was another way to reach

out and forgive one's tormentors," thus said the Deccan Herald Editorial (Saturday, December 7, 2013, p. 10). During the brutal years of his imprisonment on Robben Island, thanks to his own patience, humor, and capacity for forgiveness, he seemed freer behind bars than those who kept him there, locked up in their own self-demeaning prejudices (*The Financial Express*, Editorial, Saturday, December 7, 2013, p. 7).

Mandela founded the TRC aimed at providing victims of the apartheid years with closure. The TRC did help uncover the truth about violence unleashed by the apartheid regime as well as its opponents, but it was only partially helpful in healing wounds or ending racial hatred. Mandela never hesitated to speak truth to power. He was uncompromising in expressing his anguish, even anger, over injustice. In 2003, Mandela lashed the United States for committing "unspeakable atrocities" and for risking a "holocaust" by invading Iraq. His words were prophetic and appealed to the conscience of millions, compelling even warring groups to lay down their guns to build peace. It will not be easy for the post-Mandela world to accept the challenge of his death – his moral authority will be sorely missed (*Deccan Herald* editorial, Saturday, December 7, 2013, p. 10). Ever since Mandela voluntarily left the presidency of South Africa in 1999, he has brought his moral stature to bear elsewhere around the continents of the world – he was a broker of peace.

The question most often asked about Mandela was how, after South African whites had systematically crushed and humiliated his people, tortured and murdered many of his friends, and incarcerated him into prison for 27 long years, he could be so evidently free of spite and retribution. When preparing for the Mandela obituary in 2007, Bill Keller, columnist of International New York Times, asked Mandela, "After such barbarous torment, how do you keep hatred in check?" Mandela's answer was almost dismissive: "Hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy. Leaders cannot afford to hate."⁴ He was an apostle against apartheid – a word that literally means "apartness" in the African language, but in reality means a system of racial gerrymandering that stripped blacks of their citizenship in the country of their origin and relegated them to USA-template "reservation" of so-called homelands and townships, a system that denied 80% of South Africans any voice in their own affairs.

Among Mandela's many achievements, two stand out: (1) he was the world's most inspiring example of fortitude, magnanimity, and human dignity in the face of oppression and opposition, serving over 27 years in prison for his belief that all men and women are equal. (2) Little short of the miraculous was the way he engineered and oversaw South Africa's transformation from a byword for nastiness and narrowness into, at least in intent, a rainbow nation in which people, regardless of caste or color, were entitled to be treated with respect and human dignity. Nelson Mandela was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the highest Indian civilian award, in the year 1990.

His charisma was evident from his youth. He was a born leader who feared nobody, debased himself before no one, and never lost his sense of humor. He was handsome and comfortable in his own skin. In a country in which the myth of racial superiority was enshrined in law, he never for a moment doubted his

right to equal treatment, and that of all his compatriots. For all the humiliation he suffered at the hands of white racists before he was released in 1990, he was never animated by feelings of revenge. He was himself utterly without prejudice, which is why he became a symbol of tolerance and justice across the globe. He was quite simply, a wonderful man (*The Financial Express*, Editorial, Saturday, December 7, 2013, p. 7).

His persistent struggle against apartheid teaches us that if we are determined to achieve something, if we have true willingness to change something for humanity, it is never impossible to strike hard and win the battle. A right path could be difficult, long, and full of obstacles but it will definitely lead to success. His message of reconciliation, not vengeance, reaffirmed Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy that fighting violence with violence is never a good idea. The way he handled South Africa's affairs after he assumed the presidential powers demonstrates the highest human values with regard to forgiveness, truth and altruism and social justice.

1.5. The Value and Function of Executive Personhood

Human behavior, however, cannot be reduced to a set of decisions and actions. There is a profound unity and interrelatedness that affects four basic characteristics of what it means to be human:

- (1) We are uniquely *sensitive* or *sense human beings* fed by our five senses that are nuanced by observation, perception, internalization, and pleasure.
- (2) We are *affective* and *feeling human beings* also fed by our five senses, empowered and reinforced by our attitudes, beliefs, instincts and drives, needs and wants, desires and aspirations, and ambitions and dreams.
- (3) We are *cognitive* or *knowing human beings* with unique capacities for thinking, reasoning, explanation, experimentation, creativity and innovation, imagination and intuition, hindsight and foresight, and judgment and decisions.
- (4) We are *volitive*, *voluntary*, and *intentional human beings* who can deliberate, determine, use free will, choose, select, or "elect" among competing courses of alternative actions, subjects, objects, properties, and events.

The unity of these activities (i.e., sensitive, cognitive, affective, and volitive) has been identified by many scientists as the *nexus of human personhood*, the fundamental unity of us as persons. Contemporary science insists on the transcending unity of the human being brought about by different powers. Our thinking is an activity that is highly dependent upon choice and intimately affected by our emotional state (Strawson, 1959). According to Lopez Ibor (1964, p. 157ff), feeling is the bridge which enables biological data of sensory perception to reach the mind of evaluation, classification, and choice of a response. I choose to accept or reject ideas based upon how I feel about them, about their source, and about their relationship to my experience and manner

of thinking. That is, I feel something, I quickly interpret my feelings intellectually, and react to both by choosing a course of action. We are publicly identified by the possession of a cluster of different attributes, some bodily, some behavioral, and some mental and some volitional, and we call them our “character” or our “personality.”

In the Greek classic tradition, this human personhood is represented by the “soul” that unifies the body and spirit, the physical and the mental, the understanding and the will, the voluntary and the involuntary, and human instincts and human drives (Harré & Shorter, 1983; Strawson, 1959). Whether one holds with Socrates that all knowledge is innate ready to be drawn out through education (*e-ducere* in Latin), or with Plato that all knowledge is fundamentally remembering, or with Aristotle that all knowledge begins with sensation, in any case, the raw data for our reasoning are given through our sensory organs of the body working in harmony with the soul (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, pp. 77–78, 84–85). The unifying principle and power is the human person.

While on the one hand, our human personhood is fed and molded by the *internal stimuli* of our sensitive, cognitive, affective, and volitive lives, on the other, it is also influenced by *external stimuli* such as:

- **Our family and school stimuli:** Our childhood experiences of our parents, nursery school, siblings, grandparents, and relatives; our adolescent experiences of peers and teachers at middle and high schools, colleges, and universities.
- **Our ergonomic stimuli:** Experiences of the workplace in relation to gainful work, meaningful work, co-workers and labor unions, native talent perfected, new skills picked up, new sources of income and rewards merited, and the like.
- **Our market stimuli:** The whole world of supply and demand, consumer buying power and shopping, an expanding world of thousands of brands, products, services, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, music, stores, malls, supermarkets, transportation, logistics, brick-and-mortar markets, Internet markets, www, blogs, e-bulletins, and Facebook.
- **Our ideological stimuli:** Our unique value-experiences derived from our society, art and poetry, language and literature, science and fiction, textbooks and novels, libraries and art galleries, local, national and global governments, law and order systems, religion and religious institutions, politics and political agenda, history and culture, and philosophy and theology.

Our human personhood receives, internalizes, filters, sorts, unifies, blends, lives, and relives all the internal and external stimuli in a mysterious, transcending synthesis and unity that really defines us. Given the internal and external stimuli, that is, our physical, spatial, and temporal worlds, our human personhood develops certain personality characteristics, behavior patterns, cultivates certain virtues (or vices), capacities or limitations, needs and wants, desires and dreams, habits and passions of heart, ethics and morals, and transforms us into responsible (or irresponsible) persons. These phenomena of internal and external stimuli

make and mold us as “human resources” ready for contributing back to society and the world.

How this mysterious unity or self-attribution is done is still debated. Various religions attribute this to a superior power in us that some call the soul, the spirit, the mind, the atman, the transcendent, the immanent, or the divine in us. Others trace this power to our genes and chromosomes, or the mysterious neural-physical body that we are endowed and engineered with. It is because of this unity that we say: I feel, I speak, I did this, and not that our body feels, our body speaks or that our body does something. More importantly, we say: I own certain actions and their consequences, and hence we assert: I did this, I chose this, I am accountable for this choice and the deed that follows, and I am responsible for the effects or outcomes. It is because of this superior power in us that we can formulate a mission (personal, corporate, social, or political) for ourselves that is beyond ourselves, a vision to realize this mission, and accordingly, we can spell ideals, ends, goals, objectives, and the means to achieve this mission. It is because of this body-spirit, matter-mind unity, the body becomes the home of the soul, the home of our intelligence, the home of our virtue or vice, the home of ethics and morals, and the home of our responsibility. Hence, the body becomes human, is humanized, and is sacred.

Figure 1.1 is a rudimentary attempt to sketch this great phenomenon of human personhood formed by the internal (organic) and external (environmental) stimuli or influences of our daily life. As indicated by the two-way arrows linking all the stimuli, the internal and external stimuli influence and reinforce each other circularly (not necessarily linearly), and systematically impact and mold our human personhood. Ethics and morals, and therefore, corporate ethics and corporate morals, deal with both internal and external stimuli that affect the human person.

1.6. What Constitutes Our Human Personhood?

Obviously, the human person is not a simple or random by-product of the internal and external stimuli, such as those depicted in Figure 1.1. Our human personhood is a unique combination of four internal–external forces that unify, interpret, internalize, and respond to the internal–external stimuli: *our immanence, individuality, sociality, and transcendence*. We explore each of these four human vectors from the viewpoint of corporate executive ethical decisions, actions, and duties.

1.6.1. *Our Unique Immanence*

Etymologically, immanence (in + *manere* in Latin) means to remain in, or to be operating and living within something. We are living within our state that is within our country that is within this earth, which is within the solar system that is within the universe. We are immanent in the world and in the universe. The human person dwells in immanence. That is, we are incarnated in a world that is physical; both humans and the world are characterized as dwelling in the

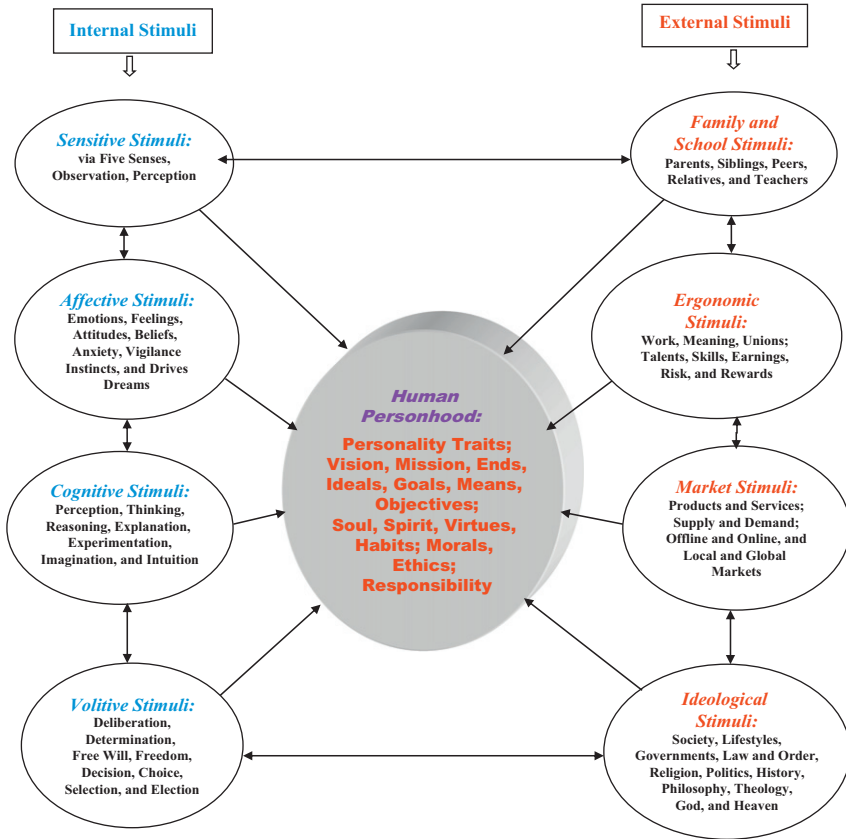


Figure 1.1: The Human Personhood as the Foundation for Executive Ethics.

universe that is in a unique intersection of time, space, motion, and gravitation. Our immanence is unique and irrevocable: we were birthed into this world at the unique interaction of the sun, moon and the seasons, galaxies and constellations, stars and zodiacs, earth and planets, time, space, gravitation, and motion. Oriental philosophers and astronomers (e.g., China, India) have explored this aspect of our unique geo-cosmic immanence. We are uniquely individualized and personalized by the unique intersection of hundreds of celestial bodies listed above. Hence, we are unique, non-imitable, non-substitutable, non-replaceable, non-replicable, non-repeatable, and non-transferable. Each of us has a unique role and responsibility for the universe that only we can fulfill.

Our immanence has two aspects: (1) we are corporeal-material in nature; (2) we are living physical organisms made up of flesh and blood. Because of our immanence, we have needs, wants, and desires; we have also, thereby, capacities and limitations. Our needs and limitations are sourced in the interactions and unity that exist between each human being and its environment. We are bound

by the physical laws of the universe, and we are limited by the physical capabilities of our muscular and skeletal structure and physical fitness. Accordingly, our needs, wants, desires, dreams, skills, and limitations change depending upon our age, gender, education, occupation, culture, religion, and where we are at any given moment.

Needs and limitations, however, do not define us. There is a unity between our corporeality and the flesh and blood living organism that we are. The body is the way in which the person is; it is the source of our being in the world. The body is the foundation for feeling and the place where feelings are experienced. It is the home of the intelligence. Without the body, there cannot be a human person. On the other hand, our body cannot be the sole source and locus of our human personhood. There is a unity between the human person and the body, but also a distinction. The body needs a principle to vivify it and provide a source of unity for the body with its corporeal function, activities, and processes of human nature. The Greeks and several religions call this principle of unity the soul (*atman* in Sanskrit, *pneuma* in Greek, *anima* in Latin). Without the soul or spirit as the unifying principle, we cannot be human persons, and without the body, we cannot be human persons either; we need and are a unique combination of the two. Only human beings composed of spirit and body, mind and matter can be human persons; to be human beings is to be both spiritual and corporeal.⁵

This is systems thinking applied to the human person: we are more than the efficiency of the body or the spirit, taken individually; we are an interactive whole that has energy, direction, drive, power, and passion far beyond the power of the body and soul taken individually. Ethics must see the human person not only in our universal aspects but in our unique combination of mind and matter, body and soul, time and eternity, and unique immanence.

1.7. Our Unique Individuality

The soul when joined to the body becomes the unifying principle of all activities and becomes the seat of intelligence and will. Because of this soul or spirit, we are immanent in the world in a unique way: we can sense the world, feel the world, love the world, explore, study and know the world, experiment, change and manipulate the world, and control, forecast and predict the world. It is precisely this interconnectedness between the spiritual principle of the soul and the unique corporeality of our body that gives rise to the unique “individuality” by which we identify the presence of the human person, and that we own our actions as not performed by the body or by the soul in isolation, but as an unity and immanent combination of the body and the soul whereby we say “I did it” or “we did it.” In the unique joining of the soul and the body, something new comes into being that is greater than the mere sum of the parts (soul and body) added together — this is the unique human person.

Writing about his deep personal convictions that he picked up from many years of client-centered therapy, its great founder Carl R. Rogers in his best-

seller *On Becoming a Person* (1961/1989, p. 21) wrote, “It has come to me that the separateness of individuals, the right of each individual to utilize his experience in his own way and discover his meanings in it, — this is one of the most priceless potentialities of life. Each person is an island unto himself, in a very real sense; and he can only build bridges to other islands if he is first of all willing to be himself and permitted to be himself.”

We are a unique combination of body and soul, mind and matter, faculties and powers, the conscious and the unconscious, the physical and the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual, the individual and the social, and the ethical and moral parts of our human personality. Such a unique combination makes knowledge, thought, talent and skills, choice and freedom possible. Such a unique process of individuation is not a simple or random by-product of our body and genes, or a victim of biological and economic exigencies of our human world. All these (including our genes and genetic compositions) will not determine and control who we are and what we become. Nor will our talents and skills, knowledge and thoughts, and willed actions and behaviors totally determine the outcome of our individual development. They all contribute to our specific personality and uniqueness.

Our unique, non-repeatable, irreducible, and irreplaceable individuality cannot be fully understood and explained unless we accept that our uniqueness comes from being uniquely shaped and molded into the image of God (or some such superior being) who crafted us into this unique and historical composition of the body and soul, mind and matter, family, social and historical environments. We are a unique meeting point between soul and body, the corporeal and the spiritual, the physical and the social that we call the human personality or individuality. Each of us, accordingly, is born with a unique destiny that forges and converges each one of us into a unique transcendent openness of possibility that translates (from a near infinite number of possibilities) into a unique combination of talents and skills, knowledge and ideologies, thoughts and actions, moral qualities and events, virtues and values. That is, we are a limited but immanent and transcendent expression of unique human personhood we claim as our personal mission, vision, character, and self-identity. This particular course of our growth and change, consciously or unconsciously, leads to the development of our personality and within the structure of this personality will eventually emerge a certain “character” by which we designate ourselves as “I,” “Ego,” “Me” and experience consciously, express and project externally in society as “self.”

1.8. Our Unique Sociality

We do not live, move, and have our being in isolation. Because of our unique immanence and individuality, we are social creatures, members of a common human species. We can sense, feel, and manipulate the world around as animals do. But far more than animals, we have “knowledge,” because the activity of knowing is dependent upon a deeper reality, that of sharing. *Knowledge by its*

very essence is relational. Psychologists, philosophers, and sociologists are all in agreement that our immanence and individuality are inseparable from our sociality. That is, *unless there is another who is like me yet distinct from me, I can never come to a full understanding of who I am and what I am.* Our very existence is dependent upon this social quality of human personhood. This principle can be the foundation for human resources management, especially as recruitment, development and retention, and as teamwork and spirit.

Even at the biological level, the physical structure of our body or corporeality is fundamentally social. Thus, our genes exist in strands of DNA that form pairs of chromosomes; our birth is conditioned on two individuals coming together; the basic genetic material of our corporeality comes to us from others. Human reproduction, unlike animal reproduction, is not merely instinctual, but a profound social experience of courting, conceiving, nesting, birthing, parenting, nurturing, and other family activities, each of which contributes to our sociality of nurturance and dependence. *From the first moment of human existence until the last, human life is profoundly social* (Rehrauer, 1996, pp. 37–38).

We are individuals precisely because we are social beings. By our very nature, we are gregarious beings. We need contact with other beings like ourselves in order to understand that we are human and what this means. *Without sociality there is no individuality. We are born and inserted into society. We cannot be personalized human persons in isolation. It is through our social contacts that we activate and develop the ability to be individual and social, to be ethical and moral.* The child becomes aware as a person, as a human being of a particular individuality, as a function of its relations with other human beings. Social action precedes the self and provides the materials for it (Asch, 1987, p. 286; Flanagan, 1991, p. 122). In this sense, *our sociality precedes and grounds our individuality.*

Human personhood is more than our personality. We primarily develop our human personalities precisely because all human beings share a common social being. Our fundamental nature of human personhood (expressed as being sensitive, affective, cognitive, and volitive) becomes alive through our sociality. The nature and development of our individuality are a social product of both the social nature of our genetic heritage and the quality of our social interactions with others and with our cultural heritage as a whole. We carry in our bones and in our minds, in our genetic and cultural sources, something of all of those who have gone ahead of us and those who have been part of our lives. Our basic sociality takes us from the nuclear family we are born into broader groups such as ethnic, cultural, linguistic, national, religious, ergonomic, political, and other group affiliations. We learn to be a member of a given society by coming to know and practice the norms, rules, conventions and mores of that society. *Societies and social regulations develop, pattern, and shape our thinking, action, and behavior.* We not only learn about social regulations, but also learn to live within the framework and under the guidance of these social regulations (Heller, 1988, p. 19).

This is the metaphysical and transcendent foundation of our individuality, immanence, parenthood, and sociality. Our family and society, our history and culture, our values and religion, and our interpersonal networking with others

around us all of these contribute to the makeup of who we are, what we are, and who we are becoming, of how ethical and moral we are and can become (Flanagan, 1991). In particular, social systems of language, tradition, technology and communication, signs and symbols, leaders, values and history, culture and civilization, morals, and mores form an important part of our social and individual world. It is within the context of this specific community that our individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence are situated and contextualized.

1.9. Our Unique Transcendence

Etymologically (from Latin *ascendere* = to climb; *transcendere* = to go beyond, to surpass), transcendence implies going beyond one's sense and experience, emotions and feelings, knowledge and skills, capacities, and limitations, in order to achieve excellence, moral integrity, and extraordinary heights of self-actualization. In Kantian philosophy, transcendence means going beyond sense data and hypothetical imperatives to categorical moral imperatives inherent in the organizing function of the mind and the will, and which are necessary conditions for human knowledge.⁶

Human transcendence is founded on our nature as human beings, the inherent nature of our self-awareness as "I am" and as distinct from others, the transpersonal nature of human personhood, the externalizing expression of underlying personhood through the process of character formation, and with a world in which we are immersed yet which is totally other than us — all these reveal the foundational reality or human transcendence. Our self-understanding is not purely individualistic; it is relational; that is, in contact with other persons and with the world of other human beings do I begin to understand myself (Fuchs, 1983, p. 177). As Erich Fromm (1955, p. 62) notes, it is only after we have conceived of the outer world as being separate and different from ourselves that we come to self-awareness as a distinct being from others.

Our self-awareness and self-identity are beyond the sum total of our experiences. We do not identify ourselves with our experiences, even though they may be engaging and memorable; neither do we define ourselves by what we see since we see, understand, and identify ourselves beyond and beneath our day-to-day experiences. That is, we transcend our experiences; our self-awareness and self-identity are beyond the totality of our experiences of sensing, feeling, perceiving, observing, believing, choosing, acting, and accomplishing. This is because our human being-ness and our human personhood underlie our experiences and unify them. This underlying personal being is transcendence even of our own personal identity. *Our personhood as personhood is often inaccessible even to us because it is a creative reality with continuous possibility for change.* But our immanence and transcendence unify all our changes and experiences into a meaningful whole which we call our character or personality or self-identity.

Our transcendence also grounds our ability to hope, to dream, to design, to create, to invent, to innovate, to discover, and to venture — all these we do for what is not yet accomplished. Our transcendence also empowers us to plan our

future, to make plans not only for what we will do, but for what we will not do, and for what we want to become and not become. We are transcendent because we are temporal beings who are aware of our temporality. Our very nature as temporal beings leads us to define and plan our lives in terms of meaningful past, present, and future. Our capacity for the future is the recognition of the reality of our transcendence. It is because of our transcendence we have a future, or better, we are a future, or that we can reinvent our future. In our actions, we extend ourselves over a span of time from past into the future. But in our moral act and behavior, we transcend even the mere span of time, as we touch on the divine and eternal in us. All the above statements apply to organizations and corporations: our organizational transcendence makes us surpass ourselves, our constraints, and our competition and drives us to seek the impossible dream.

We can also think of “the transcendent” in the theological sense as God or in the philosophical (specifically, Kantian) sense as that which is beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge (i.e., that which is *a priori* and a necessary condition of human experience as determined by the constitution of the mind). Likewise, “the immanent” may refer to either the theological indwelling presence of God in the world and each individual (God among us) or that which operates within the subject (our life force). Finally, “vital agent” may refer to either the Holy Spirit (the divine life-giver) or that which gives the agent his or her conscious functions (the animating source of the independent conscience (Moberg & Calkins, 2001, fn. iv, p. 267).

All human acts and actions, activities, and planned actions are stemming from our human person as individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence. How do our individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence ground corporate ethical and moral decisions actions?

- Our human *individuality* as corporate executives makes our actions (decisions and strategies) personal, with obligations of due ownership of the choices of inputs, processes, and outputs we make.
- Our human *sociality* as corporate executives makes our acts and actions (decisions and strategies) social and society oriented or common-good oriented, with summons for *social due diligence* of the choices of inputs, processes, and outputs we make.
- Our human *immanence* as corporate executives makes our decisions and strategies, acts, actions and activities concrete, historical, geographical, contextual, bounded by concrete space (spatiality) and time (temporality), and hence, uniquely situational, irreversible, existential, and accountable for their consequences.
- Our human *transcendence* as corporate executives makes our decisions and strategies, actions, activities, acts and planned actions, meta-individual, trans-social, and trans-organizational in relation to the choices of inputs, processes, and outputs we make, such that transcendent organizations are empowered to surpass themselves, their goals, and objectives.

As temporal beings, we are capable of many actions and choose many alternatives; we have within our grasp an enormous range of events with their specific inputs, processes, and outputs. We choose some of these and reject other competing alternatives. *In the search, deliberation, choice, and subsequent actions lies our transcendence — the power to bring unity, consistency and continuity in our thoughts, desires and actions, to bring forth order in otherwise chaotic choices and environments, and correspondingly, into our relationships with others* (Asch, 1987, pp. 122–123). As subjects who are temporal, we transcend our activity, and this demands of us that we actively integrate every moment of our existence into a broader pattern of self-conscious awareness (Rehrauer, 1996, pp. 45–47).

The discussion on our unique and essential experience of transcendence, in conjunction with our immanence, individuality, and sociality, can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the corporation as a whole, since it is composed of real human persons, all of whom are radically individual, immanent, and social in being and becoming. Transcendence can be experienced and incorporated into our otherwise mundane and materialistic, competitive, and aggressive corporate personality and strategy. This is the foundation for corporate executive transcendent spirituality. Thus, we can understand, interpret, and apply the construct of our unique and necessary transcendence to define and live our *corporate spiritual individuality and immanence, individuality, and sociality*.

The concept of unique human personhood can be applied for Nelson Mandela:

- **Unique individuality:** Being born in a royal family, Nelson Mandela had the required confidence and leadership abilities.
- **Unique sociality:** Mandela was affected by social oppression; he fought not only for racial equality but also for gender equality.
- **Unique immanence:** The objective of non-discrimination was achieved, and Mandela was unanimously elected as the president of the nation. He took care of his country, his people, and his followers.
- **Unique transcendence:** Mandela rose above hatred and vengeance, even after being cruelly oppressed in prison. He included colored and non-colored, men and women in his dream of a perfect apartheid free nation. He mentioned that hatred clouds the mind and a leader cannot afford to hate.

Given our individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence, several rights and duties, obligations, and responsibilities follow, such as:

- As corporate executives, we are responsible to our *unique individuality* of talents and skills, passions and drives, attitudes and perceptions, feelings and emotions, and that is specifically individuated about us. While we expect others to respect our individuality, we must also learn to respect the unique individuality of our employees, customers, distributors, creditors, suppliers, local and national communities, and even our competitors.
- As corporate executives, we are responsible to our *unique sociality*, our social talents and skills, and our unique capacity to interact, network, bargain,

negotiate, argue, persuade, and lead people. While we expect others to respect our sociality, we must also learn to respect the unique sociality of our subjects and reports, customers and partners, competitors and regulators, and shareholders and all stakeholders alike.

- Lastly, as corporate executives, we are responsible to our *unique transcendence*, our unique mystique and philosophy, our unique vision and mission, our unique ideals and ideologies, our unique values and virtues, our unique brand of inspiring and moral leadership, and our unique ministry of servant leadership. While we expect others to respect our unique transcendence, we must also learn to respect the unique and inaccessible transcendence of others, our subjects and reports, our customers and partners, our employees and their families, and our local and global stakeholders alike.

Figure 1.2 captures this dynamic quadric-directional moral responsibility of our human personhood. The challenge of Figure 1.1 is Figure 1.2 – given our lives influenced by multiple internal and external stimuli, how do we humanize and divinize ourselves for others? All five major constituents of executive human personhood and responsibility have starry borders or boundaries to indicate ever-widening scope, scale, and domain of responsibilities under individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence, and therefore, under executive human personhood.

Martin Heidegger once wrote that caring for things demands immanence in God (Heidegger, 1985). The ethics of human personhood suggests that we too may try to see the *world* as the *face of God* and organize our business accordingly (Heidegger, 1985).

1.10. Current Controversy of Human Dignity vs Human Enhancement

In bioethics, the term “human enhancement” refers to any kind of genetic, biomedical, or pharmaceutical intervention aimed at improving human dispositions, capacities, and well-being, even though there is no pathology to be treated (Giubilini & Sanyal, 2015). For instance, such interventions include selecting embryos before implantation during in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures, inserting or deleting gene sequences, taking enhancing drugs for better physical or mental performance, pursuing life extension through stem cell applications, and other regenerative medical procedures (Giubilini & Sanyal, 2016).

1.11. Arguments for Human Enhancement

- People should be free to enhance themselves (and their offspring) through various means mentioned above (including genetic engineering embryos) – this position is usually dubbed as *bio-liberal*.
- HE may actually promote human dignity by improving those qualities and virtues that confer a special worth on human beings (Bostrom, 2008, p. 175).

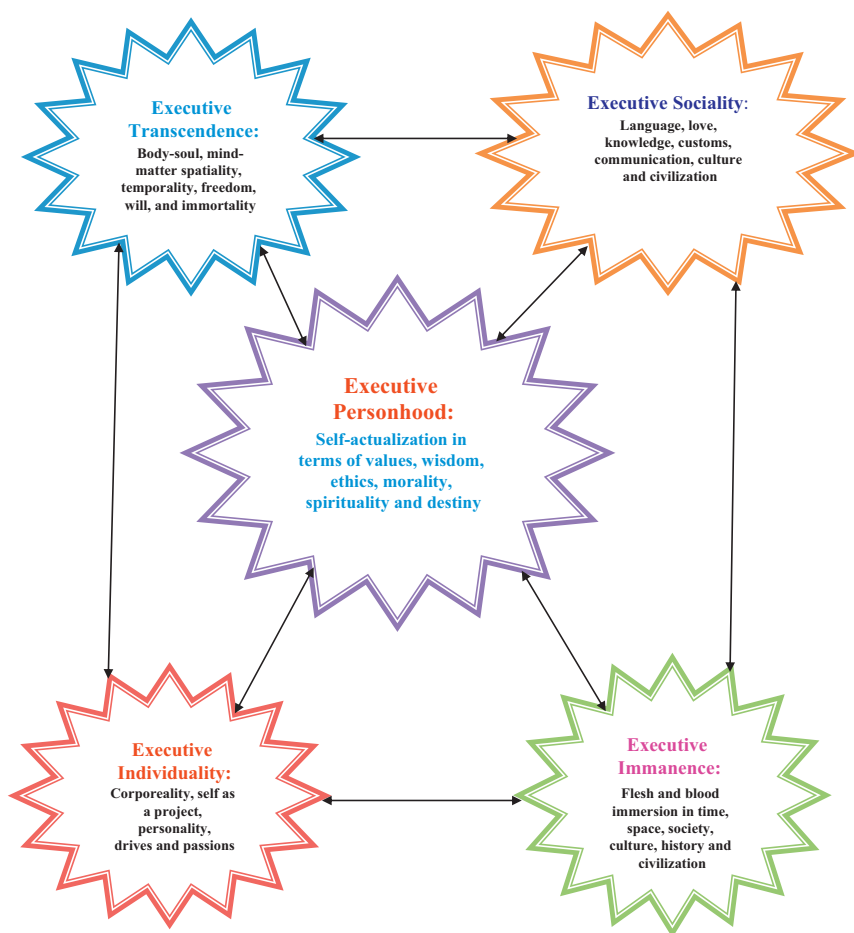


Figure 1.2: The Quadri-directional Responsibility of Human Personhood: The Challenge of Executive Ethics. *Source:* Rehrauer (1996, p. 57).

- Opposition to enhancement as violations of human dignity is based on a notion of human dignity that is too vague or that it adds nothing to bioethical discussion (Macklin, 2003). In fact, the notion of human dignity is a stupid concept that is relative, fungible, and even potentially harmful and deceptive (Pinker, 2008).
- Far from being opposed to equality, HE can be used to make up for the unfairness of “genetic lottery” by bringing the least fortunate up to a decent minimum of capacity and well-being (Savulescu, 2006). In this view, one could even institute a policy whereby enhancements are subsidized for those who cannot afford them – this could level the playing field (Buchanan, 2011; Mehlman, 2009).

- Other utilitarian considerations in favor of HE take into account the cost to society (rather than to the individual) of failing to enhance the individual (Levy, 2013).
- While indiscriminate HE may be irresponsible, some enhancements are highly positive with low negative externalities.
- HEs, however, should not be imposed or subsidized by the state for certain groups of people.

1.12. Arguments Restricting Human Enhancement

- While HE in principle may be defensible, there are certain objectionable forms of enhancements such as the wealthy having access to enhancement that is not accessible to the poor, thus exacerbating and increasing the already marked inequalities between the rich and the poor (McKibben, 2004; Mehlman, 2003; Mehlman & Botkin, 1998) – this position is usually dubbed as *bio-conservative*.
- Enhancement carried out over several generations may create two separate human species, one of which will have the power to dominate the other (Silver, 1997).
- HE is in principle (i.e., per se) objectionable, as it violates the intrinsic sanctity of nature and human dignity of life; it is “playing God” to improve upon human nature.
- It is human hubris to be dissatisfied with what God has endowed humans and exploit biotechnology of HE to make up for God. Enhancing human nature while disregarding the potential and unknown risk itself reveals certain hubris. Humans are neither omniscient nor benevolent and might therefore overlook the risks of tampering with genes.
- In the process of improving upon God, we may create human “monsters” (Krauthammer, 2002, p. 202) that might violate human nature, human dignity, God’s gift of being human (Cohen, 2006; Fukuyama, 2002; Kass, 1997; Levin, 2003; Sandel, 2004, 2007).
- A major limitation of the drive to “mastery” is its failure to appreciate the “giftedness of human life” or its “openness to the unbidden” (Sandel, 2007). This failure not only jeopardizes humility but also human solidarity as some HE advocates would assume upon themselves the hyper agency in determining exactly what kinds of people should exist and be left as a legacy.
- More than social or political issues, HE raises moral issues regarding the meaning and value of life and death, the notion of personhood, the extent to which human life can be used as a commodity or as a means to one’s ends.
- Francis Fukuyama (2002, pp. 74–75, 92–93) argues that HE is dangerous because the interactions between single genes and phenotypic gene or genetic sequence to obtain a desirable trait might have bad unintended consequences for the expression of other desirable traits.
- With certain HE technologies, we may get more easily what we asked for only to realize it is vastly less than what we really wanted and at a big cost to

humanity (Kass, 2008, p. 303) — this is also called the “perversity thesis” (*President’s Council on Bioethics*, 2002, p. 287). That is, there is a “precisely balanced” human nature such that any HE intervention to alter it could have disastrous consequences.

Some people generally in favor of HE may oppose specific types of enhancement such as certain radical and impermissible forms of HE that may lead to a new species (e.g., post-humans — see Fukuyama, 2002) or a new state of what is normal humanity (Agar, 2013) or may need a new rule to define a given activity (e.g., doping in sport). Others oppose certain specific methods of HE that are problematic (e.g., genetic manipulation of embryos changing genetic identity of individuals may be more problematic than selecting a certain embryo in IVF procedures).

According to Eric Cohen (2006), there is a “moral anthropology” by which we recognize a special dignity in all human beings, which is an essential feature of human nature rather than something based on contingent properties (e.g., rationality or self-awareness). Human anthropology calls for a recognition of human experience as something beyond our comprehension that gives a special meaning to our morality as the sign of the mystery surrounding our transcendent yet authentic human experience, something we cannot fully “master” (Cohen, 2006, p. 49) via human cloning, gamete engineering, creating man-animal hybrids that exert novel parental control over genetic makeup of new life, creation of human-animal chimera embryos or eugenic projects, and the manufacturing and selling of human body parts. In Chapter 5, we will revisit the problem of HE and apply moral reasoning methods to assess their justification.

1.13. What is Human Nature or Dignity and Why and How Sacrosanct Is It?

Bio-conservatives frequently invoke human dignity to argue against HE.⁷ There is no single definition of human dignity as the term itself is abstract and highly ambiguous (Fukuyama, 2002, p. 148; Kass, 2008, p. 306). Hence, authors propose different and often conflicting interpretations of human dignity based on varied concepts of allied constructs such as being human, human personhood, human life, human nature, human equality, rationality, autonomy, freedom, moral worth, basic human goals and values, and human destiny.

An important distinction between conceptions of human dignity is the exclusive, comparative, or aristocratic—elitist notion as opposed to the inclusive, non-comparative, egalitarian, and universal notion. The former is the presumptive notion of full dignity of being human predicated by a sense of worthiness and nobility that is found not in every human being but only in those with certain excellences, virtues, or capacities — this is close to the divine monarchical right of kings or the “blueblood” or “Brahmin” concept of exclusive dignity. The second is non-comparative egalitarian notion that “basic dignity of being human” is shared by all forms of human life. Both concepts considered

separately are problematic and with shortcomings. The former is exclusive and monarchical and seems to have had some historical roots, while the latter, according to Kass (2008, pp. 316–320), cannot be justified on any ontological or theological grounds.

Accordingly, Kass (2008, pp. 323–324) proposes an in-between position of human dignity, half-way between other animals and God. Humans are god-like and have aspirations toward what is higher and thus, are more than an animal. But they are dependent on their embodied nature for everything high about human life – the latter trait of dependence, according to Kass (2008, pp. 321–322), seemingly reconciles the comparative exclusive and non-comparative inclusive notions of human dignity. “The fullest dignity of the god-like animal is realized in its acknowledgment and celebration of the divine” (Kass, 2008, p. 329). That is, both concepts cannot be reconciled or defended unless from the context of religious beliefs that formed it (Meilaender, 2008, pp. 262–263). In the final analysis, following Emmanuel Kant, our exclusive distinction from the animals based on human dignity should have to be based on our rationality (Lee & George, 2008, p. 410).

The most significant threat posed by HE is that it may alter human nature and thereby usher us into a “post-human” stage of history (Fukuyama, 2002, p. 7); or that it may jeopardize the idea of a natural quality among human beings. By sharing the same human nature, humans, qua humans, have equal dignity. Altering human nature via HE (say, by embryo or gene selection) would violate the God-given gift of being “begotten” and replace it by being made or manufactured via HE (President’s Council of Bioethics, 2002, p. 112).

Liberals, however, oppose this normative concept of human nature as alternatives to a monolithic concept of human nature have characterized our species (Lewens, 2012). Human nature cannot have normative value un-problematically because it contains both good and bad aspects. Our concept of the good is independent of, and indeed is used to evaluate, human nature (Buchanan, 2009).

There is a general fear that genetic manipulation technologies might blur existing species boundaries – that genetic manipulation and engineering could create a new human species (Annas, Andrews, & Isasi, 2002). However, as Eric Juengst (2009, p. 50) notes, we cannot literally preserve the species against all genetic change. In the history of evolution, genetic profiles associated with a species do change, as existing individuals pass away and new ones are born. Without much exogenous intervention in the process, the typical genome of a given species is likely to vary both over time and across populations that are geographically separated with little interaction. If we must choose the current human species-typical genome as sacrosanct, then it may indicate certain arbitrariness to take a snapshot at a particular point in time and space to be the general and final definition of human species.

This argument makes the current theory of the inviolability of the sacrosanctity and dignity of our human species less plausible. It also asks what specific psychobiological features of our human species make us specifically human and bestow a moral status to us (see Annas et al., 2002). Also, what human rights attach to individual humans as specific human species with a moral status? A

subspecies of humans created by genetic interventions or by HE might come to possess relevant human characteristics to such a heightened degree that it no longer makes sense to assign ordinary humans as much moral status as the new subspecies. This argument turns the current “hubris” argument against HE in the favor of HE (see Douglas, 2013).

1.14. Concluding Remarks: Executive Freedom and Transcendence

An important aspect of our transcendence and our nature as executive human persons is our free will or the realm of our freedom. Our executive freedom is twofold: (1) we are free to make choices; (2) we are thereby free to determine the direction and meaning of our existence. When we categorically exercise this twofold freedom, we exercise the basic transcendental freedom, which is the freedom to create ourselves. Freedom of choice is largely dependent upon the domain and situation of choices – it is situational. Our transcendental freedom whereby we determine the meaning and direction of our existence is the autonomy of character which expresses the person behind the character. My choices may be limited, but I can still be free in the autonomy of personhood that makes the choices. As Agnes Heller (1988, p. 54) puts it: the referent of liberty is action; the referent of autonomy is character. *A completely autonomous person may have no choices whatever owing to circumstances, but still be totally autonomous.* Often, there might be no external (e.g., market or economic or political) choices whatsoever, but there are real choices from within: to do or not to do, to become or not to become, to be or not to be. This is autonomy at its best.

Personal executive autonomy is our transcendence over situations; it is mind over matter, soul over body, the absolute over relative, the eternal over temporal, and life over death. We cannot choose our birth, our genetics, our parents, our gender, our race, our nationality, and our culture – they are the “givens” of our immanence. *But still our transcendence enables us to go beyond these constraints to exercise our autonomous freedom to create a meaningful existence and personal history. Human transcendence may not be absolute transcendence, but it is transcendence nevertheless* (John Paul II: *Veritatis Splendor*, pp. 35–53). Nelson Mandela exercised his transcendent freedom while he was jailed for 27 years; he used all his apartheid prison years to learn, form, and transform himself. He was more free and transforming than the people who imprisoned him.

All these are aspects or dimensions of our individuality, sociality, transcendence, and immanence. But, in the final analysis, human transcendence is grounded primarily in its openness to the absolute transcendence of God. The human person possesses a dignity precisely in that it is a created reality which is able to open itself to the One who creates. That is, *our human transcendence is properly understood only in relationship to God's absolute transcendence* (John Paul II: *Veritatis Splendor*, pp. 28, 67, 72, 73, and 87). Thus, our human personhood as a reality is individual and social, immanent and transcendent. This is the theology of executive spirituality.

Hence, given our individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence, major values and responsibilities accrue. There is a multidirectional responsibility involved in being human. There is, additionally, a multidirectional responsibility involved in being an executive. *We are responsible not only for what we are (immanence), but who we are (individuality), what we do (sociality), and what we have become (transcendence).* That is, we are responsible for our individuality, sociality, immanence, and transcendence, individually and collectively; that is, we are responsible to ourselves (individuality), to others, our community, society and culture (sociality), to the world and the universe we are immersed and living in (immanence), and to God who created us and whose absolute transcendence we share, and to something beyond ourselves, society, and the universe (transcendence).

NOTES

1. Cited in Stephen Covey (2000).
2. Retrieved from Nobel Laureate Liu dies at 61. *The Statesman*, Kolkata, Friday, July, 14, 2017, pp. 1, 10. Retrieved from <http://epaper.thestatesman.com/1281145/Kolkata-The-Statesman/14th-July-2017#page/1/2>
3. Retrieved from Liu Xiaobo, China's Conscience. *Cover Page* and p. 9 of *The Economist*, July 15–21, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/07/15/liu-xiaobos-death-holds-a-message-for-china>
4. Keller (2013).
5. Over against the quantitative theory that held all economic actions were driven by mathematical expectations of benefits, John Maynard Keynes, the famed economist, coined and introduced the term “animal spirits” into economics, with which he meant our souls that animate us, or consequently, our spontaneous urges that give meaning and energy to our acts. “Most of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn out over many days to come, can only be taken as a result of animal spirits — of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not the outcome of a weighted average of quantitative benefits multiplied by quantitative probabilities. An enterprise only pretends to itself to be mainly actuated by the statements of its own prospectus, however candid and sincere. Only a little more than an expedition to the South Pole could be based on an exact calculation of benefits to come. Thus, if the animal spirits are dimmed and the spontaneous optimism falters, leaving us to depend on nothing but a mathematical expectation, enterprise will fade and die” (Keynes, 1936, pp. 161–162). Similar was the position of Akerlof and Schiller (2009).
6. Accordingly, transcendentalism is a philosophy (attributed to eighteenth century German philosophers Kant, Hegel and Fichte) that proposes to discover the nature of reality by investigating the process of thought rather than the objects of sense experience. By extension, Emerson and other nineteenth century New England philosophers, defined transcendentalism as a search for reality through spiritual intuition.
7. President's Council on Bioethics (2008) provides a collection of essays on Human Dignity and Bioethics, commissioned in 2008, written by prominent modern representative conservatives and non-conservatives. The collection does not provide a single definition of human dignity as the term itself is abstract and highly ambiguous (Kass, 2008, p. 306). Fukuyama (2002, p. 148) maintains a similar position. Hence, authors propose different and often conflicting interpretations of human dignity. A working definition of

human dignity is that of Lee and George (2008, p. 410), “The dignity of a person is that whereby a person excels other beings, especially other animals, and merits respect and considerations from other persons.” This definition bears the risk of being circular. Different definitions arise based on different definitions of the person, human excellence and respect, different understanding of human nature and of the foundations of human dignity (see Giubilini & Sanyal, 2016).