Humiliation, Trauma, and Trauma Recovery in a Globalizing World

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Introduction

Yesterday, I met with a dear friend, a Japanese professor, an expert on mediation. She told me that it is futile that I write this chapter. She explained that she just saw a BBC World program on solar dimming (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4880328.stm), where she learned that the rich countries of this world, in particular, have been filling the air with aerosols – tiny particles of pollution – which so far protected our planet from the destructive effects of global warming, at least partly. As we clean up the air and reduce solar dimming, global warming will get even worse than otherwise expected. This shocked her, my friend said – she had not been aware that the situation was even more threatening than she had thought. Not enough, she professed, becoming aware that millions might have died in Africa already due to draughts caused by solar dimming, made her lose all hope. She now tends to believe that it is too late, she sighed, and that humankind has no way anymore to survive, at least not in the longer term. Humankind will die out, leaving behind a devastated planet Earth, relieved of its human plague.

And, she added, it is absurd to write chapters about *Peacebuilding for Traumatized Societies*, while forgetting that we all, including all trauma experts and all readers of books for trauma experts, are doomed and ought to be thinking what to do with traumatized death-bound humankind, us, during our last days.

When I listened to my friend, I remembered the bitterness I witnessed in Africa. I started my field work for my doctorate on humiliation in 1998 in Africa – see Lindner (2000) – and among the most humiliated people I met were the helpers at lower echelons of humanitarian organizations. Many had drifted from idealism to cynicism. Michael Maren (1997) wrote a book entitled *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*, and this book had been read by everyone and had resonated with many. Usually, most helpers began their mission inspired by human rights ideals, ideals of equal dignity for all, but soon had to realize, painfully, that they were caught in a larger context, which sometimes included their own superiors, where power was still defined in old top-down ways, not seldom at the expense of human rights. Similarly, the readers of this book, while trying to help traumatized societies, face their own limits and the fact that the larger context traumatizes us all.

I suggest that we have to face up to this larger context, if we wish to have a chance at all to be successful in helping traumatized societies or, for that matter, traumatized individuals. I posit that it is not elective to take large-scale global trauma into account, it is compulsory.

Michio Kaku (2005), renowned physicist and leading expert in string theory, concludes his book on *Parallel Worlds* with the following paragraph:

> The generation now alive is perhaps the most important generation of humans ever to walk the Earth. Unlike previous generations, we hold in our hands the future destiny of our species, whether we soar into fulfilling our promise as a type I civilization [meaning a civilization that succeeds in building a socially and ecologically sustainable world] or fall into the abyss of chaos, pollution, and war. Decisions made by us will reverberate throughout this century. How we resolve global wars, proliferating nuclear weapons, and sectarian and ethnic strife will either lay or destroy the foundations of a type I civilization. Perhaps the purpose and meaning of the current generation are to make sure that the transition to a type I civilization is a smooth one. The choice is ours. This is the legacy of the generation now alive. This is our destiny (Kaku, 2005, p. 361).

If my Japanese friend is right in her gloom, there is no hope, and also writing this chapter might indeed be pointless. She thinks that Michio Kaku's challenge is too tall an order. She wants to retire and spend her last years tending her garden, otherwise wishing humankind a quick death so as to minimize the amount of trauma during the process. I am not surprised. Wherever I hold my lectures, I meet many people who harbor my friend's quiet desperation, her sense of hopelessness and helplessness – a kind of simmering traumatization – as to the world's plight and the survival of all of us.

I believe we have to accept that mass trauma will increasingly define the psychological state of the human population of the globe, us, the readers of this book included. Humankind will increasingly face global challenges. Already at the current point in time, mass trauma has entered world stage forcefully. Natural disasters such as the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean, hurricane Katrina or terrorist acts in large cities such as Madrid or London, intractable violent conflicts in various world regions, as well as inner city violence and poverty are all creating large scale trauma. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is no longer a term for a few specialists, who attend to victims of pedophilia, domestic violence, or neglect of children and the elderly, but has become a definitorial term relevant for millions. New large scale approaches to tackling trauma have to be developed that bypass the bottleneck of the availability of individual therapists.

In this chapter, I propose that the crisis that humankind faces globally, at the highest macro level, may serve as a challenge that, if taken on, might even help to alleviate the effects of trauma that occur on meso and micro levels. A Canadian consultant working in Japan, after attending one of my lectures – see Lindner (2006b) – agreed and commented that my global vision of hope needs to be disseminated, not least in Japan, where more than one million young men have retreated into depressed isolation, like eremites secluding themselves in their homes, refusing to lead fuller lives (the so-called *hikikomori* phenomenon).

Trauma does not automatically lead to incapacitation; it can also lead to growth, and, if we accept that humankind finds itself in a crisis, at a tipping point, clearly, it would be beneficial to promote such growth on a large scale. Lawrence G. Calhoun and Richard Tedeschi have found that trauma can lead to a greater appreciation for life, improved

relationships, and a greater sense of personal strength and spiritual development, and, I would add, also to a greater ability to help traumatized societies and individuals. In their *Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth*, Tedeschi and Calhoun (Eds.) (2006) attest that some trauma survivors find that their losses have produced valuable gains, even though it does not necessarily diminish emotional distress (clearly, focus on growth through trauma should not come at the expense of empathy for the pain and suffering of trauma survivors).

There is evidence from disasters that shows that some people tend to be proactive, while others react, and a third group becomes overwhelmed to the point of doing nothing. Being proactive seems to be the best way to overcome extreme stress, while people who allow themselves to be overwhelmed may even die, without any noticeable coping actions.

Barry Hart has developed the *Peacebuilding Wheel*, a template for trauma recovery and peacebuilding. I suggest that it has to be applied at the global level as much as at local levels, in a proactive way, so as to facilitate growth at a large scale. Hart indicates that the following important elements have to be considered if a stable society is to be achieved: identity/ worldview, justice, religion/ spirituality, leadership, relief and development, conflict transformation, and trauma healing, all on the background of values related to human security (human needs, rights, dignity, and beliefs), and informed by culture and context (social, political, and economic).

In this chapter it is argued that we can proactively harness global crisis and facilitate growth, and that this can also help alleviate trauma at meso and micro levels. We can do that by understanding that humankind finds itself in a historic transition away from old values and old worldviews, away from old conceptualizations of Hart's features of identity, justice, religion, spirituality, and leadership, in sum, away from old adaptations – toward new values and new worldviews that represent adaptations to new circumstances. This transition is currently handled less than optimally. However, if managed more efficiently, this transition entails hope. This transition is intimately linked with human rights, humiliation and trauma, and it is when humiliating and trauma are not handled well, that they may undo the otherwise hopeful features. This chapter presents a frame that might be useful for harnessing crisis and trauma at all levels, global and local.

Before delving into this chapter in more depth, I believe, every reader has to make a personal decision. This decision is addressed in the following section.

Before doing anything else, in order to be efficient in their work, trauma experts have to take a proactive decision

I sympathize with my Japanese friend's feelings. I catch myself being envious of people who are able to close their eyes in blissful ignorance and stay uninformed of the crises humankind is facing. I also feel ashamed, ashamed of being part of the species Homo sapiens that behaves like locusts, short-sightedly destroying the resources they depend on for long-term survival – I feel ashamed when I hear that our global problems are not tackled properly because of so-called "lack of political will." Furthermore, I feel humiliated when some individuals choose to peddle their ignorance as so-called Realism and demean those others who try to fight for more far-sighted awareness. In short, I feel

everything, from traumatized, to ashamed and humiliated. I feel traumatized by global crisis, ashamed of global ignorance, and humiliated by people of short-sighted righteousness. I feel even more humiliated by people who indulge in double standards – I mean those who speak of human rights and human dignity and betray their words with their deeds. "To recognise humanity hypocritically and betray the promise humiliates in the most devastating way by denying the humanity professed" (Stephan Feuchtwang, November 14, 2002, in a personal note).

I am the founding manager of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (http://www.humiliationstudies.org) and we have two annual meetings. Currently, we conduct an online discussion in preparation for a meeting in Costa Rica, in September 2006. I opened the discussion by comparing humankind to a locust-minded crew on the Titanic, just before sinking, busying themselves with conflicts inside or between the cabins, both on the luxury first floor and among the poor further down in the ship, while trying to block out the looming trauma that the entire ship is sinking. The sinking of the ship is too big a trauma, too large to be fully allowed into our psyches – it is easier to concentrate on the "smaller" traumas that we think we can actually do something about. In other words, many people, like my Japanese friend, work for "bettering the world," however, in an honest moment they admit that they live in a lingering sense of hopelessness as to whether not all efforts may be pointless.

I suggest that we need to intervene here and make a proactive decision – even more, I propose that all other traumas, the smaller ones so to speak, will be easier to overcome if we succeed in facing the largest ones proactively.

If we think that it is hopeless for the world to avoid the abyss – it may indeed be hopeless – we better follow my Japanese friend's suggestion and make our last days as pleasant as possible. A terminal ill cancer patient takes lots of morphine to die in peace. If we decide that humankind's only chance is to get extinct (and planet Earth will certainly sigh in relief) let us pass our last days as agreeable as possible, with lots of pain killers.

However, in some cases, even very ill patients may get better if treated with the proper medicine. In that case, the treatment might diminish the patients' quality of life in the short-term, in exchange for the promise of surviving in the long term. If we decide to go for this kind of treatment for humankind, let us hold together through the hardship of this solution, without complaining, because long-term survival might be the price. In that case, we have to aim high and try to transform humankind from "locusts" to more far-sighted beings.

The decision to fight in times of crisis has nothing to do with naïve optimism – as C. Richard Snyder (2002) explains in his *hope theory*. On the contrary. Such a decision represents the insight that in times of crisis, pessimistic hand-wringing drains the last drop of energy that might be needed to save the situation. Hand-wringing is a luxury for good times. Outbursts of indignation at how "bad" our world is, are potentially suicidal in times of crisis. They foreclose the optimal strategy of facing crisis, namely firm and focused proaction.

It is *either or*. *Either* we agree with ourselves on the first *or* the second strategy. We cannot have both and we better don't hover in the middle. If we wish to avoid painful interventions we will not save the world. If we wish to save the world we have to face difficult times. Whichever decision we take, it is proactive to make the very decision. Lingering in between, keeping our eyes half shut, letting simmering traumatization seep

into our lives slowly, all this equals the worst strategies for facing crisis, namely merely reacting post-hoc or letting disaster overwhelm us. If we decide, consciously, for humankind to die out in peace, deeming our own locust-nature to be too resistant to reform, this is a proactive and noble decision. Settling on trying to save the world is another proactive and noble decision. In contrast, keeping still and letting the crisis slowly overwhelm and eat us from inside, while indulging in half-hearted reactions such as indignated hand-wringing and deep sighs, forecloses both pleasant death and courageous fight.

This chapter is written for people who have decided to fight. Those of you, who have chosen otherwise – a decision that I deeply respect – please disengage, and make your days as pleasant as possible. At the same time, please refrain from discouraging those who have chosen to fight. Please refrain from lamenting and interfering.

In my message to our Costa Rica meeting – here all participants have decided to fight – I outlined how we can conceptualize a deeper transformation of humankind. I began as follows:

> If we decide that transformation is what we want, then all details of our actions should feed into that larger goal. It would be rather unwise to engage in locust-like actionism, be it painting the cabins of the rich in the upper luxury floor of the Titanic with nicer colors or going down and helping the poor get their cabins painted for the first time. All such actions would be valuable in themselves, clearly it is good to have nicer colors, or help the poor. But it would not necessarily contribute to deeply transforming the crew of the ship from locusts into more constructive beings.

What are the solutions? What do we have to do to "save the world" and prevent and heal both global and local trauma? I believe that four steps are crucial. We have to 1) discard some old assumption that are wrong, 2) we have to develop world views that are both more adapted to the new reality of a globalizing interdependent world and more apt to promoting constructive strategies for further development where trauma can be prevented and healed, 3) we have to learn the skills to implement the new world views and strategies that we have developed, and 4) we need to build the institutions that give structure those new strategies.

In other texts – see, for example, Lindner (2006a) – I have spelled out these four points in detail. Here I wish to concentrate on the second point. As to the first point, one of the most dysfunctional beliefs, to my view, is the postulation that "man is aggressive by nature," meaning that humans are ravaging predators at their heart, and that therefore those of us who think that the dire state of the world can be improved at all are blue-eyed fools. As can be shown, this is a mistaken view. I do not want to go into further detail here. Furthermore, as to point three, I believe that the down-to-earth skills that are necessary to prevent and overcome trauma, are amply covered in other chapters of this book. As to the last point, in essence, it refers to realizing the so-called Millennium Goals (http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/).

Please let me now attend to the second point, namely how we could develop conceptualizations of our situation that are both more adapted to the new reality of a globalizing interdependent world and more apt to promoting constructive strategies for

further development, strategies that can help us avoid traumatization in the future and heal trauma where it has occurred.

The intricate connections between humiliation and trauma

The readers of this book, I assume, consider themselves to be human rights advocates. The first sentence in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." This means that nobody ought to be humiliated – humiliation is a violation of dignity that is illegitimate.

It seems easy to be a human rights advocate – the ideals are so noble. Problems arise, however, when we face complex situations. What if we are disgusted and humiliated by people who do not share our views, whom we perceive as humiliators, who undermine our trauma alleviation work? And what if we are tempted to lash out at them in rage, instead of extending respect to them? It is here that human rights advocates themselves get traumatized and have their ability to help reduced, both with respect to mass trauma and domestic trauma.

Let us look at some of those complex situations. Until 1991, I worked as a clinical psychologist (in the Middle East 1984-1991, among others), and was confronted with many complicated cases, including what is called honor killing. Imagine, a mother approaches you and explains that her daughter was raped and has to be killed to prevent family honor from being humiliated since the rapist will not marry her. As human rights defenders, you stipulate that marrying a raped girl off to her rapist, let alone killing the girl, is equivalent to compounding humiliation, not remedying it. The mother, in turn, regards your attitude as condescending, as humiliating for her cultural beliefs. In sum, we face several layers of honor, dignity and humiliation. What position do we take when we think of healing trauma? Whose honor or dignity do we protect? And which arguments do we use?

Let us illustrate this case with the following very recent news item that is entitled "A man has been jailed for life for murdering his sister after she fell in love with an asylum seeker" (at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/5179162.stm). These are the details: Greengrocer Azhar Nazir, 30, and his cousin Imran Mohammed, 17, stabbed Samaira Nazir, a 25-year-old recruitment consultant, 18 times at the family home in Southall in April 2005. The attack was barbaric, and witnessed by two young nieces. Samaira tried to flee but her brother dragged her back into the house where the assault continued. Samaira was killed after she asked to marry an Afghan man – instead of marrying someone in the Pakistani family circle. She fell in love with Salman Mohammed, who befriended the family after arriving in the UK in 2000. The relationship was kept secret at first, but when Samaira asked for permission to marry him, her family reacted angrily. Her fiancé was warned by Nazir: "We can get you anywhere if you get married, even if you are not in this country." Samaira had tried to talk to her mother about the problem at a relative's house, but her mother refused. A neighbor heard Samaira shout, "You are not my mother any more." Samaira's father was arrested and bailed during the investigation but fled to Pakistan. The judge said to Samaira's brother: "You claimed to have loved your sister but were guilty of orchestrating her murder."

Now let us read another text, by Nadim Matta, a management consultant and US citizen of Lebanese origin. During the civil war in Lebanon, he worked for USAID and for Save the Children Federation in Beirut. On July 18, 2006, Matta (2006) writes about the Middle East crisis and the bombs falling on Lebanon:

> The more plausible rationale for the "shock and awe" operation is to make the situation so painful for Lebanese civilians that they "take responsibility" for the actions of one of their own, the Hizbollah militia. The argument goes as follows: if the cost is made high enough, citizens will pressure their government into doing what it has been struggling to do for months: disarming Hizbollah. This strategy was beginning to work in the first day of the Israeli operation, as voices in the country began to be raised against Hizbollah and its reckless action. But as the intensity and the perniciousness of the Israeli bombing escalated, even the most moderate civilians in Lebanon experienced an emotional transformation into what can be likened to the revulsion of an innocent person being terrorised into submission by a vastly superior power. In an affront to human dignity and disregard for human life, Israel is inflicting severe pain and suffering on a huge number of civilians to incite them to do its bidding (Matta, 2006, http://www.commongroundnews.org).

What we meet in these short snapshots are two profoundly different and incompatible world views, the human rights view of equal dignity for all (represented by the British judge and Nadim Matta), and the world of honorable ranking, where masters exercise authority over underlings (represented by the family of Samaira and by certain forces in the Middle East). What should a trauma expert do in this conundrum?

What we see as detestable humiliation today was once seen as legitimate humbling

Demeaning, degrading, debasing, all those words entail a downward movement at their core; at the heart of the practice of humiliation we find a movement of holding down. Up to very recently (and still today, in some world regions), holding down a person was not necessarily regarded as illicit. The verbs *to humble* and *to humiliate* were used rather interchangeably until not long ago. It is only about 250 years ago that the meanings of those two verbs separated and developed into diametrically opposed directions in the English language: *humility* remained to be seen as a virtue, while *humiliation* acquired the taste of an illicit violation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the earliest recorded use of *to humiliate* meaning to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone does not occur until 1757.

If we ask what else happened around that historical period, we see that other features began to change as well: an awareness of One World began to emerge, the notion of an individual self started to unfold, science as a moral project gained visibility, and it was soon time for the French Revolution and the U.S. Declaration of Independence, and, not least, the human rights idea of equal dignity for all entered mainstream stage.

As it seems that humankind, at least in the West, set in motion a process of deep cultural and social change around 300 to 250 years ago. I suggest that this change needs to be conceptualized as part of a much larger historic discourse, namely a discourse

around humiliation, or, more precisely, around the option that something or somebody can be held down or put down.

In my work, I treat concepts such as democracy, communism, capitalism, modernism, or postmodernism as epiphenomena, or side effects of deeper logics, which are inscribed in a time frame that reaches back more than 10,000 years. William Ury (1999), anthropologist, and director of the Harvard University Project on Preventing War, drew up a simplified depiction of history. He pulls together elements from anthropology, game theory and conflict studies to describe three major types of society: a) simple hunter-gatherers, b) complex agriculturists, and c) the currently emerging knowledge society.

In Ury's system, simple hunter-gatherers lived in a world of coexistence and open networks, within which conflicts were negotiated, rather than addressed by coercion. Small groups of around 200 people enjoyed rather egalitarian social institutions. The abundance of wild food represented an expandable pie of resources that did not force opponents into win-lose paradigms.

When we study the historic facts, we find that the hunter-gatherer way of life dominated the globe until about 10,000 years ago, when it "hit the wall." Around 10,000 years ago, rather suddenly in terms of long-term history, hunter-gatherers no longer could merely wander off and find untouched abundance of wild food in the next valley, because other people were already there (*circumscription* is the anthropological term): all the easily accessible parts of planet Earth were inhabited by Homo sapiens. We could call this the first round of globalization for humankind.

Humankind came up with a response to this crisis, namely agriculture (*intensification* is the anthropological term). However, as Ury spells out, there was a problem with this response. Complex agriculturalists lived in a world of coercion. They lived within closed hierarchical pyramids of power on land that represents a fixed pie and pushes antagonists into win-lose situations governed by strict rules (land is either mine or yours and it does not represent an expandable pie of resources).

If we look at Ury's theory, we can add that dependence on land, with its inherent win-lose framing, also triggered what international relations theory calls the *security dilemma*. The term was coined by John Herz (1950), to explain why states that have no intention to harm one another may still end up in competition and war. Its very essence is one of tragedy. The security dilemma is a dilemma that forces bloody competition to emerge out of mutual distrust, even as nobody is interested in going to war in the first place. The threat of preemption with preemption is the ultimate and inevitable outcome of the traditional security dilemma. Under conditions of the security dilemma, fear reigns, Hobbesian fear of surprise attacks from outside one's nation's borders. Constant preparations for war drain societal resources. Everybody has to be on alert, continuously, lead by their leaders and governmental institutions. Stereotyped fear of outgroups (for example, of other nations) permeates ingroups. And indeed, for the last 10,000 years, this fear became manifest in societal, social and cultural institutions, from "Ministries of War" or "Defense" to identity constructs such as patriotism, or gender division – see Goldstein (2001), and how he links war and gender division.

In other words, the world of honorable domination/submission could be regarded as an adaptation to the security dilemma, which is an outflow of the fact that land became the resource of most of humankind, a resource that by definition is not expandable.

In a world of honorable domination/submission, all share the view that it is God's will or nature's order that some people are born higher and ought to hold down those who are lesser beings. For centuries, domestic chastisement, for example, was an entitlement and duty for masters to carry out – a disobedient wife or child or slave had to accept being brutally punished. The pain that was inflicted was seen as "prosocial" pain, as a "necessary lesson," necessary to achieve calm and stability in the hierarchical system. Myriads of social systems were invented to keep this top-down order in place, from kow-towing to regular beatings and killings so as to "remind" underlings of their due lowly place.

When masters held down underlings to keep them humble, even the most atrocious methods were seen as "honorable medicine," and the victims had no right to invoke the notion of humiliation as a form of violation. Only the masters themselves, when their privileged position was questioned, could appeal to humiliation as an infringement of their honor and redeem it, for example, in certain historic periods, by going to duel.

Honor killings provide an example for practices that have their place in a larger framework of honorable domination/submission. Only an obedient daughter is a "good" daughter; a disobedient daughter is seen as a shame for the family, and the humiliated family honor "must" be reconstituted by cutting out the diseased limb, which is the daughter (this was the explanation I usually was presented with, when I was exposed to such cases during my work).

Likewise, it is felt that "messages of strength" "have" to be sent to unruly underlings (nowadays they easily acquire the label "terrorists"), messages that make it utterly clear where their due place is, so as to achieve calm and safety within the hierarchical system.

Human rights, in contrast to honorable domination/submission, represent an adaptation to new circumstances, namely to the current round of globalization leading up to a global knowledge society that removes the security dilemma as defining principle.

Globalization entails a number of benign elements

Ury posits that a knowledge society resembles the hunter-gatherer model because the pie of resources – knowledge – appears to be infinitely expandable, lending itself to win-win solutions. This type of society rejects tightly knit hierarchical structures in favor of the open network espoused by our earliest ancestors. Negotiation and contract replace command lines, and coexistence is the primary strategy.

Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio show in their research that an environment that rests on win-win conditions is more benign than environments framed by win-lose conditions. Gaertner and Dovidio (1999) explain that a win-win situation lends itself to cooperation, while zero sum circumstances increase the likelihood of divisions among people. If we take Ury's historic picture, we find that a rather benign period of hunting-gathering was followed by a relatively malign period of complex agriculture, leading up to the benign promise of a win-win framing through knowledge in a global knowledge society.

Unlike land, knowledge – ideas, new thoughts, and novel inventions – has no limits. Agriculturalists depend on land, while information bearers find themselves in win-win situations; there is always another innovation out there waiting to be invented (I am not speaking of crude economic growth here, on the contrary). The innovative ideas that

power modern technologies that in turn power globalization therefore also render a benign win-win push towards cooperation.

Yet, globalization entails many more positive elements. Among them is waning of ingroup/outgroups divisions. Humankind is being freed from destructive biases in tact with the emergence of the idea and reality of *one single family of humankind* who is jointly responsible for their tiny home planet Earth. A host of destructive *biases* arises when we engage in polarizing "us," or our ingroup," from "them," or our outgroups. As long as we polarize ingroups from outgroups, we suffer from biases such as *attributions errors* and *false polarization effect,* to name just a few, all of which are not conducive to fruitful cooperation.

Globalization, or the coming together of humankind, or what anthropologists call the *ingathering* of the human tribe, by creating one single in-group, does away with destructive psychological biases. These are very good news. At the same time, the coming-into-being of one single ingroup fosters a benign promise to all human beings, namely that they all are invited to use their full capacities instead of being pressed into social prisons of domination/submission designed to fight outgroups.

Humiliation gains significance as obscene violation of human rights

However, we ask, if globalization is such a good thing, how come that we live in a world of environmental destruction and violent conflicts where a few indulge in conspicuous over-consumption and the majority lives in squalor?

Three elements are important. First, as stipulated in the first Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights redefine the notion of humiliation: humiliation is no longer seen as prosocial humbling but as a violation of the very core of human dignity. Treating people as lesser beings is no longer admissible. On the contrary, treating people as lesser beings turns into the worst form of violation. Humiliation acquires the potential to cause deep wounds, deeper than ever before, wounds at the core of ones very being, at the core of ones humanity. Wherever people are treated as lesser beings, no longer are calm and stability the result, but revulsion and upheaval.

Second, human rights move the entitlement to invoke humiliation from masters to underlings. No longer are elites entitled to cry "humiliation" when their privileges are infringed upon, and no longer are they permitted to take up the sword to defend their supremacy. In times of human rights, elites are required to descend humbly and discontinue arrogating superiority. Nelson Mandela went to the white elite in South Africa and asked them to humble themselves without crying "humiliation." He took humiliation away from the elites so to speak, and gave it to the oppressed. He went to the downtrodden and bestowed on them the entitlement to invoke humiliation. The underlings, those who traditionally were expected to quietly accept mistreatment, received the right to feel humiliated, hurt, angry, and empowered to rise up. The downtrodden masses received a powerful instrument that only a few elites had before.

In other words, the Mandelas of this world, the human rights advocates, use feelings of humiliation as the very fuel for the human rights movement. (I treat Nelson Mandela in an *ideal type* fashion and focus on his constructive strategies, which, I feel, are not minimized by various criticisms that people may be directing at him as a person.) Mandelas teach those at the bottom of the pyramid of power, the poor, the

disenfranchised, the marginalized, that their plight no longer is ordained by God or nature, but a violation of human rights – that they have a right to feel humiliated, violated, hurt, and get angry. Under the security dilemma the negative emotion that ruled the world was fear, fear of attack. One community feared the other, the enemy. Human rights, in contrast, invite all human beings into one single human family where everybody enjoys equal dignity. All are neighbors, no longer friends versus enemies. Everybody is told that he or she can expect to be treated with respect. And everybody feels humiliated if this respect is failing. Thus, while the period of honor during human history was characterized by fear, collective fear of attack from outgroups, human rights introduce humiliation, humiliation as reaction to failing respect for equal dignity on the part of each individual qua being an individual, no longer qua being part of a collective.

And humiliation has awesome potency. If human rights promoters are not cautious, this "fuel" of the human rights revolution is so powerful that it can eat its children. In Rwanda, not the masters, but the former underlings, the Hutus, when they had the power, attempted to eradicate their former master in a genocide. The wisdom of Mandela saved the white elite in South Africa from this fate.

In my book *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* – see Lindner (2006d) – chapter seven is entitled "The Humiliation Addiction." There I explain that feelings of humiliation can turn out to be as strong and compelling as an addiction. For drug addicts, self-interest is replaced by their craving for the next fix. Likewise, people who feel humiliated may hunger for revenge and might act in ways that lead to suicide and homicide. Some of the so-called suicide bombers that terrorize citizens around the world today may harbor precisely this mix of feelings. Hitler, to be sure, in his obsession with undoing national humiliation, led millions into their death – he clearly did not follow rational deliberations of self-interest. Trauma experts need to understand the potency of humiliation. Philosopher Avishai Margalit (2002) proposes that some people may become obsessively attached to feeling humiliated, not least because this secures the "benefits" of the victim status and an entitlement for retaliation.

As to the definition of humiliation, we understand now that humiliation has two deeply contradictory definitions – honor humiliation is not at all the same as dignity humiliation. Both entail the downward movement of holding down somebody; this is what both definitions share. However, in the world of honor, holding down underlings is no violation; it only becomes a violation in a human rights frame that prescribes equal dignity for all. In the world of ranked honor, only the elites have the right to interpret an attempt to put them down as violation, not their underlings.

Now we come to the third point that undercuts the otherwise hopeful promises of globalization at the current point in time. The transition from the old honor order to the new human rights order is carried out in such a haphazard way that feelings of humiliation are compounded. The old honor order condones the ranking of people into higher and lesser beings. The human rights order of equal dignity for all squarely rejects this. Both arrangements cannot coexist, they are mutually exclusive. One cannot rank people and not rank them at the same time. Like in the case of driving, a country can have either left-hand driving or right-hand driving, but not both. If a country's leadership is too weak to carry out a clean transition from one system to the other, with some people continuing to drive on the left side while others begin to drive on the right side, the mere incompatibility will lead to accidents. Currently, humankind allows for precisely such

accidents. Humankind manages the transition to equal dignity for everybody abysmally badly. And the accidents that are bound to occur multiply feelings of humiliation on all sides.

Feelings of humiliation abound because from the point of view of one world view, the respective other world view seems evil. For many of my human rights friends, for example, people who condone that lesser beings (women, for example) need to be dominated by higher beings (men, for example) seem wicked, and witnessing their deeds infuses hopelessness, despair and rage. And vice versa. People who believe that it is ordained by nature or by divine forces that superiors are placed above inferiors, feel that human rights poke holes into the very rock of true morality. And the powerful in the world, the national elites, even those who advocate human rights, in practice, often side with the dominators of world, for reasons of "national security" and "national stability." The result is that all sides feel that the other side humiliates the core of their most cherished moral beliefs and demeans their most noble motives. All are at an impasse that traumatizes everybody.

And this contributes to creating a world that is split in "terrorists" and "heroes," responded to by "war on terrorism" on one side and "heroic resistance of freedom fighters" on the other side. And this split forecloses what the world needs most to make globalization humane and fair, namely cooperation and joint caring for the survival of humankind and its planet.

How should a human rights worker, a helper, a trauma expert, the reader of this book, act efficiently in such a mess? Millions of abused women in this world survive without trauma counseling. When the American Embassy in Kenya was bombed in 1998, American psychiatrists flew in. My Kenyan friends were thankful. However, they shared with me with a certain amount of bitterness that millions of Africans live under circumstances of poverty and conflict that are more traumatizing than the bombing – trauma represents "normality" for them – and they all have to cope on their own. There are no resources available to help them. And resources are not forthcoming either. A report drawn up by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005) found that the gap between rich and poor is now wider than it was a decade ago, both globally and locally. And there is little help in sight. The so-called Doha round of talks which began in 2004, failed again in July 2006. World Trade Organization (WTO) director general Pascal Lamy warned the rich countries: "We have missed a very important opportunity," and Charity Christian Aid said that the collapse of talks struck "a terrible blow" for the world's poor (read on http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/5209010.stm).

In other words, the world is full of traumatized people, victimized by large-scale power play that is detrimental to a fair global economy, detrimental to a healthy global climate, and unhelpful in solving violent conflicts around the world. Should a trauma expert focus on some smaller traumas of the rich who can pay for treatment and forget about the needs of all others? Or should the trauma expert despair at the antagonism of the larger context? Here we are back to our Japanese friend.

I suggest that hopelessness and despair stem from a lack of understanding of how historic social change works and thus represent an unnecessary expenditure of energy. And, as mentioned earlier, rage – rather than endured as a state of being – is best harnessed into proactive constructive action. The human rights movement needs to be

more aware of the fact that we live in the middle of a large-scale social transition, which does not realize itself instantaneously and automatically, and surely not through indignation-entrepreneurship or rage, but requires wise management.

Before discussing this point in more depth, please let me make a brief step aside and look at the current-state-of-the art of research on humiliation.

Current state-of-the-art with respect to research on humiliation

Since humiliation has become more visible only recently, few researchers have studied this phenomenon explicitly so far. Mostly, the phenomenon of humiliation figures implicitly, for example, in literature on violence and war. The view that humiliation may be a particularly forceful phenomenon is supported, however, by the research of some authors – Gilligan (1996), Hale (1994), Hartling and Luchetta (1999), Klein (1991), Lewis (1971), Miller (1993)**,** Negrao et al. (2005), Nisbett and Cohen (1996), Retzinger (1991), Scheff (1990), Vogel and Lazare (1990), and Volkan (2004).

There is, furthermore, a significant literature in philosophy on the *politics of recognition* and ressentiment – see Honneth (1995), Honneth (1997), and Scheler (1912). The relationship between guilt, shame and aggression has been addressed – see, for example, Tangney et al. (1992) – as has the relationship between anger and aggression – see, for example, Averill (2001). *Hazing* and *bullying* entail humiliation at their core – Olweus (1993) is a pioneer in research on bullying. Culture differences have been highlighted – see, among others, Smith and Bond (1999)

According to Goffman, *face* is the positive social value a person wishes to attain for herself in a social interaction. Humiliation can be described as a loss of face; the picture one wishes to present is suddenly discredited – see Goffman (1953), and Goffman (1967). The link between humiliation and aggression has not received much attention among researchers so far. Among the few scholars addressing this topic are Mischel and De Smet (2000), who explain that *rejection-sensitive* men may get "hooked" on situations of debasement where they can feel humiliated. Furthermore, *malignant narcissism* has been linked to humiliation. Feelings of humiliation and shame may lead to narcissistic rage and acts of aggression meant to lessen pain and increase self-worth; international leaders, when publicly humiliated, in some cases, may instigate mass destruction and war – see Steinberg (1991), and Steinberg (1996). And at last, there is also a link between help and humiliation; help may be resented by low-status groups – see Nadler (2002).

Lindner has pioneered transdisciplinary work on humiliation that includes all fields from political science, sociology, anthropology, history, theology, social psychology and clinical psychology – see http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php.

Mass healing through egalization

At the current point in time, so far, globalization has led to deep global humiliation and trauma. In order to disentangle malign and benign influences at the current point in human history, I have coined the term *egalization*. Humiliation and trauma can only be prevented and healed through marrying globalization with egalization, or, in other words, through putting into practice, beyond mere rhetoric, the ideals of human rights.

The term egalization is meant to match the word globalization and at the same time differentiate it from words such as equality, equity, or egalitarianism. The main point is *equal dignity* as stipulated in the Human Rights Convention. As discussed above, human rights ideals oppose hierarchical rankings of human worthiness that were once regarded as "normal" (and are still "normal" in many parts of the world).

The term egalization is meant to avoid claiming that everybody should become equal or the same and that there should be no differences between people. *Egality* can coexist with functional hierarchy that regards all participants as possessing equal dignity; egality can not coexist, though, with hierarchy that defines some people as lesser beings and others as more valuable. (Even though egalization is not the same as equality, there is a connection between equality and equal dignity that is "hidden" in the human rights stipulation that equal chances and enabling environments for all are necessary to protect human dignity.)

Egalization, however, is not just a task to be carried out externally, in society, but also internally, in the way we connect with others and even within our own psyche. Again I suggest that trauma experts start with themselves, by realizing egalization with their colleagues and within their own selves. Formerly, when underlings staged revolutions, they merely replaced their former master and kept the hierarchical system in place – former inferiors soon acted as new tyrants. The human rights revolution is different, and recognizing this fact is essential for efficient trauma recovery to work. The human rights revolution entails two parts, first the dismantling of tyrants and second the dismantling of the very tyrannical system. And this tyrannical system is not merely a characteristic of the larger social environment; it is also to be found within ourselves. Many in the peace movement overlook this fact – Lindner (2006c) addresses this point. Many human rights defenders are angry people, not least because they are frustrated at the uncoordinated slowness of the human rights revolution. They accumulate frustration and some fall back on old-fashioned authoritarian top-down behavior – some behave aggressively and lash out, even at their own friends and colleagues. In other words, some try to achieve the first part of the human rights revolution by forgetting the second. They compound trauma by not recognizing that humiliating humiliators and demeaning co-workers is not a strategy that is commensurable with human rights. They need to learn to walk their talk and understand that human rights bestow dignity on every human being, including those who are slow to grasp that new times have come. Tyrants, supremacists, adherents of the old honor order, they all must be humbled with respect. Whenever humiliating strategies are employed, supposedly to achieve human rights aims, the effect is counterproductive because moderates are being radicalized, rather than extremists becoming more moderate. Abu Ghraib is a name that has become known around the world because its story of humiliation demonstrates this.

Human rights can be implemented only through proactive non-humiliating interventions, not through hand-wringing, and not through indignation-entrepreneurship or worse. For 10,000 years, humankind, caught in the security dilemma, adapted to the rather malign win-lose context of fear by maintaining hierarchical ranking systems for human worthiness. Masters held down underlings and this was regarded as utterly legitimate. It is only something like 250 years ago that humankind began to make a moral u-turn and removed legitimacy from 10,000 years of practice. And this is because the new circumstances of ingathering require new adaptations, fortunately, more benign ones

than during the past 10,000 years. However, we cannot expect that everybody understands these dynamics evenly fast. Some lag behind and some are ahead. The readers of this book are ahead, they are the avant-garde. The worst service the avant-garde can render to humankind at this point would be to add to the complexity of the transition by engaging in dejected wailing or humiliation-entrepreneurship on their part.

Trauma experts need to follow the example of Mandela, who emerged from 27 years of humiliation without losing hope, without lashing out at his humiliators in blind rage, and without paying back by inflicting humiliation on his humiliators in return. Trauma experts must avoid the Hitler-like exit from feelings of humiliation. Hitler plunged the world into World War II, supposedly remedying the national humiliation of Germany that had been inflicted on Germany by ways of the Versailles Treaties at the end of World War I with the aim to keep Germans down and discourage them from repeating aggression. Unfortunately, this strategy backfired and Hitler invited all Germans into a narrative of national humiliation for which, unlike Mandela, he offered war as remedy – and millions paid with their lives. Mandela – in contrast to Hitler – demonstrates how the explosiveness of feelings of humiliation can be channeled differently and more constructively. This constructive channeling is at the core of recovery from trauma, both mass trauma and individual trauma. In the spirit of Jean Baker Miller (1986), we need to learn how to "wage good conflict."

Mandelas wage good conflict by stopping cycles of humiliation, with toughness and firmness, so that space is opened for new ways of dignified living. The Mandelas of this world can be called the moderates. Hitlers are extremists, who, under the pretext of toughness and firmness, wage bad conflict and keep turning spirals of humiliation deeper into the abyss.

The example of Mandela shows also that human rights are not a fancy Western idea. All the downtrodden around the world respond with joy if told that they are entitled to live a better life. Usually, only their elites hesitate, rejecting human rights as foreign ideas in order to hold on to their privileges. Elites often have a hard time recognizing the fact that a world of equal dignity for all is not only the new adaptation required by new global circumstances, but that it would also benefit them.

Human rights are not just a moral call; they also entail straight forward practical advantages, advantages that went unused under the conditions of the security dilemma. A world of equal dignity for all is beneficial for everybody because the old division of masters presiding over underlings handicaps all players: underlings are prevented from contributing to larger society with their creativity and leadership, and elites are prevented from enjoying caring and nurturing. The old world was divided, among others, into a female domestic sphere and a male public sphere. Fathers, for example, would not take pleasure in domestic life; they would not change the diapers of their babies, play with them, and see them grow up. At the same time, their wives would not make strategic decisions but would follow their husbands' definitions of life. Both sacrificed the enjoyment that life in its entirety has on offer, both in caring and in leadership, while society at large under-utilized the available potential for creativity and leadership. To employ the image of the sword arm, men were allowed to only use their right arm, the sword arm, while their nurturing arm was bound behind their back. Women had their right arm tied up behind their back and were not allowed to strategize and lead; they were only permitted to use their left arm for caring, harmonizing and nurturing in the private

sphere. Human rights free both arms for everybody. This is why human rights are so humanizing, not only are they morally compelling but also plain useful as defining frame for structuring human life. Egalization is beneficial for all.

Realizing egalization in the world and in our selves

Thus, egalization, at international, national, intergroup, intragroup, interpersonal and intrapersonal levels, is called for, if trauma prevention and recovery shall be successful.

If we start with the global level, realizing egalization means building a *decent* global community, following Avishai Margalit's (1996) call for a decent society, in which institutions no longer humiliate citizens. In practice, this means working for the Millennium Goals and for building global institutions that are based on human rights and that free the highest global level from the current might-is-right ranking that contravenes equal dignity for all at every lower level.

As part of this endeavor institutionalized humiliation has to be undone. A senior adviser in the European Union Delegation of the European Commission in Kenya explained to me how humiliation is institutionalized in the relations between the international organizations and the recipient countries (this discussion took place on December 2, 1998, in Somaliland and I quote from my notes). He explained that though the principles of empowerment are widely known and accepted, they are not followed. What is needed today is the exercise of empowerment: "We need cooperation, not assistance!" he said:

> We need joint management of projects, together with local partners, with international organization slowly phasing out. […] Of course humiliation should not now be moved from the recipient to the donor, there must be a balance. The bottom line is always: avoidance of corruption, where does the money go to, transparency, good governance, and accountability. Humiliation is now institutionalized in the way international organizations approach the recipients and what is needed is the operationalisation of ways how to change that.

Institutionalized rage has to be undone as well. Antoinette Errante (2006) writes about Mozambique and criticizes that donors and the international community push post-conflict countries prematurely into post-post-war frames. Broad-based recovery is simply pasted over, she warns, and the international community, by focusing on the "integration" of adult combatants, facilitates nothing but the transferring of combatants from one organization where violence is normalized (the military) to another (society at-large). Errante documents how unresolved anger and shame paralyze national conversations regarding post-war healing and reconstruction, more even, how rage becomes institutionalized, and as a result, how the needs of the victims, in particular child soldiers and war-affected children, are not attended to.

Apart from undoing institutionalized humiliation and rage, cultural resources for trauma recovery need to be used more systematically and at larger scales. All cultures of the world need to be "harvested" for constructive practices of healing – see for a discussion Lindner (2006b). There is a wide range of trauma healing resources available that is addressed in other chapters in this book. Many cultures know about art, for

example, and how it can express trauma and facilitate healing. From Africa we can learn to apply *ubuntu* philosophy – following the Zulu maxim of *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* or "a person is a person through other persons" – Michael Jesse Battle (1997) explains how Archbishop Desmond Tutu based his concept of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions on ubuntu. Or, the Great Lakes in Africa can teach us *gacaca* reconciliation meetings, also based on ubuntu.

From Japan we might learn communal apology. I am writing this paragraph on July 25, 2006, in Japan, while watching the news on television. I watch two officials of the Paloma group (a producer of water heaters) apologize to the family of a 21-year-old man who died of carbon monoxide poisoning in 1996 due to a malfunctioning water heater (see http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20060721TDY02010.htm). Both officials are shown how they first pay their respects to a shrine in the living room of the family, which displays the picture of the young victim. Then the officials kneel on the carpet in the living room, facing the victim's father and mother who kneel in front of them. The officials are shown to bow with their heads almost touching the floor, staying in this position while the victim's father and mother ask them why this accident took so long to uncover, and why so many water heaters malfunctioned over the years. In other words, here we see a public display of mourning, reproach and atonement between a company and a family hurt by one of the company's products. (So far, the old honor code prevents similar deep apologies from the Japanese side at higher international levels; however, the cultural template is there to be used and facilitating this wisely, in Mandela-like ways, is precisely the task of human rights advocates.)

At the level of the individual, self-help methods can be learned by larger numbers of people, independently of individual therapists. For example, it is useful to learn to relax the psoas muscles, the "fight or flight" muscles which tend to contract under conditions of stress. Releasing exercises restore a sense of calmness in the body and can be learned also by people in remote areas of the world – see, for example, http://www.traumaprevention.com/.

Tools for large-scale trauma recovery such as art or self-help are covered more comprehensively in other chapters of this book.

Concluding remarks

Barry Hart's *Peacebuilding Wheel* can help us to proactively face crisis and facilitate growth, both with respect to mass trauma and individual trauma. This chapter discusses how humankind's current large-scale historic transition touches upon every single element in Hart's *Peacebuilding Wheel*, upon the cultural, social, political, and economic contexts of societies around the world and how we define human needs, rights, dignity, and beliefs. The definitions of what we mean by identity, worldview, justice, religion, spirituality, leadership, relief and development, and conflict transformation, are all embedded into the present all-encompassing movement toward human rights ideals which stipulate equal dignity for all, a movement that leads away from a culture where human worthiness and value are ranked. This transition permeates all world regions and all levels, from global levels to everybody's psyche.

Global warming and global peace are as much part of this transition as my inner psychological world. If I may take myself as an example, I am a "bad" woman: I grew up in a rather conservative family where a "good" woman is subservient to her husband. I struggled for years with this definition and was less than efficient in making the transition to redefining what a "good" woman means for me, namely a woman who deserves equal dignity as compared to a man and to a husband. For a long while, I merely felt bad. Currently this transition is handled in similarly inefficient ways almost everywhere. This is a great loss, because, if managed more capably, this transition holds great promise and hope.

Among the pitfalls of this transition is the fact that human rights forcefully introduce feelings of humiliation into this world, feelings of humiliation when dignity is not respected. And since the transition toward human rights is so dismally slow, feelings of humiliation are rife everywhere. And since these feelings are potentially so strong and have the capacity to lead to ravaging traumatization and hatred, they often undo the otherwise hopeful elements.

In my article "Humiliation - Trauma That Has Been Overlooked" I wrote – see Lindner (2001):

> Human rights do not abolish humiliation. On the contrary, they intensify the experience. In a human rights society, we do not accept humiliation as a "normal" mechanism built into the bone and muscle of society. Instead, we reject its legitimacy.' In other words, humiliation, already hurtful in an honour society where it is routinely used as habitual means to put people down or keep them down, becomes many times more hurtful when it occurs in a human-rights society. In a human-rights context humiliation links up to the inner core of dignity of each person qua being born as a human being, and acquires an explosive potential (Lindner, 2001, p. 14).

If we translate Hart's terms into the world of ranked honor, my identity of a "good" woman is to be a respectful and subservient daughter and wife and thus protect the honor of my men; my worldview is that it is nature's order that I am born as lesser being and that justice is being done when I am chastised in case of disobedience; I sin against my religion and my spiritual orientation when I do not know my due lowly place; for me to demonstrate leadership is to show my daughters the path of due respectful subservience; relief and development need to underpin this framing; and conflict transformation is successful when unruly underlings are made to quietly and thankfully accept the authority of their patrons.

In contrast, if we translate Hart's terms into a human rights framing, my identity of a "good" woman is to be treated as equal in dignity with my brothers and my husband; my worldview is that it is nature's order that I deserve to be treated as equal in dignity with everybody else and that justice is being done when my dignity is respected; I sin against my religion and my spiritual orientation when I allow humiliation to occur, both for myself and others; for me to demonstrate leadership is to show my sons and daughters the path of respect for equal dignity for all; relief and development need to underpin this framing; and conflict transformation is successful when underlings are given a voice and elevated to the same level of dignity as everybody else.

When we see those two worldviews, and what they entail, we understand that the current transition toward building an ethical and institutional framework that is based on human rights at a global level is at the core of trauma prevention and recovery work, both for global and local communities and for each individual. We understand that the transition in itself is very difficult – potent feelings of humiliation drive the human rights movement – and that the current incoherence and slowness of the process compound humiliation and trauma. This chapter presents a frame that might be useful for harnessing crisis and trauma at all levels, global and local, through humanizing globalization – by imbuing *globalization* with *egalization* (equal dignity for all) – wisely, patiently, calmly, intelligently, and far-sighted.

In a first step, before focusing on trauma of others, trauma experts, the readers of this book included, are advised to turn their eyes both more inwards and more outwards than usual and invest part of their time in learning how to walk the talk themselves (this is the inward, micro level), and on helping to build global institutions for a decent global society (this is the outward global macro level). Only on the background of such an engagement can helpers uphold their own motivation and remain efficient helpers. If helpers try to evade the trauma entailed in the larger global context into which we all are embedded, by focusing on "smaller" traumas at national, communal or domestic levels, the interference from the larger world will undermine their motivation. And if they fall back on old top-down behavior in their ways of dealing with themselves and others, they will compound humiliation and trauma.

Globalization is powered by technology and our use of it for shrinking the world, while egalization depends on our moral decisions. Egalization is about how we treat others and ourselves, whether we uphold a system of domination/submission or whether we believe we ought to treat everybody with equal respect. Egalization is about whether we use fear as the "glue" for coercive hierarchies or prefer to live in creative networks held together by mutual respect and the avoidance of humiliation. A friend wrote to me yesterday: "As you know, for example, academia in the U.S. seems to require many individuals to employ power-over maneuvers to gain recognition. It is a tradition that rewards individual, competitive achievement, while discouraging and devaluing creative, collective efforts" (personal message, July 26, 2006). This is an example of a culture that has to be overcome.

 "Globalization critics" oppose the lack of egalization entailed in the current design of globalization. Globalization critics do not necessarily wish for less globalization, but for a different kind of globalization. They want this world not only to shrink in "width," but also to become "flatter" – see Thomas L. Friedman (2005). Human rights advocates wish to do more than bring down tyrants (and let them be replaced by new tyrants); human rights promoters aim at dismantling the very system that keeps supposedly higher beings above lower beings. Egalization means dismantling oppressive hierarchies and building institutions, both locally and globally, that respect that every citizen is equal in dignity, while healing, preventing and avoiding humiliation. This vision is in line with Margalit's (1996) call that we need to build a *decent* society, or, in the case of the whole world, a *decent global village* – a world based on human rights, extending the opportunity for dignified lives to all.

This is not a dream. In former times, only rulers counted. My grandmother said to me once, "Wir kleinen Leute können ja sowieso nichts tun. Die da oben machen ja doch was

sie wollen,“ meaning that the masses, the “little people“ as she called it, had no power. And she was right, then. However, today, this has changed. Globalization and its technology give virtually everybody the tools to become a global Mandela or a global Hitler. Trauma experts have a responsibility to help everybody to become Mandelas and help us all create decent and dignified living conditions for humankind.

Today I received a message from Cairo. An Israeli scholar had overcome his hesitation and had traveled to Cairo and given his paper at a conference there (see http://www.humiliationstudies.org/news/archives/001304.html). He writes, “The next day, one of the people at the conference who had heard the presentation approached me and complimented me on the paper. He introduced himself as a Professor at the American University in Beirut. He had also come to the conference in spite of the ‘situation,’ a word that has become a euphemism for the death and destruction, the agony and the pain that we all share.” My friend goes on describing how both shared their dismay at the situation and how they expressed compassion for the other side’s suffering. A little while later they met again, and my Israeli friend told his colleague from Beirut that his remarks had brought tears to my friend’s eyes. He writes, “We looked at each other and embraced.” My friend then read the paper written by his colleague from Beirut and shares his feelings with us as follows, “In the prologue he [the Professor from Beirut] noted the words of two Egyptian artists, Ahmad Fouad Negm, and the Oud player, Sheikh Imam. He brought forth only four lines which stress the power of words, the main tools of communication. These words echo and reverberate in my mind, refusing to leave me, to allow me any rest or respite:

> Should the sun drown in the sea of clouds
> And should the world be engulfed in waves of darkness
> You who search, and care, for meaning
> Shall find nothing to guide you, but eyes made of words.

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