Chapter 6

Significance of CSR for the Progress of the Society:
Mediation between Individualism and Altruism

Introduction

Society gets contaminated with viruses of selfishness, self-interest, egoism greed etc. It eventually hinders the perpetual growth and progress that affect everyone in the society. Such sick society gradually denies the basic human needs that are present in our core nature. The fatal illusion that all the time that is invested in love, friendship and humanness is wasted and lost, is the beginning of such a sick society. This denies basic human needs inherent in our very nature. This chapter will give clear glimpse of the denial of our basic human nature which is inherent in each human being. Unless we re-institute that basic nature, progress and wellbeing in the society would remain as a far distant dream.

Human beings are like reptiles hatched into the world, completely self-reliant and totally independent. Other mammals are forced to rely upon the welfare of social networks in the nature to survive, but not humans. Unlike other mammals human being is leached off parents until the adulthood is obtained. This peculiar leeching nature in humans sow the seeds of ‘I,’ ‘Me and Me Only’ and nurture it as they grow — culminating a ripple effect of greed, selfishness, self-interest which hamper progress and thereby creating a sick society.

Descartes' maxim, "I think, therefore I am," projects the existence-by-self or self-support, self-sufficiency of self or ego. When the core philosophy of human existence is ego or selfishness why should anyone, for that matter, engage in CSR activities? It is a possible question that might pop up in anyone’s or everyone’s mind as we speak of CSR. Human beings have a core tendency of being selfish in whatever they do. Thus, the possible question that can arise from the selfishness is what am I going to gain or how do I benefit? This question can only be bypassed when every human being takes the

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629 Pandikattu Kuruvilla,  This too will pass away!, (Jnanam, Pune, 2003), 84-85.
individual responsibility of overcoming selfishness which is common to the core of self. This happens when we consider more into the responsibilities that we have towards ourselves and the society. And of course, it is a cosmic law or the law of nature that each of us has to shoulder that responsibility for the progress and development of the society at large. Emmanuel Levinas in his second major work, *Otherwise than Being*, or *Beyond Essence* clearly indicated the ethical standpoint 'response and responsibility' that CSR is trying to impart to individuals and corporate. This chapter will amplify ethics which entails with the relationship with the other — very presence of the other person obligates me to respond. Also this chapter will try to address the much debated question on CSR: should a corporation or an individual be socially responsible? The debate over this question can be simplified once we have reduced the issue to a pair of foundational but contrary world views — altruism/communitarianism and individualism. So let us see how we can make that paradigm shift in the selfish nature of human beings, thereby establishing the importance of CSR for the progress of the society.

6.1 Selfishness as the Core Human Nature

Selfishness is a pre-requisite for survival and maintenance for any living being on earth. Richard Dawkins argues that a predominant quality to be expected in a successful gene is ruthless selfishness. This gene selfishness will usually give rise to selfishness in individual behavior. To be selfish is to be motivated by concern for one’s self-interest. This requires one to consider what constitutes one’s self-interest and how to achieve it — what values and goals to pursue, what principles and policies to adopt. If a man were not concerned with this question, he could not be said objectively to be concerned with or to desire his self-interest; one cannot be concerned with or desire that of which one has no knowledge.

The selfish person is interested only in himself, wants everything for himself, feels no pleasure in giving, but only in taking. The world outside

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is looked at only from the standpoint of what he can get out of it; he lacks interest in the needs of others, and respect for their dignity and integrity. He can see nothing but himself; he judges everyone and everything from its usefulness; he is basically unable to love.634

According to Thomas Hobbes, “man in the state of nature seeks nothing but his own selfish pleasure, but such individualism naturally leads to a war in which every man's hand is against his neighbor.”635 Hobbes describes man as being naturally vain and selfish. He declares that:

Whatsoever is the object of any man’s appetite or desire that is it which he for his part calleth good; and the object of his hate and aversion, evil; and of his contempt, vile and inconsiderable. For these words of good, evil and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that useth them… 636

In other words, man by nature perceives a thing as being good or evil not in terms of how it may affect the interests of others, but in terms of how it affects his own self-interest. Hobbes argued that the basic attribute of human nature is egoism, which inevitably leads to a savage and brutal competition for resources in the absence of constraints imposed by a ruling monarch.637 John Stuart Mill Wrote, "Of the social virtues it is almost superfluous to speak; so completely is it the verdict of all experience that selfishness is natural."638 Selfishness makes human beings individualistic rather than a social being. Because, man has a code of ethics primarily for his own sake, not for anyone else's.639 Human beings operate on this code which is intrinsic to their nature. No one is devoid of this nature. Thus this traditional understanding of human behavior by exalting a psychological mind-set utterly divorced from anything outside the self.640 Thus there is a need for breaking that core nature which is selfishness. And Dawkins would put it sarcastically yet seriously, let us try to teach generosity and altruism, because we are born selfish. Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because we may then at

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635 Charles George Herbermann, Edward Aloysius Pace (Eds.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, (Appleton, New York, 1911), 191.
640 Ibid.
least have the chance to upset their designs, something that no other species has ever aspired to.\textsuperscript{641}

It is almost impossible to think about CSR when people operate with selfishness. The “selfish individual who is the product of the stunted moral development environment is not likely to contribute to the social good,”\textsuperscript{642} because there is very little to be said in favor of an individualism which takes its orientation from a conception of the individual as essentially “the proprietor of his own person, for which he owes nothing to the society.” But the next question that persuades us would be, Is everyone selfish in the world? What is the level of selfishness that can be noticed around? Unless we delve into the nitty-grittys of this concept, it is difficult to bring an awareness in the society to work for the progress and development of it.

6.1.1 Isn’t Everyone Selfish?

Animals seek their own pleasure and do not think about the consequences to others. Those species that do live together have the fewest appetites to gratify. This clearly shows that selfishness is not only the trait of humans but it is also prominent in animals. The plant species also the same. They try to absorb minerals and water for themselves first. They even change their directions for getting enough sunlight which decide their growth. “Evolutionary biology is quite clear that ‘What’s in it for me?’ is an ancient refrain for all life, and there is no reason to exclude \textit{Homo sapiens},” writes David Barash.\textsuperscript{643}

As I already mentioned any living organism has an intrinsic call towards selfishness. Man being at the top of the pyramid with intellect, reason out this intrinsic nature a bit more intensely for his own self-interest. “Everyone does what he really wants to do—otherwise, he wouldn’t do it.” Or: “No one ever really sacrifices himself. Since every

\textsuperscript{641} Richard Dawkins, \textit{The Selfish Gene}, 3.


purposeful action is motivated by some value or goal that the actor desires, one always acts selfishly, whether one knows it or not.”

It is pretty clear that the nature of existence catapult a drive in every living organism to take care of its growth, sustenance, and survival. May be we call it as selfishness. However, we need to question ourselves, how can we survive in the competitive world without looking to one’s own needs and progress? It is a healthy note for anyone to be what one ought to be. But some of us go a few steps further than this limit in the world of ‘me and me’ only. Ayn Rand in her essay, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, defines selfishness as “concern with one’s own interests.” It is very dangerous as it leads to corruption and manipulation in the world. A genuinely selfish man chooses his goals by the guidance of reason — and because the interests of rational men do not clash — other men may often benefit from his actions. But the benefit of other men is not his primary purpose or goal; his own benefit is his primary purpose and the conscious goal directing his actions. For Spinoza, “The more each person strives and is able to seek his profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he posses; on the other hand, is so far as each person who neglects his own profit, is impotent.” What I mean by selfishness here is the tendency to seek and promote my own comfort and satisfaction before that of anybody else. They grab the best for themselves before anyone else. Selfish people in this sense are the people who (for instance) always try to get the finest piece of chicken, or the largest glass of wine, or the best seat for themselves.

Dawkin’s argument would substantiate the selfish gene theory that everyone is born selfish and we are selfish at our gene level. The fundamental unit of selection, and therefore of self-interest, is not the species, nor the group, nor even, strictly, the individual. It is the gene, the unit of heredity.

Thus, I would not hesitate to doubt that it is the man’s selfish gene and the ability to reason which drives him to be selfish and thereby leads to egoism.

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645 Ibid., 495.
646 Ibid., 54.
6.1.2 Selfishness to Egoism

The transition or transformation that happens from a caterpillar to a butterfly would be the best comparison for this scenario — viz., selfishness to egoism. At the caterpillar stage it works with itself. There is no world around. No need to interact with the world. The shell is the end of the world for the caterpillar. But as a butterfly, it has the possibility to interact with the world outside. That which is called ‘atta’ (which is just the ordinary word for 'self' or 'oneself') or ‘self’ corresponds to the Latin word ‘ego.’ If the feeling of the self-consciousness arises, we call it egoism because once the feeling of ‘I’ arises, it naturally and inevitably gives rise to the feeling of ‘mine.’ Therefore the feeling of self and the feeling of things belonging to the self, taken together, are egoism.649

But then what happens to such selfish people as they are used to their own shell, they try to protect themselves more closely and try to safeguard themselves from others around. Sartre’s maxim “Hell is other people,”650 has much relevance in this situation. After experiencing the selfishness in the shell of one’s own comfort, it is very likely to feel much of threat and insecurity in the open world. So naturally the selfish beings would try to tighten up and become more centered to themselves — a transformation into egoist. The egoistic person first serves for his/her ego and won’t respect to others and most of the times hurt others.

The egoist has an overwhelming sense of the centrality of ‘Me,’ of their personal qualities.651 Egoism means placing oneself at the core of one’s world with no concern for others, including those loved or considered as ‘close,’ in any other terms except those set by the egoist.652 An egoist is a man who lives for himself.653 Gorden Graham in his book describes Plato’s views on egoism:

Egoism is most powerfully represented in two of Plato’s dramatic dialogues, the Gorgias where Socrates argues at length with (amongst others) a character called Callicles, and the Republic, in the earlier part of which the egoistic point of view is articulated by a character called

Thrasymachus. Both Callicles and Thrasymachus argue that it is our desiring thing which makes those things valuable to us, and that the good life, consequently, consists in being successful at getting what you want. If this requires the domination of others and the suppression of their aims in pursuit of your own, so be it. I lead the best life when I get what I want, regardless of how this affects others.654

According to Kant, human beings, too, have inclinations. They are inclined to pursue things that they ‘want.’ He also says that what differentiates humans from other animals are their choices about how to fulfill their inclinations and they can act against their inclinations for the sake of duty.655 Emile Durkheim says, “Man is more vulnerable to self-destruction the more he is detached from any collectivity, that is to say, the more he lives as an egoist.”656

If the world was only full of egoistic human beings, how can we think of progress or CSR in the society? What is the interplay of ego to do with the society? How does the ego reflect in the society tampering its progress? The answer to many of these questions would be nothing but greed.

6.1.3 Egoism the Foster-father of Greed

“There is enough wealth to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed,”657 intelligently asserted Mahatma Gandhi. In his own words:

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I thieve it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world.658

Greed has become unavoidable. We live today, amidst a kind of greed that seems to define our culture, to taint almost everything we touch. Where does this greed originate? Definitely, it is the egoism that dictates it. Sam Pizzigati in his book *Greed and Good*, comments that man’s soul even gets possessed by greed:

> The greed for gain gets such possession of men's souls that they become demons. They rush into the maelstrom of money-getting, and soon lose all fear of God and love for their fellow-men, and before they realize it, they have become slaves to a passion which is as cruel as fate and remorseless and unrelenting as death.\(^{659}\)

Thus, egoism fosters greed which leads to significant socially irresponsible or unethical actions of individuals and firms. Some of the more significant relevant scandals of our time include Enron, WorldCom, Satyam, 2G Scam or Bernie Madoff’s massive Ponzi scheme. Many have suggested that the 2008 US financial crisis, primarily involving sub-prime mortgages, was caused by unrestricted egoism or self-interest on the part of the mortgage lenders and investment banks.\(^{660}\)

### 6.1.3.1 What is Greed?

Someone must wonder: What is greed? Where does it come from? Are all people greedy? Greed has been defined as action to gain something, typically money, wealth, power, or status, in an insatiable and excessive manner.\(^{661}\) Greed is an excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth.\(^{662}\) People tend to be naturally greedy, rarely content with what they have achieved. All for me nothing for you is the inherent concept that fosters greed in the society. The feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ is the inner nucleus which gives birth to greed, hatred, and delusion.\(^{663}\) When it emerges as greed, blind desires and craving for things propel the individual to amass anything and everything for the self. Greed or lust (*lobha*

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661 Ibid.


or *raga*) pulls the object in, gathers it into itself.\footnote{Ibid.} Greed dominates all other human sentiments, greed is the master, the others are the slaves. Greed can make people happy, and sad. Greed makes us curious or ignorant, possessive or docile, aggressive or gentle and so on. Greed is the driver of everyone's personal sentimental software and guides our behavior.\footnote{Ferry Frank, *Greed: How Human Attitude Affects Planet Earth*, (AuthorHouse, London, 2011), 11.} Thus, when a person is excessively egoistic about himself, greed functions as the major driving force that boosts the computer.

### 6.1.3.2 Why Are We Greedy?

Greed is part of the nature itself. The river that flows silently starts eating up the shores or river banks gradually. Isn’t that we call greed? Thomas Hobbes built from the ground up; he began with a notion of human nature based on the continuity of egotistical behavior, or what we would call desire or greed.\footnote{David Denby, *Great books*, (Simon & Schuster, Washington, 1996), 208.} We as a species seem wholly unable to prevent ourselves from taking what we want. It is like when small kids are playing and they see another kid with a cooler toy and decide they should have it. Nine times out of ten the little brat just grabs it. There is an old saying that states “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” No matter what we have, we always want more. At least sometime or a few times in life we must have questioned ourselves with a ‘why?’ The simple answer to it is that, man is a great paradox. He is the greatest enigma for himself. The greatest cosmic secret and the closest to remains — Man… On the one side man is a slave of necessity, and on the other side he is a being with many possibilities.\footnote{George Therukattil, *Becoming Human*, (JIP Publications, Bangalore, 1999), 10.}

Greed is a bottomless pit. Especially when it is triggered by ego it is endless. We also noticed that it is the formulation of our gene where selfishness is embedded. So looking at the individualistic philosophical view we tend to be selfish, egoistic and greedy. That is the design we all have at our gene level. However, later in this chapter, I will discuss about individualism versus altruism where the gene designs would allow human beings to bypass it for the sake of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. That is where each of us takes the responsibility for the progress of the society, even though there is a slight
friction within. Because, man is a tension towards the infinite. He experiences, in the words of St. Augustine an “existential uneasiness.”\textsuperscript{668}

All the abilities we have were probably instrumental to our survival at one time or another. The human condition is a constant fight between raw urges and getting along and surviving in this world. In the words of Darwin, “a mere survival of the fittest.” Wanting more can be a kind of safeguard for the possibility of things changing in the future. If we’re just happy surviving, drawing water from the well that’s been providing for centuries, it’s possible that well may dry up one day. Without the experience of a well drying up, it may never occur to us to make a second one. With greed, we can open a second well and get more water, more than we need but maybe want. But then greed can damage things too. Like most things in life, it’s a double edged sword. It’s good for some things but possibly not good for others.

Thus, we need to be greedy but we have to transcend it to a level where it will pump water to the growth and development of the society rather than focusing at self-centered individualistic framework. This is where I would like to even place the greed, when one starts looking through the glass of CSR.

### 6.2 Individualism

The term ‘individualism’ is rather ambiguous; but Friedrich A. Hayek, in his \textit{Individualism and Economic Order}\textsuperscript{669} stated that the term was created by the Saint Simonians, in opposition to their centrally-planned ‘socialism.’ ‘True’ individualism began its intellectual development with John Locke, Adam Smith, and Edmund Burke, but a second kind of individualism was developed by the French — Descartes and Rousseau being the most famous of these thinkers. This strand of thought is called ‘rationalistic individualism,’ which F.A. Hayek claims "tends to develop into the opposite of individualism; namely, socialism or collectivism."\textsuperscript{670} A central theme of Adam Smith

\textsuperscript{668} George Therukattil, \textit{Becoming Human}, 10.
\textsuperscript{669} Friedrich A. Hayek, \textit{Individualism and Economic Order}, (The Ludwig von Mises Institute, Alabama, 2009), 3.
\textsuperscript{670} Ibid., 4.
and Edmund Burke was that "combined efforts of individual actions often create things greater than their individual minds can comprehend."\textsuperscript{671} 

The term ‘individualism’ opens up a labyrinth of meaning that goes well beyond mere disagreement about positive and negative connotations.\textsuperscript{672} Encyclopedia Britannica defines individualism as the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that stresses "the moral worth of the individual."\textsuperscript{673} Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires and so value independence and self-reliance while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society or other institutions such as the government.\textsuperscript{674} There is a dichotomy of self versus society. The idea that the person and the group are independent and completely distinct entities is a serious concern of the relationship between one's self and one's society.\textsuperscript{675} And it promotes the self-interest, selfishness, greed leading to individualism.

In this CSR study, we will consider individualism as the entry of an individual into the society to further his or her own interests, or at least demands the right to serve his or her own interests, without taking the interests of society into consideration. This makes him an ‘individualist.’ It also prompts us to look into Rudolf Bultmann's understanding of individualism. According to him individualism is "the isolation of ego."\textsuperscript{676} In this study, this definition comes very much handy as we are delving more into the subjective behavior of human beings. Such subjective behavior plays a vital role in digging out the importance of CSR for the progress of the society where a subject or individual becomes an individualist as he isolates his ego. Thus, making him an end in himself in the society.

The individualist does not lend credence to any philosophy that requires the sacrifice of the self-interest of the individual for any higher social causes. Individualism in modern

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{671} Ibid., 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{672} Daniel Shanahan, \textit{Toward a Genealogy of Individualism}, (University of Massachusetts Press, Massachusetts(1992), 13.
  \item \textsuperscript{673} "Individualism, on Encyclopædia Britannica Online"<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/286303/individualism>, Retrieved on 30-12-2011.
  \item \textsuperscript{674} "Individualism" <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/individualism>, Retrieved on 30-12-2011.
  \item \textsuperscript{675} Peter L. Callero, \textit{The Myth of Individualism: How Social Forces Shape Our Lives}, (Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 2009), 29.
  \item \textsuperscript{676} Roger A. Johnson, \textit{The Origins of Demythologizing: Philosophy and Historiography in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann}, (BRILL, The Netherlands, 1974), 27.
\end{itemize}
times has greatly influenced social and political institutions, views of the self, and liberal, democratic values associated with the universal rights of man and human rights.  

Probably, there can arise a profound question as to why am I talking about individuals or individualism in study that is dealing with CSR and its importance? I deal with it with the presumption that without the individual (human being) and his varied behavioral tendencies there can’t be a CSR study. If the individual is eliminated there is no society. Similarly, if there is no transformation at the individual level, there can never be progress in the society.

Heidegger uses the expression Dasein to refer to the experience of being that is peculiar to human beings. Thus it is a form of being that is aware of and must confront such issues as personhood, mortality and the dilemma or paradox of living in relationship with other humans while being ultimately alone with oneself. Heidegger used the concept of Dasein to uncover the primal nature of ‘Being’ (Sein). The fundamental mode of Being is not that of a subject or of the objective but of the coherence of Being-in-the-world. Thus I feel that Heidegger attempted to maintain the definition of Dasein as we all are, in our average everydayness.

6.2.1 Features of Individualism

Individualism holds that the individual is the primary unit of reality and the ultimate standard of value. This view does not deny that societies exist or that people benefit from living in them, but it sees society as a collection of individuals, not something over and above them. Under individualism, the individual is sovereign. The essential characteristics of true individualism are (1) that it is a theory of society, an attempt to understand the forces determining the social life of man, and that (2) it is a set of political maxims, derived from those forces determining the social life of man. Individualists

679 Ibid.
680 Ibid.
see people dealing primarily with reality; other people are just one aspect of reality. Individualism holds that every person is an end in himself and that no person should be sacrificed for the sake of another.\textsuperscript{683}

It holds that the individual is the unit of achievement.\textsuperscript{684} While not denying that one person can build on the achievements of others, individualism points out that achievement goes beyond what has already been done; it is something new that is created by the individual. Undoubtedly, this specific nature of human being or individual or Dasein is the subject matter of this research and is the end as well as means of CSR which is important for the progress of the society.

\subsection*{6.2.2 Individualism and CSR}

Individualism is the more realistic view that each person has moral significance and certain inviolable natural rights. Each person exists, perceives, experiences, thinks, and acts in and through his own body and therefore from unique points in time and space. It is the individual who thinks and has the capacity for original and creative rationality.\textsuperscript{685} Individuals' minds can interrelate but thinking requires a specific, unique thinker. The individualist assumes responsibility for thinking for himself and for acting on his own thought.

Milton Friedman and others have argued that a corporation's purpose is to maximize returns to its shareholders, and that since only people can have social responsibilities, corporations are only responsible to their shareholders and not to society as a whole. Although they accept that corporations should obey the laws of the countries within which they work, they assert that corporations have no other obligation to society.\textsuperscript{686}

Assigning primary emphasis to the individual does not devalue social cooperation. Humans are not only distinct individuals but also social beings.\textsuperscript{687} Cooperative action

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  \item \textsuperscript{683} Michael Perelman, \textit{Manufacturing Discontent}, 87.
  \item \textsuperscript{684} Michael Perelman, \textit{Manufacturing Discontent}, 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{686} "Corporate Social Responsibility" \textltt{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility}, Retrieved on 30-12-2011.
\end{itemize}
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affords growth possibilities and brings benefits which otherwise would be unattainable by isolated individuals. Man's rationality allows him to cooperate and communicate with others.\textsuperscript{688} In a free society, all cooperative social ventures are entered voluntarily. In fact, individualism provides the best theoretical basis for a genuine community that is worthy of human life. The uniqueness and worth of the human person is affirmed when membership in a community is freely chosen by the individuals that comprise it.

Individualism denies that a community or a society has an existence apart from the individuals that make up that community or society.\textsuperscript{689} A community or society is a collection of individuals — it is not some concrete thing or living organism distinct from its members. To use an abstract term such as community or society is to refer to certain persons sharing particular characteristics and related in specifiable ways. There is no such thing as the general will, collective reason, or group welfare apart from, and other than, that possessed by each individual in a group. Human society or community is an association of persons for cooperative active, resulting in greater productivity and mutual benefits.\textsuperscript{690} Coordinated group action is a function of the self-directed and self-initiated efforts of each person within the group.

Individualism involves the idea that society is no more than the sum of individuals comprising it. Created by the interaction of individuals, society is what individuals make it. The social contract is a fiction. Corporations are viewed as expressions of individual freedom, do not derive their power from society, owe nothing to the community, and need only pay taxes and adhere to government regulations. Closely related to individualism are the ideas of equal opportunity and contract. But, Aristotelian concept of an ideal citizenship comprising duties as well as rights, an ideal of the common good transcending the good of any individual.\textsuperscript{691}

Thus, individualism with all the vices such as self-interest, selfishness and ego do not foster the societal interests rather it is interest of the self. In the language of Levinas; the

\textsuperscript{688} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{689} Ibid.
"other is not an Other in the full sense, but told to be exploited." Humans employed in corporations can certainly meet the Other and attempt to manage the corporation in line with their own ethics. But the fact remains as ever it is, that corporations are not individuals. Thus, similar criticism has been made using Heidegger,

Corporations cannot fully act in socially responsible ways because they possess a perspective on nature that is extremely limited.... Corporations cannot be citizens because their value systems are highly constrained and unable to handle concepts of value beyond instrumentality. However, acting in the interest of the individual will not serve the purpose of common good or good of the society. Hence, a basic insight is that when CSR is treated as an instrument for reputation and self-interest, it will not come across as a 'good deed' in itself. Mises asserts that prosperity is expressed by the fulfillment of diverse human responses. His ultimate concern is that survival of the human race, which he views as prosperity in the broadest sense. Thus, social cooperation is required for the achievement of human prosperity and happiness. CSR in reality is trying to get across the same through the cooperation of individuals and corporate for the welfare of the society. What we need is like Aristotelian concept of both rights and duties which helps the individual to transcend limitations to enter an enlightened paradigm which is beyond self-interest, selfishness, egoism that ensures common good and altruism.

6.3 Altruism/Communitarianism

The study of man and society begins from man whose whole nature and character is determined by his interaction with other men; not from the wide misconception that society is a collection of completely isolated individuals. Thus, Mises views society as the concerted action or cooperation of individuals that is a product of their conscious and purposeful behavior. Unless we are born and dropped in a wilderness containing no humans, we cannot develop without interaction with other humans and thus be affected by that interactions. J. S. Mill, believed that all human activities should be aimed at the

693 Ibid.
694 Edward Wayne Younkins, Philosophers of Capitalism: Menger, Mises, Rand, and Beyond, 68.
695 Ibid., 67.
good of our fellow beings; in fact, “at the greatest happiness of the greatest number.”696 Altruism can be defined as a tendency to perform acts or to promote attitudes that are not solely or primarily motivated by the agent's own self-interest, but, instead, by concern for the well-being of others.697 People and societies who are given to altruism in this sense can be seen as unselfish, and they are normally not purely egoistic in their behavior or thinking. Thus, here I have used the terms ‘Altruism/Communitarianism’ as synonymous by passing the philosophical or hermeneutical depths for the sake of this research and to simplify the understanding.

According to Altruism/Communitarianism, society is more than the sum of the individuals in it. Society exists prior to any particular individual's existence.698 And the society itself is complex and varied in nature. In a complex society, people have different perspectives and different interests.699 Nevertheless, the corporation, a possession of the community rather than of individuals, holds a social contract with society from which it derives its power and, therefore, serves a constellation of interests. The communitarian ethic is based on the view that, in a socially interdependent society, no manager can act ethically without considering the claims of others. While managers have direct obligations to stockholders and employees, they must also recognize other claimants (e.g., customers, suppliers, and the community itself from which the corporation derives its existence). Thus, corporations do have to consider that interdependency and engage in those activities which benefit the society.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau would argue, however, that his concept of ‘general will’ in the ‘social contract’ is not the simple collection of individual wills and precisely furthers the interests of the individual. Rousseau stressed the role of the individual as a responsible member of society. The social contract that he proposed was a contract in which the members of society agreed to be ruled by their general will. Although Rousseau never made it clear how the general will would operate in actual practice, he believed that all members of society would participate in the formulation of the general will, which would

697 Ibid. 278.
699 Ibid., 36.
then be executed by a small group. The Social Contract (1762), Rousseau's treatise on politics and government, opens with the words: "All men are born free, but everywhere they are in chains."\textsuperscript{700}

Communitarians view communities and society as living organisms existing independently of their individual members and believe there is a general common will separate from the wills of the individuals comprising them. For some communitarians, the ‘general will’ is the will of the state as Leviathan — the earthly equivalent of God.\textsuperscript{701}

Communitarians believe that communities and society have moral significance and rights that are at least equal to the rights of individuals and that sometimes and somehow override individual rights. They fail to realize that a community or a society is not a being, is not capable of self-directed thought or action, and, therefore, cannot possess rights. Durkheim holds the view that individuals in modern society are not, in fact, autonomous; rather, they are bound together in dense webs of inter-dependence.\textsuperscript{702}

Often there has been talk about balancing the rights of individuals with the rights of the community. In addition, they tend to view the state as the agent of social betterment and support laws that force people to serve communities and society by taking part in programs that some intellectuals, speaking for the community, have declared to be for the common good or in the public interest. Communitarianism stifles the decision making power of individual persons by subordinating their preferences to community purposes which tends to be the same as majority rule. The communitarian vision of self-interest is thus often defined in terms of community service.

Communitarianism is closely related to social contract theory and emphasizes the social nature of the corporation which exists as the result of a highly implicit and flexible contract that determines its duties and rights. The corporation is portrayed as responsible to and subject to the will of society (i.e., the people). Both the state and the law are creatures of society. They are creatures of the state, in the sense that the state's legal mechanisms bring them into existence. The state determines how individuals and


corporations are created as coherent entities entitled to act as such in society.\(^{703}\) Since, from the perspective of communitarians, corporations are created by the government which, in turn, owes its existence to society, it follows that corporations are actually made by society and are responsible to the public to serve whatever is deemed to be in the public interest or for the common good. Since the corporation only exists because of social permission, society is said to be able to legitimately demand that a corporation perform certain activities that the owners and managers do not wish to perform.\(^{704}\)

Altruism holds “each man as his brother's keeper;” in other words, we are each responsible for the health and well-being of others. This is incompatible with individualism, yet many people who are basically individualists uphold altruism as the standard of morality. There are many reasons to engage in CSR — some noble, some very pragmatic. It was Saul Alinsky who said, "The fact is that it is not man's 'better nature' but his self-interest that demands that he be his brother's keeper... This is the low road to morality. There is no other."\(^{705}\)

Social crusaders believe that corporations should be socially responsible both out of gratitude for their existence and a moral sense of reciprocation for benefits received from society, including the purchase of their goods and serves as an access to, and use of, public goods.\(^{706}\)

During the 20th century, society has been reassessing its expectations of corporations and has pressured them to balance profit-making with social responsibility.\(^{707}\)

Communitarians believe that corporations should be socially responsible both out of gratitude for their existence and a moral sense of reciprocation for the benefits received from society, including the purchase of their goods and services and the access to, and use of, public goods. In essence, the corporation is viewed as more like common property than as private property. Some communitarians even propose that the corporation be brought under government control to assure the common good.

Whatsoever it be, Altruism/Communitarianism demands involvement at individualistic level as well as group level, because, man is a social being. According to Marx, "my own

\(^{703}\) Martha Fineman(ed.), *Transcending the Boundaries of Law*, (Taylor & Francis, New York, 2010), 164.


\(^{707}\) Ibid.
existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being. It is necessary to strike a balance between individualistic outlook with altruism for the good of the society. The existentialist tradition also emphasizes that the self is always a self-in-the-face-of-others. Being-with, is an existential characteristic of Dasein (human being) even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived, according to Heidegger "even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world." CSR in the altruistic/communitarian outlook seeks not kindness from the individual or corporate but empathy. We need individuals who are with empathy for effectively letting the CSR practices without prejudice to aspire for the welfare and well-being of the community not as commitment but as one's responsibility towards the other being. Individuals with empathy at the corporate level can only feel the acuteness of the situation to discharge effective CSR practices for the benefit of the society.

Thus, it is clear how cultural values, practices, and beliefs shape social norms regarding when and how people should experience empathy and express altruism toward others. The fundamental cultural dimension of individualism — collectivism, in particular, prescribes vastly distinct ways of interacting with others. So being empathetic and sympathetic towards the other, instills such responsibility and awareness in each of us—a clear transformation at very individuals level.

6.4 Empathy — Ethical Balance Striker between Egoism and Altruism

Altruism and egoism are complex psychological and ethical concepts. One central concept within the perennial philosophy is that of community. For human persons to belong to communities is natural. One characteristic of a community is that there is no conflict between the good of the individual members and the good of the community as a whole. Consequently, to be ethical, to promote the common good, is good for oneself.

709 Ibid.
Thus, CSR is considered to be a global phenomenon than just referring to a particular group, society or a culture…

Among the most distinctive features of modern moral and political philosophy, including social contractarianism, is its individualism. Human persons are naturally individualistic and artificially social. In the words of economist Milton Friedman, writing under the influence of modern philosophy, “Society is a collection of individuals and of the various groups they voluntarily form.”

This individualism results in what Henry Sidgwick has called the “dualism of practical reason,” the dichotomy between egoism and altruism. The interest of an organization is the aggregate of the conflicting self-interests of its individual members. Ethics is no longer about promoting one’s own good by promoting the good of the community, but about promoting the interests of others instead of self-interest, or about striking some ethical balance between egoism and altruism. This is true of most modern moral philosophers, no matter how sharp their disagreement at other points.

Man is extraordinarily selfish, cunning, and stubborn, but capable of being socialized, if he believes he can profit by it. Even in ordinary social situations like dinner parties, social interactions and expectations can vary dramatically depending on whether one thinks of themselves as autonomous or highly connected and interdependent with others. Such thoughts evolve only when one has a social sensitivity which we call empathy?

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711 Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits”, New York Times Magazine, 13 September 1970. Cf. Edward W. Younkins: “To use an abstract term such as community or society is to refer to certain persons sharing particular characteristics and related in specifiable ways.... Society is no more than the sum of individuals comprising it.... Corporations are viewed as expressions of individual freedom, do not derive their power from society, owe nothing to the community, and need only pay taxes and adhere to government regulations.... The social responsibility of corporations is limited to respecting the natural rights of all individual parties” (“Two Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility”, Capitalism & Commerce [Montréal, Quebec, Canada], No. 84, 9 June 2001.


6.4.1 Meaning of Empathy

The idea that empathy is essential for morality has a rich heritage in Eastern and Western thought. “For at least 300 years philosophers in the Anglo-American (or utilitarian) tradition of ethics have assumed that man has an innate social sensitivity which plays an important role in moral development.” Historically, philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Smith as well as social scientists such as George Herbert Mead have given a significant role to empathy in their theories. Smith defines empathy as "our capacity to interpret the feelings of others in terms of sympathy." Smith opens up the fascinating insight into human behavior and the way we perceive others.

The origin of the word ‘empathy’ can be traced from the German word *Einfühlung*, which is translated as ‘feeling into.’ Empathy is different from sympathy though both sound alike. *Mitfühlung* is sympathy in German which is translated as ‘along with.’ A sympathetic person feels *along with* another person but not into a person. Empathetic behavior implies a convergence. Thus, a person with empathy converges egoism and altruism in the view of CSR. That is the simple reason in Taiwan, the motivation for CSR and corporate philanthropy revolves around the Confucian philosophy of *Ru Shang*, in which it is the businessman's responsibility to give back to the society that helped to create the business. Confucianism values empathy for all human beings, while socialism is committed to sharing and promoting the common good of the whole society.

Martin Hoffman has proposed the most integrated and conceptually coherent theory of empathic development. His view of human nature was founded in the altruistic foundation of empathy. There exists an egoistic motive of self-protection or the enhancement of one’s own condition and on the other hand, there exists an independent altruistic motive that promotes the other’s welfare “without conscious regard for one’s

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718 Ibid., 35.
own self-interest.”

Hoffman’s accounts envision empathy as the source of this care for others. Accordingly, both an egoistic motive and an altruistic motive are necessary, as both motive systems allow for an optimal level of human adaptability and therefore of human survival. Hoffman defines empathy as “an affective response more appropriate to someone else’s situation than one’s own.” It is a similar feeling though it does not duplicate one’s own feeling with others which allows for an accurate interpretation of another’s state. Simply getting into the other person’s shoe and feeling with him. I personally think, that nothing but empathy in a person can arise concern for the society and happiness of other human beings around. This feeling of being one with the other requires mutual respect and thereby responsibility. Thus, Hoffman appears to recognize the satisfaction that prosocial actions have for the person, yet he maintains that empathic responding serves as a distinctively prosocial action that supports the view of the altruistic human nature. In this research, Hoffman’s viewpoint supports us to establish empathy as a synch between altruism and egoism, which bridges the gap with responsibility as moral duty in the larger universal design.

However, several aspects of the evolution of human nature include an increasing circle of concern that goes beyond simple self-interest. To the extent to which human nature is defined according to particular dispositions and behaviors, the social pressures on the evolution of the human mind have produced a capacity for attachment and cooperation with others that has become a major aspect of human nature. Hoffman may call it as empathy which is ‘feeling into’; Smith would term it as “our capacity to correspond with the feelings of others with our own” and some others something else. This is not to deny the existence of self-interest or even selfishness in human nature but rather that selfish genes produced a core human nature that is ultimately selfish. Selfishness and concern for others exist on a continuum in human nature (and other animal natures as well). It is our duty to nurture egoism and altruism through empathy. How far can we make that

720 Charles M. Shelton, Morality of the Heart, (Crossroad, New York, 1990), 41.
721 Ibid., 42 Quoted from (Hoffman, The Contribution of Empathy, 45).
722 Charles M. Shelton, Morality of the Heart, 54.
synchronization possible through CSR at individual and corporate levels? Let us be reminded of the blanket truth that if at all someone could make difference in the society, it is each of us. Thus, each human being should strive for the enlightened interest of the progress and welfare of the society. That will place an important role for CSR in the development of the society.

**Conclusion**

The chicken or egg story — business or philanthropy? Egoism or Altruism? Individual or society? Here the question is not who is first or who is important, rather it is the existential question of what I am doing for the society where I play key role. Do I feel empathy towards the other human being? Do I take responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the society?

One must not forget that a flow in one direction cannot last long until and unless backed by other reciprocating flows. This implies that the role played by society is not a passive one or a neutral one. The growing responsibility of the society and the community in general cannot be denied at all. The awareness level of the society, which in turn is correlated with the literacy level, the standard of living, the preference pattern is a major determinant in this area — which helps individuals to voice their demands and grievances in a systematic manner ensuring that organizations in that locality practice CSR in a way that truly benefits society. The aim of every organization is to produce and distribute goods and services in such a way that income exceeds cost. Society expects the organization to be socially responsible as the economic environment of the society is dependent on the business environment. Socially responsible business is a common term today as business and societies are unthinkable without each other.

Thus, human capacity to empathize with human beings around is the clarion call for CSR and it is the converging point of individualism and altruism. Managers or Executives with empathy are necessary for expanding their support for the societal welfare not as charity but as responsibility of every human being. It should spring not out of compulsion by the government or authorities instead should spring from the heart out of one’s mutual respect for the human being and universe. It is each one’s responsibility. This
responsibility is emerging out of freedom. Thus, freedom with responsibility can take CSR in the 21st century to a new paradigm. I think, that CSR will have significant role to play in bringing an effectual impact for the progress of the society whether as an individual or as a corporate. Appropriate mediation of individualism and altruism can generate empathy in each one of us. CSR practices should emerge not out of sympathy instead it should spring up from the heart where empathy originates. The goodness of human nature manifests itself from within. This sense of internal goodness is not merely a being but a generative activity, indeed a creative impulse that expresses human care in the context of human relatedness. Self-realization depends on innate subjectivity as well as social environment. It is also predicated on an anthropocosmic vision that human beings in their all embracing fullness are co-creators of the cosmos through the great transformation which CSR is trying to bring about in the modern world. The ‘co-creator’ status obligates us with responsibility and freedom — choiceless choice. And of course, freedom with responsibility will force us to ask the existential question which philosophers and sages have been asking for ages: What is the purpose of life as a human being? Is there a purpose in life at all?

However, we have to understand that we have a purpose in life. Our lives are not just for vanishing like mushrooms that pop up after a rain. It is even ridiculous to use the imagery of mushrooms. They do have a purpose and end to fulfill. Every human being and every living being has a responsibility to himself, others and nature. This fact cannot be ignored whether we follow individualism or altruism.