

Chapter 1: Presenting Dignity, Honor, this Book's Argument and Layout

The Nightmare ("Jihad") and the Obsession ("Social Media")

In the second decade of the twenty first century, one of the world's global community's worst nightmares is the ruthless religious war imposed by fanatic fundamentalists; a war that shocks the world via bloody images of brutality, terror attacks and massive waves of victimized refugees. Global anxiety regarding this contemporary crusade has triggered Western pursuit of honor in forms such as "Donald Trumpism". Most of my readers might reject any implication that such anxiety has anything to do with what seems to me to be the era's growing obsession: massive compulsive partaking in virtual "social networks". Yet in this book I suggest that both the nightmare ("Jihad"¹) and the obsession ("facebook"²) are symptoms that reflect and testify to an essential feature of our time. This feature is the massive, unwitting flight from human dignity-based culture (i.e. the post WWII version of liberal, individualistic, human rights-centered culture), to the honor-traps set by universally powerful, alluring, interest-driven systems (such as fundamentalist warring ideologies and commercial conglomerates). In order to make this claim comprehensible, let alone convincing, I must set the stage in more than one way.

Setting the Stage: The Era of Human Dignity and Rights

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which determines in its first article that "[a]ll human beings are born **free and equal in dignity and rights.**" In its opening statement, the declaration proclaims that

recognition of the **inherent dignity** and of the **equal and inalienable rights** of all members of the **human family** is the foundation of **freedom, justice and peace** in the world.

Liberty and equality were established as the foundation of the modern age as early as the end-of-the 18th century American and French revolutions. A century and a half later, the Universal Declaration's first article clarifies that it is in human dignity and rights that we are all equal. It goes on to determine that the recognition of this inherent equal dignity and rights is the basis of freedom, i.e., liberty. This clarification came in the aftermath of WWII and the unprecedented brutality that members of the

¹ Jihad is, of course, the term denoting Muslim religious wars, and indeed the blood curdling images of DAESH soldiers beheading prisoners are the epitome of our collective nightmare. Yet fanatic, fundamentalist Christianity (in the USA for example), fanatic, fundamentalist Judaism (in Israel and the West Bank), and fanatic, fundamentalist Hinduism (in India) can also be said to be waging religious wars, "Jihad", on contemporary, liberal, dignity-based, rights-oriented culture. It is in this wide sense that I use the Muslim term Jihad.

² I refer to facebook since, at the time of writing this book, it is the biggest and most influential platform of its kind. I use "facebook" it as a generic term, much as I use the Muslim-based word Jihad.

human family forced on each other. Horrified by humankind's unleashed potential for cruel self-destruction, the world realized and declared that future human survival ("freedom, justice and peace") depended upon a universal acceptance of the tenet of human dignity. A year later, this same tenet was made the centerpiece of (then Western) Germany's new constitution (Basic Law). With time, additional constitutions (such as South Africa's) and international treaties (mostly European) adopted human dignity as their underlying principle. Half a century later, human dignity is widely accepted – now even in the English-speaking world – as the foundation of contemporary human rights-oriented culture.

December 10th is rightly commemorated and celebrated as Human Rights Day. It should more accurately be celebrated as “human dignity and rights” day. I believe that the adoption of the Universal Declaration constituted a historic turn which bears dramatic consequences. On this exclusive occasion, representatives of a significant majority of the world's population took an unprecedented, strong ethical stand, establishing human dignity as the core of a universalistic value system that must be acknowledged and upheld worldwide. The nations of the world determined that this value system would yield social and legal norms to be considered binding everywhere around the globe. These norms declare, define and defend human rights. Otherwise phrased: nations of the world decided (through the Universal Declaration) to universally embrace the normative code of conduct based on human dignity and to name it fundamental universal human rights.

Escape from human dignity is the abandonment of our commitment to the value system underlying this global culture of universal human rights. It comes in many shapes and forms, using many reasons, excuses and disguises. It is facilitated by honor-traps set by powerful corporations and other interest-driven entities. It leads to a fearful unknown.

Flight from the dignity-based world is, hence, often to honor-based alternatives. Honor offers a very different, yet much more emotionally fulfilling sense of meaning and worth; one embedded in solid, tight collectivism and each person's clear and acknowledged position and rank within the group. Many who unwittingly flee dignity, are lured to pursue honor in the normative, widely accepted and now readily available arena of virtual "social networks".

In facebook and its ever more "cool" satellites, people who may have initially sought dignity and respect, are enticed though sophisticated underlying structures to seek constant affirmation of their standing within "social networks"; to build their sense of worth and meaning on perpetual, immediate virtual participation and feedback. They relinquish their privacy together with the experience of individual separateness, submitting to the networks' demands of permanent availability and constant response. In return, they feel they receive acknowledgment and affirmation of their worth, belonging and status as limbs of something bigger than themselves. So doing,

they trade in the pain of lonely seclusion (associated with existence in the dignity-based culture) for ceaseless confirmation of themselves as members of tightly-knit (virtual) networks (confirmation typical of honor-based groups).

Simultaneously, they serve the profit-seeking program, which thrives on their commoditization into sellable "data". The well-hidden commercial platform (facebook), which profits from its members' submissive participation in the virtual honor game, rewards them for maintaining the system.

Horrified by the ugly face of the monstrous "Jihad" (of any fundamentalist ideology), most people do not identify in it the escalated shadow image of the more familiar flight to the honor traps of popular "social media". Yet this book suggests that the facebook obsession, manifesting the normative, socially acceptable flight from dignity, is echoed, mirrored and complemented by nightmare "Jihad": the full-blown rejection of and assault on human dignity-based culture. Simplistically put: although checking facebook (or any of its cool descendants) 24/7 is *nothing* like leaving London to join Daesh, we may detect the surrender of human dignity-based culture, and the desperate dependence on honor-bound confirmation in both. The embrace of honor by Daesh supporters triggers further insecurity and anxiety among members of the dignity universe, triggering some of them to seek honor in the form of "strong leaders" such as Donald Trump (see discussion in Chapter 6).

Setting the Stage: The Lack of and Need for Common Terminology

To properly consider this claim, we must first agree on the precise meanings of human dignity and honor. This is no simple task. For decades, much attention and an abundance of meanings have been attributed to human dignity, at the expense of its adjacent and antithetic notion, honor, which has been drained, neglected and ignored. The result is that we do not know (or at least cannot agree on) what dignity means, because the term has been overwhelmed with too much meaning, and we do not know what honor is, because we no longer give it enough thought to form a clear sense. Worse still – we confuse the two, speaking of dignity as if it included all the defining components of honor. Under such circumstances, it is hard to consider an argument that builds on the bipolarity constituted by these two underlying values and the social norms built on them.

This is further complicated by the fact that in the decades of accelerated growth, the term dignity has absorbed two additional notions, which I refer to as "glory" and "respect". Glory, in this book, is a person's worth as manifesting the sacred image of God, *imago dei*; respect refers to recognition, appreciation and confirmation of concrete, specific, manifestations of personal traits and ways of life. (If my choice of terms puzzles you, see the explanation below, in the section titled "Found in Translation"). This book suggests that glory is dignity's theological predecessor and precursor, whereas respect is dignity's "sibling" basic value and perhaps the core of the next phase that dignity-based culture must properly develop and genuinely

embrace if it is to flourish. The book suggests that some people reject human dignity confusing it with glory (i.e., they reject dignity for being too theological and spiritual), while others reject it for *not* being glory (i.e., for not being theological and spiritual enough). Some people are disillusioned with human dignity-based culture because it does not properly accommodate their need for respect-based norms. These various disappointments with dignity often lead to the unwitting embrace of honor. In order to understand this line of thought, we must first clearly distinguish between the four value concepts.

So an inherent obstacle in addressing the flight from dignity and refuge in honor is the endemic confusion of four distinct notions, and what should have been clearly defined terms: glory, human dignity, respect and honor. Only when we distinguish it from glory, respect and honor, can we examine human dignity and consider its apparent weakness, the growing disappointment with the human rights culture that it underlies, the attraction of honor-reassuring alternatives, and possible ways of addressing these crucial concerns. Only then can we consider the possibility that enhancing out universal dignity-based human rights culture with respect-based norms may lessen the need for honor-based compensation.

Concern regarding the range, application and utility of dignity is by no means new. In the introduction to a monumental essay collection on human dignity published in 2014, Christopher McCrudden states that “[t]he concept of human dignity has probably never been so omnipotent in everyday speech, or so deeply embedded in political and legal discourse” (McCrudden, 1). He observes that “[h]uman dignity often seems to be used on both sides of many of the most controversial political debates: on issues such as abortion, assisted suicide, genetic experimentation, freedom of expression, and gay rights...” This, he notes, poses a serious concern: “does this demonstrate that the concept is hopelessly vague and excessively prone to manipulation?” McCrudden is a link in a long chain of scholars who have been making these worried observations.

Indeed, in the 21st century human dignity seems to be everywhere, used in every context and way. Almost inevitably, this immense popularity gives rise to the spreading suspicion, pronounced by many, that a concept that lends itself to any and every argumentation must be thin, empty, essentially meaningless.

In the face of this frustrated confusion, I suggest that dignity suffers not from inherent vacuous essence, but from an overabundance of meanings attributed to it. Due to the combination of its long cultural history and the central role currently assigned to it, it has been made to take on too many connotations and come to signify too many things – hence nothing concrete. When these many different meanings are applied

to a multitude of topics – dignity seems to be everywhere, do everything and hence mean very little.³

I suggest that this superfluous reference to dignity comes at the expense of the depleted honor, respect and glory, which are dignity's neighboring yet distinct value-notions, each sharing some commonalities with dignity – while maintaining its vital singularity. Through comparison, each of these values illuminates dignity's precise uniqueness. Together they constitute the discursive field in which all four operate. But honor, respect and glory have either lost their appeal and are no longer studied and used (honor and glory are cases in point), or (as in the case of respect) have not yet come fully into their own and remain underdeveloped and underused. The result is that the overused and overexploited human dignity is spread too thin, substituting and preventing discussions that should have included reference to the adjunct yet distinct notions honor, respect and glory. The discursive arena in which dignity could and should be analyzed alongside these adjacent values is underdeveloped.

This book claims that the insufficient differentiation of dignity from honor, respect and glory hinders the effectiveness of contemporary global, universalistic normative discourse. This deep conceptual confusion obstructs the burgeoning of a potentially rich, nuanced discourse that would be sensitive to the sometimes subtle yet valuable distinctions between dignity, honor, glory and respect. Each of these four basic values captures and constitutes a distinct element of human worth. Each of them is connected to a distinct value system, range of emotions and normative codes of conduct – or “informal institutions”, as political scientists would have it⁴.

The four values' ongoing enmeshing in both popular and scholarly discourses, the association of all their distinct tones with the singular, inflated concept of dignity, jeopardize the integrity of this important value while draining crucial aspects of our global discourse. It prevents the nuanced examination of human dignity *vis-a-vis* glory and respect, and the conscious construction of a dignity-and-respect-based culture. Honor-based alternatives, fed by commercial and ideological interests, are thus left unanswered.

This has very serious implications in the real world: it threatens the continuation and realization of the normative dignity-and-respect-based and rights-centered revolution proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of December 10th, 1948.

³ Interestingly, writing of honor, Robert L. Oprisko offers a parallel criticism: “Honor has lost its way. The primary methodological difficulty within the study of honor is that the word means many different things and that, because it means many things, its value as a word becomes relatively meaningless. We use multiple concepts interchangeably when speaking about honor, disregarding conceptual differences”. Honor: A Phenomenology, P.4

⁴ “At their most basic cognitive level, institutions are sets of mental rules and schemas that drive our desires to reduce and replicate specific behaviors in specific contexts.” (Steinmo, 2012: 318).

The revolution declared by the Universal Declaration was designed to unite us, humans, in collective global strive for a more humane future for all. It was motivated by the determination to avoid the abyss of unleashed brutality. If we still believe in these goals, if we wish to uphold and empower the Universal Declaration's historic revolution, to understand the fierce attacks on it – as well as the flight from it – and to defend it adequately, it must be persistently studied, interpreted and realized. The Declaration's notion of human dignity must be continuously revisited, explored and developed. This book partakes in this effort. The dignity it seeks to explore and define is the one at the heart of the United Nation's Universal Declaration, its revolution and global, universalistic culture. The way it proposes to study this dignity is through distinction from and comparison with honor, respect and glory.

Untangling the conglomerate, overreaching notion of dignity must be through framing a narrow, coherent definition of this concept that would be distinct from narrow, coherent definitions of the contiguous honor, glory and respect. This teasing of terminology is vital for the forging of a compelling vision of dignity – as well as for the better understanding of its competitors, and the whole discursive terrain. It is imperative for the designing of a dignity-based world view – as well as for weighing its alternatives.

This task, as I have just sketched it, is challenging in many ways. To accommodate as many readers as possible, let me try, in the following four sections of this chapter, to flesh it out in four different ways: an examination of a "case study", an everyday social situation (leading to a broader discussion); a systematic, analytical – if concise – set of definitions of the four values; an origin-focused explanation of how this framework came about; finally, the evolutionary narrative that I propose in order to make sense of this book's argument. Feel free to choose from these four the angle that best suits you, or, if like me, you learn through accumulating layers of meaning – follow all four roads, in any order that you choose.

A Demonstrative Vignette of Cafeteria Etiquette, Leading to a Discussion of Security Checks, Gay marriage and Multi-Culturalism

In the course of writing the first draft of this chapter, my friend Alex told me of an incident that had taken place during a visit at an academic institution some years back. Walking into the dining hall one day, Alex noticed an acquaintance, Bill, dining with two other colleagues. The convention in the institution was that colleagues, including visitors, joined each other for lunch, unless expressly requested not to. Making eye contact and smiling, Alex asked whether it was OK to join, to which Bill replied with an unqualified 'yes.' Alex joined, yet Bill did not interrupt the conversation to make introductions, and Alex thus merely nodded to the others at the table. At an appropriate moment Alex ventured a comment, yet the three colleagues ignored the input and continued with their conversation. A few moments later Alex once again attempted to join the discussion, and was once again ignored. Feeling

increasingly awkward, Alex wondered whether the colleagues considered this a private tête-à-tête, or a work lunch. Growing self-conscious, Alex withdrew and pretended to be absorbed in thought. The environment felt alienating and potentially hostile. Finally, as the colleagues continued as if they were alone at the table, Alex gobbled the meal as quickly as possible, and had coffee privately at the office, reluctant to spend more time in the dining hall. The experience left its mark and caused caution and many secluded lunches away from potentially hurtful interactions.

The casual incident at the cafeteria (which I have since learned strikes a chord with many), is, of course, hardly significant enough to warrant concern. Yet in essence, this mundane social interaction differs only in scale from countless others, in which a perceived offence to a person's worth invokes strong emotions and actions, constituting anything from tension, conflict, hostility, confrontation, to full blown violence. Interactions among groups and nations are no different. In fact, I would argue that most discords, personal and collective, past and present, contain some offense to human worth. Examining a trivial social interaction as that in Alex's story is unlikely to incite strong moral or political responses that cloud our vision; it may, therefore, best demonstrate the quarto-perspective framework that I propose and its usefulness.

I suggest we use human dignity strictly to mean every person's intrinsic, inherent, inviolable value as a human being and a member of the human family. In view of this narrow definition, the question we need to tackle to determine whether human dignity was jeopardized is this: behaving as though Alex were no more than thin air, was the colleagues' (non) reference to Alex "dehumanizing" to the extent of indicating that a person may have no inherent value? Did their dismissal of Alex deny the universality of intrinsic human worth?

In the Judeo-Christian world, many understand human dignity to be Man's intrinsic value as manifesting the image of God. This is derived from Man's biblical creation in God's image, from Christ's divine image, and/or from theological construction of humans as God's beloved children. To distinguish this theological perspective from a universalistic, enlightenment-based one, I refer to this type of human worth as glory, and distinguish it from the narrow definition of human dignity. In line with this, did the colleagues' dismissal of Alex tarnish the divine spark, that metaphysical, transcendental glory imprinted in us by the creator?

Perhaps the hurt felt by my friend was not triggered by the generic dismissal of human or divine-human value; perhaps it was the emotional response to lack of recognition, acceptance and appreciation of Alex's *specific*, concrete personal identity and quality. I use the noun respect exclusively to denote the value, worth of a person's unique individuality. Perhaps the pain was caused by the blunt refusal to acknowledge Alex's value as a thoughtful, intelligent, original, articulate and witty

individual. Perhaps it was caused by the denial of Alex's value as a competent, meaningful person and member of the group.

An alternative, quite different reading of the situation would be that my friend's deep sense of discomfort was shame and humiliation: one's inevitable response to loss of honor. Following the long standing anthropological convention, I designate the term honor, as well as the words shame and humiliation, to refer exclusively to a person's relative value in social terms of hierarchical standing, status, rank, prestige within a specific, tightly-knit group. Perhaps the colleagues' blunt exclusion was a public signal, simultaneously constituting and exposing Alex as unworthy of their notice; declaring and revealing that Alex's standing in the social hierarchy of the profession or the department was dramatically lower than theirs. Perhaps publically placing themselves out of Alex's reach elevated the colleagues' professional and societal honor at the expense of their visitor's, triggering Alex's sense of shame and humiliation.

Why bother to define whether the offense was to dignity, glory, respect or honor? Because it may assist us in understanding the type of harm done and in deciding what means to employ to address it. If we find that the injury was mostly to Alex's honor, we may define the incident as a case of "shaming", describe the injury as "loss of face", and suggest that the academic department in which the incident occurred consider whether its honor culture breeds hostile work environment. If we determine that the incident constituted a violation to human dignity, we may urge Alex to file a complaint to a human rights tribunal. If we conclude that divine human glory was disgraced, we may wish to rebuke the colleagues for contemptuous treatment of the image of God. Finally, if we agree that respect is at stake, we may advise Alex to leave the hostile, disrespectful environment and seek a more emotionally nourishing one.

Based on the thin scenario above, many of us are likely to agree that the dismissal of my friend by the dining colleagues did not really challenge the value of humanity *per se*, or the divine worth of the human manifestation of God. It surely undermined Alex's social standing. But perhaps most significantly, the incident seems to have deprived Alex of the recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance that we tend to think one requires in order to flourish. Having been allowed to participate in the discussion, Alex may have actively pursued and practiced self-determination and growth. Denial of this opportunity may be the gravest damage caused by the described interaction. If so, it is the value system, set of emotions, code of conduct and moral logic that correspond with *respect* to which we should turn first in analyzing the situation and seeking to rectify it.

But let us assume that Alex and the two colleagues were young male professors, and Bill was a senior male professor in a department that adhered to an honor based code of conduct. Let us assume that the young men were competing for the senior

professor's attention, each trying to impress him in hope of receiving his support in their competition for a prestigious scholarship. This makes it more likely that the interaction revolved not merely on disrespect, but also on honor and shame (all as narrowly defined above). The two young local professors were successfully excluding Alex in order to outshine him and gain honor at his expense, thus promoting their own social standing and chances of being noticed, appreciated and chosen by the senior colleague. In this context, Alex's pretense to be disinterested might have been appropriate, (a tactic of "saving face"), but perhaps insufficient to gain him the attention he needed and sought. It would have been "playing the right game", but not well enough to excel or win. In this scenario, if my friend wished to succeed in impressing the senior colleague, he should have played the honor game, and found a way to outshine his competitors.

Alternatively, let us assume that the three colleagues in the cafeteria were white men, Alex was a woman of color, and the environment was known for its race and gender based prejudice. Personal disrespect and shame might still be relevant and interesting, yet many of us would agree that human dignity now come into play as well. Perhaps Alex's exclusion and dismissal was the white men's way of signaling that the woman of color was inherently inferior; that she did not have the same innate value, as a human being, as white men do. Additionally, perhaps this was a (non-verbal) statement regarding the superior collective honor of white men *vis-à-vis* women of color. How do we define the harm now, and what course of action do we recommend to address it?

Now, let us suppose that Alex was a transgendered person, in a very conservative religious environment. In this scenario it is perhaps likely that the dining colleagues viewed Alex as an offense to the divine image of God that is embedded in Man. They might have thought of Alex as defiling divine human glory. If so, was their avoidance of Alex an offense to my friend's glory? Was it an offense to human dignity? How do we determine?

Factors of gender and race added – the trivial social situation seems more complex and multi-layered. Yet in reality, many (if not most) social situations of every kind involve such factors (consider class, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education), thus bringing to play several values and the corresponding value systems, ranges of emotions and informal institutions. Many conflicts and injustices are complex this way, requiring precise analysis and consequent intervention.

Any one of the cafeteria situations I presented may be viewed by some of us as mostly honor-based, while by others as mostly respect, or dignity or glory-based. Unless we all use the same terminology to discuss and argue, we may all speak of "dignity" while each responding (in emotions and conduct) to a different grievance, implying different sets of tools. Such blindness breeds mutual misunderstanding and further offense. It may lead to withdrawal and/or to aggression. Common terminology

may help us accept each other's differing views on the situation. It is easier to accept that someone evaluates the situation differently if I know that her point of view is respect-based, whereas mine is honor-based. Such tolerance may also lead to search of solutions that would satisfy both honor and glory adherents. It may even enable me to accept more calmly a decision based on a different value than the one I would have ascribed the situation.

Having braved the analysis of the cafeteria incident, we may venture to apply the quarto-perspective framework to more emotionally and politically charged social situations. So, for example, airport security checks have repeatedly aroused forceful protestations, claiming that bodily searches compromise human dignity. Defining dignity narrowly, distinguishing it from glory, honor and respect, we may want to consider whether it is human dignity that the security checks defy, or whether they curtail personal self-determination (hence effecting respect) or publically demean people of high standing (hence staining honor)? And what about a bodily search of a religious person: is there an offense to divine human glory in such an interaction? If so – should it be acknowledged by state authorities and prohibited? Should offenses to honor and respect?

Force feeding of hunger striking prisoners similarly gives rise to heated debates regarding human dignity. Clearly, force feeding undermines such prisoners' respect and honor: food is forced unto them against their personal will (offending respect), exposing their helplessness and vulnerability (insulting honor). Preservation of divine human glory may support forced feeding, to prevent human death at all cost. But does human dignity likewise require the forced feeding, or does it mandate protection of the integrity of prisoners' bodies even at the expense of their lives? In order to determine this difficult issue, we would need to choose whether life itself or liberty is predominant in the makeup of human dignity.

Even more charged politically is the conflict over gay marriage. In his US Supreme Court decision, Justice Kennedy stated that gay and lesbian petitioners ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. He determined that the Constitution grants them that. Denial of marriage based on sexual orientation is clearly discriminatory; Justice Kennedy determines that it is also an offense to human dignity. If we wish to review this stand we might ask whether denial of marriage rights to same sex couples renders them "less than human". In other words, do we consider the capacity to legally marry one's chosen partner a constituting component of "being human and having human worth"? Perhaps denial of such a right is an offense to the respect of gays and lesbians who wish to manifest aspects of their identities by legally marrying their chosen partners. Perhaps it is mostly about honor: perhaps gays and lesbians experience the marriage discrimination as systematic perpetuation of their social humiliation, and hence demand to be considered as honorable as heterosexual men and women. Perhaps for some opponents of such marriages, homosexuality offends

the image of God in Man; public acceptance of such lifestyle thus constitutes an offense to divine human glory.

How do we determine whether the offense in this case is to human dignity or to individuals' respect? Which of the dignity, honor, respect and glory considerations should be taken into account in policy making, decision making or legislation, and which should prevail? These are the questions raised by the implementation of the four-faced framework suggested here.

Multicultural interactions are particularly likely to be fraught with misunderstandings regarding offenses to personal and collective human worth. Precise distinction of dignity from honor may enable members of western communities to better understand the humiliation and outrage felt by members of honor-cherishing communities, even when human dignity does not seem to be compromised. To give a familiar example: publishing a humorous caricature of the prophet Muhammad may seem, from a dignity and respect-based point of view, as an act of personal autonomy and self manifestation, deriving from human dignity and respect and protected by human rights. From an honor-based perspective this same act may seem as outrageously shaming, calling for vengeance and cleansing of the prophet's – and his followers'– offended honor. It might trigger an honor-based attack on the culture of human dignity and rights.

Likewise, a request to unveil a woman's face may be understood, from a dignity-based perspective, as upholding basic human dignity. From a glory-based perspective, the demand to expose body parts may be perceived as offensive to divine human glory, and from an honor-based point of view imposition of such demand may be humiliating to the unveiled woman, to her father, family or culture. Additionally, some women protest against the unveiling from a respect-based perspective, claiming that their personal free choice to veil their faces should be respected. Some such women claim that preservation of the abstract human dignity might come at the expense of offense to concrete respect. Which of the two should prevail in such a clash?

I hope these examples suffice to make the case that the prevalent confusion of dignity, respect, honor and glory makes it all but impossible to identify what kind of value was most acutely offended or breached at any given situation, what set of emotions was triggered in the victim, and what ethical and emotional avenues could be chosen to address the damage. This confusion invites snowballing misunderstandings that rarely end well.

In order to address a sensitive situation, it is initially necessary to agree on common terminology that makes it possible to distinguish between the different perspectives. This paves the way to communication, negotiation, mutual tolerance and reflexive decision making. In such an atmosphere, attempts may be made to find a solution that accommodates several of the competing values. Even if eventually the defense

of human dignity is chosen at the expense of honor, glory and/or respect, it can be formulated and explained in the most comprehensible and respectful manner, and perhaps be more acceptable to those whose stands were overruled.

This book puts forth merely one argument: that escape from dignity is facilitated by alluring honor-traps. Yet the quadrangle perspective that underlies this argument is useful for deeper coping with a host of social interactions.

Concise Analytical Definitions of Human Dignity and Respect, Honor and Glory

This section offers a concise version of the narrow definitions of human dignity, glory, respect and honor as presented and developed in the following chapters of this book. Careful comparative review of the four concepts is likely to give rise to weighing and consideration of similarities and differences, pros and cons, potential tensions and possible alliances of value systems and ideologies built on these four basic values.

For me, each and all are social constructions, and as such – cultural manifestations of their creators and supporters. That is, I view the discourse of dignity, honor, respect and glory as strictly epistemological.

a. Human Dignity

Human dignity is the inherent value we⁵ ascribe the category “human.” It is, therefore, worth equally inherent in the human makeup of every human being; merit identically “stamped” in the humanity of every member of the human category. We can think of it as the hallmark of “human quality” that is similarly imprinted in each of us. In this context, value, worth, virtue and merit do not mean “measurable price”, but precisely the opposite: priceless, innate ethical virtue.

Dignity is an ethical *ought* and not an empirical *is*; it is normative and not descriptive, quality and not quantity. Human dignity does not depict people’s empirical value; it constitutes them as normatively worthy by virtue of their humanity.

We define humans as subjects: autonomous and moral thinking, feeling living beings. In line with Kant’s moral philosophy (his *categorical imperative*), we think of objects as things that may be regarded and used as mere means to a subject’s ends; in contrast, we define subjects as *not-objects*: as entities that must never be treated merely as means to other’s ends. Subjects are creatures that must always be viewed as ends in their own right.

⁵ “We” refers to those of us who prescribe to the enlightenment-based, human rights world view. As I do not advocate Natural Law, I do not propose that human dignity “exists” in a metaphysical sense. I suggest that it is a value that we, humans, assign ourselves.

If human dignity is the value of human subjects as such, then it is an inherent, absolute and inalienable value; it must always be acknowledged, preserved and upheld fully and unconditionally. Simply put, it is absolutely prohibited to forgo human dignity and treat any member of the human category disregarding his or her intrinsic human value, that is — to treat any human as an object, as a mere means to an end indifferent to him or herself. We must always acknowledge and protect the human dignity of every person even if he or she does not.

The United Nations' Universal Declaration (from 1948) pledges allegiance to a human dignity-based value system. It maintains that all human beings are members of the human family. The declaration affirms that human dignity is the basis of all fundamental human rights. Fundamental human rights are thus the consequence of international norms aimed at guaranteeing that no human being's dignity ever be ignored; they are the safeguards of human dignity. A fundamental human right may thus be defined as a right whose breach may compromise human dignity, i.e., the value of humanity, the essence of being human, as we humans determine it.

b. Glory

I use the word *glory* to convey the value that Judeo-Christian theologies attribute to humanity as manifesting God's exceptional virtue. In the biblical narrative, God created Adam in his own divine image and "likeness". In so doing, God endowed Adam with sacred, metaphysical glory, i.e., with God's exclusively transcendental, infinite value. Glory was thus Adam's innate eternal, inestimable value as God's earthly image. Jewish and Christian theologies differ on whether sin, fall and exile from Eden deprived Adam of divine human glory. Christian theologies define Jesus Christ as the second, perfect Adam and true image of God, his Father. According to this line of thought, divine human glory is not necessarily inherited by all humans from their ancestral first couple; it may be acquired through acceptance of Christ and his gospel. Either way, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, humans who manifest the divine image of God partake in his glory.

Over millennia, Jewish and Christian treaties have offered innumerable interpretations and variations on this theme. They all share the precept that human beings' innate, most precious value does not derive from tentative membership in social orders, but from the absolute divine hallmark imprinted in humans by their creator. This notion is pervasive, almost self-evident, in Christian-based European and latter American culture.⁶

Although this type of human value was traditionally called in English "glory", many refer to it as "dignity", particularly since 1948. I believe that glory was the Judeo-

⁶ Not having studied Islam or other religions, I cannot refer to their perception of the value of the human being.

Christian transcendental precursor of the Universal Declaration's humanistic, secular, enlightenment-based human dignity. I suggest that clear terminological and conceptual distinction between them is inseparable from our civilization's separation of state from church; of secular ethical values from theological ones; of civic codes of norms from religious ones.

c. Respect

By attributing human dignity to humanity itself, we associate it with the basic, generic common denominator of all human beings, which is, by definition, conceptual and abstract. To draw on the metaphors mentioned above— we are all members of the human family, and human dignity is the family (normative) attribute that we all share. Yet none of us is merely that. On the foundation of our common humanity we each build a specific, complex, multi-faceted human configuration that we think of as our personal identity. Its building blocks are myriad realizations of our characteristics, abilities, feelings, desires, choices and attempts.

Each personal identity combines countless distinctive elements; some of these are dictated, encouraged or endorsed by socio-cultural norms, while others are idiosyncratic. Some involve social interaction or cultural affiliation, while others are private or discrete. Personal identity is built over time; it is fluid and ever-changing. It is somewhat self-determined: a manifestation of our human autonomy in given circumstances. Every personal identity is a unique human achievement. In contemporary culture we encourage, cherish and value it.

We endorse individual manifestations of our human potential because we revere individuality and pluralism. But what is the value that we ascribe to individual, distinctive personal identities *per se*? Human dignity assigns worth strictly to the generic stamp of fundamental humanity in each of us. I suggest that we employ the noun *respect* to denote the value we assign the diverseness of our identities. Although the verb "to respect" is used for a wider range of meanings, the noun seems best suited to express the type of value that I wish to distinguish from dignity.

Respect belongs to the same universalistic, humanistic, liberal and secular value system as human dignity. But whereas human dignity conveys the veneration of an abstract idea of a singular, generic human structure – respect implies accepting recognition of multiple, concrete, unique individual identities. Human dignity endows absolute, unconditional merit and protection to the kernel of the universal human. Respect, on the other hand, can only attribute relative, tentative and conditional value to countless actual manifestations of human plurality, since, due to their endless variability, they necessarily interfere and clash with each other. If they are all to be cherished, such cherish, i.e., respect, must be provisional.

Respect-based rights must be more tenuous than those guaranteeing human dignity. At the same time, they correspond with a far greater variety of human needs, preferences, choices and aspirations.

The widespread confusion of human dignity and respect blurs the crucial distinction between the necessarily absolute human dignity-based fundamental human rights and the manifold provisional respect-based rights. This confusion breeds pervasive misunderstandings, instigating a variety of accusations aimed at human dignity-based culture.

Honor

Human dignity and respect are inseparable from contemporary enlightenment-based civilization, as is the universalistic, humanistic, secular value system that they underlie. Other types of cultures did not and do not necessarily cherish and uphold these values and their derivatives. Instead, they have relied on alternative value systems to ascribe value, worth, to their members. The most popular and successful of those types of systems has been that of honor-and-shame. Most traditional societies in most parts of the world adhered – and often still do – to honor-and-shame value systems, their logic, psychology and economy.

In honor-and-shame societies, honor is the relative value attributed to and felt by a member of society *vis-à-vis* his peers. This type of value is neither universal nor innate to all members of a group *per se*; quite the contrary, it implies comparative social status, prestige, rank and standing in the hierarchical structure of a specific group. It is admired and sought after, because its accumulation promises superiority over others, hence better living and improved prospects of survival and prosperity. In honor-based societies, shame is dishonor: the absence of honor due to inherent lack or circumstantial loss.

In most honor-and-shame societies, honor is partially bequeathed and mostly gained through a careful and disciplined adherence to the norms defined by the relevant honor code. A meticulous observance of the appropriate honor norms entitles a person to honor; failure bestows shame. Honor is ceaselessly achieved, enhanced, accrued and inevitably lost, while shame is dreaded and avoided at all cost.

In an honor-revering society, peers are in perpetual competition for honor, always measuring themselves up each against all others. The logic of the honor competition is, as Bill Miller aptly put it, that of a zero-sum-game. Since social hierarchy is a pyramid and honor corresponds to a position in the pyramid, one member's promotion must entail other's demotion. Each player's every move, therefore, affects all others' honor and relative standing.

In most traditional honor-and-shame societies, honor is closely linked with the prevailing ideal of manhood. The more honorable a man – the more manly he is, and

vice versa. A man's honor bestows social duties: he is expected to show leadership, manly conduct, courage ("noblesse oblige"). It also awards rights: other members of society are required to honor him according to the honor that he has gained.

Although anthropological literature usually refers to traditional honor-and-shame societies, honor mentality is very much alive in contemporary social groups all over the world. It is explicitly evident in formally hierarchical institutions, such as the military, a police force or a penitentiary system (where ranks are symbolic badges of one's honor). It is more subtle, but no less ubiquitous in academic institutions, public settings, private organizations and the international arena.

The logic of an honor-and-shame value system differs dramatically from that of a universalistic, humanistic, human dignity-based one. Nonetheless, many people around the world are intimately familiar with both, combining them or fluctuating between them in innumerable ways. This is also true for groups, from classrooms and sports teams to countries and nations. The prevailing confusion of the terms honor and dignity intertwined with unwarranted dismissal of honor, have made it almost impossible to discern honor-based interactions, emotions, responses and attitudes from human dignity-based ones, and to analyze them accordingly.

Commitment to a value system entails an adherence to its derived norms. A person, who abides by a specific honor-based value system, is likely to adhere to the specific norms it implies. A Japanese Samurai who embraced the Bushidō value system, also lived by the Bushidō honor code: he was likely to carry himself as the norms suggested, speak to his leader in accordance with the relevant norms, treat his wife in compliance with the right norms, deal with peers and foes as specified by the norms, fight in light of the norms and die accordingly. The same is true of a person committed to a value system based on human dignity, glory or respect, whether or not he or she is fully aware of it.

I believe that in one way or another, each and all of us are committed to one or several of the fundamental values dignity, glory, respect and honor; that we adhere, at least to some extent, to their corresponding informal institutions. I believe that these values, whether or not we are fully aware of them, and however we may call them in English or other languages, frame and impact our respective visions of the world and of ourselves, our understanding and evaluation of situations and events, our needs, longings and aspirations. They inform the norms that we adhere to, reject or create, and finally — our actions and omissions. On a larger scale, they motivate and account for aspects and elements of historical forces and developments.

In order to understand social, cultural, and legal norms; in order to evaluate, criticize, improve or replace them — we must familiarize ourselves with the value systems that they derive from, serve and perpetuate. The proposed conceptual distinction

between the fundamental values of dignity, honor and respect may reveal, explain and point to ways of dealing with honor-based aspects of the evasion of and severe attacks on — contemporary dignity-based culture.

Let me now try to explain how I happened upon all this. It may not surprise you to know that what enabled and triggered it was an external point of view: looking at these four English terms from the vantage point of a different culture and language. The foreign language was Hebrew, and the culture – Jewish.

Found in Translation: the Source of The Quadrangle Perspective

My interest in dignity goes back to 1995. Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Aharon Barak, who later became Israel's Supreme Court Chief Justice, the State of Israel enacted, in 1992, its Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. This was a deliberate attempt to follow the lead of the Universal Declaration and the German Basic Law, and make their concept of dignity the centerpiece of Israeli law. Israel's legal system almost immediately pronounced the new Basic Law to be the country's Bill of Rights.

At that time I was pursuing my doctoral studies in law and culture (under the supervision of James Boyd White) at the University of Michigan's law school. Upon my return to Israel in 1995, on my first year of academic teaching of law, I was instructed to prepare and teach a first-year course on the Israeli legal system. It was then that I realized that the legal system had changed dramatically in my absence, and was now speaking the new language of human dignity. Never having studied dignity systematically, I failed to fully grasp its essence. Finding little legal material on the new discourse, I turned to philosophical literature, only to discover that, in the words of Michael Rosen, "there does not exist a large, systematic body of contemporary philosophical literature on dignity" (XIV).

Having exhausted conventional academic sources, I turned to the foundational text of Jewish culture (certainly of the Hebrew Jewish one), the Hebrew Bible, seeking every appearance of the Hebrew word *kavod* (כבוד), that indicates "dignity" in Israel's Basic Law. I was hoping that this research would shed light on the primal, authentic usage – and hence meaning – of the elusive term. But this fascinating endeavor merely added to my confusion, as it led me in seemingly many different and unconnected directions.

Seeking new grounds, I turned to interpretation via translation and looked up how the Hebrew Bible's *kavod* was translated into English in different translations. It was at this point that I discovered that the Hebrew *kavod* was sometimes translated into *honor*, sometimes into *glory*, sometimes into *respect* and sometimes (in

contemporary translations) into *dignity*. Apparently, the ancient Hebrew concept *kavod*, combined four notions that in English were somehow related – yet distinct. The only thing that was irrefutable was that every usage of *kavod* implied, in one way or another, weight, as the Hebrew root *k.v.d* connotes weight. The closely related Hebrew word *kaved* means both "heavy" and "liver", which was believed by the ancients to be both the body's heaviest and most important organ. *kavod* meant "weighty" in the sense of important: central, crucial, substantial.

Following the conceptual-linguistic intuition of the Bible's translators to English, I examined separately the meaning of the *kavod* references that were respectively translated as honor, glory, respect and dignity. This led me to the revelation that the Hebrew *kavod* served as a catch-phrase for "weighty value" of several types: a person's hierarchical social standing, human essence, God's divine merit, or specific human attributes. *Kavod* encompassed all these different types of value, worth, merit. The translations taught me that English does not seem to have a corresponding catch-phrase, but assigns specific labels to each such type of "weighty value". It calls the hierarchical social value *honor*, God's divine merit *glory*, the value of humanity *dignity*, and the value of specific human attributes - *respect*.

Because they are "siblings," sharing "family resemblance," these values have often been confused in many ways, some innocent and some manipulative. But in a family portrait each of them has its own distinct face, stature and manner. If we imagine *kavod* to be the "surname" of this family of values, then their "first names" are honor, glory, dignity and respect.

Were this so simple, this "family portrait" would have been unanimously acknowledged. In fact, several obstacles have occluded this interpretive option, preventing the systematic comparative investigation of the four basic values. Firstly, only the prism of the Hebrew *kavod* invites a common examination of all four. Notwithstanding *kavod*, it is highly unlikely to address them together. Secondly, none of these four English terms has exclusively denoted a single meaning; over the course of history, each of them has been used to convey several of the four meanings. This historical reality has blurred the boundaries between the four distinct meanings, while simultaneously obscuring each of them.

Thirdly, each of these notions has been carefully studied and developed by a different academic discipline. Honor has been examined very thoroughly in anthropology; glory – in theology; dignity has been scrutinized in philosophy, legal philosophy and law; respect – in philosophy and psychology (not necessarily under this name). Political science is the discipline that compares informal social institutions (codes of behavioral norms) and their histories and evolution. Circumscribed by disciplinary boundaries, the four basic values had little opportunity to convene.

As luck would have it, my studies in Michigan included several courses on honor and honor cultures and societies with an enthusiastic expert in this field, Professor William Ian (Bill) Miller. As a student of philosophy and a lawyer (both in Jerusalem, Israel), I was exposed to Kantian, as well as legal discourse on dignity. Sporadic studies of Jewish culture enabled me to learn some of the history of glory, and a life-long keen interest in philosophy, psychology and feminism drew me to thinkers such as Erich Fromm and Charles Taylor, as well as feminist scholars, who gave much thought to what I call respect. Most significantly, as a native speaker of Hebrew, the Hebrew *kavod* was my starting point. I was, therefore, situated in a cross-road that enabled me to consider the four concepts of dignity, honor, respect and glory together, in light of *kavod*, distinguishing them from each other and defining each separately.

My first opportunity to present the four-faced framework took place in an international conference on the constitutional meaning of human dignity in Jerusalem, in 1999. Five years later, I published my first book on the topic, in Hebrew, laying out the framework and applying it to the analysis of Zionist history and Israeli society. That same year, Rivka Elisha and I founded the Israeli Center for Human Dignity, an NGO that has been active in bringing its insights to many thousands of Israeli students, soldiers, inmates, social activists, employees and interested individuals and groups of every kind. Teaching and participating in discussions about honor, dignity, respect and glory has spoken volumes. Another source of enrichment has been my Talmudic study with Yakir Englander, which has shed much light on the meanings of glory, but also of the other values.

For almost twenty years, my research and writing on this topic have been mostly in Hebrew. The last few years have seen a sudden explosion of English written scholarly work on dignity.⁷ I hope that this interest in the topic might create the opportunity to share my Hebrew-based perspective with the English-speaking world.

The many English written treatises on human dignity have made a significant contribution to this field, each emphasizing a distinct point of view and developing a unique argument. Many of them share a presupposed commitment to the cultural linguistic history of the English term *dignity* and to its prevalent contemporary usages. I respect and appreciate this commitment but do not share it. I believe that preoccupation with the multitude meanings attributed to dignity perpetuates the

⁷ Among the many important new books are Donna Hicks' *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* (Yale, 2011), George Kateb's *Human Dignity* (Harvard, 2011), Michael Rosen's *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Harvard, 2012), Jeremy Waldron's *Dignity, Rank and Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2012), David G. Kirchhoffer's *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics* (Teneo Press, 2013), Matthias Lutz-Bachman's *Human Rights – Human Dignity and Cosmopolitan Ideas* (Ashgate, 2014) and *The Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Marcus Duwel, Jens Braavig, Roger Brownsword, Dietmar Mieth (Cambridge University Press, 2014). Interestingly, 2014 also saw the publication of Aharon Barak's two volume monograph on dignity in Hebrew.

overburdening of the concept rather than clarify it. My motivation and goal are different: I focus on defining, analyzing and distinguishing the narrow, universalistic notion of dignity that, I believe, was established by the United Nation's Universal Declaration as the foundation of the global post WWII era.

The concept that the Universal Declaration chose to call *dignity* is, of course, linked to some of the meanings previously associated with this English word. But I believe that the dignity of the Universal Declaration is distinct from a host of meanings that have been associated with the English term. I believe that a focus on the precise meaning of the Universal Declaration's notion requires some distancing from the linguistic history and common usage of the English term *per se*. I suggest that the Universal Declaration's term, the dignity that has come to be the central value of constitutional and international human rights discourses, is a concept that although attached to the English word *dignity* does not necessarily carry the word's entire cultural and linguistic baggage. This universal concept is commonly associated with the English word mostly because English is the *lingua franca* of the contemporary era and of the international human rights discourse. I dare to propose that we use the term dignity not as an English term, but as a term of “*Esperanto* of values and norms” (the same holds true for the notions honor, glory and respect in the context of this discussion).

Evolutionary Narrative Underlying the Book Layout

Since I am an avid believer in stories, this book narrates the story of the evolution of honor, glory, human dignity and respect and the normative codes they inspired. In slightly other words, political scientist Sven Steinmo's, it tells the story of informal institutional evolution.

This is roughly how the story goes. Once upon a time there were many young societies all over the world that played and developed the ambitious, competitive game of honor-and-shame. Over time, they established and nurtured many honor-based societal and inter-societal informal institutions. Members of these societies derived their sense of self, self-worth and meaning from the honor codes they were born into and spent lifetimes learning, mastering, developing and cherishing.

On the fringes of some such cultures, some religious ideologies suggested the subversive normative idea that at least in one sense all humans were of equal value: the valuable image of the world's divine creator was imprinted in each and every one of them, disregarding the clan they belonged to or their position in its honor game. Let us call the notion of divine human value “glory”.

One way of telling the history of Christian Europe is as the struggle to integrate these two value systems (honor and glory-based) and their respective informal institutions. The medieval crusades were one such particularly dramatic attempt. Much later, as late as the 19th century, Europeans in the United States of America were divided

over the question whether people of African origin could and should be considered as members in communities defined by honor or glory-based rules. It took a bloody civil war to apply both honor and glory-based informal institutions to all Americans. As late as the first half of the twentieth century, in the heart of Europe, Nazi ideology dismissed glory altogether, trying to revive an exclusively honor based world, in which Aryans are at the top of the honor hierarchy, and some Others (including Roma, Jews and people with disabilities) are excluded from it altogether (and hence from the right to live).

The modern era started when human individuality gradually became an increasingly revered and celebrated value. As philosopher Charles Taylor notes, the Renaissance creative artist became a role model: humans were encouraged to pursue, find, choose, liberate and express their unique true selves. Such selves were assigned growing respect.

Yet simultaneously, as societies grew into nations and nation states, and the value system of honor and shame merged with the modern ideology of nationalism, the competition for national honor became increasingly powerful, dangerous and costly. National honor overshadowed the developing reverence of the unique individual human self. It took two world wars and roughly a hundred million lives lost for the nations of the world to realize that survival of the species and the universe required relinquishment – or at least curtailing of the honor and shame-based informal institutions and the war games that they entailed.

As the basis for an alternative universal value system that would organize the new world order and its institutions, the modern nations agreed to secularize the idea of glory (the religious concept of divine imprint in human beings) and label it “human dignity”, meaning “equal fundamental human value, *per se*, imprinted in every member of the human family”. They stated this agreement in a Universal Declaration and on this basis toiled to build new informal institutions: norms that would define and defend basic universal human rights. Review of the Universal Declaration reveals that it embraces both dignity and respect; yet it was the minimalistic dignity, and not the more ambitious respect, that received most attention.

The revolutionary process announced by the Universal Declaration has been developing in significant parts of the world. Yet, often lacking meaningful, systematic embrace of respect, many people experience contemporary dignity-based informal institutions as disappointingly thin and formalistic. Disillusioned and alienated, even as they seek dignity and respect, many find refuge in honor-based informal institutions, which now abound in virtual tightly knit groups. They are sucked into honor-traps in the service of fundamentalist ideologies or commercial interests.

This story suggests that the dignity-oriented global culture’s next logical step is sketching and constructing systematic norms that would affirm and secure richer and more diverse human rights which reflect, uphold and enhance respect.

Further, the secularized human dignity shed most of the sublime, spiritual residue that divine human glory had traditionally enjoyed. The absence of the spiritual dimension reduces the secular concept's attraction for many people, making the libidinous honor seem more alluring in comparison.

In the presentation of honor-and-shame societies, the notion of glory and the concept of human dignity, this book's contribution is mostly in the descriptive mapping out of what has been amply researched and analyzed in several disciplines, naturally preferring certain interpretations to others. The less trodden path is the book's evolutionary narrative in its entirety, the suggested quadrangle perspective, and the conceptual-normative distinction between dignity and respect.

Chapter Two introduces honor in honor-and-shame societies. I rely on vast anthropological writing to present the basic logic of the value system embedded in the psyches of members of such cultures. It is a world of relentless competition for social precedence and recognition; of mutual suspicion and mistrust. It is relativistic, ever-changing, and ruthless in the sense that often one must conquer at all cost. Chapter Three presents the alternative, subversive value system nourished by the Jewish and later Christian cultures, which centers on glory—God's divine merit that is embedded in humankind and adorns Man with inherent worth. This notion fosters empathy, compassion, mutual reverence among fellow humans. It also cultivates adherence to divine commandments and complete surrender of one's will to that of God's and His worldly representatives. The fourth chapter narrates how, after two world wars, the world, led by the United Nations, concluded that in modern times, honor has become increasingly deadly and dangerous. After WWII, the conquering allies decided to repress the thirst for honor and mitigate it with a modern, universal, atheistic variation on glory: human dignity. This new formulation drew on Kantian philosophy and was shaped in binary opposition to honor.

Chapter Five presents respect, defined as the value bestowed on diverse manifestations of personal characteristics. Individuality has been venerated for a couple of centuries, and its recognition has been defined by philosophers such as Charles Taylor and psychologists such as Erich Fromm. Chapter 5 suggests that respect, the value of concrete, specific individuality, is the unpronounced basis of the next phase of human rights; it is the offspring hidden in the folds of the Universal Declaration's sanctification of dignity. The merit accorded human specificity, respect, is the value that is yet to be fully specified, acknowledged, elaborated, celebrated, and made the foundation of the next generation of human rights.

Lastly, Chapter Six presents the flight from dignity by referring to "jihad" and virtual "social media" as overwhelmingly powerful and enticing honor-based platforms. "Donlad Trumpism" is presented as an American dignity-escape and honor-seeking response to the Barak Obama era and in the face of growing "jihad". The chapter builds on Erich Fromm's analysis, in his book *Escape from Freedom*. It suggests that

"jihad" and "facebook" constitute the early twenty first century's most alluring honor-traps, much as, according to Fromm, fascism and the culture of advertisement lured the masses away from freedom in the first half of the twentieth century.

A Word on the Book's Title

The book's title is homage to Erich Fromm's 1941 visionary *Escape from Freedom*. In the seventy five years since its publication, WWII ended, its ghastly effects shocked the world, and the nations pledged allegiance to human dignity. That moment of hope was meant to launch a new era that has, in many ways, improved the lives of many people around the globe. Yet, many of Fromm's insights regarding freedom and its discontents seem as relevant today as they were when he presented them. Perhaps revisiting them in the framework of human dignity is a way of placing them back in center stage while simultaneously enriching the discourse on dignity. My argument regarding dignity, respect and honor echoes Fromm's argument regarding negative liberty, positive liberty and loss of liberty. Perhaps this proposed "translation" of his liberty-centered insights into dignity-talk may introduce the familiar debate over negative and positive liberty to the contemporary discourse on dignity.

Fromm's book is, of course, not the only source of inspiration for this one. Over the long course of developing the dignity-honor-respect-glory argument I have read dozens of books and articles that all contributed, in one way or another, to fine-tuning my thoughts. Zygmunt Baum's *Liquid Modernity* (2000, Polity Press) and Yuval Noah Harari's *From Animals into Gods* (2012) and *The History of Tomorrow* (2015) are but three shining examples. In a conscious attempt not to overburden the reader of this book with an incessant flow of names, titles, references and nuances, I deliberately trimmed down quotes and references. In fact, to minimize the reader's feeling of cacophony and confusion I attempted to construct each of the book's sections as my argument's dialogue with a single other (usually academic) voice. This, sadly, forced me to leave out many important contributions to the many topics this book touches on. Despite the inevitable perceived disrespect of existing literature, I am, of course, grateful and indebted to all the many thinkers and writers on whose shoulders I gratefully stand.

The book of Genesis (11:4-9) tells the story of the tower of Babel that our ancestors attempted to build together. Their aspirations were thwarted by God's confounding their language, causing them to break into groups speaking diverse dialects. This divine intervention produced such disruptive misunderstanding that the ancients had to abandon their plan of building a universal city and tower. Separated by words, they gave up on the collective dream to reach the stars.

In 1948 we tried again, this time aspiring to build a universal value system and social institutions that would ensure our human rights and survival together. In the

Universal Declaration we stated that “a **common understanding** of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge”. Yet, once again, many things came between us, among them our conflicting interests and ideologies, mutual suspicions, fragility, impatience, alienation — and languages.

We speak of human dignity, but each of us hears something different; we want to build together for our common wellbeing — but fail to hand each other the proper tools. This book cannot bridge over conflicting interests, ideologies and mutual suspicions; it cannot overcome or remedy fragility, impatience and alienation. But it aspires to remind us of the possibility of a common language with which we intended to build our universal future, based on human dignity, respect and rights.