Managerial Ethics as a Prerequisite to CSR:
The Person Behind the Role

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Abstract

Managers occupy a particular position in organisations that make them morally responsible for their own actions as well as key influences on the moral mindset of the staff they supervise. Nevertheless, the concepts of 'manager' and 'management' remain elusive. Successive management theories have unveiled various organisational and moral implications of managerial responsibilities, and a role-based analysis of managers' moral responsibilities has proved appealing to researchers, but comes with its own ethical traps. A sustainable ethic requires consistency of character, something a mere role-performer lacks. The moral point of view needs to examine the moral qualities of the self behind the roles, where the self pre-empts the role. In this chapter, we argue that managerial ethics should first and foremost celebrate people rather than organisational actors, selves rather than roles. Anchored in humanity and individuality, we offer a self-based approach to a more sustainable, fulfilling and authentic ethical practice in management. Managerial ethics thus calls for self-reflection and examination, with subtler but no less effective implications for organisational life, ethical business practice and genuine CSR.

1.1   Introduction

Many different people compose an organisation, but every organisation has managers, albeit they might not wear the title. Organisations grant managers a greater degree of responsibility to deliver activities, services and/or products to their markets, even when they operate at the first-line level. They face ethical issues everyday and in every dimension of their work (Carroll, 2002:141; Cadbury, 2002:11). Although the CSR literature generally gives priority to organisational or global concerns and dynamics, the various expectations organisations place on individual actors, including managers, are fundamental in nurturing sustainable business practices (Wood, 1991:695). If business ethics research should integrate both "the person's internal awareness of ethical principles, the organizational contexts of thought and action, and the realities of combining ideals and work demands" (Kahn, 1990:319), then individual managers are amongst the first in line for a serious ethical enquiry.

Although everyone should be ethically sensitive, managers are often expected to be role models and to set the tone in the organisation (Kantor and Weisberg, 2002; Morrell and Anderson, 2006). In fact, the higher the manager's position within the company, the more the company imposes expectations on him/her to be a role model. Studies in leadership have highlighted that top executives and leaders should play a key part in encouraging particular behaviours and attitudes towards ethical standards (see, for instance, Thomas and Simerly, 1995; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Minkes et al., 1999; Kantor and Weisberg, 2002; Rendtorff, 2003; Treviño and Brown, 2004). Effective ethical leadership goes beyond the 'do as I say, do not do as I do', and leaders are expected to embody the values they preach and inspire others to act as well (Wheststone, 1997; Treviño et al., 2000). Not all managers are leaders; nevertheless, managers occupy a moral ground at least as large as that of leaders. Whilst leaders promote good ethics in the organisation through their charisma and ability to inspire others, managers do so through their key position of authority and expectations of exemplarity (Carroll, 2002).

Yet, whilst we would value a person as a role model in a business environment we would not necessarily consider that person a moral exemplar in another context. We actually tend to have different conceptions of moral exemplarity (Walker and Hennig, 2004). In practice, we usually identify the pressure to achieve business (as opposed to social or environmental) objectives as a cause for moral failure (Bird and Waters, 1989). Solomon (2005:111)

however contends that opposing virtuous conduct to business performance is a mistake and that: "ethics is a way of life, a seemingly delicate but, in fact, very strong tissue of endless adjustments and compromises." This leaves greater hope for developing more authentic managerial ethics. The chapter first reviews various approaches to management and discusses their moral implications. One must examine the terms 'management' and 'manager' in order to grasp the extent of a manager's individual responsibility and discretion in relation to ethical practice. The second part of the chapter critically examines the value of using a role-based approach to analyse managerial ethical duties. The final part offers some directions for developing an organisationally sustainable and personally fulfilling managerial ethic centred on the person behind the role.

1.2   On Management, Managers and Ethics

Although Christopher Grey (1999) declares that "we are all managers [and] we always were", it is surprisingly difficult to define manager and, subsequently, management. Managers and management probably fall into the category of those terms everyone understands, but no one can clearly define. More surprisingly, despite an impressive literature examining the whereabouts of management and managers, there appears to be no clear working definition of the terms (Thomas, 1993; Stewart, 1997; Hales, 2001b). This is partly because research has not examined consistently the issues of management, in particular, what is specific to managers, and how we should define managers (Hales, 2001a). Researchers also link it to the ideological framework in which they posit themselves and from where they define and reflect on management (du Gay, 1994; Grey, 1999).

1.2.1   Ethical Dimensions of Various Management Perspectives

Various waves of analysis and recommendations for effective practice have shaped contemporary management thought, from a system-based to a behavioural to a contingency approach (Kreitner, 2001:43-63). Each approach redefines management, examines managers' focus, but also provides interesting insights onto potential ethical concerns of managers. The responsibilities of managers for the employees they manage, as well as the relationship between manager and '*managee*' differ tremendously depending on the perspective one adopts: organisations who view employees as human resources, sadly, do not call for the same 'ethical treatment' as organisations who view employees as emotional actors in need of recognition and support.

Henri Fayol, a French engineer-turned-administrator, whose 1918 opus *Administration Industrielle et Générale* (1987) remains a landmark in management theory, adopted in the early days a descriptive approach of the functions necessary to manage any organisation. Yet his fourteen principles of management, still referred to, demonstrate a fair apprehension of the human factor whereby organisations expect employees to be obedient and productive, but equally, ought to treat them fairly almost as a moral obligation. The following wave of theories aimed at improving the production process in terms of quality and efficiency (Kreitner, 2001). Frederick W. Taylor (1911) and his counterparts Frank and Lillian Gilbreth (1917) and Henry Gantt (1919) all contributed to this approach which scholars often pinpoint as the root of the dehumanised workplace. However, their scientific stance on work processes also brought significant improvements to the working conditions of employees, in particular less fatigue and wage incentives. The social and humane cost of this approach remains significant, and we can no longer morally accept its dialectic validity as we did in the early twentieth century. Psychosocial studies such as Maslow's (1968) indeed demonstrate that motivation is a more complex phenomenon than what Taylor assumed, and that workers seek more than a monetary retribution in their job.

Later on, sociologists and psychologists turned their attention to the organisation and put the workers' emotional needs and motivation patterns on the management agenda (Kreitner, 2001:51-52). People are the key resource upon which organisational success ultimately depends, argued Elton Mayo (2007), Mary Parker Follett (1918/2009) or Douglas McGregor (2005). However, if managing people's needs is merely instrumental to achieve greater productivity and profitability, that model fails to be sustainable. There must be a moral commitment to treat people *as* people in order to nurture sustainable commitment from employees. Theorists who view the organisation as a system greater than the sum of its parts focus on organisational dynamics rather than organisational behaviour. Within this approach, managers assume that the organisation can learn (Kreitner, 2001:54-57). If we abandon the question of moral personhood of a non-physical entity, this approach has the merit to welcome the human ability to evolve, 'sense' the change and engage with it in an almost intuitive manner. Here moral knowledge is as much emotional and intuitive as it is rational.

This brief review of some central management theories illustrates how the importance, meaning and focus of ethics can change depending on one's standpoint. None really

addresses the ethical question, but all provide valuable material to infuse moral reflection on organisational life. Managers ought to understand the moral implications of a certain mode of organising onto their employees, themselves and the organisational collective. This understanding is an early but essential element of managerial ethics.

1.2.2 Locating the Manager in Management

Although the activity of management, understood as coordinating and controlling the work of others, is almost as old as mankind (Thomas, 1993), only since the Industrial Revolution has society given management a prominent status, and only since the beginning of the twentieth century has it been the object of extensive academic research. We generally understand management as "deciding what to do and then getting it done through people" (Armstrong, 1999:2). Managers' expertise does not lie in a specialist or technical knowledge, but in the ability to oversee activities, coordinate people and draw a general plan of progress (Hannagan, 2005:5). Not everyone is suited for such a role. Most people are familiar with the experience of management, but not everyone has experienced what it is to be a manager. Enteman (1993) speaks of "managerialism" to illustrate how nowadays everybody manages his/her life, from the family household to the workplace. Nevertheless, the manager-job (i.e. the job content and responsibilities) is quite different from the manager-mindset (i.e. the need to organise, plan, manage all aspects of one's life and relationships).

Management is not equivalent to the managerial role either. Actually, confusion reigns over what management really designates. Scholars have used "managerial work, jobs, behaviour, tasks or functions" interchangeably to represent management in research studies (Hales and Tamangani, 1996). Furthermore, management can refer to the process of managing, but might also refer to 'the management' (team) of an organisation (Stewart, 1997; Grey, 1999). In the latter case, one needs to address questions about who to include in 'the management' and whether the management possesses a distinctive dimension and responsibility (see Tsahuridu, 2004). Do we or should we anthropomorphise 'the management' as we do with 'the organisation'? Intuitively, management seems to encompass more than a job description or more than the characteristics of the managers. In fact, organisations often hold responsible 'the management' rather than individual managers for the adversities the activities of the corporation trigger. As Hales (2001a:56, original emphasis) puts it: "individual managers may not make a difference because *no-one* does: organisational outcomes emerge, without evident authorship, from complex negotiated interactions – even if, after the event,

participants and observers may try to make sense of these outcomes by attributing them to the actions of specific individuals."

Nonetheless, that no one makes a real difference at the organisational level is not a strong enough argument to relieve organisational actors from their individual moral responsibilities (Boatright, 1988:306). We may extend the structure of our actions to the corporations we choose to build and within which we act as agents in decision-making. As decision-makers, managers' commitments include using discretion as a quality of collective endeavour. Therefore, individual choice or the autonomous expression of the human self is the power to affect decision-making by distinguishing between specific qualities using *discretion* to make choices among a number of qualities. Managers, as coordinators, supervisors or planners, have a clear role in the actions of 'the management' and 'the organisation' for which they are, at least, partly accountable. Furthermore, managers may do "what everyone does in managing themselves and their lives", but "they are paid to do it – and they are paid to do it because they manage *other people* (employees) as well as themselves and do so *on behalf of* others (employers)" (Hales, 2001b:11, original emphasis).

Fayol and Mintzberg's works describe the general typology of the manager, which is centred on the tasks of planning, organising, motivating and controlling (Stewart, 1997). Hales (2001b:10) lists the following as dimensions of the managerial job: acting as figurehead; monitoring and disseminating information; negotiating; handling disturbances; allocating resources; directing, monitoring and controlling; liaising; networking; innovating; planning and scheduling; and managing human resources. Other researchers have tried to capture the meaning of management and manager through the 'role' approach (e.g. Pfeffer and Salancik, 1975; Boatright, 1988; Kraut et al., 1989; Fondas and Stewart, 1994). A role-based framework includes not only the functions, tasks or responsibilities but also the covert behaviours and implicit social and moral expectations related to the manager status or position. Role-based analysis offers the advantage of locating the individual within his/her social context, thereby facilitating a more complex and complete picture of the managerial position. The next part discusses whether a role-based analysis holds up to its explanatory potential.

1.3 The 'Role' Framework

Several studies have used a role-based framework of analysis with a view to framing moral dilemmas. In the following section we review some of these studies and critically assess whether they provide a solid moral foundation for a sustainable managerial ethic.

1.3.1 Role Performance and Role Conflicts

Literature has widely discussed the concept of role, although often with varied preconceptions and implications (Neiman and Hughes, 1951; Biddle, 1986). Role-based analysis offers the advantage of locating the individual within his/her social context. It addresses the shaping and enactment of role expectations (Katz and Kahn, 1978). These expectations usually define the content of role obligations (Hardimon, 1994). Goffman (1959) provided a classic framework for understanding the extent and nature of role-playing in our lives. Drawing constant comparisons with dramaturgical features, in the tradition of psychodrama (Moreno, 1977), Goffman (1959) describes how we perform our roles, and work through and with various groups and props in front of an audience, how we deal with disturbances and disruptions, how we manage the transition from back stage to front stage, and how we learn to hide our self effectively. Roles encompass both social and moral expectations although to varying degrees (Downie, 1968; Boatright, 1988). In this purview, moral tensions result from the perception of a contradiction or a conflict between various moral expectations either within the boundaries of a single role (intra-role moral conflict), between the expectations of separate roles (inter-role moral conflict), or between role expectations and self aspirations.

When scholars discuss the concept of role in an organisational context, two broad levels of enquiry co-exist (e.g. see Bassett and Carr, 1996). One level focuses on the organisation as a unit of analysis. A role refers to a given task that an individual performs, for instance 'the accountant' or 'the marketing senior manager'. The various role-players are expected to interact with one another to achieve the organisational goal. The roles may be constraining and interaction of the different roles may cause conflict, in so far as the objectives of the accountant may conflict with the objectives of the marketing manager. But the very existence of roles is understood as the pursuit of organisational effectiveness and there is ample room for developing "liaison and conflict management roles" or "buffer roles", if appropriate (Bassett and Carr, 1996). The system is based on the 'one person-one role' principle, which

implies that problems and conflicts can only occur between two roles, in other words, between two distinct people. From an ethical viewpoint, the conflicts that emerge between two people primarily involve interpersonal relationships, communication and negotiation. If the values of manager "A" conflict with those of manager "B", then an open and frank discussion would create a safe space to address the conflict. Yet the dynamics of this discussion, and whether the discussion takes place at all, very much depend on how each actor feels towards both the conflict itself and his/her values. A moral conflict is never just about two people, but also involves how these people conceive their respective role. Therefore, the first level of analysis cannot supply a thorough understanding of the moral dynamics of management, and we should turn to the second level of analysis.

This level focuses on the individual and analyses the relationships between the role and the self. Drawing mainly from psychology and sociology, such approach allows one individual to have several roles and defines conflict as the tension between the self and a role, or between different roles amongst which an individual has to choose or by which an individual is influenced in a given situation. Moral dilemmas experienced at this level are more acute and potentially more traumatic.

For example, Athanasopoulou (2004) led a qualitative study amongst managers' role conflicts at work. Using a role-based framework she distinguishes inter-role from person-role conflicts and explains that inter-role conflicts (which is when the person experiences conflicting demands from different roles, for instance 'as a manager' versus 'as a community member') are more frequent than person-role conflicts (that is when the role expectations conflict with the person's values). She then lists the "rationalisation mechanisms" managers implement to cope with such conflicts, which consist of (Athanasopoulou, 2004:18):

1. distancing oneself from the situation ("it is part of the job");
2. hoping that it is for the best ("I am protecting the jobs of other people"); or
3. taking a "deterministic approach" which implies that what happens is inevitable because "it is not entirely up to me to decide".

Overall, however, justifications (1) and (3) illustrate a tendency to mitigate one's responsibility by annihilating 'the human' under 'the manager', 'the business' or 'the organisational machine'. Justification (2) is more engaging, but is an example of a narrow utilitarian rationalisation and is certainly estranged from what John Stuart Mill had in mind when he refined the utility-maximizing doctrine (Mill, 1863/1992). That is not to say that a

hopeful rationalisation is wrong in itself; however such reasoning likely weakens the intrinsic human value of those sacrificed, especially if the notion of dignity so dear to Mill is ignored. Besides, it is not certain under these circumstances that the decision is purely motivated by a desire to protect others rather than one's own interests and well-being first and foremost.

The above study illustrates how a role-based analysis fails to capture the underlying dynamics which motivate those "rationalisation mechanisms". In her study, Athanasopoulou (2004) only describes how managers justify their behaviour, but she does not dig into the rationale behind these claims. Yet in order to improve our moral behaviour, we need to understand what makes us act the way we do. We require a greater degree of self-knowledge to uncover the meaning and significance of moral experiences. Besides, the suggested lower frequency of person-role conflicts hides the fact that conflicts between self and roles most certainly lead to psychological imbalance and serious social and moral trauma. Conflicts of values or of expectations never merely involve two roles; it also always concerns the self of the person whether one is conscious of it or not.

1.3.3 Role Enactment and Virtuousness

Moral dilemmas do not only result from role conflict. Tensions in role enactment can originate from role ambiguity, role malintegration, role discontinuity, role overload as much as role conflict (Miles, 1977; Biddle, 1986). However, the point a role perspective puts forward is that life is a play, people are actors and morality is a matter of expectations regulated by interaction with others. Such theory has undeniable descriptive qualities, but its moral qualities, as we saw above, are a different matter. First and foremost the very concept of virtues as a determinant of one's character is seriously challenged. From a role perspective, a person cannot *be* truly virtuous but only *acts as* a virtuous person since life is a socially constructed fiction. Let's consider, for example, the virtue of benevolence. The virtuous person is benevolent because it is in her character, that is, it defines her as a person. If life is a play, however, a person might very well be benevolent, but only through enactment. In other words, she can enact benevolence but she is not benevolent *per se*. If the social or moral expectations bearing upon a specific role include acting with benevolence, then the person who is benevolent simply is a good actress in the sense that she enacts what is expected of her (or what she perceives is expected of her). If the next role she enacts does not require acting with benevolence, she might choose not to be benevolent without people sanctioning her as immoral, wrong or non-virtuous.

Of course, one could argue that global social rules exist that require benevolence to be a compulsory feature of each possible role. In which case, we would consider being virtuous a global moral expectation against which we assess everyone. Yet, we would still address virtuousness as the feature of a role rather than of a character in the Aristotelian sense. Virtuousness in this instance is significant only because those are the rules of the play. In fact, virtuousness loses its intrinsic value. We may also argue that a person can decide to enact her role in a virtuous manner, in which case she chooses to act virtuously. Yet, this is far from obvious. Indeed, if she chooses to enact her role virtuously, say with benevolence, then her benevolence is relevant to what she enacts, not necessarily to who she is as a person. Furthermore, if we were to accept that she *is* what she enacts, we need to identify a permanent feature that links all roles and all enactments together, which serves as a unity of character that bears the moral responsibility. Otherwise, the person is just a puppet lacking moral strength to assert her convictions when pressured by social expectations attached to her role, as Goffman (1959:87) illustrates.

Morally, the risk is high for individual autonomy and responsibility. As Vice (2003:105, original emphasis) notices: "If we see ourselves purely in terms of roles, we both risk bad faith in the Sartrean sense – *mauvaise foi* – as well as losing sight of the individuality of persons.[…] And it is arguably a sign of maturity to outgrow 'role-playing', to stop defining ourselves essentially with any role we may happen to take on and to become comfortable with or resigned to the kind of person we broadly are and to our inescapable limitations." Managers thus fulfil their duties as sensible beings by using discretion to delineate the value in the choices organisations present to them. According to Kant, virtue is the strength one exercises in using discretion and discretionary means by acknowledging the constraints under which we must make decisions (Kant, 1797/1996:156). Thus, one exercises "free self-constraint, not constraint by other human beings", as a responsibility to others by using autonomous decision-making, rather than being subject to coercion (Kant, 1797/1996:395). Managers have a duty, a responsibility to act as sensible beings because of one's mutual respect for humanity.

A role-based framework therefore proves insufficient on two essential accounts: first, it fails to explore the intrinsic motives for action of people; second, it reduces identity and individuality to a sum of socially constructed roles. Without any unifying core, the actual

moral responsibility of the person becomes rather precarious. In other words, a self must exist as a platform upon which the conscious person wears the various masks and performs the various roles in reaction to social stimuli. However, the self must be of a different nature from the roles or the masks. Proponents of a role-based framework define the self rather ambiguously. Whilst the self refers essentially to our own sense of identity (Layder, 2004), some believe that it is constructed from our roles (e.g. Goffman, 1959) or that "we grow up on stories" (Vice, 2003:98). One raises the question as to whether the self is per nature changing and emerging, or stable, essentially present at birth and constant throughout our life experiences. If, as most social psychologists believe, the self is the product of a social, interactive construction, then it cannot be that essential platform necessary for moral autonomy and responsibility. This is because we can never know who is responsible for a person's actions since that person's sense of who she is possibly changes everyday.

If, on the other hand, one conceives the self as different from roles, as an anchor that constitutes who the person fundamentally is, then we are capable of identifying a sound moral basis for individual responsibility. C.G. Jung's archetypal self, for example, is of that nature. Jung (1970) views the self as the archetype of wholeness, a collective figure at the core of everyone's psyche which individually determines our true nature, our potential as individuals. Our conscious-ego embraces various persona, various social roles depending on the circumstances, but our actual quality as a person lies with the self. Therefore we should be well advised to seek our self through our social roles, rather than attach various degrees of moral responsibility to factitious roles. A role-based framework, devoid of a significant and stable conceptualisation of self, is not morally conducive. A self-based framework, on the other hand, allows an in-depth exploration of our inner moral mechanisms and offers more solid moral foundations. It also resonates with virtuousness. Practical wisdom, the virtue that helps us determine the appropriate set of virtues in each circumstance, demands a consistent self. Thus, the self contains all that makes us human beings, all that makes us who we are and who we could become. It raises the value of personhood and individuality. Yet, the organisational context is often insensitive to the call for individual expression and self-authenticity. On the contrary, it cultivates roles and anonymity, with serious moral compromises at stake.

1.3.4 Organisational Roles: Bureaucracy and the Person

Organisational studies closely attach the concept of role to bureaucracy. Even if in recent years organisations have placed much effort into moving away from bureaucracy towards a more entrepreneurial model, most large companies still display some degree of bureaucratic stiffness. Traditionally, bureaucratic organisations have epitomised the 'impersonal machine' in which detached and interchangeable actors perform their tasks rationally and withdraw their personality (Ladd, 1970 quoted by Metzger and Dalton, 1996). Scholars have extensively criticised this model, sometimes caricatured, on the grounds that it allows for immoral behaviour to occur because it cultivates impersonality (see, for instance, Jackall's depiction of the roots of American bureaucracies, 1988:11). Popularised by Max Weber, the bureaucratic model displays a hierarchical structure, a strict division of labour that separates different professional experts, and emphasises extensive reliance on rules and procedures (Buchanan, 1996). The bureaucratic structure sets the roles, not allowing personal characteristics to come into play, so organisations can easily replace and interchange agents. Eventually, of course, one becomes an expert in his/her role, but he/she does not do so by making the role his or hers; rather it is the role that formats the person into a stereotypical character, which reflects and defines the position, the tasks and the organisation itself (Merton, 1940).

Personality, individuality and creativity are absent from bureaucracy to the extent that they impede the efficiency of the management and production process. In his analysis of French bureaucracies, Crozier (1964) concluded that impersonal rules, centralised decisions, isolation and subsequent group pressure and power relationships regarding the control of "areas of uncertainty" create a "vicious circle" that leads organisational members to solve problems by elaborating more rules and engendering greater isolation. This ultimately contributes to reinforcing the bureaucratic characteristics that might have initiated the problem in the first place. Bureaucracy reproduces itself as well as its members according to a similar, constant profile (Dugger, 1980). It is therefore unsurprising that Johnson (1981:56) insists on the need to review bureaucracies' organisational structures and processes "in order to reduce the anonymity of decision making", whilst Buchanan (1996) contends that strengthening the ethical commitments of bureaucratic actors would limit the agency problem and offer a better outcome than alternative models of corporate responsibility or bureaucratic roles. Paradoxically, this confirms that emotions (of which bureaucratic actors are deprived *de facto*) are significant in moral behaviour (Hine, 2004).

Dyck and Schroeder (2005) take even more distance with the bureaucratic model. Inspired by Weber's ideal-types, they argue that managers should shift their moral-point-of-view from the conventional to a radical model characterised by compassion, stewardship and critical approaches to practice and thinking. It is probable that altering the conditions of moral perception by modifying the context (that is the organisational structure, the moral climate and culture and so on) or the social expectations we attach to defined roles is likely to affect people's moral behaviour. The key to this programme, though, is to make people aware of the changes before implementing them, because it is people who initiate the basic structures of the social world. Yet, why would people do so? In spite of numerous talks about ethics in business and its relevance to develop sustainable growth, and in spite of much active lobbying to integrate stakeholders' concern into strategic management and to prioritise good management practice over profitable practice, ethical misbehaviour still occurs in organisations and corporate scandals seem to reproduce. It is not that business people are morally insensitive, or unwilling to merge their personal morality with their work ethic. There may be impediments at the institutional level, which fall within the arena of politics. One might question, for example, what goals business should pursue, which ontological obligations business has towards society, and whether our consumerist capitalism nurtures actual happiness, progress and dignity. These questions deserve open reflection and an informed public debate, as well as a willingness to consider challenging alternatives. There may also be impediments at the individual level, and these are the realm of managerial ethics.

1.4   Towards Managerial Ethics

1.4.1 Foundations

In order to establish the concerns of managerial ethics, we shall clarify from the previous discussion what managers do. Managers are in charge of a variety of tasks that often involve other people, either subordinates or other managers; they are accountable for the efficient running of the organisation at different levels; they are submitted to a certain degree of tension due to conflicting duties, situations or demands; they make decisions both rationally and intuitively or emotionally; and organisations tend to define them by what they do or what they achieve. We may draw several ethical obligations from this description. First, managers deal with people; therefore, they have an obvious moral duty to respect them as such and to act fairly. Management is primarily about people, not about process, output or resources.

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Second, managers are *de facto* subjected to tension and pressure in order to meet performance expectations, especially as agents for the organisation's owners. This pressure brings them closer to the ethical/unethical borderline (Carroll, 2002). Moral dilemmas are part of the manager's life; consequently, "moral thinking" is an "essential capability" for managers (Paine, 1996). It takes practice and reflection prior to a confrontation with a moral dilemma. Finally, we notice that emotions and intuition influence decision-making alongside rationality. Compassion and stewardship are not rational expressions; rather, they display an emotional sensitivity and a deep desire to act in accordance with one's actual beliefs, in accordance with one's self.

So what does this mean? We suggest that a solid managerial ethic lies on two essential pillars: the full recognition of the humanity of the people who work in an organisation; and the acceptance of one's individuality and individual responsibility even when one is engulfed by the social machine. A general tendency to anthropomorphise organisations proves damaging for the real people who work in these organisations. Referring to 'organisational beings' as commonly as we do today is pernicious and has "the potential to distract attention from the real decision-makers, perhaps enabling them to evade responsibility for their actions" (Ashman, 2005). More importantly, we humanise abstract entities, whilst we dehumanise real human beings whose decisions and actions are no longer accounted for but instead are transferred to the organisation as such (McKenna and Tsahuridu, 2001; Bakan, 2004; Ashman, 2005). Both personal responsibility and human respect lose out, because no one seems to make a difference and no one feels that they matter. Views that describe the organisation as "a shared community of purpose" (Warren, 1996), or as a member of a wider community and "inconceivable without that community" (Ewin, 1995) are kinder to humanity. They acknowledge that people come to work for a purpose, and that 'to earn a living' may not really fulfil that purpose. Responsible organisations treat their employees as dignified, worthy people, irrespective of their position and performance. Responsible managers embody this motto without hiding behind their powerlessness at changing the rules of the game.

Of course, the systemic process that turns organisational outcomes into something more than the sum of individual acts renders impractical the unambiguous pinning of the responsibility on one specific link of the chain (Hales and Tamangani, 1996; Tsahuridu, 2004). Nonetheless, the possible responsibility of the organisational entity does not alleviate

organisational members from their accountability and moral responsibilities (Paine, 1996; Berthouzoz, 2000). Individuals are actors, active or passive, and that is usually enough in the eyes of the law and social custom to hold each one of us responsible for what we do or do not do. In Peter Singer's four-dimensional world, one action at one point in time in one specific place does matter, even when nothing else changes after that (Singer, 2000). At our modest level, this means that one manager taking a stand for something he believes in, or for someone he wants to support at one point in time does matter, even if nothing happens or no subsequent changes take place, providing one does not cause equivalent pain by doing so. It matters neither because his conscience is clear, nor because it is cool to be a hero. It matters because this manager acts as an individual in the noblest sense, therefore resonating with forces that extend beyond the organisation. To be an individual is perilous, but it is the only responsible way in the distance.

1.4.2   Developing a Good Character to Live the Good Life

Virtue ethicists have been prominent in the management ethics research field recently, either to support Virtue Ethics as a comprehensive moral framework for managers or to argue that management cannot be virtuous (Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003). In the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle, contemporary virtue ethicists ask what sort of life a good person should live, and argued that this life should be a virtuous life. Ethics is about developing a good character, which refers to a natural disposition to practice the virtues appropriately and an understanding that this participates in achieving our purpose and a deep sense of fulfilment (Aristotle 1992; Solomon, 2002). The chief good in life is *eudaimonia* or happiness, personal flourishing, that which makes our life and our moral actions worthwhile.

Yet, pursuit for *eudaimonia* is not equal to achieving it because we generally lack a "very specific program of action" (Dierksmeier and Pirson, 2009). Since Aristotle refuses to deduce morality from principles, we simply must "work from experience and develop an understanding of different customs and mores so as to learn, gradually and habitually, to employ wise judgment in the management of [our] affairs" (Dierksmeier and Pirson, 2009:420). A community of virtuous exemplars helps us define what the virtuous life is, and makes the good life a desirable goal (Aristotle, 1992). For Aristotle (1992), friendship (*agape*) is an essential virtue without which life lacks value. Friendship is a basis for social interaction and community-building, therefore Aristotle claims this virtue is a regulator of community life and relationships. Virtuous friends or "the paragon of concrete persons

(*phronimoi*) who excel in judgment and wisdom" (Dierksmeier and Pirson, 2009:420) challenge our actual character and encourage us to aspire to greater moral exemplarity.

Living the good life thus requires developing a good character in the first instance. What character means is not uncontroversial and some virtue ethicists do not even refer to the concept (Statman, 1997). Watson's (1997) outline of the concept illustrates some of the misunderstandings that occur in the field. Watson (1997) argues that we should not confuse the character-based virtue approach with character utilitarianism (i.e. developing a virtuous character in order to achieve happiness), nor with perfectionism (which remains consequentialist in essence). These views reminisce of virtue as a role rather than an authentic character trend. For Watson (1997), the proper notion of character embraces a non-consequentialist view without necessarily implying a purpose to which we direct human actions. Nonetheless, Aristotelian virtue ethics is teleological.

The notion of character helps redefine the boundaries of personal responsibility in a business setting. For instance, Sundman (2000) examines from a virtue ethics perspective whether a good manager is also a moral manager, and suggests that the demands of morality are external to the business practice, so that a good manager ought not to be a moral manager. In particular, he provides the example of excellent managers who work for companies that produce harmful goods. Yet, as Dawson and Bartholomew (2003:135) rightly point out, a virtuous manager would still be concerned with what the organisation for which he works produces. Hence, working for an arm manufacturer would raise serious moral issues that contravene the ideal of the good life and human happiness. Besides, pleading ignorance would not obliterate one's responsibility because the virtuous manager would be wise enough to know the implications of working for such an organisation. "Virtuous business people have the interest of society in mind and knowledge of the human goods to which their work contributes" (Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003:135-136).

Alasdair MacIntyre provides another example of the use of a character in management. As interpreted by MacIntyre (1985), a character is more than a social role. It demands that role and personality fuse so that the distinction between what is specific to one individual and what is specific to his social role disappears. Therefore, the character stands for the moral representation of the culture to which it belongs. Besides, "the requirements of a character are imposed from the outside, from the way in which others regard and use characters to

understand and to evaluate themselves" so that ultimately, "the character morally legitimates a mode of social existence" (MacIntyre, 1985:29). MacIntyre identifies three characters representative of modern society, but scholars have commented particularly on his depiction of the bureaucratic manager (see Deetz, 1995; Mangham, 1995a and 1995b; Nash, 1995; Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003). The bureaucratic manager is "manipulating others and manipulated by the system he has created" and "his area of expertise is efficient management which, for him, has no moral dimension" (Vardy and Grosch, 1999:103-104), and indeed may itself be illusory (MacIntyre, 1985). A controversial picture of manager, MacIntyre's character depiction is an ideal-type, although we are unclear as to how much MacIntyre himself believes it mirrors reality.

MacIntyre's (1995) character of the bureaucratic manager echoes what Carroll (2002) has dubbed "amoral management". Whilst immoral managers deliberately ignore and transgress ethical rules to serve their own interests, moral managers are attentive to the letter and the spirit of the law, and their strategy encompasses moral standards (Carroll, 2002). Yet the vast majority of managers are likely to qualify as amoral managers, either unintentionally or intentionally (Carroll, 2002). Intentional amoral managers consciously avoid thinking about ethics when at work; whereas, unintentional amoral managers are simply ignorant of the fact that what they do has moral consequences. Carroll (2002) suggests that at the individual level each manager goes into phases that range from the immoral to the moral management model, depending on the circumstances. Overall, however, organisations are likely to be filled with amoral managers who "are basically good people, but they essentially see the competitive business world as ethically neutral" (Carroll, 2002:148). The conclusion is that organisations should make more efforts to raise managers' awareness of the ethical challenges in the business environment and explain to them how they can benefit from being ethically proactive. In other words, most managers have not actually developed a virtuous character. The same individual can act ethically one day and unethically the next because the circumstances have changed his/her perception of the situation.
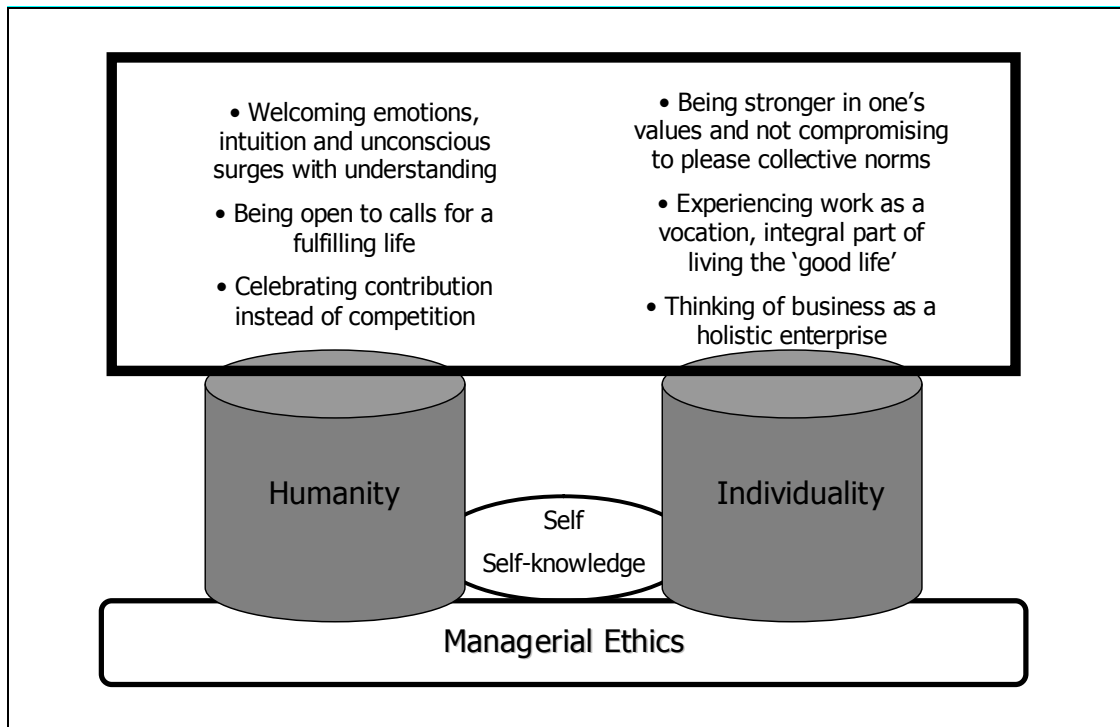
1.4.3 Practical Implications and Expectations

We can draw two conclusions from the discussion above: first, that people possess dual characteristics and are equally capable of good and evil. Second, the key to understanding why people behave as they do (rightly or badly) lies in their internal deliberations, which reflect the perception they have of the situation. This concurs with what Treviño and Brown

(2004:70) underline as a lack of "moral awareness, ethical recognition, or ethical sensitivity". Basically, managers are not necessarily able to detect the moral component of a situation, hence to act in a morally considerate way. But as Treviño and Brown (2004) specify, moral awareness is just the first stage in the wider process of decision-making. When it comes to ethics, these authors argue that people are likely to be equally good and bad depending on their environment. They question the autonomy of moral agents by arguing that most adults are followers and reproduce what they observe amongst their peers (Treviño and Brown, 2004). There is no denying that the culture and the personal qualities of leaders and managers set the tone within the organisation, and that they must practice their ethical commitments, not just hang them on the wall, if they are to be meaningful. Yet individuals are rarely coerced into doing something with which they disagree. Certainly, examples exist where management threatens to fire people if they do not follow the orders, and the fear of unemployment may count as a mitigating circumstance. But it cannot qualify as an excuse for denying one's moral agency because it is always a matter of choice. To make the decision in agreement with one's conscience represents a challenge which announces the critical importance of self-knowledge.

Moral motivation and moral character are both acts of will. They imply a choice (i.e. to be willing to do something rather than something else) and the effort necessary to concretise it (i.e. the will-power to implement the choice). Roberto Assagioli, founder of the psychosynthesis movement, believed that "the will's function [consists] in deciding what is to be done, in applying all the necessary means for its realisation and in persisting in the task in the face of all obstacles and difficulties." (1974/2002:6). The will is essential to our actions in life, but we must train it. The training occurs in three phases, argues Assagioli (1974/2002:7 – original emphasis): "first, is the recognition that *the will exists*; the second concerns the realization of *having a will*. The third phase of the discovery, which renders it complete and effective, is that of *being a will* (this is different from "having" a will)." In any case, the will is located at the "central core of our being" so that "the self and the will are intimately connected" (Assagioli, 1974/2002:9). Therefore, the willing self appears as the ultimate source of moral decision and moral action. It is the self who practices wisdom and we rely on our self, and not just on rational thinking, to assess our choices and to choose our course of action.

Figure 1.1: Self-based Managerial Ethics

- Welcoming emotions, intuition and unconscious surges with understanding
- Being open to calls for a fulfilling life
- Celebrating contribution instead of competition

- Being stronger in one's values and not compromising to please collective norms
- Experiencing work as a vocation, integral part of living the 'good life'
- Thinking of business as a holistic enterprise

Humanity   Self   Individuality
            Self-knowledge

Managerial Ethics

Source: Compiled by authors

We can now propose a more complete picture of managerial ethics (see Figure 1). The foundations consist, as exposed previously, in an assertion of humanity and individuality. Both are essential in sustaining good ethical practice, virtuous management. Both require taking time to know oneself, not superficially but deeply, painfully. This is no positive thinking or self-delusion, but true self-knowledge: a clear perception of who one is, what one is capable of, what one purports to become, how one fits within the universal frame. Without self-knowledge, each pillar is frail and lacks authentic expression.

We argued that managers should always view their colleagues and subordinates as people, and should always view themselves as people. This means that we do not just tolerate, but instead welcome and encourage emotions and intuition. Self-knowledge may unleash unconscious surges which we also need to welcome, with careful compassion and a readiness to understand their dynamics. This helps us make more creative decisions. Reaching out for the humane in organisations also means that we acknowledge that people seek fulfilment and meaning. Industrialisation has deeply transformed society, but crushed the hopes of

thousands of men and women to realise their calling. Some may find fulfilment in low-skilled or repetitive jobs and deserve respect and dignity. Others are able to contribute differently and the organisation should offer the space and time to express this. This goes far beyond what the HR department may offer. It is the manager's responsibility to know his/her employees and colleagues enough to facilitate such developments. It is especially our responsibility to give ourselves the space and time to express our own calls for a fulfilling life. This may concern the personal life, the content of the job or the job itself; either way, it is too important a human need for us to neglect or ignore. Organisational life thus emphasises talent contribution rather than talent competition.

Affirming one's individuality in the face of an anonymous collective entity also brings about significant changes. Instead of learning to compromise, we learn to embody our values. This does not imply that we shall be heroic fools every time organisational goals squeeze our values. On the contrary, we may discover more powerful, clever ways to address the dilemma without compromising the ethics. We respect others and respect ourselves, but we also know that CSR is more about values than about profits. It takes courage and a great sense of grounding to be the lonely, independent voice of morality, promoting a different type of management, of business, of organisation. But sometimes it is the only choice, and it is the salutary choice. When one acts true to one's self, work recaptures its vocational dimension, and fully contributes to the good life. The organisation evolves, and the business world opens up to the interconnectedness of all things. Business no longer pursues profit, but a holistic integration with its social and natural environment. This, after all, is the ambitious meaning of Frederick's CSR4, where cosmological, scientific and religious or spiritual inputs reshape both management research and practice (Frederick, 1998).

1.5   Conclusion

In this chapter we have exposed some of the essential groundwork to build up a sustainable, personally fulfilling and socially just managerial ethic. We have discussed how our interpretation of management influences our perception of the organisational actors, and called for a rehabilitation of the human, the person in the organisation. As such, a role-based framework reinforces a partial, mechanical, artificial or manipulative view of human beings in a social context. We argued that such framework is neither morally workable nor desirable. Instead we proposed to welcome and encourage the expression of the self, thereby instilling

greater authenticity in human relationships. Managers have much to gain, both personally and professionally, by asserting humanity and individuality in their practice. It does not prevent them from 'getting things done', but it makes them reflect on how they actually could 'do things' better for everyone, not simply for the organisation.

Managerial ethics is a prerequisite for genuine CSR because it has the power to redefine the corporation, what responsibility entails and how much in harmony we live with society at large. In his *Politics*, Aristotle (1998) made a clear distinction between *chrematistike* (sheer money-making) and *oikonomia* (economics). Of the two subjects, he deliberately favoured the study of economics (*oikonomia*), that is "the concern for morally adequate individual and public household management" (Dierksmeier and Pirson, 2009:418). Aristotle's concerns sharply contrast with current discourses on the moral neutrality of economics. Not even Adam Smith (1790/2010) would support the contemporary narrow interpretation of the purpose of economics. Thus, we need to move away from what Aristotle calls *chrematistike* to embrace an economic system that does not put humanity's survival at stake. Equally, we need to use our insights and understanding to envisage alternative business organisations (e.g. social enterprise) that help us to create healthy and sustainable wealth that is conducive to *eudaimonic* happiness. This, in turn, requires a mind shift from a currently widely accepted business goal, as to maximise shareholder value, which leads to (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2010):

- Value for shareholder;
- Corruption in achieving shareholder value;
- Increasingly polarised society of haves and have-nots; and
- Market imperatives.

We shall instead conceive the goal of business as to create products and services that add value to society, which in turn leads to:

- Products/services that customers value, need and are willing to pay for;
- Maximisation of shareholder value;
- Decreased corruption - managers are not incentivised to deal illegally and/or unethically just to maximise shareholder value;
- Less polarised society; and
- Balance between market and non-market forces.

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