

World Peace Through Equal Dignity in Mutual Solidarity

9th World Parliament of Science, Religion/Spirituality and Philosophy - 2023
9th World Parliament of Science, Religion/Spirituality and Philosophy to Promote 'Culture Of Peace' in the World based on the Ethos of G-20, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम्)
Shri Kashi-Vishwanath Corridor, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India
Thursday 9th to Saturday 11th February 2023
organised by MAEER's MIT World Peace University, Pune
under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Vishwanath Karad
www.mitwpu-worldparliament.com

Session 6: 'Need to attain Holistic Sustainable Development Goals in pursuit of World Peace'
10th February 2023
<https://www.mitwpu-worldparliament.com/session-theme-2023>

Evelin Lindner
Medical Doctor and Psychologist
Dr. med., Dr. psychol.
Founding President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS,
humiliationstudies.org) and
Co-Founder of the World Dignity University Initiative

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Abstract (412 words)

We live in times in which *sociocide* and *ecocide* are systemic. Ecocide is the killing of our *ecosphere*, of our ecological world, of which we humans only are a small part. Sociocide is the killing of our *sociosphere*, of the cohesion in our human communities, local and global. The suffix *-cide* means 'killing'. Words such as genocide, suicide, or pesticide all end on *-cide*, stemming from Latin *-cida* and the verb *caedo*, *caedes*, *caedere*, *caedi*, *caedum*.

Ecocide and sociocide are facilitated by the same underlying catalyst, namely, *cogitocide*. *Cogito* comes from *cogitare* in Latin, 'to think', and *cogitocide* means the killing of our *cogitosphere*, the killing of 'the realm of thinking and reflection', the drowning of humanity in a sightless infosphere.

In this paper, the author presents her definition of a peaceful and dignified future for humanity. She has coined the term *dignity-ism*, or *dignism*, to describe a world where every new-born finds space and is nurtured to unfold their highest and best, embedded in a social context of loving

appreciation and connection, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone's basic needs are met. It is a world where *unity in diversity* reigns, where we unite in respecting human dignity and celebrating diversity, where we prevent unity from devolving into oppressive uniformity, and keep diversity from sliding into hostile division. Dignism speaks to the ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, meaning 'the entire Earth is but one family', a verse that has been engraved in the entrance hall of the parliament of India.

With respect to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their potential for world peace in dignity, the author is highly critical of Goal 8. She fears that this goal will undermine all other goals if not radically adapted. Therefore, for the SDGs to be a force for world peace, Goal 8 needs to be critically appraised.

The task at hand for humanity is to co-create a world of dignism. For the first time in its history humanity is in a position to do so. The presently living generations have access to a much more comprehensive knowledge base about the universe and humanity's place in it than even their grandparents had. We have all the knowledge and skills required to build mutual trust and solidarity at a global scale. We have everything needed to humanise globalisation by reaping the benefits that the global ingathering of humanity offers. We can co-create a world of dignism.

Summary (1,220 words)

We live in times in which *sociocide* and *ecocide* are systemic. The suffix *-cide* means 'killing'. Words such as genocide, suicide, or pesticide all end on *-cide*, stemming from Latin *-cida* and the verb *caedo*, *caedes*, *caedere*, *caedi*, *caedum*.

Ecocide is the killing of our *ecosphere*, of our ecological world, of which we only are a small part, as much as we might want to believe to be its masters. Sociocide is the killing of our *sociosphere*, of the cohesion in our human communities, local and global. Sociocide and ecocide together represent humiliation congealed into systems, just as South Africa was in the grip of humiliation congealed into a system called apartheid. The most recent expression are military-corporate-political systems that drive global races for arms and resources. Sociocide and ecocide together, as they afflict an entire planet, drive systemic humiliation to hitherto unattained levels.

Ecocide and sociocide are facilitated by the same underlying catalyst, namely, *cogitocide* — the very 'weapon of mass destruction' that systems of humiliation use. The term *cogitocide* was coined in 2020 by El Hassan bin Talal. *Cogito* comes from *cogitare* in Latin, 'to think', and *cogitocide* means the killing of our *cogitosphere*, the killing of 'the realm of thinking and reflection', the drowning of humanity in a sightless infosphere. It is the misuse of *cogens*, our ability to think.

All those *-cides*, all those killings, amplify each other. As a result, *omnicide* looms — the killing of everything, the annihilation of life on Earth. It would be the first time in this planet's history that one species alone would have caused a mass extinction — in this case, the species of *Homo sapiens*, which is a species that walks planet Earth since a very short time historically seen compared with other species. This species succeeded to raid an entire planet within an extremely short time span, and, more even, to do so in proud blindness.

In this paper, the author presents her definition of a peaceful and dignified future for humanity. She has coined the term *dignism* (dignity-ism) to describe a world where every new-born finds space and is nurtured to unfold their highest and best, embedded in a social context of loving appreciation and connection, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone's basic needs are met. It is a world where *unity in diversity* reigns, where we unite in respecting human dignity and celebrating diversity, where we prevent unity from devolving into oppressive uniformity, and keep diversity from sliding into hostile division. Dignism means ending past cycles of humiliation and preventing new ones from emerging. Dignism means loving care for the common good of all of humanity as co-inhabitants of one single finite habitat. Dignism weaves together all dignifying aspects of all the world's cultural traditions into one decent global village.

Dignism speaks to the phrase *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (Sanskrit: वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) that consists of several words: *vasudhā* means ‘the earth’, *ēva* means ‘indeed’, and *kutumbakam* means ‘family’. So, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* means that the entire Earth is but one family, all its mountains and plains, its plants and its animals, including the human animal, the species *Homo sapiens*. The original verse *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* appears in Chapter 6 of *Maha Upanishad* and it has been engraved in the entrance hall of the parliament of India.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were drafted at the Earth Summit Rio+20 in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The drafters of the SDGs at the Rio+20 summit made an impressive start towards dignism — in the beginning, the SDGs included the concept of planetary boundaries. This concept is vitally important for world peace in dignity and should have been preserved in the SDGs. Yet, it was not. In the last moment, the drafters were undermined, and Goal 8 was brought in like a ‘Trojan horse’. As a result, the SDGs comprise internally contradicting goals. Goal 8 has the potential to undermine all other goals in that it ‘lumps together important need-related goals — participation in work and acceptable conditions in work — with economic growth, a questionable means to achieving these goals’, says Ian Gough, scholar of human needs. ‘The UN’s sustainable development goals... are clearly not going to be met without drastic recalibration’, warns Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, as ‘the SDG framework places immense and mistaken faith in growth and the private sector’. The author of this article concurs. The author suggests that the Goal 8 needs to be critically appraised if the SDGs are to be a force for world peace in dignity.

Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, humiliationstudies.org) is both a transdisciplinary academic field and a global community of like-minded concerned scholars, researchers, educators, practitioners, creative artists, and others, who all collaborate in a spirit of mutual support to understand the complex dynamics of dignity and humiliation. Relational psychologist Linda Hartling is the director of HumanDHS, while the author is its founding president. Linda Hartling and Evelin Lindner both wrote their doctoral dissertations on the theme of humiliation, highlighting how dynamics of humiliation violate honour and dignity, how they damage relationships and hinder cooperation. All HumanDHS members were humbled by the fact that this work was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

Research shows that humiliation is the most intense human emotion — it leads to the mobilisation of more processing power and a greater consumption of mental resources than any other emotions. Victims of humiliation never forget, while humiliators often are oblivious of their deeds or they justify them (while they may be silently consumed by their own deeds from inside). Humiliators are often shocked when confronted with the consequences of their deeds, be it that revenge comes their way or attempts of peace making. Through this dynamic, both humiliatees and humiliators see themselves at the end as victims and expect witnesses to take their side.

The HumanDHS community wishes to stimulate systemic change, globally and locally, to open space for dignity, mutual respect, and esteem to take root and grow. The goal is ending systemic humiliation and humiliating practices, preventing new ones from arising, and opening space for feelings of humiliation to nurture constructive social change, so that we all can join in healing the cycles of humiliation throughout the world.

The task at hand for humanity is to co-create a world of dignism. For the first time in our history, we humans can fully appreciate our place in the cosmos. Our ancestors could not see pictures of our Blue Marble from the perspective of an astronaut. Unlike our forebears, we have the privilege of seeing our planet from outside and thus experiencing the *overview effect*, an effect that helps us understand that we humans are *one* species living on *one* tiny planet. We can embrace *biophilia*, we can feel ‘the ecology of the living’ taking place within *one* circumscribed *biopoetic* space that is shared between all beings. We have access to a much more comprehensive knowledge base about the universe and our place in it than even our grandparents had. We have all the knowledge and skills required to build mutual trust and solidarity at a global scale. We have everything needed to humanise globalisation by reaping the benefits that the global ingathering of humanity offers. We

can co-create a world of dignism.

Short biography of the author



Evelin Lindner, MD, PhDs, has a dual education as a Medical Doctor and a Psychologist, with a Ph.D. in Medicine from the University in Hamburg in Germany, and a Ph.D. in Psychology from the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo. She is the founding president of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS), a global transdisciplinary community of concerned academics and practitioners who wish to promote dignity and transcend humiliation around the world. She is also co-founder of the World Dignity University initiative, including Dignity Press and World Dignity University Press. All initiatives are not-for-profit efforts. Her first book, based on her doctoral dissertation in psychology, *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict*, was honoured as ‘Outstanding Academic Title’ by the journal *Choice* in 2007. She has since written five more books. She lives and teaches globally and is affiliated, among others, with the University of Oslo in Norway and Columbia University in New York.

World Peace Through Dignity

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Evelin Lindner

Medical Doctor and Psychologist

Dr. med., Dr. psychol.

Founding President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS,
humiliationstudies.org) and

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Introduction to Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies

Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS) are both a transdisciplinary academic field and a global community of like-minded academics and practitioners. Relational psychologist Linda Hartling is its director while I am its founding president. We are proud that our work was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.¹ Each of us wrote a doctoral dissertation on the theme of humiliation, and we have since written widely about that theme, highlighting how dynamics of humiliation violate honour and dignity, how they damage relationships and hinder cooperation. On my side, this work grew out of my family’s traumatic experiences of war and displacement and therefore my doctoral dissertation addressed the psychology of humiliation in relation to war and genocide.²

Research shows that humiliation is the most intense human emotion — it leads to the mobilisation of more processing power and a greater consumption of mental resources than any other emotions. ‘Humiliation is a particularly intense and cognitively demanding negative emotional experience that has far-reaching consequences for individuals and groups alike’.³ Research also shows that the combination of loss and humiliation is the strongest predictor of major depression.⁴ Research on childhood trauma found that ‘recurrent chronic humiliation’ is the most damaging childhood experience.⁵ Humiliation-attrition can wear people down to the point of apathy and depression⁶ and deep inertia,⁷ protracted cycles of humiliation can create the kind of paralysis and apathy also known from learned helplessness.⁸ A seemingly ‘peaceful’ society may be the outcome, peaceful through *structural violence*,⁹ since the price for this ‘peace’ is being paid for by the victims’ pain from humiliation.¹⁰

Victims of humiliation never forget, while humiliators often are oblivious of their deeds or they justify them (while being unaware of the cost of fending off guilt and shame over their deeds). Humiliators are often shocked when confronted with the consequences of their deeds, be it that revenge comes their way or attempts of peace making. Through this dynamic, both humiliatees and humiliators see themselves as victims at the end and expect witnesses to take their side.

Linda Hartling was the first to write a doctoral dissertation on humiliation as something that is not part of the shame continuum. She finalised her work in 1995, two years before I began with my doctoral research on humiliation.¹¹ She developed a *Humiliation Inventory*, a scale from 1 to 5 that assesses the internal experience of derision and degradation, gauging the extent to which a person feels harmed by humiliating incidents throughout her life, how much she fears ‘being teased, bullied, scorned, excluded, laughed at, or, harassed’.¹² This inventory has so far been translated into Italian, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, and Norwegian, and it has been an important tool to help extend the research on humiliation globally, and explore the universality and diversity of the concept of humiliation. This inventory has been used in research on the link

between humiliation and social and psychological concerns such as global poverty, immigration, depression, eating disorders, emotional isolation, and narcissism.

Is there hope for a peaceful future?

‘Right now, we are facing a man-made disaster of global scale. Our greatest threat in thousands of years’. These were the words of natural historian Sir David Attenborough at the opening ceremony of United Nations-sponsored climate talks in Katowice, Poland, in 2018.¹³

We live in times in which *sociocide* and *ecocide* are systemic. The suffix *-cide* means ‘killing’. Words such as genocide, suicide, or pesticide all end on *-cide*, stemming from Latin *-cida* and the verb *caedo*, *caedes*, *caedere*, *caedi*, *caedum*.

Ecocide is the killing of our *ecosphere*, of our ecological world,¹⁴ of which we only are a small part, despite our belief to be its masters.¹⁵ Sociocide is the killing of our *sociosphere*, of the cohesion in our human communities, local and global.¹⁶ Sociocide and ecocide together are the outcome of humiliation that has been congealed into systems, just as South Africa was in the grip of humiliation congealed into a system called apartheid. Present-day military-corporate-political systems that drive global races for arms and resources are the most recent expression.¹⁷ Sociocide and ecocide together, as they afflict an entire planet, drive systemic humiliation to hitherto unattained levels.

Ecocide and sociocide are facilitated by the same underlying catalyst, namely, *cogitocide* — the very ‘weapon of mass destruction’ that systems of humiliation use. The term *cogitocide* was coined in 2020 by former head of the Club of Rome, Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan.¹⁸ *Cogito* comes from *cogitare* in Latin, ‘to think’,¹⁹ and *cogitocide* means the killing of our *cogitosphere*, the killing of ‘the realm of thinking and reflection’,²⁰ the drowning of humanity in a sightless infosphere.²¹ It is the misuse of *cogens*, our ability to think.²²

All those *-cides*, all those killings, amplify each other. As a result, *omnicide* looms — the killing of everything, the annihilation of all life on Earth. It would be the first time in this planet’s history that one species alone would have caused a mass extinction — in this case, the culprit would be the species of *Homo sapiens*, a species that walks planet Earth historically seen since a very short time compared with other species. This species succeeded to raid an entire planet within an extremely short time span, and, on top of this, to do so in proud blindness.²³

As a result, we are at the end of a lavish party of exploitation of this planet,²⁴ an exploitation for which our children will have to pay. We ended the party with fireworks, literally, by burning our fossil fuels. We live in times of systemic decline where the old order is disintegrating, and environmental and political disruptions augment each other. The world risks descending into gloom and despair, while what is needed are solutions that are sober, practical, and fundamentally new in their substance.

In this situation, many pin their hopes on artificial *intelligence*. I fear it may be a misnomer — it may rather be artificial *sightlessness*, it may be the digitalisation of a kind of cogitocidal sightlessness that in former times was called *fog of war*, only taking on new shapes and reaching new levels now.²⁵ *Big data*, instead of becoming big success, could also turn into *big disaster*.²⁶

In my work, I attempt to bridge separate disciplines and overcome academia’s cogitocidal siloisation by striving to understand the core messages of various fields of academic inquiry, then bring these messages together on different levels of abstraction, using the *ideal-type* approach of sociologist Max Weber,²⁷ so as to reconstruct them from the perspective of dignity and humiliation. So far, I have done this with war, genocide, and terrorism (2000, 2017),²⁸ international conflict (2006 and 2009, translated into Chinese in 2019),²⁹ gender and security (2010),³⁰ and economics (2012, translated into Brazilian-Portuguese in 2016).³¹

What is peace?

Many words carry diametrically opposed meanings at their core — peace, love, reconciliation, conflict resolution, coexistence — the list is long.³² In all cases, the same term covers definitions that can be so vastly apart that they exclude each other. Peace, many would say, is to be achieved through dialogical relationships in mutual solidarity in a context of respect for equality in dignity. Yet, there are people who contend that peace is when subordinates endure their subordination in quiet and obedient submission.³³ Who is right? I am on the side of those who would call it violence and not peace when people are so oppressed or so manipulated that they no longer speak up,³⁴ Such peace has been called ‘structural violence’.³⁵

May I share a personal experience from my practice as a clinical psychologist? I once had a client, a woman, let me call her Eve. She came to me because she was suffering from depression. I spoke to Eve’s social worker because I had noticed bruises on her arms and had heard that her neighbours had repeatedly reported scenes of shouting and crying. Eve and her children were severely and regularly beaten by her husband, let us call him Adam. The social worker was afraid that Eve or the children may at some point not survive Adam’s beatings and tried to convince Eve to protect herself and her offspring by leaving her unsafe home to seek refuge in sheltered housing, at least in times of crisis. Eve, however, stubbornly undermined the social worker’s efforts. She argued, ‘Beating me is Adam’s way of loving me! I am not a victim. I bring his anger on myself!’ For his part, Adam adamantly refused to be labelled a ‘perpetrator’, accusing the social worker of viciously disturbing the peace of his home.

The social worker told me, ‘I do not understand Eve’s definition of love! Here she and her children are treated, not like human beings, but like pieces of clay that must transform themselves into the perfect crutch for her husband’s notion of male honour, and she goes along with this! She does not see the harm in being erased as a human being in her own right with her own dignity but thinks that becoming a self-effaced little cogwheel in her husband’s personality machinery is the essence of love! She offers wonderfully genuine and loving humility to her husband, but it is so wasted!’

Yet, as the social worker observed time and again, ‘both, not just Adam but also Eve, believe that their strategy — violent punishment — if only intensified sufficiently, would lead to a happy relationship — even if their experience is that all it brings is tears and bruises’.

In short, what we observe here is a normative fault line. Adam thinks that wife beating is needed to create and maintain peace in his home. He thinks that it is his duty to use violence to preserve a hierarchy where he has control over his wife. For him, peace is when his wife submits to his oppression in quiet subservience. The social worker rejects that view. For him, the husband’s strategy produces the opposite of peace. Eve is caught in between. She is unsure and asks herself, ‘Am I at fault? Do I suffer from undue arrogance? Do I fail to know my place? Or is my husband at fault?’ Her question is: What is peace?

Little by little, the social worker tried to introduce a new definition of love and peace to Eve and Adam, one that was in total opposition to theirs. The social worker’s definition of love is that love is a meeting of equal hearts and minds in mutual caring, a definition embedded in the human rights ideal of equal dignity for all. This view is the opposite of what Eve and her husband are accustomed to — they connect love and peace with female subservience reinforcing male prowess and honour.

The social worker repeatedly reminded Eve and Adam of the first sentence of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted on 10th December 1948 and that says, ‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’. This sentence does not say, ‘Men and women are born unequal in dignity and rights’. The social worker explained to Eve that ‘domestic chastisement’ is no longer legitimate and justified, that it is now being called ‘domestic violence’, and that Adam is a humiliator who cruelly degrades the dignity of Eve and her children, and she has a right to feel unduly humiliated by Adam and rise up from subordination.

The social worker also talked to Adam and explained to him that he ought to learn that he is no longer justified in arrogating superiority over his wife and children and demand subservient humbleness from them. On the contrary, his task is to step down and learn dignified humility, learn to appreciate his wife and children as fellow human beings, equal in dignity.

Family life is not the only arena where human rights ideals turn old definitions into their opposite. South Africa is an example. In Afrikaans, *apartheid* means simply segregation, literally ‘aparthood’, and when it was devised after the trauma of the Boer Wars, it was seen as thoroughly legitimate solution void of any taste of violation, as painful as it was for those at the bottom. It was the global rise of the promise of equality in dignity that gave this pain legitimacy, and it did so to the point that it could drive *conscientisation* — as Paulo Freire would formulate it — namely, the motivation to strive for social change.³⁶ The anti-apartheid campaign led by African and Asian nations is often hailed as the earliest sustained international human rights struggle alongside decolonisation, ‘Human rights were embraced as a fundamental goal of the struggle for racial justice’.³⁷

When we look at India, Mahatma Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar dedicated their entire lives to addressing the same challenge. Hansa Mehta is another important name to remember. She was a Gandhian political activist and social worker who made important contributions to drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She especially highlighted the need for reflecting gender equality by changing the language from ‘all men are created equal’ to ‘all human beings’.³⁸

Peace needs equal dignity in mutual solidarity to be true peace

Peace needs dignity to be true peace. This sentence sounds true, yet, it leads to another question, namely: What is dignity? The concept of a *dignitary* betrays that also the notion of dignity has its roots in mindsets that condone hierarchies of worthiness. The term dignity was used long before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights said in 1948 that ‘All human beings are born with equal rights and dignity’. In former times, dignity was *unequal* and very different sentences would have felt ‘right’ in the past, and still do, for instance, ‘All human beings are born unequal in worthiness and rights. Some are endowed with more reason and conscience than others and should preside over inferiors in a spirit of supremacy’. In other words, in former times, a dignitary was a ‘higher’ being who presided over ‘lesser beings’ because he was considered to be worth more than others.

It becomes clear that it is not just dignity that is at stake, it is equal dignity for all in mutual solidarity. In my work, I describe equal dignity as an embodied sense of being able to stand tall — independent of one’s body size — and hold one’s head up high, as high as everyone else’s. Equal dignity is an ‘orthopaedic challenge’, it is the art of walking upright.³⁹ It means looking into the eyes of fellow human beings as equals rather than being humiliated and bowing down in submissive servility or sticking one’s nose up in haughty arrogance.⁴⁰ Equal dignity is a posture, a *Haltung*, in German.⁴¹ It is a posture of dignified humility — of humble pride⁴² — neither looking up to others from humiliated inferiority nor looking down on others from arrogant superiority.

Equal dignity means for inferiors to become aware that they need no longer to accept humiliation in docile meekness, while it means for superiors to learn to step down from arrogating supremacy and stop using humiliation to keep others in an inferior position.

Uppity was once a derogatory word to describe black persons who held their heads ‘too high’ and ‘didn’t know their place’ in the ranking order.⁴³ Today, equal dignity invites everyone to reject not just ‘uppity’, but to abandon the entire ranking order for human worth that ranges from superiority to inferiority, more even, to include all living beings and acknowledge that there can be no human dignity if there is no dignity for the entire planet.

For dignity to manifest, however, even equality is not enough. Human rights ideals represent more than just an invitation to hold heads up so that all are equals. They invite everyone to do more, namely, to also open one’s arms and offer respectful solidarity to others. Human rights ideals ask

everyone to refrain from sticking their elbows out in divisive competition even if they are equals, just as much as nobody should smother others with choking embraces. Everyone is invited to protect unity in diversity through avoiding hostile division as much as averting suffocating uniformity.

All are invited to meet in the middle between top and bottom, at the level of equal dignity in shared humility and mutual solidarity, so that all can join hands in co-creating a decent future together.⁴⁴ Co-creating a decent future means liberating all living beings on the planet from whatever undignifying global political and economic frames there are.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were drafted at the Earth Summit Rio+20 in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The drafters of the SDGs at the Rio+20 summit made an impressive start towards dignity — in the beginning, the SDGs included the concept of planetary boundaries. The concept of planetary boundaries should have been preserved in the SDGs because it is vitally important for world peace in equal dignity in solidarity. Yet, it was not preserved. In the last moment, the drafters were undermined, and Goal 8 was brought in like a ‘Trojan horse’.⁴⁵ As the conference drew to a close, the finance ministers and the big ministries ‘started turning up’, remembers Kate Raworth, economic re-thinker and creator of Oxfam’s doughnut of social and planetary boundaries.⁴⁶

As a result, the SDGs now comprise internally contradicting goals. Goal 8 has the potential to undermine all other goals in that it ‘lumps together important need-related goals — participation in work and acceptable conditions in work — with economic growth, a questionable means to achieving these goals’, says Ian Gough, scholar of human needs.⁴⁷ ‘The UN’s sustainable development goals... are clearly not going to be met without drastic recalibration’, warns also Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, as ‘the SDG framework places immense and mistaken faith in growth and the private sector’.⁴⁸

In the 42nd Schumacher lecture of 2022, Kate Raworth described the 2012 meeting where the finance minister of Brazil said, ‘What’s this: planetary boundaries? That is a limit to our development! Take it out!’,⁴⁹ and the idea of growth was put in instead. Raworth explained (transcription of her oral comments):

And it is not just growth for the low-income countries — I profoundly believe that low-income countries like Malawi, like Bangladesh, their economies will and must and should grow, and that kind of growth should be channelled into meeting the needs of all people, and they will need to grow in regenerative ways. So, I want to be very clear, I am not against growth where it is needed — we are growing until we are grown up — but it uses it to meet the vested interests of all countries. It is like a shield that all countries must grow.⁵⁰

Raworth explained the backdrop for this situation with great humour.⁵¹ She drew on Bernhard Lietaer, who co-authored *Money and sustainability: The missing link: A report from the Club of Rome*.⁵² Raworth explained:

Now, that is what we are locked into, the growth-centric paradigm of mainstream capitalism. We are locked into an economy where finance has been designed — and this takes me back to the work of Bernhard Lietaer — it has been designed with cumulative interest. So, it assumes this shape [she shows an exponential curve] and it will accumulate endlessly. It’s profound! Because everything on this living planet, all life deteriorates — potatoes rot, newspapers rot, human bodies die, metal rusts, we are all subject to the second law of thermodynamics — but money, money accumulates, it has compounding interest! Friedrich Schumacher knew that, and Aristotle

knew that, and Marx knew that! So, the design of money means that it is endlessly seeking its return and it exploits and consumes the living world. It exploits and consumes the unpaid care of parents, it also has a racial bias, capitalism exploits black and brown bodies in its name, to drive that return. So, there is a vested interest, and it shows up in the major fossil fuel companies that still, well, today, are raking in record profits, because they have for so long lobbied, to first obfuscate and to delay action on climate change. Major companies are driven by shareholder return, it is the owners of capital, so they invest in protecting the rentier economy. And then many governments are in service of this — I am shocked that even in my own country [England], both the leaders of the conservative party and the leader of the labour party recently have said the goal of our government will be growth, growth, growth! I mean, have we learned nothing left and right in the UK? This is all we can imagine? This is the biggest vision that is been put forward now. It is extraordinary.⁵³

Thomas Pogge, philosopher of global justice, has since a long time warned that it is morally unconscientious to compare existing poverty ‘with historical benchmarks’, instead, one should compare it with ‘present possibilities’ — ‘How much of this poverty is really unavoidable today?’⁵⁴ Pogge has concluded that ‘by this standard, our generation is doing worse than any in human history’.⁵⁵ This author of this article concurs.

Conclusion

Systems thinkers have developed a *two loops* model of responding to the existential risks humanity faces, they suggest to ‘hospice’ a system when it is dying and an alternative system is ushered in, while highlighting the choice between the two.⁵⁶ Other thinkers speak of a *two-pronged* approach, first bending environmental and social justice curves within a current framework, then fostering a longer-term shift in consciousness to integrate people and planet.⁵⁷ Yet others see *three pathways*.⁵⁸

I suggest a *multi-tiered refolution*, using historian Timothy Garton Ash’s term of refolution that mixes reform and revolution. At its core I see a two-tiered or two-pronged strategy of first gathering enough support for creating new systemic frames, and then letting those frames do their work in amplifying a new *Zeitgeist*. Following physicist Paul Raskin, I call on a global citizens movement, from civil society to the gatekeepers of political and economic institutions.⁵⁹ I call for Globally United People to overcome the damage that Globally Disunited Nations perpetrate. I call on every single citizen to envision how a decent world may be organised and then mandate a small group of thoughtful citizens — just as happened in 1948 under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt — to begin a *dignity transition* by creating new cultural and institutional frames in the spirit of equal dignity for all in mutual solidarity.⁶⁰

This small group will have to muster enough courage to hold space for ‘fuzziness’, so that the vision of a future of dignity can be filled with creative ideas for action, ideas that may be so innovative and novel that no one has thought of them so far.⁶¹ It falls short to discuss the details of possible solutions for systemic crises only within the confines of the system that created them. Therefore, holding large enough ‘legroom’ for deeper questioning — just as philosopher Arne Næss has called for⁶² — means refraining from spelling out every detail of how to reach this future prematurely.

This small group will have to muster the courage to envision out-of-the-box ideas for how new dignifying global *constitutive rules*⁶³ for our *world-system* may look like,⁶⁴ how new *generative mechanisms* may be shaped.⁶⁵ These new mechanisms and rules must have the capacity to manifest unity-in-diversity *convivialism*, *inclusionism*, and *lifeism* beyond humanism.⁶⁶ *We the planet*, the instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems, waits to be embraced.⁶⁷ *Livelihood* for all species on our planet waits to be ensured.⁶⁸ When a new Eleanor Roosevelt moment finally emerges, we hope that the world will be ready for a Universal Declaration of

Human Vulnerability,⁶⁹ for Universal Declarations of Human Responsibilities and Duty.⁷⁰

For the first time in our history, we humans can fully appreciate our place in the cosmos. Our ancestors could not see pictures of our Blue Marble from the perspective of an astronaut.⁷¹ Unlike our forebears, we have the privilege of seeing our planet from outside and thus experiencing the *overview effect*,⁷² an effect that helps us understand that we humans are *one* species living on *one* tiny planet. We can embrace *biophilia*,⁷³ we can feel ‘the ecology of the living’ taking place within *one* circumscribed *biopoetic* space that is shared between all beings.⁷⁴ We have access to a much more comprehensive knowledge base about the universe and our place in it than even our grandparents had. We have all the knowledge and skills required to build mutual trust and solidarity at a global scale. We have everything needed to humanise globalisation by reaping the benefits that the global ingathering of humanity offers.

I am a patriot of planet Earth and I see myself as part of a long lineage of *Homo sapiens*. I am proud of our egalitarian traditions that lasted throughout the first 97 per cent of our history and I regret that these traditions had to go underground during the past millennia, the past three per cent of our history. It saddens me that the spirit of solidarity in equal dignity was assaulted by mindsets of competition for domination during this time and that this spirit could only persist in a few philosophical and religious movements — the *axial age* was one of its manifestations.⁷⁵ I am glad that this spirit has been reinvigorated lately by courageous pioneers such as Bertha von Suttner, Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rachel Carson, Paulo Freire, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela, to name but a few.

Planet Earth is the commons of humanity that is entrusted to us as its nurturers. We are not empowered to destroy it. I dedicate my entire life to humanising globalisation through equal dignity for all in freedom and solidarity so that dignified life can flourish on this planet in the future. I have coined the term *dignism* (dignity-ism) to describe such a world:

Dignism describes a world where every new-born finds space and is nurtured to unfold their highest and best, embedded in a social context of loving appreciation and connection, where the carrying capacity of the planet guides the ways in which everyone’s basic needs are met. It is a world where *unity in diversity* reigns, where we unite in respecting human dignity and celebrating diversity, where we prevent unity from devolving into oppressive uniformity, and keep diversity from sliding into hostile division. Dignism means ending past cycles of humiliation and preventing new ones from emerging. Dignism means loving care for the common good of all of humanity as co-inhabitants of one single finite habitat. Dignism weaves together all dignifying aspects of all the world’s cultural traditions into one decent global village.

Dignism speaks to the phrase *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (Sanskrit: वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) that consists of several words: *vasudhā* means ‘the earth’, *ēva* means ‘indeed’, and *kutumbakam* means ‘family’. So, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* means that the entire Earth is but one family, all its mountains and plains, its plants and its animals, including the human animal, the species *Homo sapiens*. The original verse *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* appears in Chapter 6 of *Maha Upanishad* and it has been engraved in the entrance hall of the parliament of India.

Very often, new solutions do not come from the power centres of the world, as they are too invested in the privileges of the status-quo. It is therefore important to listen to people who have the wisdom of ancient history and long lineages, from centuries of experience in one of history’s hotbeds. It is important to listen to people who have the intellectual ability to look at the world from a bird’s eye perspective and who can then form visions that serve the common good of all. It is important to listen to people who can love! Without loving solidarity, no living creature on this planet may survive, and this includes the human animal.

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¹ For the nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, see <https://humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/142.php>.

² See my new book, Lindner, 2023. See also Lindner, 2006, 2009a, Lindner and Desmond Tutu (Foreword), 2010, Lindner, 2012, and Lindner, 2017. See chapters and papers in full text on www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php, and see a list of talks on www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin021.php.

³ Otten and Jonas, 2013, p. 33.

⁴ Kendler, et al., 2003.

⁵ Recurrent humiliation by a parent has been found to be the most damaging childhood experience, see Jackson Nakazawa, 2015. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study) is a research study conducted by the American health maintenance organisation Kaiser Permanente and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Participants were recruited to the study between 1995 and 1997 and have been in long-term follow up for health outcomes. The study has demonstrated an association of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (aka childhood trauma) with health and social problems across the lifespan. See, among others, Felitti, 2017. See www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html. See the study described by Jane Ellen Stevens in *ACESTooHigh*, 3rd October 2012, <https://acestoohigh.com/2012/10/03/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-study-the-largest-most-important-public-health-study-you-never-heard-of-began-in-an-obesity-clinic/>. ACESTooHigh is a news site that reports on research about adverse childhood experiences, including developments in epidemiology, neurobiology, and the biomedical and epigenetic consequences of toxic stress. Research shows that the brains of neglected children are smaller than those of psychologically well-nurtured children, since brain cells grow and cerebral circuits develop in response to an infant's interaction with the main caregiver. See, among others, Schore and Sieff, 2015. Obesity is often a sign that abuse took place at an earlier point in life. In one study, a woman who had been raped, reported that she had gained 105 pounds after the event and that this was the reason, 'Overweight is overlooked, and that's the way I need to be'. I thank Heather Stark for making me aware of the ACESTooHigh site. See more in note 710 in chapter 3 of Lindner, 2023.

⁶ See Sarraj, 2002, and Giacaman, et al., 2007, for the situation of Palestinians. For the African-American perspective, see, among others, Letha, 2007, see Sayler, 2004, for the impact of poverty, and see Elison and Harter, 2007, and Walker and Knauer, 2011, for the nexus of humiliation, self-esteem, and violence. Protracted cycles of humiliation can lead to the kind of paralysis and apathy that also results from *learned helplessness*. See for research on inertia, for instance, Leidner, et al., 2012. Even suicide can be the outcome, see 'Wave of Indigenous suicides leaves Canadian town appealing for help', by Liam Stack, *New York Times*, 18th March 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/03/19/world/americas/canada-youth-suicide.html. I thank Linda Hartling for making me aware of this article.

Anthropologist Scott Atran researched radicalisation processes in Britain and found that humiliation is a negative predictor for terrorism, since those who feel humiliated become submissive. The situation is different, however, for those who act on behalf of others who were exposed to humiliation, such as the second or third generation of Muslims in Britain who observe that their parents were humiliated. See, among others, Ginges and Atran, 2008. See also the related argument by Alexis de Tocqueville, see more in note 2402 in chapter 8 of in Lindner, 2023.

⁷ See for research on inertia, for instance, Leidner, et al., 2012.

⁸ See note 717 in Lindner, 2023, for psychologist Martin Seligman's research on learned helplessness. See also note 628 in Lindner, 2023.

⁹ See Galtung, 1969, and 'Structural violence re-explored', by Johan Galtung, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, Editorial #333, 21st July 2014, www.transcend.org/tms/2014/07/structural-violence-re-explored/.

¹⁰ For an illustration, see 'Wave of Indigenous suicides leaves Canadian town appealing for help', by Liam Stack, *New York Times*, 18th March 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/03/19/world/americas/canada-youth-suicide.html. I thank Linda Hartling for making me aware of this article. Hartling commented in a personal communication, 21st March 2016:

Canada's indigenous populations demonstrate the deleterious effect of continuous humiliation: they are driven into waves of suicide as an outflow of 'cumulative humiliation', of a lingering trauma of colonialism and prejudice, of 'cultural genocide'.

¹¹ Hartling, 1996.

¹² Hartling and Luchetta, 1999.

¹³ See the transcript of the speech by Sir David Attenborough on 3rd December 2018, at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/The%20People%27s%20Address%202.11.18_FINAL.pdf. The 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference was the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), also known as the Katowice Climate Change Conference. It was held between 2nd and 15th December 2018 in Katowice, Poland. See also Attenborough, 2020, and his 2020 documentary film *A life on our planet* at <https://attenboroughfilm.com>. See, furthermore, his interview on PBS News Hour, 6th October 2020, www.pbs.org/video/october-6-2020-pbs-newshour-full-episode-1601956801/.

¹⁴ As a term, *ecocide* dates to 1970, when Arthur Galston, an American botanist, used it to describe the appalling effects of Agent Orange on the vast forests of Vietnam and Cambodia. See also Higgins, 2016.

¹⁵ Green New Deals (GNDs), in their attempt to remedy ecocide, fail when they simply replace one mastery strategy with another one, when they implement public policies built on the same economic principles that led to ecocide and sociocide in the first place. Current GND proposals usually aim to address not only ecocide but also sociocide insofar as they aspire to achieve social aims like job creation and reducing economic inequality. I resonate with the conclusion of the member of the Club of Rome Stefan Brunnhuber that the monetary system is the missing link in the debate of sustainability. See Brunnhuber, 2021, and Lietaer, et al., 2012a.

See also *The youth have seen enough*, by Rex Weyler, Greenpeace, 4th January 2019, www.greenpeace.org/international/story/20260/the-youth-have-seen-enough/.

The name Green New Deal (GND) refers back to the New Deal by the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the Great Depression in the 1930s. For European efforts, see, for instance, 'Statement by President von der Leyen on delivering the European Green Deal', European Commission, Brussels, 14th July 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_3701.

¹⁶ 'Sociocide is the intended wounding-killing of a society by eliminating the prerequisites for a live, vibrant, dynamic society', writes peace researcher Johan Galtung, in 'Sociocide, Palestine and Israel', *TRANSCEND Media Service*, 8th October 2012, www.transcend.org/tms/2012/10/sociocide-palestine-and-israel/, italics in original:

Sociocide, the killing of a society's capacity to survive and to reproduce itself, should become equally and prominently a crime against humanity. A society is a self-reproducing social system. So are human beings, with our basic needs for survival, wellness, identity, freedom. Society is also an organism, with a lifespan far beyond that of individuals. For humans to survive as humans, their basic needs have to be met. For that to happen the society has to survive. For the society to survive the basic social *prerequisites* must be met:

- for *security*, against violence, killing, wounding the members
- for economic *sustainability*, against their starvation, illness
- for *identity* culturally, a meaning with life, against alienation
- for *autonomy* politically, to be a master of their own house.

As society unfolds, so do humans, and vice versa. Life breeds life.

This also holds for nomadic societies based on hunter-gatherers. Monasteries are incapable of self-reproduction biologically when based on one gender, but are highly viable societies based on recruitment. Under modernity, identity is carried by the *nation*, with four characteristics: an *idiom*, a *religion-worldview*, a *history* — of the past, present and future — and *geographical attachment*. *Time*, *space*, with the means to communicate and something to believe is crucial.

Under modernity the state is the key executor of all the above.

Sociocide is the intended wounding-killing of a society by eliminating the prerequisites for a live, vibrant, dynamic society.

Sociocide molests the human members. In the longer run, lethally. *Sociocide* is what Western, and not only Western, colonialism has done for centuries, denying others their autonomy, imposing their own

identity — language and worldview — moving others out of their own historical dialectic and into history as Western periphery, denying them the land they are attached to with their hearts and minds. And their bodies for security and sustenance, for food, water, health.

See also Cormann, 2015.

¹⁷ See ‘The vengeance of history: Thirty years of foreseeable retrogression’, by Hall Gardner, *Wall Street International Magazine*, 18th December 2018, <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/46316-the-vengeance-of-history>. Hall Gardner is professor and chair of the ICP Department at the American University of Paris, and author of *World war Trump: The risks of America’s new nationalism*, Gardner, 2018. It is a privilege to have Hall Gardner on the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community.

See also ‘UN General Assembly: Guterres warns against “new Cold War”’, *Deutsche Welle*, 22nd September 2020, <https://p.dw.com/p/3iqdT>. See, furthermore, ‘Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd: “A Cold War with China is probable and not just possible”’, interview conducted by Bernhard Zand, *Der Spiegel Online International*, 24th September 2021, www.spiegel.de/international/world/former-australian-pm-kevin-rudd-a-cold-war-with-china-is-probable-and-not-just-possible-a-959ebfec-826e-4961-821c-29b7d1e8736c. See also the work of Ankit Panda, expert on the Asia-Pacific region, and his warning of ‘chaotic armament’ in the Indo-Pacific region, frequently quoted in the magazine *Der Spiegel*, see www.spiegel.de/thema/kim_jong_un/.

See, furthermore, *Global arms industry: US companies dominate the Top 100; Russian arms industry moves to second place*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 10th December 2018, www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2018/global-arms-industry-us-companies-dominate-top-100-russian-arms-industry-moves-second-place.

¹⁸ I very much thank Prince El Hassan bin Talal, for his personal message from 19th May 2020, where he suggested the term *cogitocide*. He proposed the term *cogitosphere* in his Opening Address to the 2004 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome ‘On limits to ignorance: The challenge of informed humanity’, 11th–12th October 2004 in Helsinki, Finland. His address was titled *The challenge of informed humanity: From ‘infosphere’ to ‘cogitosphere’*. In this address, he called on the Club of Rome to elevate the ‘Cogitosphere’, or the realm of thinking and reflection, ‘above that of the Infosphere in order to avoid sightless vision and to focus our deliberative process on the real challenges facing informed humanity’. See also notes 1779, 1780, and 1781, and note 4105 in chapter 12 of Lindner, 2023.

Prince El Hassan bin Talal is an important international thinker and member of the Jordanian royal family, the uncle of the sitting King Abdullah II, and he is deeply engaged in conversations regarding issues of human rights and development and how they are increasingly integrated with security matters on the international agenda and in the Arab World. See, among others, Bin Talal and Schwarz, 2013, ‘The responsibility to protect and the Arab World: An emerging international norm?’ in *Contemporary Security Policy*.

As one of the many expressions of cogitocide, we may identify the rise of conspiracy narratives. I could refer to many examples here, yet, I limit myself to the ‘great reset’ conspiracy narrative, as this functions as a kind of container for many smaller conspiracy theories that gather under its umbrella. All appear to follow a similar pattern of what could be called meta-humiliation entrepreneurship, which means surfing on the humiliation entrepreneurship that others perpetrate on the ground — ‘smaller profiteers’ profit from the suffering caused by ‘larger profiteers’. See, among others, ‘How the “great reset” of capitalism became an anti-lockdown conspiracy’, by Quinn Slobodian, *The Guardian*, 4th December 2020, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy. See more in note 27 in the Preface, and see the section titled ‘Indignation entrepreneurship hinders sober and constructive action’ in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023.

¹⁹ *Cogito, ergo sum* is a well-known philosophical proposition by philosopher René Descartes, meaning ‘I think, therefore I am’. *Cogito, ergo sum* originally appeared in French as *je pense, donc je suis* in 1637, in Descartes’ oeuvre *Discours de la méthode*. Descartes intended to say *dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum*, or ‘I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am’.

²⁰ *The challenge of informed humanity: From ‘infosphere’ to ‘cogitosphere’*, Prince El Hassan bin Talal’s Opening Address to the 2004 Annual Conference of the Club of Rome ‘On limits to ignorance: The challenge of informed humanity’, 11th–12th October 2004 in Helsinki, Finland.

²¹ Bin Talal refers to cultural theorist Paul Virilio, 1977/2006, originator of the concept of *dromology*, ‘the science of speed’, where he points at the media-driven acceleration that results in an infosphere that diminishes and engulfs the political subject — the accountable leader as much as the participatory citizen and the deliberative process itself. The outcome is what bin Talal calls *infoterror* and *infowar*, and what Virilio describes as the ‘aesthetics of disappearance’.

²² See the *Alain Elkann Interview: HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal*, 1st November 2020, www.alainelkanninterviews.com/hassan-bin-talal/: ‘Cogens — the use of one’s ability to think — is the most democratic expression I can think of, of commenting on public and private life’. Latin *cōgēns*, is the present active participle of *cōgō* or ‘drive together’, ‘compel’, from *cō* + *agō*, ‘drive’. See www.wordsense.eu/cogens/.

As one of the many expressions of cogitocide, we may identify the rise of conspiracy narratives. There is, for instance, the ‘great reset’ conspiracy narrative that functions as a kind of container for many smaller conspiracy theories that gather under its umbrella. All appear to follow a similar pattern of what could be called meta-humiliation entrepreneurship, which means surfing on the humiliation entrepreneurship that others perpetrate on the ground — ‘smaller profiteers’ profit from the suffering caused by ‘larger profiteers’. See, among others, ‘How the “great reset” of capitalism became an anti-lockdown conspiracy’, by Quinn Slobodian, *The Guardian*, 4th December 2020, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy. See more in note 27 in the Preface, and see the section titled ‘Indignation entrepreneurship hinders sober and constructive action’ in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023.

²³ Rounsevell, et al., 2020, call for a prominent target to lower species extinction rates, comparable to the 2-degree climate target.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013, founding director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, cautions that our species is so new to this planet compared with other species, we still need to ‘grow up’. Her books include *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*. I thank Jacqueline Wasilewski, who gave me this book at the 2006 ICU-COE Northeast Asian Dialogue: Sharing Narratives, Weaving/Mapping History in Tokyo, Japan, 3rd–5th February 2006. See more in note 3881 in chapter 11 of Lindner, 2023.

See also Torres, 2018, and ‘Who wants to destroy the world? More people than you might expect — and new technologies might give them the power to do it’, by Phil Torres, *OneZero*, 25th October 2019, <https://onezero.medium.com/who-wants-to-destroy-the-world-e7571c66397>:

...bioengineering is ‘the specific technology for doing the job right of annihilating humanity — and it’s something that could be done by just one person with the necessary expertise and access to the necessary equipment’.

²⁴ While the causes of the degradation of the world’s ecosystems — from oceans to forests to farmlands — ‘are various and complex, one thing is clear: the massive economic growth of recent decades has come at the cost of ecological health’, see *Becoming #GenerationRestoration — Key messages: Ecosystem restoration for people, nature and climate*, by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 3rd June 2021, https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36252/ERPNC_KMEN.pdf.

See for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, www.decadeonrestoration.org.

On 9th August 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) launched *AR6 climate change 2021: The physical science basis*, representing the first part of its Sixth Assessment Report, see www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/. The first line of the report summary reads, ‘It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land’. The IPCC is a body of the United Nations that is mandated to provide objective scientific information relevant to understanding human-induced climate change. See also ‘IPCC report: ‘Code red’ for human driven global heating, warns UN chief’, *United Nations News*, 9th August 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362>.

See also ‘Rethinking our vision of success: A conversation with Robert Pollack’, *Edge*, 10th October 2019, https://stage.edge.org/conversation/robert_pollack-rethinking-our-vision-of-success:

I’ve lived as a biologist in the world of Darwin, trying to understand Darwinian pre-adaptive mutation in terms of cancer as distinct from normal cells. ... We are 100,000-fold in excess of our natural numbers, and we threaten the planet by our success.

Robert Pollack is a professor of biological sciences, and it was a privilege for me to be introduced to him by Evelin Lindner, 2023

Clifford Hill and meeting up with him at Columbia University on 13th December 2004, and reconnecting again in 2021. *Edge* aims 'to arrive at the edge of the world's knowledge, seek out the most complex and sophisticated minds, put them in a room together, and have them ask each other the questions they are asking themselves'.

See, furthermore, Randers and Golüke, 2020, saying that just stopping CO2 emissions may no longer be enough to stop global warming, that the world must undertake a massive effort to capture carbon out of the atmosphere and store it back underground, a technology known as carbon sequestration. This will be a task that is 'equivalent to the work involved in putting all the man-made CO2 into the atmosphere, which has taken us 100–200 years of industrial activity. Getting it out again will be the same type of effort'.

See also Roy Eidelson, 2018, *How the 1% manipulate our understanding of what's happening, what's right, and what's possible*. It was a pleasure to meet met Roy Eidelson at the Solomon Asch Center when I visited on 28th November 2005, invited by Paul Rozin, hosted by Clark McCauley.

See also 'Stephen Pinker & NY Times Nicholas Kristof: Wrong about Western "progress",' by Charles Eisenstein and Jeremy Lent, *Tikkun*, 23rd May 2018, www.tikkun.org/nextgen/new-yorkers-pinker-ny-times-nicholas-kristof-wrong-about-things-getting-better-and-safer-1-charles-eisenstein-2-jeremy-lent. See also Eisenstein, 2011, 2014. It was a privilege to have Charles Eisenstein with us in our 2012 Workshop on Transforming Humiliation and Violent Conflict at Columbia University in New York City.

Hans Rosling and Steven Pinker have been criticised of having a *positivity bias*, also called *Pollyannaism*, which means remembering pleasant items more accurately than unpleasant ones. The 1913 novel *Pollyanna* by Eleanor Porter describes a girl who tries to find something to be glad about in every situation.

See also *A confused statistician*, by Anne H. Ehrlich and Paul R. Ehrlich, Millennium Alliance for Humanity and Biosphere, 12th November 2013, <http://mahb.stanford.edu/blog/a-confused-statistician>.

See, furthermore, David Pilling, 2018, and his related analysis. I thank Michelle Brenner for making me aware of Pilling's work.

Hans Rosling, whose life mission was to highlight optimism, listed five risks that even he would 'worry about', all of which have either arrived or are looming: global pandemic, financial collapse, a new world war, climate change, and extreme poverty. Rosling's term *factfulness* is commented on in 'Swansong of Hans Rosling, data visionary', by Jim O'Neill, *Nature*, 3rd April 2018, www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-03921-y.

See also 'Why you shouldn't listen to self-serving optimists like Hans Rosling and Steven Pinker: There's a reason Bill Gates loves Pinker and Rosling — their analyses obscure inequality', by Roland Paulsen, *In These Times*, 27th March 2019, <http://inthesetimes.com/article/21771/new-optimists-bill-gates-steven-pinker-hans-rosling-world-health>. See, furthermore, 'The philanthropy racket or: How the people destroying the world anoint themselves its saviors: How the global elite cast themselves as do-gooders', by Chris Lehmann, *In These Times*, 22nd August 2018, <http://inthesetimes.com/article/21346/philanthropy-global-elite-neoliberal-marketworld-economy>: After the Harvard linguist Steven Pinker's 'argument that the arc of history is bending ineluctably toward world peace', the term 'Pinking' was coined for 'the elite evasion of social conflict': 'Your problems don't really matter compared to the past's, and your problems are not really problems, because things are getting better'.

In countries like Germany, in recent years, I observe that many who were opposed to 'the system' during the 1960s and 1970s when they were young, continue with an attitude of opposition also after having attained well-established positions in society, only that they no longer oppose the system from the political 'left' but from the 'right' side. Among them seem to be those who have a psychological need for an 'anti-position', a need to speak 'against them'. During the 1960s and 1970s, many moderates were left-leaning and when they were extreme, they sympathised with groups such as the RAF. Today, it seems, moderates resonate with voices such as Steven Pinker and Hans Rosling, while more extreme-leaning people vote for right-wing parties. I observe names such as Pinker, Rosling, and Bill Gates being used by those who have accumulated privileges and may wish to relieve themselves from a guilty conscience. They overlook Hans Rosling's list of five risks that even he would 'worry about'.

See also note 1594 in chapter 6 of Lindner, 2023 for the 'repackaging' of ongoing colonisations as 'progress'. See the work of sociologist Jacques Ellul, 1985, on the 'humiliation of the word', see note 1919 in chapter 7 of Lindner, 2023. 'The American-inspired pattern of development does not create real wealth, it creates the illusion of wealth', says Charles Marohn, see note 3056 in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023. Furthermore, see note 3584 in Lindner, 2023, about supposedly 'necessary' humiliation in the name of progress and development.

²⁵ The exact phrase *fog of war* can be found in a 1896 text by Prussian military analyst Carl von Clausewitz, describing the state of ignorance of military commanders regarding the strength and position of both enemy and friend. See also ‘kill them all; let God sort them out’, in Latin *Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius*, a phrase reportedly spoken in 1209 by the commander prior to a massacre. See Wallace, 2018, p. 1, for an application of this phrase on present-day problems:

...[the] emergence of the AI revolution from games of Chess and Go into the real world will fatally encounter the central matters of the Clausewitz analysis of *Zweikampf* warfare. Promises of graceful degradation under stress for large numbers of driverless vehicles on intelligent roads, of precision targeting that avoids civilian collateral damage for autonomous or so-called man/machine centaur weapons, of precision medicine under even normal living condition, let alone during the current slow disaster; of climate change and social decay, of the ability to manage financial crises in real time with agent-based models, and so on, are delusive groupthink or marketing hype that will be beta-tested on human populations, a gross contravention of fundamental moral and legal norms.

Consider also *scobel: Ethik der Algorithmen*, by Gert Scobel, 3sat, 23rd May 2018, www.3sat.de/page/?source=/scobel/197051/index.html. 3sat is a public and advertising-free television network in Central Europe.

²⁶ Gert Scobel in *scobel: scobel — Ethik fürs Digitale*, by Gert Scobel, 3sat, 3rd September 2020, www.3sat.de/wissen/scobel/scobel---ethik-fuers-digitale-102.html. 3sat is a public and advertising-free television network in Central Europe. See also ‘Mensch über Maschine: Warum künstliche Intelligenz nie mächtiger werden darf als wir’, by Imre Grimm, *Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland*, 26th September 2020, www.rnd.de/digital/mensch-uber-maschine-warum-kunstliche-intelligenz-nie-machtiger-werden-darf-als-wir-AZOSR3BV6ZDPNIS5S5OI3YAJME.html, where the author recommends the book *Prinzip Mensch* by Nemitz and Pfeffer, 2020, as ‘a profound component in the growing debate about data ethics. It is a fact-rich, anger-free and well-founded pamphlet that will not be welcome reading in Silicon Valley, where the billionaires’ delusions of God have merged with the hippiesque promises of salvation of the Californian can-do spirit. Where politics, laws and social discourse are only seen as regional brake blocks on the way to a digital utopia’. Translated by Lindner from the German original:

Prinzip Mensch ist ein profunder Baustein in der anschwellenden Debatte über Datenethik. Es ist eine faktenreiche, zornfreie und fundierte Streitschrift, die man nicht gern lesen wird im Silicon Valley, wo der Gotteswahn der Milliardäre mit den hippiesken Heilsversprechen des kalifornischen Can-do-Spirit verschmolzen ist. Wo Politik, Gesetze und gesellschaftlicher Diskurs nur als regionale Bremsklötze auf dem Weg in ein digitales Utopia gelten.

The notion of *cogitocide* has its place here.

²⁷ In my work, I apply the *ideal-type* approach as described by sociologist Max Weber, 1904/1949. See also note 64 in the Preface on my approach to ‘spatial seeing’. See Coser, 1977, p. 224:

Weber’s three kinds of ideal types are distinguished by their levels of abstraction. First are the ideal types rooted in historical particularities, such as the ‘western city’, ‘the Protestant Ethic’, or ‘modern capitalism’, which refer to phenomena that appear only in specific historical periods and in particular cultural areas. A second kind involves abstract elements of social reality — such concepts as ‘bureaucracy’ or ‘feudalism’ — that may be found in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Finally, there is a third kind of ideal type, which Raymond Aron calls ‘rationalising reconstructions of a particular kind of behaviour’. According to Weber, all propositions in economic theory, for example, fall into this category. They all refer to the ways in which men would behave were they actuated by purely economic motives, were they purely economic men.

Michael Karlberg explains how analytical constructs never correspond perfectly with some presumably objective reality. See Karlberg, 2013, p. 9:

Care must be taken, therefore, not to reify these frames or over-extend the metaphors that inform them. These frames can, however, serve as useful heuristic devices for organising certain forms of inquiry and guiding certain forms of practice — such as inquiry into the meaning of human dignity and the application of this concept in fields such as human rights and conflict resolution.

I very much appreciate Louise Sundararajan's comments on the book *The nature and challenges of indigenous psychologies* by Carl Martin Allwood, 2018, that she shared with her Indigenous psychology task force on 3rd September 2018, based on her book chapter 'Indigenous psychologies', Sundararajan, et al., 2017. Sundararajan explains how to avoid that abstractions slide towards essentialism. In her view 'essentialism is abstraction mistaken as reality', as it is in the case of 'nation' or 'identity', 'whereas scientific theorising is abstraction treated as abstraction'. As an example she offers the model airplane, which nobody would mistake for reality, since it one can't fly in it. Also the pure form of the model does not lead to essentialism, 'because of the basic understanding that no reality exists in pure forms'. I appreciate her next example, namely, that of 'dirt' and she illustrates it by two approaches to reality (X):

A: X=dirt, elements, crystals, subatomic particles

B: X=dirt (elements, crystals, subatomic particles)

Sundararajan explains that in scientific investigations, as represented by A, 'abstraction is context dependent, each level of analysis generates its own abstraction such that there are multiple abstractions (dirt, elements, crystals, subatomic particles)', none of which has a higher status of 'essence' than the other. Essentialism is represented by B, where 'the term closest to the phenomenal world (dirt) is elevated to the status of reality, the essence of which is supposed to be captured by the more abstract terms'. Sundararajan then applies the example of dirt to notions such as culture, nation, and population. If one takes the approach of B, nation or population names reality, 'the essence of which is captured by abstractions'. By contrast, in A, 'abstractions are not inextricably yoked to serve the master script of nation or population which are treated as labels of convenience like any other'.

²⁸ *The psychology of humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda / Burundi, and Hitler's Germany* was my doctoral dissertation in social psychology at the Department of Psychology of the University of Oslo, Norway, in 2000. *Quality of life: A German-Egyptian comparative study* (in German) was my doctoral dissertation in psychological medicine at the University of Hamburg, Germany, in 1993. *Honor, humiliation, and terror: An explosive mix — and how we can defuse it with dignity*, was my fifth book, and it came out in 2017 in Dignity Press, in its imprint World Dignity University Press, with a Foreword by Linda Hartling, director of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies. Please see more chapters and papers in full text on www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php.

²⁹ *Making enemies: Humiliation and international conflict* was my first book on dignity and humiliation and how we may envision a more dignified world, characterised as a path-breaking book and honoured as 'Outstanding Academic Title' for 2007 in the USA by the journal *Choice*. Please see more details on www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/01.php. See more in note 510 in chapter 2, and note 580 further down in Lindner, 2023.

Emotion and conflict: How human rights can dignify emotion and help us wage good conflict was my second book. See www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/02.php.

³⁰ *Gender, humiliation, and global security* was my third book, published by Praeger in 2010. Archbishop Desmond Tutu kindly contributed with a Foreword (asked for a prepublication endorsement, he was so generous to offer to contribute with a Foreword). The book was 'highly recommended' by *Choice* in July 2010. For more details, see www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/03.php.

³¹ *A dignity economy: Creating an economy that serves human dignity and preserves our planet* was my fourth book, and it is the first publication of Dignity Press, published in 2012 in its imprint World Dignity University Press. See www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin/book/04.php.

³² See Lindner, 2009b, and Tschudi and Lindner, 2008.

³³ See Lindner, 2009b, and Tschudi and Lindner, 2008.

³⁴ See Galtung, 1969, and 'Structural violence re-explored', by Johan Galtung, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, Editorial #333, 21st July 2014, www.transcend.org/tms/2014/07/structural-violence-re-explored/.

³⁵ For slow violence, see Nixon, 2011.

³⁶ See Freire, 1968/1970, 1968/1973, and Morais, 1979, 1983. See Andersson and Richards, 2013, chapter IV, p. 15, of the unpublished manuscript:

De Morais, in contradistinction to Freire, sets forward not two but three levels of awareness. He adds to Freire's two, which are: the naïve level and the critical level. The third is the organisational level of

awareness. At the naïve level a person is aware of problems but is unable to understand their cause (and so may blame God or the Fates). The critically conscious person is able to identify the factors responsible for problems, and their inter-relationship. Organisational awareness is reached when the person has the ability to act together with others to address a problem or attain particular results. Organisational awareness manifests what de Moraes calls a ‘methodological rationality’.

It was a great inspiration for me to learn about the work of Iván Labra based on Clodomir Santos de Moraes’ concepts in Howard Richards’ Dialogue Home and Centro para el Desarrollo Alternativo en Limache, Chile, on 26th April 2012. See *Iván Labra and the organisation workshop* at <http://youtu.be/SaxNvVBDfks>, and *Iván Labra: Consciousness is in the act* at <http://youtu.be/Vn05XK8McEM>. See also notes 411 and 412 in chapter 2 in Lindner, 2023.

³⁷ Sikkink, 2018. I thank Paul Raskin for introducing Kathryn Sikkink to the Great Transition Network.

³⁸ ‘Hansa Mehta: The daughter of the Dewan of Baroda who fought for gender equality: Throughout her life, Hansa Jivraj Mehta fought for education for all, gender equality, parity and the upliftment of women. Read her story here’, *Inuth*, 14th August 2017, www.inuth.com/india/women-freedom-fighters-of-india/hansa-mehta-the-daughter-of-the-dewan-of-baroda-who-fought-for-gender-equality/. I called for ‘a new Mehta’ in a talk I gave to Indian students in 2021, see www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin021.php#bhopal21.

³⁹ See Wetz, 2014.

⁴⁰ See Lindner, 2000, based on Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999. See also chapter 4 in Lindner, 2023.

⁴¹ See Weber-Guskar, 2016.

⁴² Psychotherapist Carol Smaldino uses the phrase *intrinsic pride* in ‘Addressing the “Toxins in Our Hearts”: A Conversation with Mary Gordon, Founder of Roots of Empathy’, *Huffington Post*, 21st December 2017, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/addressing-the-toxins-in-our-hearts-a-conversation_us_5a3c7b0ce4b0d86c803c70a0.

⁴³ A collection of nineteenth-century African American folktales known as Uncle Remus stories became a derogatory way to describe blacks. Uncle Remus is a fictional black narrator, who calls a stuck-up sparrow ‘uppity’.

⁴⁴ See also *Dignity is a vital force*, by Beth Boynton, 2019, www.confidentvoices.com/2019/04/23/dignity-is-a-vital-force-medical-improv-holds-the-key/.

⁴⁵ For the Sustainable Development Goals, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>. If the exponential growth curve of Goal 8 were to be taken seriously, it would undermine the success of the other goals. Goal 8 of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals: ‘Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all’, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/. See an interdisciplinary introduction to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that looks at all SDGs and their progress and challenges and is offered by Johan Schot, a historian working in the field of science and technology policy. See www.edx.org/course/the-un-sustainable-development-goals-an-interdisci?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIiILQ_qOR7QIViNPtCh1Vzg-4EAAAYASAAEgL4Tfd_BwE.

Consider also Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director, who warns, ‘There’s this idea out there that we have to log, mine, and drill our way to prosperity. But that’s not true. By embracing circularity and re-using materials we can still drive economic growth while protecting the planet for future generations’, see *New trade rules vital to protecting the planet*, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 20th November 2020, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/new-trade-rules-vital-protecting-planet.

I resonate with the conclusion of the member of the Club of Rome Stefan Brunnhuber that the monetary system is the missing link in the debate of sustainability. See Brunnhuber, 2021, and Lietaer, et al., 2012a. This is why I wrote the book *A dignity economy*, Lindner, 2012.

Green New Deal proposals suffer from the same problem, as they intend to implement public policies built on the same economic principles that led to ecocide and sociocide in the first place. For European efforts, see, for instance, ‘Statement by President von der Leyen on delivering the European Green Deal’, European Commission, Brussels, 14th July 2021,

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_3701.

See also ‘Beware UN food systems summit Trojan horse’, by Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *Inter Press Service*, www.ipsnews.net/2021/07/beware-un-food-systems-summit-trojan-horse/.

For an easy-to-read text on financial instability, see, among others, ‘The stock market is one black swan away from the greatest reset in history: How a hidden stock market crash exposed the illusion of stability’, by Concode, *Medium*, 15th May 2021, <https://medium.com/concode/the-financial-system-is-a-lot-more-fragile-than-were-led-to-believe-7303fb6bcac8>.

⁴⁶ Raworth, 2017.

⁴⁷ Scholar of human needs Ian Gough, 2017, p. 56. In his book *Heat, greed and human need*, Gough refers to an eudaimonic psychology definition of three universal needs, *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*, see page 44. Katherine Trebeck, a research and policy adviser with Oxfam, summarises Gough’s definition of basic needs on 17th July 2019, on www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/book-review-heat-greed-and-human-need/:

...basic needs encompass physical health, autonomy of agency (mental health, cognitive understanding, opportunities to participate), and critical autonomy. They are satisfied by access to things such as adequate food and water, protective housing, safe work environment, healthcare, and significant primary relationships, and in turn optimised by freedoms from (civic and political rights), freedoms to (rights of access to need satisfiers), and political participation.

I resonate with Trebeck’s appreciation of Gough’s work, as it helps those who are ‘sceptical about the merit of wellbeing as individual self-reported happiness in the hedonic sense’. While it is true that preferences and wants depend on context, which means that it is not advisable to make simplistic assumptions about how people feel, ‘human needs are objective, plural, non-substitutable and satiable’, Gough, 2017, p. 3.

⁴⁸ ‘Covid-19 has revealed a pre-existing pandemic of poverty that benefits the rich’, by Philip Alston, outgoing UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, *The Guardian*, 11th July 2020, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/11/covid-19-has-revealed-a-pre-existing-pandemic-of-poverty-that-benefits-the-rich. See also Hickel, 2018, and *The parlous state of poverty eradication: Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Advance Unedited Version*, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, NYU School of Law, 2nd July 2020, <https://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Alston-Poverty-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

⁴⁹ *Planetary economics: New tools for local transformation* with Kate Raworth, Schumacher Center for New Economics, November 12, 2022, <https://youtu.be/aPWOHR6dM-4>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See, for instance, Lietaer, et al., 2012b.

⁵³ *Planetary economics: New tools for local transformation* with Kate Raworth, Schumacher Center for New Economics, November 12, 2022, <https://youtu.be/aPWOHR6dM-4>.

⁵⁴ ‘The end of poverty?’ by Thomas Pogge, *The Mark News*, 7th February 2016, www.themarknews.com/2016/02/07/the-end-of-poverty/. See also Pogge, 2008. It has been a privilege for me to learn from Thomas Pogge, starting more than twenty years ago, when he was part of the Ethics Programme of the Norwegian Research Council, led by Dagfinn Føllesdal. When I studied psychology at Hamburg University in the 1970s, Pogge studied sociology there at the same time, however, we did not meet then. See also the work of Norwegian economist Kalle Moene, 2018.

⁵⁵ ‘The end of poverty?’ by Thomas Pogge, *The Mark News*, 7th February 2016.

⁵⁶ ‘Our theory of change’, <http://berkana.org/about/our-theory-of-change/> and <https://vimeo.com/17907928>:

The two loops model has been a fundamental piece of The Berkana Institute’s theory of change. As one system culminates and starts to collapse, isolated alternatives slowly begin to arise and give way to the new. In this video Deborah Frieze, Berkana’s former co-president, explains the two loops theory and speaks about the way that our work to name, connect, nourish and illuminate has fit into this model. She also identifies some of the different roles we might play to hospice the dying system, usher in the alternative system and make clear the choice between the two.

We believe that no universal solution exists for the challenges of this time: increased poverty and disease, failing large-scale systems, ecological degradation. But widespread impact does become possible when

people working at the local level are able to learn from one another, practice together and share learning with communities everywhere. We have observed that large-scale change emerges when local actions get connected globally while preserving their deeply local culture, flavour and form. And we have called this trans-local learning.

I thank Anamaria Aristizabal for making me aware of this article, in her contribution to the Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum on the topic of ‘Feminism and revolution: Looking back, looking ahead’, 4th May 2018, in response to the essay of the same title by Julie Matthaei, 2018.

⁵⁷ Johan Rockström, 2015, p. 1:

The urgency of the challenges ahead demands a two-prong strategy: acting within our current obsolete development framework to bend environmental and social justice curves as much as possible, while simultaneously fostering the longer-term shift in consciousness to values and institutions that equitably integrate people and planet.

See more in note 1301 in chapter 5, and in chapter 7 of Lindner, 2023.

⁵⁸ A ‘stubborn optimist’ in the face of climate change, talk by Christiana Figueres’, 2018 Aspen Ideas Festival, www.aspenideas.org/sessions/a-stubborn-optimist-in-the-face-of-climate-change.

⁵⁹ Raskin, 2016, Raskin, et al., 2002. Raskin recommends *Alternatives to a failed economy*, edited by Gus Speth and Courrier, 2020, and a related study guide by Thad Williamson, 2020. An important caveat: The arguments proposed here are not to be confused with the ‘great reset’ conspiracy narrative that is currently being disseminated by conspiracy entrepreneurs. This narrative has appropriated the ‘shock doctrine’ of Naomi Klein, 2007. In fact, Raskin’s thinking represents the opposite of this conspiracy narrative. See, among others, ‘How the “great reset” of capitalism became an anti-lockdown conspiracy’, by Quinn Slobodian, *The Guardian*, 4th December 2020, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy. See more in note 27 in the Preface, and see the section titled ‘Indignation entrepreneurship hinders sober and constructive action’ in chapter 10.

⁶⁰ See, among others, Lindner, 2009a, p. 71.

⁶¹ See, among others, ‘To get better decisions, get a little fuzzy’, by Bob Frisch, *Harvard Business Review*, 22nd May 2012, <https://hbr.org/2012/05/to-get-better-decisions-get-a>:

It’s easy to equate crisp, clear, black-and-white decisions with good decisions. ... But, as often as not, this drive toward clarity and closure — and the need for precision that accompanies it — leads senior management teams to waste time and make meaningless decisions. Often, it’s better to be fuzzy...

See also the work of psychiatrist and neuroimaging researcher Iain McGilchrist, 2009, who theorises that language fixes our view on the world rather than grounding our thinking in the world. See more in note 3499 in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023.

⁶² The Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss developed the notion of the ‘depth of intention’, the ‘depth of questioning’ or ‘deepness of answers’. Greater depth means continuing to ask questions at the point at which others stop asking. Næss wrote ‘our depth of intention improves only slowly over years of study. There is an abyss of depth in everything fundamental’, see Næss, 1978, p. 143. Warwick Fox, 2000, in his paper ‘Intellectual origins of the “depth” theme in the philosophy of Arne Næss’, explains on page 5:

The extent to which a person discriminates along a chain of precizations (and, therefore, in a particular direction of interpretation) is a measure of their depth of intention, that is, the depth to which that person can claim to have understood the intended meaning of the expression.

See also Fox, 1992. Arne Næss was a pillar of the Foundational Conference of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme de l’Homme in Paris, 12th–13th September 2003. See www.humiliationstudies.org/whowere/annualmeeting/02.php. Arne Næss was a highly esteemed member in the global advisory board of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community.

⁶³ Taylor, 1971, 1993, Searle, 1995. Searle uses the phrase *institutional facts* when he speaks of, for instance, property rights and contract rights. See Manicas, 2006. See, furthermore, Porpora, 1993, Donati and Archer, 2015, and Richards, 2004, and Lawson, 2019. I thank Howard Richards for including me into his lifelong

journey of reflecting on social change. See ‘The basic cultural structure: A comment from Chile as it burns’, by Howard Richards, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, Editorial #613, 18th November 2019, www.transcend.org/tms/2019/11/the-basic-cultural-structure-a-comment-from-chile-as-it-burns/Media. See also Haavelsrud, 1981, for four kinds of peace education: idealistic, scientific, critical, and political. See also Bill McKibben, 2019, founder of the environmental organisation 350.org, and his essay ‘Climate movement: What’s next?’ for the May 2019 discussion of Paul Raskin’s Great Transition Network Forum. When asked where I stand with respect to the reform versus transformation debate, then I stand on the side of transformation.

My experience indicates that ‘green capitalism’ does not reach far enough. Climate degradation is only one of many deeply embedded structural problems that require transformations at the appropriate level. Single-issue Band Aids are insufficient.

See also note 2355 in chapter 7 of Lindner, 2023.

⁶⁴ For the notion of a world-system, see Wallerstein, 1974–1989. See also Harvey, 2005, or Hudson, 2003. Howard Richards in a personal communication, 23rd October 2016: ‘According to Immanuel Wallerstein the global economy is the one and only object of study of the social sciences today; everything else is caught up in a web of causes and effects where the structure of the global economy is the principal cause’. See also Lindner, 2012, and see more in note 2359 in chapter 7 of Lindner, 2023. See also note 1328 in chapter 5, and note 4049 in Lindner, 2023.

The caveat mentioned above is valid also here: Howard Richards’ thinking should not be confused with the ‘great reset’ conspiracy narrative that is currently being disseminated by conspiracy entrepreneurs. This narrative has appropriated the ‘shock doctrine’ of Naomi Klein, 2007. In fact, Richards’ his thinking represents the opposite of this conspiracy narrative. See, among others, ‘How the “great reset” of capitalism became an anti-lockdown conspiracy’, by Quinn Slobodian, *The Guardian*, 4th December 2020, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/04/great-reset-capitalism-became-anti-lockdown-conspiracy. See more in note 27 in the Preface, and see the section titled ‘Indignation entrepreneurship hinders sober and constructive action’ in chapter 10 of Lindner, 2023.

⁶⁵ Bhaskar, 1975/2008.

⁶⁶ Anthony Marsella in a personal communication, 26th June 2013. See also ‘Lifeism: beyond humanity’, Anthony Marsella, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, 17th March 2014, www.transcend.org/tms/2014/03/lifeism-beyond-humanity/. See, furthermore, ‘Identity in a global era: Individual, collective, national, “existential” considerations’, by Anthony J. Marsella, *TRANSCEND Media Service*, 30th July 2018, www.transcend.org/tms/2018/07/identity-in-a-global-era-individual-collective-national-existential-considerations/. It is a privilege to have Anthony Marsella as an esteemed member in the global advisory board of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community. See more in note 477 in chapter 2 of Lindner, 2023.

⁶⁷ *We the planet* is the title of a book by political scientist and social psychologist Walter Truett Anderson, 2016, who advocates *biophilia*, the instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems.

⁶⁸ Social theorist Mary Mellor writes about the *right to livelihood* for all (including other species) in her response to the contributions to the Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum on the topic of ‘Money for the people’, 19th September 2017, a discussion that was based on her essay with the same title, Mellor, 2017. The right to livelihood means to promote ‘sufficiency provisioning for all and reversing the emphasis on individualism and bootstraps (shared by conservatives and progressives in their different ways)’. Mary Mellor considers herself a monetary re-thinker, working for a new approach to monetary policy, an approach that is based on ‘how money really works rather than on prevailing economic myths’. What she tries to show in her books, as she writes in her response, is ‘that public money does exist, states do print money, money is not in short supply, public expenditure does not rest on taxation, the public sector is not funded by the private sector, banks do not link savers and borrowers, a debt-based money supply is not viable, public sector deficits (surplus expenditure) are usually a good thing’. She ascertains that ‘re-thinking alone cannot achieve change’, however, change ‘will come from the exposed failures of current thinking and practice, if we are ready with an alternative analysis and framework for action’.

See also ‘COVID, livelihoods, and deadlihoods: We have choices to make’, by Ashish Kothari, *Wall Street International Magazine*, 13th August 2020, <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/63071-covid-livelihoods-and-deadlihoods>. See also chapter 7 in Lindner, 2023, look for note 2368.

⁶⁹ Michael Britton in a personal communication, 1st April 2020:

If Eleanor Roosevelt were here today, instead of the universal declaration of human rights we might be ready, in one of Evelin and Linda's Eleanor Roosevelt Moments, we might be ready for a Universal Declaration of Human Vulnerability, or a Declaration of Universal Human Vulnerability — premising a need for pulling together, universal cooperation as the foundation of planetary life.

See, furthermore, the Charter of Compassion by Karen Armstrong, <https://charterforcompassion.org>, and 'Brené Brown on why courage, vulnerability and authenticity have to be practiced', interviewer: Chantal Pierrat, *Huffington Post*, 25th August 2013, www.huffpost.com/entry/brene-brown-origin-magazine-interview_n_3796923.

⁷⁰ See for a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, www.interactioncouncil.org/publications/universal-declaration-human-responsibilities. Pierre Calamé called for such a declaration in his contribution to the Great Transition Initiative (GTI) Forum on the topic of 'Corporations in the crosshairs: From reform to redesign', 18th November 2019, in response to White, 2019:

What is at stake is the very definition of responsibility: moving from the limited responsibility and liability which characterises each of the stakeholders and, as a result, gives birth to our societies of illimited irresponsibility, to an enlarged definition befitting the reality of our global interdependences. But this effort to enlarge the definition cannot be limited to economic or financial actors. It also concerns the states, the local authorities, the non-governmental organizations, and the citizens themselves. We must develop a Universal Declaration of human responsibilities endorsed by as many actors as possible, each stakeholder translating this Declaration into a Charter of societal responsibilities which should be the basis of its social contract.

Calamé refers to ethics of *respons-ability*, see the International Alliance for Responsible and Sustainable Societies at www.alliance-respons.net.

For a Universal Declaration of Duty, listen to the Earth Charter podcast with Gus Speth titled 'A new consciousness and the eight-fold way towards sustainability'. See <https://earthcharter.org/podcasts/gus-speth/>. It was a privilege for me to be introduced to Gus Speth by Margrit Kennedy in 2010, and to meet him in person at the Thirtieth Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures 'Voices of a New Economics', in New York City on 20th November 2010.

⁷¹ *Space exploration — A powerful symbol of global cooperation*, NASA's Jim Zimmerman interviewed by Susan T. Coleman in the Peacebuilding Podcast, 13th December 2016, <http://us11.campaign-archive1.com/?u=e5c2110f5cc4fe346c79bf3d1&id=06298a46ca&e=e7c4dd8362>. I thank Judit Révész for making me aware of this interview.

See also *24 hours of reality: 'Earthrise'*, by Amanda Gorman, Climate Reality, 4th December 2018, <https://youtu.be/xwOvBv8RLmo>: 'It is a hope that implores us at an uncompromising core to keep rising up for an Earth more than worth fighting for'. See <http://climateresearchproject.org>.

⁷² White, 2014.

⁷³ Anderson, 2016.

⁷⁴ A creative ecology of the living — a *biopoetics* — is developed by philosopher and biologist Andreas Weber, 2016, explaining why mind and life are coextensive. See the book description:

Meaning, feeling and expression — the experience of inwardness — matter most in human existence. The perspective of biopoetics shows that this experience is shared by all organisms. Being alive means to exist through relations that have existential concern, and to express these dimensions through the body and its gestures. All life takes place within one poetic space which is shared between all beings and which is accessible through subjective sensual experience. We take part in this through our empirical subjectivity, which arises from the experiences and needs of living beings, and which makes them open to access and sharing in a poetic objectivity. Biopoetics breaks free from the causal-mechanic paradigm which made biology unable to account for mind and meaning. Biology becomes a science of expression, connection and subjectivity which can understand all organisms including humans as feeling agents in a shared ecology of meaningful relations, embedded in a symbolical and material metabolism of the biosphere.

⁷⁵ The *axial age* is a term that philosopher Karl Jaspers coined sixty years ago for the philosophical, religious, and technical developments that arose in relatively independent cultural regions around the world in a comparatively short period of time, starting eight hundred years BCE and lasting until around two hundred years BCE. See Jaspers, 1949. See also Bellah, 2011, and Bellah and Joas, 2012. Even though the assumption of an axial period could not stand up to subsequent historical scrutiny in exactly the way Jaspers formulated it, it became a founding myth of modernity, and it can still today serve to overcome Eurocentric views of history today.