Humiliation in the Flesh.

Honour Is 'Face,' Arrogance Is 'Nose Up,' and Humiliation Is 'To Be Put Down'

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Abstract

This paper plays out the dynamics of humiliation within the framework of Lakoff and Johnson's work on metaphor. The article discusses the question to what extent humiliation may be stable and universal and to what extent culture-dependent, and maps some instantiations of humiliation and ways to respond to it. In the first part of the article the concept of humiliation is discussed in two ways. First the universal and stable core of the concept of humiliation is addressed, showing that every human being knows what humiliation is, and secondly the culture-dependent periphery is attended to, focusing on the different meanings of humiliation in those societies that are based on honour and domination, and those that are based on human rights. The second part of the article presents cases of humiliation and ways to respond to it. Nelson Mandela's innovative way of avoiding violent counter-humiliation of his humiliators receives special attention.

Humiliation in the Flesh.

Honour Is "FACE," Arrogance Is "NOSE UP," and Humiliation Is "TO BE PUT DOWN"

Can humiliation lead to war? It has been widely accepted for a long time that the Versailles Accords after World War I inflicted humiliation on Germany to such an extent that it triggered World War II. It is surprising that social psychology has not researched the issue of humiliation on a larger scale. How can we neglect an aspect of human behaviour that seems to have the capacity to trigger unfathomable violence and unspeakable atrocities such as the slaughtering of millions of people in war and Holocaust?

This paper draws upon a perspective developed while carrying out a research project at the University of Oslo (1997-2001),[1] entitled The Feeling of Being Humiliated: A Central Theme in Armed Conflicts. A Study of the Role of Humiliation in Somalia, and Rwanda/Burundi, Between the Warring Parties, and in Relation to Third Intervening Parties.[2] 216 qualitative interviews were carried out, from 1998 to 1999 in Africa (in Hargeisa, which is the capital of "Somaliland," in Kigali and other places in Rwanda, in Bujumbura, capital of Burundi, in Nairobi in Kenya, and in Cairo in Egypt), and from 1997 to 2000 in Europe (in Oslo in Norway, in Germany, in Geneva, and in Brussels).[3] The topic has been discussed with about

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[1] See project description on www.uio.no/~evelinl. The project is supported by the Norwegian Research Council and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I am grateful for their support, and would also like to thank the Institute of Psychology at the University of Oslo for hosting it. I extend my warmest thanks to all my informants in and from Africa, many of whom survive under the most difficult life circumstances. I hope that at some point in the future I will be able to give back at least a fraction of all the support I received from them! I thank Reidar Ommundsen at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Oslo for his continuous support, together with Jan Smedslund, Hilde Nafstad, Malvern Lumsden (Lumsden, 1997), Carl-Erik Grenness, Jon Martin Sundet, Finn Tschudi, Kjell Flekkøy, and Astrid Bastiansen. Michael Harris Bond, Chinese University of Hong Kong, helped with constant feedback and support (see Bond, Michael Harris,1996; Bond, 1998; Bond, 2000; Bond, Chiu, & Wan, 1984; Bond & Venus, 1991; Smith & Bond, 1999). The project would not have been possible without the help of Dennis Smith, professor of sociology at Loughborough University (UK). Without Lee D. Ross's encouragement my research would not have been possible; Lee Ross is a principal investigator and co-founder of the Stanford Center on Conflict and Negotiation (SCCN). I also thank Pierre Dasen, Professeur en approches interculturelles de l'éducation, Université en Genève, Departement de Psychologie, for his most valuable support. The project is interdisciplinary and has benefited from the help of many colleagues at the University of Oslo and elsewhere. I would especially like to thank Jan Øberg, William Ury, Director, Project on Preventing War, Harvard University (Ury, 1999; Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991), Heidi von Weltzien Hoivik and Andreas Føllesdal (Weltzien Hoivik, Heidi von and Føllesdal, Andreas,1995), Dagfinn Føllesdal (Føllesdal, 1988), Thomas Pogge, Helge Høybråten, Thorleif Lund, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (Eriksen, 1993), Unni Wikan (Wikan, 1984), Asbjørn Eide and Bernt Hagtvet (Eide & Hagtvet, 1996), Leif Ahnstrøm, and Jan Brøgger (Brøgger, 1986).

[2] For article written so long, see Lindner, 2000c; Lindner, 2000d; Lindner, 2000e; Lindner, 1996; Lindner, 2000f; Lindner, 2000g; Lindner, 2000h; Lindner, 2000b; Lindner, 1999a; Lindner, 2000a; Lindner, 1999b; Lindner, 1999c; Lindner, 1998; Lindner, 2000i; Lindner, 2000j; Lindner, 2000k; Lindner, 2000l; Lindner, 2000m; Lindner, 2000n; Lindner, 2000o; Lindner, 2000p.

[3] The title of the project indicates that three groups had to be interviewed, namely both conflict parties in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi, and representatives of third intervening parties. These three groups stand in a relationship that in its minimum version is triangular. In case of more than two opponents, as is the case in most conflicts, it acquires more than three corners.

400 researchers working in related fields. The current state-of-the-art has been mapped, showing that few researchers have given attention to the concept of humiliation. A Theory of Humiliation is currently being developed by the author, and a book project, The Death of the West, is in process.[4]

When the research project on humiliation first was drawn up (1996) it started out with the following propositions (Lindner, 1996, 1, 2): "I hypothesise that the significance of feelings of humiliation is universal or culture-independent, and that these feelings carry the potential to hamper conflict solutions described by rational choice theory. What is rather culture-dependent is according to my experience the way how humiliation is perceived and responded to. If this double-layer hypothesis is correct then third parties intervening in a violent conflict could develop and use a two-module strategy which contains one basic module which deals with universally present fundamental questions of humiliation, and one rather culture-dependent module which addresses the specific ways of dealing with humiliation in the cultural domain in which the third party is operating at present (note: culture or cultural domain is here not understood as closed, self-contained entity)."

These hypotheses gave rise to the following questions:

Both in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi representatives of the 'opponents' and the 'third party' were interviewed. The following categories of people were included:

- Survivors of genocide were included, i.e. people belonging to the group that was targeted for genocide. In Somalia this was the Issaq tribe, in Rwanda the Tutsi, in Burundi also the Hutu. The group of survivors consists of two parts, namely those who survived because they were not in the country when the genocide happened - some of them returned after the genocide - and those who survived the ongoing onslaught inside the country.
- Freedom fighters (only men) were interviewed. In Somalia these were the SNM (Somali National Movement) fighters who fought the troops sent by the central government in Mogadishu; in Rwanda these were the former Tutsi refugees who formed an army, the RFP (Rwandese Patriotic Front), and attacked Rwanda from the north in order to oust the Hutu government which carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994; in Burundi these were also Hutu rebels.
- Many Somali warlords have their retreat in Kenya, and some were interviewed there.
- Politicians were included, among them people who were in power already before the genocide and whom survivors secretly suspected of having been collaborators or at least silent supporters of perpetrators.
- Somali and Rwandan/Burundian academicians were interviewed, who study the situation of their countries.
- Representatives of national non-governmental organisations who work locally with development, peace and reconciliation were included.
- Third parties were interviewed, namely representatives of United Nations organisations and international non-governmental organisations who work with emergency relief, long-term development, peace, and reconciliation.
- Egyptian diplomats in the foreign ministry who deal with Somalia were included; Egypt is a heavy weight in the OAU.
- African psychiatrists in Kenya who deal with trauma, and forensic psychiatry were included. In Kenya many nationals from Somalia and also Rwanda/Burundi have sought refuge, both in refugee camps, but also on the basis of private arrangements.
- Those who have not yet been interviewed are masterminds of genocide in Rwanda, those who have planned the genocide. Many of them are said to be in hiding in Kenya, and other parts of Africa, or in Brussels and other parts of Europe, or in the States and Canada. Some are in the prisons in Rwanda and in Arusha, Tanzania.

[4] Both in collaboration with Dennis Smith, Loughborough University, UK. Smith is professor of sociology at Loughborough University (UK), see his publications: Smith, 2000a; Smith, 2000b; Smith, 2000c; Smith, 1999; Smith, 1997a; Smith, 1997b; Smith, 1991; Smith, 1984a; Smith, 1984b; Smith, 1983; Smith, 1981.

What is experienced as humiliation? What happens when people feel humiliated? When is humiliation established as a feeling? What does humiliation lead to? Which experiences of justice, honour, dignity, respect and self-respect are connected with the feeling of being humiliated? How is humiliation perceived and responded to in different cultures? What role does humiliation play for aggression? What can be done to overcome violent effects of humiliation? To what extent is humiliation stable and universal and to what extent culture-dependent?

This article will discuss the question to what extent humiliation may be stable and universal and to what extent culture-dependent, and will try to map some instantiations of humiliation and ways to respond to it. The paper will be organised in two main parts, each having several subsections. Part I will map out the current state-of-the-art of research on humiliation. Following this the concept of humiliation will discussed in two ways. First the universal and stable core of the concept of humiliation will be addressed, showing that every human being knows what humiliation is, and secondly the culture-dependent periphery will be attended to, focusing on the different meanings of humiliation in those societies that are based on honour and domination, and those that are based on human rights. Part II will then present cases of humiliation and ways to respond to it. Humiliation may be i) accepted, ii) it may be responded to with depression, iii) it may be countered with aggression, or iv) it may be reacted to with the elimination of the humiliators, either by annihilating their significance, or their physical existence, or by an unexpected method, namely by gaining their respect and transforming their ideology from honour to human rights. Nelson Mandela's innovative way of not counter-humiliating his humiliators will receive special attention.

PART I: The Current State-of-the-art

Few researchers have studied humiliation explicitly, related themes, however, such as shame, guilt, trauma, self-esteem, trust, dominance, power, etc., have been studied more extensively.[5]

Thomas Scheff, along with Suzanne Retzinger, has studied the part played by "humiliated fury" (Scheff, 1997a, 11) in escalating conflict between individuals and nations. Retzinger and Scheff show that the suffering caused by humiliation is highly significant and that the bitterest divisions have their roots in shame and humiliation.[6] The Journal of Primary Prevention devoted a special issue to the topic of humiliation in 1991,[7] 1992,[8] and 1999,[9] as did the journal Social Research in 1997, stimulated by Margalit's Decent Society (Margalit, 1996).[10]

William Ian Miller wrote a book entitled Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence (Miller, 1993), where he links humiliation to honour as understood

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[5] Some authors do not differentiate between humiliation and shame and use it exchangeably, for example Silvan S. Tomkins (1962–1992) whose work is carried further by Donald L. Nathanson who describes humiliation as a combination of three innate affects out of nine, namely as a combination of shame, disgust and dissmell (Nathanson told me this in a personal conversation, 1st October 1999). See Nathanson, 1992; Nathanson, 1987, and Tomkins, 1962.

[6] See Scheff, 1990a; Scheff, 1988; Scheff, 1990b; Scheff, 1997b. See also Gilligan, 1996; Rapoport, 1997; Staub, 1988; Staub, 1989; Staub, 1990; Staub, 1993; Vogel & Lazare, 1990; Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 1992; Volkan, 1988.

[7] Klein, 1991.

[8] Barrett & Brooks, 1992; Klein, 1992; Smith, 1992.

[9] Hartling & Luchetta, 1999.

[10] Frankfurt, 1997; Honneth, 1997; Lukes, 1997; Mack, 1997; Margalit, 1997; Pettit, 1997; Quinton, 1997; Ripstein, 1997; Rorty, 1997; Schick, 1997.

in the Iliad or Icelandic sagas. Miller explains that these concepts are still very much alive today, despite a common assumption that they are no longer relevant. Miller suggests, "that we are more familiar with the culture of honor than we may like to admit. This familiarity partially explains why stories of revenge play so well, whether read as the Iliad, an Icelandic saga, Hamlet, many novels, or seen as so many gangland, intergalactic, horror, or Clint Eastwood movies. Honor is not our official ideology, but its ethic survives in pockets of most all our lives. In some ethnic (sub)cultures it still is the official ideology, or at least so we are told about the cultures of some urban black males, Mafiosi, Chicano barrios, and so on. And even among the suburban middle class the honor ethic is lived in high school or in the competitive rat race of certain professional cultures" (Miller, 1993, 9).

Also Cohen and Nisbett examine an honour-based notion of humiliation (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). The honour to which Cohen and Nisbett refer is the kind that operates in the more traditional branches of the Mafia or, more generally, in blood feuds. The present author is familiar with this scenario as a result of working for seven years as a psychological counsellor in Egypt. Within a blood feud culture it is honourable and perfectly legitimate to "heal" humiliation by killing a targeted person. The opposite is true in a society where universal human rights are recognised; "healing" humiliation means restoring the victim's dignity by empathic dialogue, sincere apology, and finally reconciliation.[11]

There is a significant literature in philosophy on "the politics of recognition," claiming that people who are not recognized suffer humiliation and that this leads to violence (see also Honneth, 1997 on related themes). Max Scheler set out these issues in his classic book Ressentiment (Scheler, 1961).[12] Humiliation has also been addressed in such fields as international relations,[13] love, sex and social attractiveness,[14] depression,[15] society and identity formation,[16] sports,[17] serial murder,[18] war and violence.[19] A few examples from history, literature and film illustrate humiliation.[20] Galtung amalgamates various approaches into a greater analysis of society and humankind.[21]

The Human Body Is Stable and Universal

Is the above-introduced double-layered hypothesis of humiliation defendable, namely that the concept of humiliation has a stable and universal core and a culture-dependent periphery?

When George Lakoff was asked in an interview "What is the body?" he answered with Pierre Bourdieu "that our bodies and what we do with them differ significantly from culture

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[11] See other evidence relating to blood feuds in Boehm, 1984, Malcolm, 1998, and Rodina, 1999. I owe these references to Adam Jones.

[12] See also Liah Greenfeld, who suggests that ressentiment plays a central role in nation building (Greenfeld, 1992; Greenfeld, 1996).

[13] See for example Cviic, 1993; Luo, 1993; Midiohouan, 1991; Steinberg, 1991a; Steinberg, 1991b; Steinberg, 1996; Urban, 1990.

[14] See for example Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993; Brossat, 1995; Gilbert, 1997; Proulx, Aubut, Mckibben, & Cote, 1994.

[15] See for example Brown et al., 1995; Miller, 1988.

[16] See for example Ignatieff, 1997; Markus, Kitayama, & Heimann, 1996; Silver, Conte, Miceli, & Poggi, 1986; Wood, Giordanobeech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994.

[17] See for example Hardman, Fox, McLaughlin, & Zimmerman, 1996.

[18] See for example Hale, 1994; Lehmann, 1995; Schlesinger, 1998.

[19] See for example Masson, 1996; Vachon, 1993; Znakov, 1990.

[20] See for example Peters, 1993; Stadtwald, 1992; Toles, 1995; Zender, 1994.

[21] Galtung, 1996; Galtung, 1969.

to culture" (Brockman, 2000, 1) [22]. Continuing, Lakoff points out, "Frenchmen do not walk like Americans do. Women's bodies are different than men's bodies. The Chinese body is not like the Polish body. And our understanding of what the body is has changed drastically over time, as postmodernists have often observed" (1).

Lakoff then makes his central point: "But nonetheless, our bodies do share a lot. We have two eyes, two ears, two arms, two legs, blood that circulates, lungs used to breathe, skin, internal organs, and on and on. The common conventionalized aspects of our conceptual systems tend to be structured by what our bodies have in common, which is a lot" (1).

Lakoff here addresses a phenomenon that John Kennedy frames in terms of infinite "open sets," and restricted "closed sets": "Lego is a system with a single block shape that can be combined into as many permutations as we wish. The element and the rules for building are a closed set that offers an open set of permutations. Likewise, arithmetic offers a few rules that permit an infinite number of Arabic numbers to be envisaged. The discovery of polar perspective was based on squares and diagonals but it enables us to portray a landscape stretching into the indefinite distance with an infinite number of objects on it, with an infinite variety of shapes. These systems use a few rules and elements, and so are closed, but each allows infinite numbers of examples to be generated" (Kennedy, 2000, 6).

With this approach Kennedy bridges the gulf between contextualists such as Sonia Sedivy, 1997, and John Vervaeke, 1997, who challenge the very foundations of cognitive science and deny that any major area of thought can be systematised (because of the "infinite number of objects" that Kennedy refers to), and Charles Forceville (Forceville, 1996) who stands for the opposite perspective (because of the limited number of core rules and elements).

Similar gulfs are to be found also in social psychology: Jan Smedslund, for example, the founder of "Psycho-logic"[23] cautions psychological research not to overlook core rules and elements. He warns psychologists against trying to appear "scientific" by mistaking "scientifically looking" methods for sound science in places where core rules are blatantly apparent and studying "infinite objects" would be silly. He writes: "The finding that all bachelors are in fact unmarried males cannot be said to be empirical." Smedslund warns that a lot of research is as pointless as trying to make surveys in order to find out "whether bachelors really are all males" (Smedslund, 1988, 4). This, Smedslund states, would be an inexcusable waste of time and resources, and in addition a basic confusion of "the ontological status" (4, italics in original) of psychology's research object. Lee D. Ross disputes Smedslund's position and argues that psychology is not about asking whether phenomena exist or not, but about the question how they exist, to what extent and in which way.[24] "Psycho-Logic" does not make research superfluous; this is Ross's position (and Smedslund will surely agree), similar to Kennedy's stance.

Sedivy, Vervaeke, Forceville, and Smedslund appear to build polar positions, while Kennedy, Lakoff and Ross build bridges between these poles. The bridge and the poles open up room for the analysis of both factors, the aspects that vary and the aspects that are stable.

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[22] Retrieved from http://www.feedmag.com/re/re185_master2.html in June 2000

[23] See Smedslund, 1988; Smedslund, 1998; Smedslund, 1997. 'The key concepts in this system are given definitions, and the basic assumptions are presented in the form of axioms. A number of corollaries and theorems are formally proved. The text also contains numerous notes in which the formal propositions and their broader implications are discussed. It is assumed that the relationship between psycho-logic and empirical psychology is analogous to that existing between geometry and geography. Psycho-logic and geometry both provide a formal system in terms of which one may describe and analyze respectively psychological phenomena and geographical terrains' (Book-cover text of Psycho-logic, Smedslund, 1988).

[24] Personal communication with Ross January 2000, quoted with his permission.

An appropriate conclusion regarding the above-discussed double-layered hypothesis of humiliation may be as follows: the closer a concept (like humiliation) is to the human body, the more stable and universal it may be expected to be, because in such a case it is a rather "closed set" of rules and characteristics, a "Lego block" with stable features. Conversely, the further away from the body a concept is, the more variable and culture dependent it may be expected to be. This is because the basic characteristics of the human body are quite stable over time, and they are furthermore quite similar in all specimens of human species around the world. We thus can study the stable aspects of the humiliation by asking about its degree of embodiment, an endeavour that does not prevent us from also studying the infinite use to which it can be put, thus opening up for the double-layer hypothesis of humiliation suggested above.

Humiliation Is a Concept With a Universal Core

The proposition that some aspects of thought and reason may be stable and universal is the very basis of Lakoff and Johnson's work on the embodiment of human thought. They argue that, because human intelligence develops within the body and the body's interactions with the physical environment, human development and learning are essentially embodied and concrete. Lakoff and Johnson exemplify their claims by discussing, for example, the workings of the eye and how it "creates" colour (a process that already intrigued me when I dissected brains as a medical student).

"Living systems must categorize. Since we are neural beings, our categories are formed through our embodiment. What that means is that the categories we form are part of our experience! They are the structures that differentiate aspects of our experience into discernible kinds. Categorization is thus not a purely intellectual matter, occurring after the fact of experience. Rather, the formation and use of categories is the stuff of experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, 19, italics in original).

Lakoff and Johnson affirm that the sensorimotor systems that categorise in the above-described form are the foundation for higher neurological layers, which in turn provide the fundament for the cognitive mechanisms of abstract thinking. Metaphor is therefore, according to Lakoff and Johnson, the fundamental mechanism of mind, because all abstract thinking is a mapping from one domain to another, namely from the body to abstract concepts.

It may be expected, following Lakoff and Johnson's reflections on the body, that a concept such as humiliation may have universal and stable aspects if it can be shown to be closely linked to the experience of the human body.

The question to be asked now is: to what extent is the concept of humiliation embodied?

Humiliation appears to be closely related to the body in all cultures, at least in all cultures with which the author is familiar.[25] But no deeper knowledge of the world cultures is actually required to answer this question: almost everybody has some notion of the concept of humiliation in other cultures. When asked about the most pertinent characteristics of, for example, Chinese culture, most people around the world will answer: face-saving! And, on second thought, everybody will acknowledge that the face is not only relevant in Asia, it is very important in other cultures as well, for example in Arab cultures. Or, ecological psychology may find that it is especially important in the harsh environment of the desert or the mountains. The notion of face-saving can be found, for example in the Kabyle region of

[25] Before working as a psychological counsellor in Cairo, Egypt (1984-1991), the author studied and worked from 1974-1984 in New Zealand, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Israel, West Africa, USA, Germany, Norway, and handles around 12 languages.

the Algerian mountains where Bourdieu did his research. To lose or to save one's face is central there; a movement with the hands indicates that somebody has lost face, it is a movement where both hands are sliding down over the face, palms towards the face, as if pulling down a mask. To be even more precise, the symbol for honour is not just the face, but especially the nose. Somebody who "has a nose" is somebody who cannot be humiliated so easily! Kabyles say that a man who has had to sell his land has lost his face and is no longer able to face up to meeting other people.[26]

The nose not only signifies honour, but also arrogance. In honour, the nose must be strong, in arrogance the nose is "too high up". "There he goes with his nose in the air" (implying, 'as if we smell so badly that he has to avoid the odour!) is said in England about an arrogant man; or "he is looking down his nose at everybody else" (again, averting the nose, presumably to avoid the smell). This embodiment of arrogance is not limited to Europe; also in Egypt I learned that an arrogant person has her nose "up"!

In some honour cultures in the Arab world and in Africa embodiment goes even further. The woman's hymen is regarded as a symbol of her family's honour and for this reason female genital mutilation is practiced. A raped girl has a severed hymen, and in some very traditional families she must be killed in order to restore the honour of the family. This is especially the case in long-established honour societies, where the female is a token, or representative, of the family or group to which she belongs; "intact" daughters are needed for marriage into families that "her" males want as allies.[27]

In an interview in "Somaliland" (self-proclaimed republic in the North of Somalia which was a British protectorate during colonial times) a gynaecologist told me (25th November 1998) that until some years ago moral strength and purity were still laudable, but that these things had started to decline recently because times were so difficult. The South of Somalia, formerly colonised by Italy, had learned loose morals from their colonisers, he said, while the North had protected its noble morality during colonial times, among other reasons because it was only a protectorate, not a real colony, and the British interfered comparably little with Somali affairs. He said that he knew families in the North where the mother would check the hymen of a daughter when she came home. Sadly enough, he said, the Italians destroyed this moral rigour and uprightness in the South, and in the North it had been undermined recently through civil war, social turmoil, and poverty.[28]

In Latin-American macho-cultures another variant of the same basic concept is to be observed. Here the penetration of the hymen, or the "conquest" of many women, serves as a proof of male prowess. Furthermore, the literature on blood feuds and Mafia culture discussed previously indicates that not only women, but also male members of a group may embody honour, and those who are tokens of a dishonoured family may have to be killed, "cut out from the body of the group" so-to-speak.

Lakoff and Johnson would perhaps use their Container metaphor to explain such embodiments of honour.[29] They would argue that in these cases a family is conceptualised

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[26] I base this description on the account of two Kabyle informants, 16th May 2000, in Geneva, Switzerland.

[27] See for the practice of exchanging women between groups Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss (Mauss, 1950; Lévi-Strauss, 1968; Lévi-Strauss, 1957).
I was confronted with this practice during my fieldwork in Somalia 1998, where the exchange of women between clans was widely regarded as the last step on the way to solve the current divisions (Lindner, 2000i).

[28] During my fieldwork in "Somaliland" I found no exceptions to this view.

[29] Lakoff and Johnson use the example "Are tomatoes in the fruit or vegetable category?" to illustrate the Categories Are Containers metaphor where space is the sensorimotor domain that is mapped onto the subjective judgment of perception of kinds. The primary experience is: "Observing that things that

metaphorically in terms of a container image schema and that family honour and the hymen are literally taken to be the "skin" of the container. A "hole" in the "skin" would then represent spoiled honour. Traditionally, men are assigned the task to defend their family/clan/tribe, and nothing can prove their humiliation better than a penetrated hymen brought about by enemies sneaking into their camp and violating their women. Likewise, a Latin-American macho has no better way to show his competitors his superiority than by proving by his successful vagina-penetration that they are too weak to guard their women. Or, in the case of Mafia culture, a traitor has to be killed because he represents a hole in the "skin" of the container. Blood feud may in addition draw on Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor of Retribution, "You empty my container, I empty your container," a process that may continue until whole families have all their male members being killed.

Further analysis of the word humiliation suggests also a spatial downward orientation: "a-base-ment," de-base-ment," "de-grad-ation," "ned-verdig-else" (Norwegian), "Er-niedrig-ung" (German), "a-baisse-ment" (French). All these words are built on the same spatial, orientational metaphor. Already in Metaphors We Live By Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) describe orientational metaphors as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral. Humiliation clearly is "down." "These spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial environment: for example, HAPPY IS UP" (Lakoff et al., 1980, 14, capitalisation in original). If "HAPPY IS UP," then "UNHAPPY IS DOWN," meaning that "being put down" or being humiliated makes unhappy.

What Lakoff and Johnson claim here is that we take a bodily orientation from the sensorimotor domain, in this case "up," and map it on to a subjective judgment, namely happiness, which links "I'm feeling up today" with the primary experience of feeling happy and energetic and having an upright posture (illustrating the correlation between affective state and posture) (Lakoff et al., 1999, 50).

Lakoff and Johnson call it "phenomenological embodiment" as opposed to "neural embodiment" when "we schematize our own bodies and things we interact with daily" in a way that gives rise to concepts such as up and down, or front and back, concepts that depend on the body, and "would not exist if we did not have the kinds of bodies we have. The same is true of fundamental force-dynamic schemas: pushing, pulling, propelling, supporting, and balance. We comprehend these through the use of our body parts and our ability to move them, especially our arms, hands, and legs" (Lakoff et al., 1999, 36).

In Rwanda and Burundi humiliation is embodied to a very great extent in "up" and "down." It is linked to an age-old hierarchical structure of the society, just as pride is embodied in egalitarian Somali nomad culture. Historically the Hutu population are the "underlings" in Rwanda and Burundi, ruled by a Tutsi elite. Over centuries the Hutu learned a body language of inferiority. Many Tutsi interviewees, as well as foreigners, told me during my fieldwork in 1999 that it was a myth to believe that one could differentiate Hutu from Tutsi if one looked at their physical appearance (Tutsi = tall and slender, Hutu = short and broad), since Hutu and Tutsi are not really distinct ethnic groups, but very much mixed, - but that any trained person would recognise Hutu from their submissive, obsequious, servile, obeisant, and subservient demeanour. This "down" demeanour is embodied so deeply that it is impossible to suppress it, I was told. Conversely, Tutsi would stand straight and behave in a proud and "upright" way, as "upright" in their body language as nomads in Somalia and Ethiopia. (This observation sheds light on an infamous and unspeakable practice that was

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go together tend to be in the same bounded region (correlation between common location and common properties, functions, or origins)" (Lakoff et al., 1999, 51).

employed during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. When Hutu killers threw Tutsi bodies into the river they said: "Now you can go back where you came from!" meaning that the river would carry the bodies back to their nomad homeland, from which they migrated some centuries ago in order to arrogantly subjugate the Hutu, who were humble farmers.[30]).

Proud nomads look down on farmers, - this is true. Somalia is a good place to learn that. For proud Somali nomads it is unfathomable why anyone might become a farmer, because a farmer has to "bend his back" and till the soil. Free and proud nomads "carry their heads high" and regard bowing and bending as extremely humiliating and morally inferior.

This links up with the use of moral uprightness in Lakoff and Johnson: "The metaphor of Moral Strength is complex. It consists of both the strength to maintain an upright and balanced moral posture and also the strength to overcome evil forces. The uprightness aspect of this metaphor is experientially grounded in the fact that, other things being equal, it is better to be upright and balanced. When one is healthy and in control of things, one is typically upright and balanced. Thus, moral uprightness is understood metaphorically in terms of physical uprightness: Being Moral Is Being Upright; Being Immoral Is Being Low" (291, italics in original).

Lakoff (Lakoff, 1996) links a political analysis to the discussion of moral uprightness and proposes that Western political liberalism and conservatism are ultimately based on different models of the family. Mainstream conservatism, he claims, is grounded on a "strict father" model, whereas mainstream liberalism is based on a "nurturant parent" model. "Since each family model includes its own morality, political liberalism and conservatism express different views of morality. Each family model organizes the culturally shared metaphors for morality in different ways, giving priority to certain metaphors and downplaying others. Moreover, each particular metaphor for morality (e.g., Moral Strength or Moral Nurturance) gets a more unique interpretation depending on which family model it is identified with. In the Strict Father model, …, moral strength is given top priority as the key to acting morally, whereas in the Nurturant Parent model moral strength is also important, but it does not override empathy and responsibilities for nurturance" (312).

In the following I will introduce the notion of humiliation as a social structuring device and an emotional state, and try to link it to the discussion so far pursued.

Humiliation Has a Culture-dependent Periphery, and Differs in Honour Societies and Human-rights Societies

The distinction between "strict father" and "nurturant parent" may be related to humiliation in the following way:

"During the past two hundred years, and especially during the last half-century, the spread of the ideology of human rights has popularised the principle that all human beings should expect to receive respectful treatment solely on the grounds of their humanity, without reference to gender, ethnicity or other "secondary" criteria" (Lindner, 2000a, 2).

The notion of humiliation links the concepts of honour and human rights and provides a framework for both ideologies and for the transition between them. The definition of humiliation as illegitimate subjugation of human beings may be deconstructed and the development of its three parts viewed in relation to the particular context within which each of them developed, see Table I.[31]

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[30] Related to me in an interview in 22nd February 1999 by a woman who saw her parents be treated in this way. The same account has been confirmed by many other genocide survivors.

[31] Adapted from my manuscript *Humiliation and the Human Condition: Mapping a Minefield* (Lindner, 2000i), forthcoming in October 2000 in 'Human Rights Review.'

THE THREE ELEMENTS OF HUMILIATION

	Subjugation	**of human beings**	**defined as illegitimate**
Phase 1. Things	X		
Phase 2. Human Beings	X	X	
Phase 3. Human Beings	X	X	X

Table I: The three elements of humiliation

Table I shows three elements of humiliation that entered the cultural repertoire of human kind in three phases that coincided, approximately, with advances in technological and organizational capacity and shifts in the balance of power between humankind and nature and between human groups.[32] During the first phase (hunter-gatherer societies), the first seeds of the idea of subjugation entered the repertoire through small-scale tool making; in the next phase (coercive hierarchies), the idea of subjugation (or "putting/keeping/striking down," debasing, abasing, lowering, degrading) was extended from nature to human beings, meaning that human beings were enslaved and used as tools just as animals had been used till that time; during the third phase (current global information society and advent of human rights) the idea has become widespread that subjugating human beings is illegitimate and morally wrong.

Honour humiliation

I choose to call the form of subjugation introduced during the second phase Honour humiliation. Honour humiliation is a core characteristic of hierarchical "civilizations" as they were erected on the basis of the surplus created by agriculture. It means that the subjugation of nature through small-scale tool making was augmented by another kind of subjugation, unfamiliar to former egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies, namely the subjugation of people through people: some human beings (the "slaves") were instrumentalised by others (the "masters"). In a hierarchy superiority over inferiors and good standing with others of the same rank are components of a person or group's "honour."

"Honor humiliation entails at least four variants.[33] A "master" uses Conquest humiliation to subjugate formerly equal neighbors into a position of inferiority. As soon as the hierarchy in place, the "master" uses Reinforcement humiliation to keep it in place. The latter may range from seating orders according to honor and rank, to bowing rules for inferiors in front of their superiors, but may also include brutal measures such as customary beatings or even killings to "remind underlings of their place." A third form, Relegation humiliation, is used to push an already low-ranking "underling" even further down, and, finally, Exclusion humiliation means excluding victims from the hierarchy altogether, in other words, exiling or killing them. The Holocaust and all genocides around the world are gruesome examples of the latter form of humiliation" (Lindner, 2000b, 8).

My fieldwork in Rwanda 1999 brought me in contact with the long-standing hierarchical system in this region, a system that reminded me of pre-World War Germany. Germany and Rwanda were also both the scene of brutal Holocausts. In Rwanda Tutsi and moderate Hutu were the object of an orchestrated campaign of genocide at the hands of extremist Hutu in

[32] In *What Every Negotiator Ought to Know: Understanding Humiliation* (Lindner, 2000c) I base this analysis on William Ury's anthropological work (Ury, 1999).
[33] See also Smith, 2000a.

1994,[34] in Germany the Holocaust victims were Jews and other "unwanted people." The backdrop for such atrocities was in both cases a hierarchy thoroughly embedded in the culture and in the personality. To quote the words of a Hutu from the North of Burundi, now an international intellectual[35]: "A son of a Tutsi got the conviction that he is born to rule, that he was above the servants, while a son of a Hutu learned to be convinced that he was a servant, therefore he learned to be polite and humble, while a Tutsi was proud. A Tutsi learned that he could kill a Hutu at any time." He adds: "The concept of humiliation is related to tradition and culture: Tutsi are convinced that they are "born to rule," they cannot imagine how they can survive without being in power."

Human-rights humiliation

Today's knowledge revolution (Ury, 1999) marks a deep change. It makes servility dysfunctional. Honour-based hierarchies and the patterns of humiliation that go with them are rejected in any human rights context on the grounds that they undermine human rights. It is no longer regarded as "normal" that some people are "sub-human" (at the bottom of social hierarchies) and others "super-human" (at the top). The notion of universal human rights spreads the revolutionary idea that the powerful should respect the weak. It dignifies everybody's hopes, wishes and personal sensitivities.[36] Table II summarizes this transformation of attitudes.

HONOUR AND DIGNITY: TWO MODALITIES OF HUMILIATION

"Honour humiliation" in hierarchical agrarian and industrial societies:
Human beings are subjugated and turned into tools within a hierarchy that is imposed by force. Humiliation is a "normal" device of hierarchy-building, meaning that honour is attacked, defended, won and lost within a social hierarchy of dominant and subordinate groups, and this is accepted as legitimate.
"Human-rights humiliation" in today's global and egalitarian knowledge society:
The subjugation of human beings, including their use as tools or their destruction, is morally condemned. Human-rights humiliation can be defined as the "illegitimate" violation of human rights and the infliction of moral and emotional injury. There is a deep link between dignity and human rights insofar as humiliation attacks a person's core dignity as a human being, and inflicts very deep emotional wounds.

Table II: Honour and dignity: two modalities of humiliation

All four variants of Honour humiliation can be seen in relation to Lakoff's "strict father" model, while human rights promote the "nurturant parent" model. When human rights activists enter into discourse with representatives of the hierarchical order of honour, they meet two opposing meanings of the term respect and recognition, namely their own definition, "respect for the equal dignity of all human beings" (this is the human rights and "nurturant parent" definition), and "respect for the natural order of unequally ranked human beings" (this is the honour definition of respect, or "strict father" model). Equally, two meanings of humiliation come into play; see Table III.

[34] See Des Forges, 1999 (also on http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/); Destexhe, 1995; Gourevitch, 1998; Guichaoua, 1995; Kamuka, 1995; de Lame, 1997; Ngakoutou, 1994; O'Halloran, 1995; Prunier, 1995; Reyntjens, 1994; Scherrer, 1996; Omar & Alex de Waal, 1994.
[35] He wishes to stay anonymous. The interview was carried out in December 1998.
[36] See for example Bauman, 1993; Ignatieff, 1997; Weiner, Eugene,1998.

HUMILIATION, MORAL UPRIGHTNESS AND RESPECT IN RELATION TO HONOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS

	Traditional honour society using the "strict father" model	**Human rights society using the "nurturant parent" model**
Moral uprightness and respect	Moral uprightness is to respect and defend the natural and honourable order of hierarchy where some people are higher up than others. Parents must be honoured; they must be respected and feared.	Moral uprightness is to respect and defend equal dignity of all humankind. Parents may be loved.
Humiliation	Humiliation is when the position of a "master" in a hierarchy is challenged. The "master" has a legitimate right to respond to such humiliation, if necessary, by violent suppression. Any "slave" or "underling" who is strong enough to topple the "master" has the legitimate right to maintain the old hierarchical structure.	Humiliation occurs when the attempt is made to enforce the old paradigm of hierarchy and a person's core of equal dignity is violated.

Table III: Humiliation, moral uprightness and respect in relation to honour and human rights

Figure 1 illustrates the process graphically and shows that moral uprightness entails envisaging a hierarchy with a top dog in the "strict father" model, and an egalitarian society with no top dog for the "nurturant parent" model. In the first case, being courageous, honourable and "upright" means fighting to reach the top in a hierarchy, while it means stopping at the line of equality in the second case. Television programmes live on this difference of how high "up" one should go: the police must represent society as based on justice and human rights, and is frustrated when this appears to be miserably "weak" in an honour context.

HIERARCHY AND EQUALITY

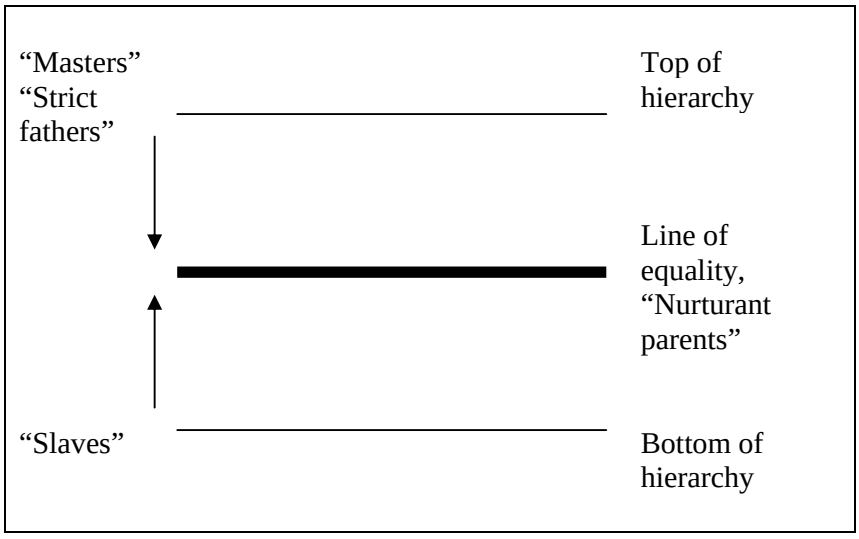

Figure 1: The transition to equal dignity for every human being

Figure 1 shows possible transitions: In a traditional hierarchical honour culture a "slave" or "underling" who wants to rise, does not want to topple hierarchy but simply wants to replace the master with himself or herself. Moral uprightness means uprightness within honourable hierarchy, and the idea of equality is seen as a sign of "weakness" and lack of "uprightness." The human rights revolution, on the contrary, aims at assigning equal dignity to all human beings. For human rights advocates moral uprightness is linked to a certain degree of humility, namely to stop at the line of equality, and not to dominate others from above. This does not mean that those who believe in human rights wish to abolish all authority. On the contrary, the professional authority of the surgeon and the airline pilot are both necessary and acceptable; they typify the form of authority that a human rights society desires: authority that enables the practitioner to use expertise on behalf of the interests of the whole group.[37]

Human rights activists have two goals: first, they desire to get "masters" all around the world down from their position of dominance and arrogance to the level of equality and humility, a process that may be labelled the "necessary humbling" of those masters; secondly, human rights activists wish to lift up all the "slaves" around the world from their lot of oppression to the line of equality, and they call this "liberation."

A traditional "master," who does not believe in human rights but in honour and God-given hierarchy, will oppose being pulled down to the level of equality and will call any attempt in this direction "illegitimate humiliation," "ruthless lack of respect," or an "infringement on sovereignty," as the above cited example of China shows. And all those "underlings" who do NOT believe in human rights and who want to rise, will not wish to stop at the line of equality on their way up, but will continue to rise to the place of the master, in order to become as dominating and oppressing as the former oppressor. Many examples come to mind, the latest, perhaps, being the new leader Laurent Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire).

Moral uprightness may be described with a combination of two metaphors, the Container metaphor and the orientational metaphor of "up" and "down." This means that human rights may be perceived as a state where moral uprightness is linked to standing upright by a container of equal dignity for all human beings that is "lower" than the container of honour of the "top dog" in a hierarchy. The line of equality is characterised by its unboastful, unassuming, unobtrusive, and humble self-limitation, contrary to "top dogs" in oppressive hierarchies who think that they deserve more than others, or to "slaves" in such hierarchies who have internalised that their head ought to be bowed down to the ground. Moral uprightness describes two different postures, and the handling of humiliation may vary according to which posture is chosen.

The illustrations used in this paper may serve as pedagogical support for this article, hopefully making its thoughts clearer, but they may also coincide with what Lakoff and Johnson call the unconscious thought in metaphorical ways that all human beings share, following the three propositions with which Lakoff and Johnson start their book "Philosophy in the Flesh": "The mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical" (Lakoff et al., 1999, 3).

[37] See also Lindner, 2000h, 9.

Figure 1 can be used to inscribe possible actions that a "slave" may undertake against a humiliating "master," see Table IV:

How a humiliated victim may channel aggression:
1. Acceptance of being inferior (humility) means absence of violence and war. Humility may be the attitude of a "slave" who accepts hierarchy, but also that of a "wise" person who believes in equal rights; it may occur within an honour context, as well as in a human rights context.
2. Depression as a reaction to humiliation means the absence of "direct violence" in a context of "structural violence;" it occurs within an oppressive hierarchy and stabilises it.
3. Hidden aggression means the absence of "direct violence" in a context of "structural violence;" it occurs within an oppressive hierarchy and may destabilise it, when the balance of force changes.
4. Open aggression against the "master" from a weak position means, for example, guerrilla war or terrorism, and, if successful, may lead to either a new oppressive hierarchy or a human rights society, depending on the "rising slaves'" intentions.

How a humiliated victim may "eliminate" a "master":
5. Elimination of the "master" through killing (for example through revolution) may lead to just another oppressive hierarchy implemented by the rising "slaves," or to the opposite, namely the abolition of hierarchy.
6. Elimination of "masters" by not taking them seriously anymore (for example by humorous sabotage instead of "direct violence") may be a way for "slaves" to survive within a context of oppressive hierarchy, to somehow "bypass" it.
7. Elimination of "masters" through giving them the chance to learn about respect for equality and dignity means peace and realisation of human rights in a society of human beings with each an equal core of dignity.

How a "master" may react to aggressors:
8. Open aggression against a competing "master" from an equally strong position leads to war between equals. This, typically, means maintaining oppressive hierarchy, either with the same or a new "master."
9. Open aggression against a "rising slave" may lead to the re-implementation of violent oppression by the master, or to a new oppressive hierarchy under the former "slave," or to a new egalitarian society.

Table IV: Oppressive hierarchy, egalitarian human rights, "masters," and "slaves"

The rest of the paper will expand on the ways to respond to humiliation as laid out in Table IV.

PART II: Humiliation and How to Respond

Edna Adan, former first lady of Somalia (before dictator Siad Barre came into power in 1969), defines humiliation in an interview 3rd December 1998 in Hargeisa: "I think humiliation is a very difficult thing to describe. But I think humiliation is when someone tries to bring someone down to their level. They think that you are above them and they want to hurt you, humiliate you, bring you down to their level, so that you have no more self-respect,

so that you lose the respect you have for yourself and others lose the respect they have for you."

Edna Adan frequently was made victim of humiliation under dictator Siad Barre's regime and relates the following incident of humiliation and how she resisted it:

"Once they said I was planning to escape from the country, and I spent six days in jail for that. They put me in a cell of my own, but I didn't have a toilet. And right in front of the place where they put me, there was a toilet, and it had no doors. And there was the cell next to me, it was full of men, of criminals, of thieves, I don't know, just men, men all behind the bars. And, so I called out, and I said, - you know, - "I, - I, - I need to go and use the bathroom!" And that is after I had been the first lady of the country! And they said: "Well, you want to use the bathroom? There is the bathroom! You use everybody's bathroom! There! You are not better than the others! There is the bathroom they use!" And I thought - how can I use the bathroom with no doors facing a cell full of men! Full of criminals and people who, - you know, - and I just came out of my cell and I just looked at those men, and I said: "Listen. I am going to use this bathroom. And, would you be watching your mother or your sister if she was using a toilet and she had no door, - is this the kind of men you are that you would watch a woman using a bathroom?" And they said, "No." And the first one said, "turn around," and they made everyone turn the other way, until I finished using the bathroom. And that was one of the most emotional moments of my time. And the police was so shocked, because they couldn't get their objective, they couldn't get me to be humiliated and using a bathroom with all these men watching and shouting at me. So, this is another form of resistance, and resisting humiliation!"

Humiliation and respect seem to be intimately connected, but also humiliation and admiration or fear. Edna Adan's humiliators may have admired her as the first lady once; "looking up," they may have even feared her influence. Humiliation means for them "to bring her down to their level," as she puts it in her definition (her tormenters wanted most probably to push her even further down to well below their level). Figure II and Figure III try to illustrate that. Person A and B are depicted as being first in a relationship of "looking up," and then in a relationship of "putting down," or humiliation. Both relationships are not only played out between person A and person B, but also represented in the mental apparatus inside person A and B. What can be observed as action coming from A and B is the effect of the dialogue occurring within each person.

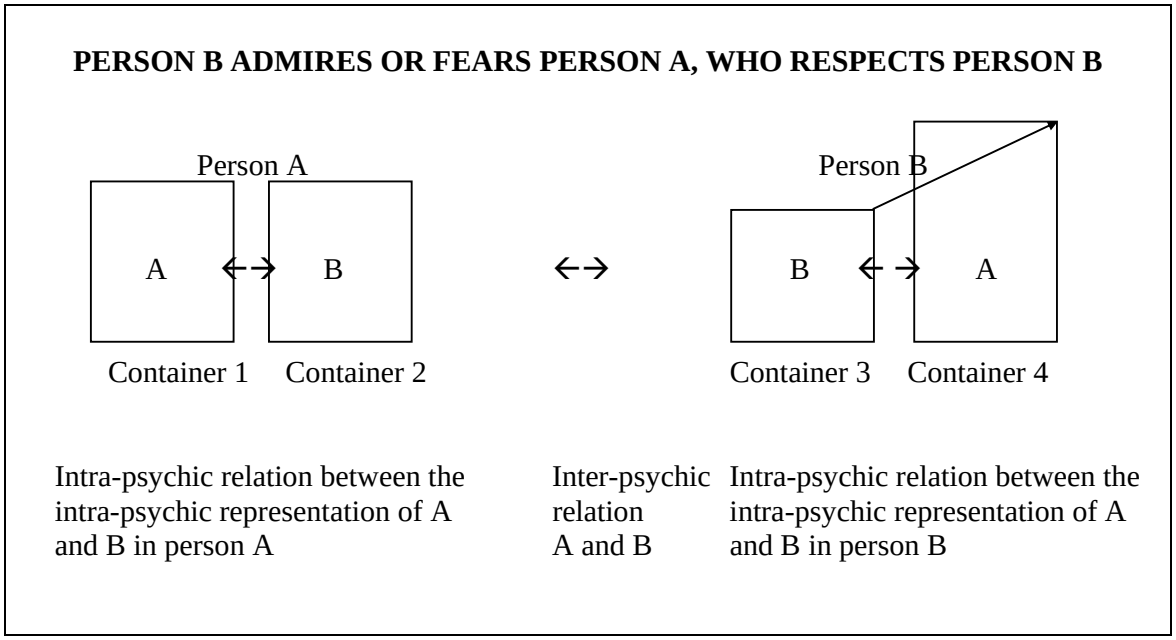

Figure II: Respect

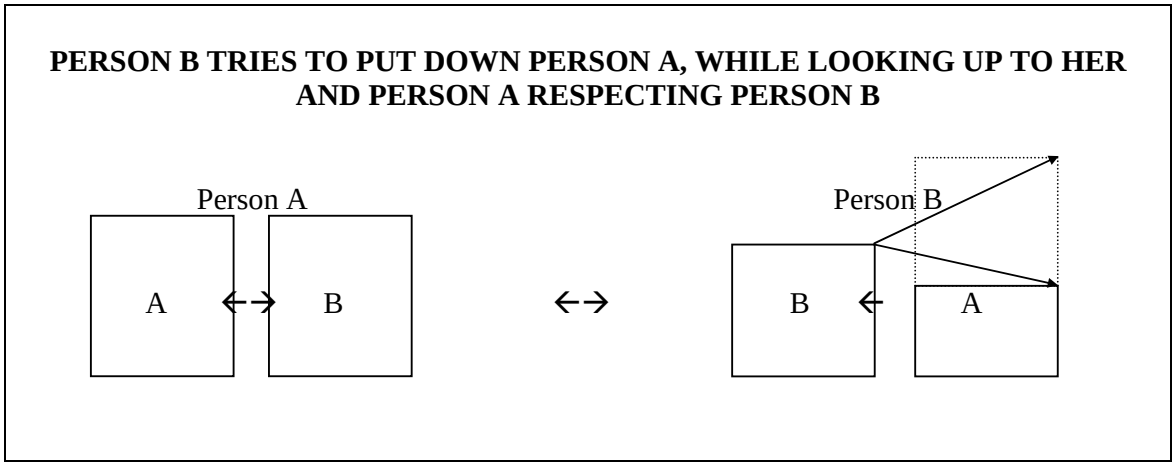

Figure III: Humiliation

Figure II and Figure III can be used as illustrations helping to describe numerous stories of both humiliation and non-humiliation. The story of humiliation seems to start with a relationship between two or more persons, where one side admires or fears the other, that is "looks up," see Figure II. Then something happens which makes the admirer "look down" upon the other person (or group of persons).

A humiliated person or group who is feeling humiliated has four "containers" (container 1-4 in Figure II) available for placing a response; a victim of humiliation can either change her attitude of self-respect, or her respect for the perpetrator, or she can attempt to change the

perpetrator's self-respect or the perpetrator's view of the victim. Usually a victim will first focus on the perpetrator, the source of her suffering, and, if courageous enough, fight the humiliator. The graphical presentation makes clear that the victim has two more options, namely to change her own inner representation of the situation. This is the way a Nelson Mandela has chosen, as will be discussed further down in more detail.

The graphical presentation may serve like a formula in physics that indicates in theory that a certain number of physical entities must be out there even though it is not immediately obvious. Similarly the graphics presented here suggest a "solution" for humiliation that is difficult to be aware of, even more difficult to carry out, - and only a few actually succeed and are then called "wise" or even "holy," - but it may be basic to peace, as examples such as those of a Mahatma Gandhi or a Nelson Mandela suggest.

Acceptance of being inferior: humility

A person who is looked down upon may accept being defined as inferior, she may have committed a crime, or a sin, which makes her feel that it is justified to be looked down upon. In this case the person who is looked down upon feels rightly inferior. This is not a story of anti-social humiliation, but of necessary, pro-social humiliation, or humility.

Examples at the individual level entail religious people who accept being inferior after conversion to a creed. They may accept punishment by humiliation. Flagellants at medieval times whipped themselves until the flesh was raw, as proof of faith in God. Today many would claim that this kind of humility goes too far; not only the top, also the bottom of hierarchy is rejected. Today environmentalists call for another kind of humility, namely for the wise acceptance of the intricate web of relations in the biosphere, or for a well-balanced attitude of humbleness in front of nature and the earth. A human rights advocate stands for humility with regard to the equal core of dignity of all human beings.

Germany may serve as an example at the inter-group level. Many self-critical Germans, even if they are born long after World War II, feel responsible for the atrocities Germany committed against its neighbours during World War II. They therefore tend to show understanding if they find themselves in a situation where they are being humiliated by people from European neighbours who suffered under German occupation.

In many societies offenders against social norms are publicly shamed and humiliated. Many feel that their wrongdoing requires this punishment. Nowadays, lists of performance indices, for example of employees in a company, or universities in a country, may have a similar effect, intended or not. Figure IV illustrates that the victim of humiliation reacts by adapting container 1.

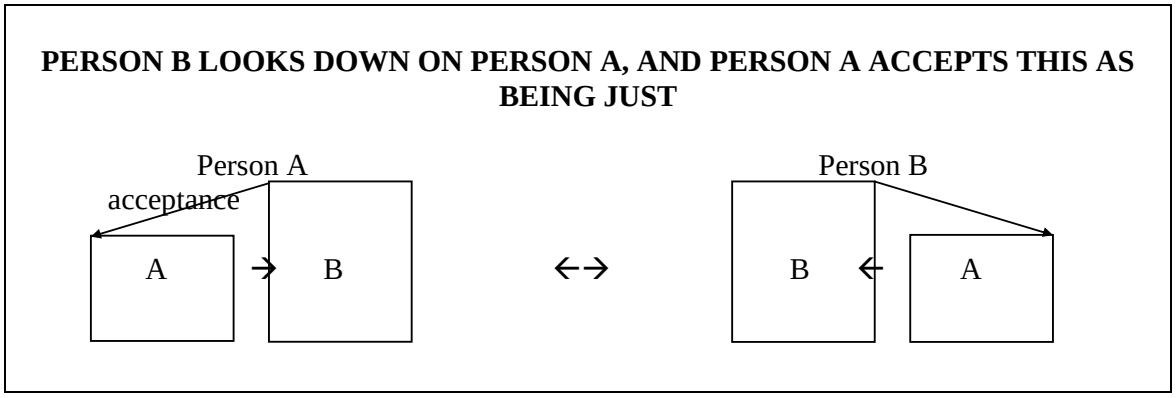

Figure IV: Humility

Depression as reaction to humiliation

A person, who is looked down upon and considers this as unjust, will feel that she should stand up and defend herself. This person feels humiliated, not humbled, as in the previous case. If she neither has the force nor the resources to actually stand up, she may become depressed. This is a story of ongoing humiliation that weakens the self-respect of the humiliated person. If the humiliation story continues long enough, for example a lifetime, it may only be the next generation who finds the strength to fight it. Or a third party may identify with the humiliated person and try to encourage her to stand up.

Abused women may serve as an example at the individual level. Women traditionally react with depression to humiliation (Brown, Harris, & Hepworth, 1995; Craig, 1996).

Depression can also occur collectively. In the years after 1959 thousands of Rwandan Tutsi fled into neighbouring countries where they lived as refugees for decades. “It is depressing to be unwanted in one’s own country if one is well respected, but respected by other people, people in a host country” (May 1998, email from a Rwandan refugee child). The second generation formed the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), attacked Rwanda from outside, and ended the genocide perpetrated on their brothers and sisters in Rwanda in 1994.

It may be concluded that humility can be described as a voluntary abasement of one’s self-image (container 1 in Figure II is made smaller) and that depression is the same process, though occurring reluctantly. Depression is an involuntary diminishing and weakening of one’s self-image and self-respect.

Aggression as reaction to humiliation

A person, who is looked down upon, may react with aggression, either hidden or open.

Hidden aggression as a reaction to humiliation

A person, who is looked down upon, may react with hidden aggression. She may, like the person who gets depressed, feel that she is unjustly looked down upon, and also have insufficient resources to stand up against the humiliator. But she may at least plan on standing up; she may struggle to carry out some acts of sabotage acts against the humiliator; she may teach her children to fight the humiliator or his people. This is a story of ongoing humiliation, but where the victim protects herself against depression.

Charlie Chaplin may serve as an example at the individual level. His films are incarnations of archetypical sabotage of oppression. The Czech “good soldier Schweik” (a figure created

by Jaroslav Hasek, 1983-1923) is an example of a person who resists oppression in very subtle ways, he resists with humour, by appearing stupid, with well-hidden sabotage, and with especially clever argumentation.

The Czech population as a whole may serve as an example at the inter-group level. Czech people are said to have the abilities of the "good soldier Schweik." Egyptians, having been occupied for more than 2000 years, are called "the Czechs of the Arab World." These examples suggest that oppressed populations develop special abilities in the field of communication; subtle manipulation methods that help them "bypass" oppression.

Oppressors have a difficult existence under such conditions. They never know whether a "yes" from their subordinates really means "yes," or whether "yes" just covers up for an attempt to divert attention, and whether the underling will subsequently perhaps do the opposite of what was ordered. And oppressors furthermore never know to what extent the oppressed may secretly build up forces to rebel. Oppressors lead a difficult and sometimes even dangerous life. They are well advised to learn to read subtle signs of protest coming from their dependants.[38] If they are really wise, they try to balance the situation in such a way that the oppressed at least think they are less oppressed.

This case is especially relevant, since third parties entering conflict regions with the aim to promote peace may actually provoke feelings of humiliation among the people they want to pacify, - cross-cultural misunderstandings may easily happen. When peacemakers face open opposition they know where they stand, but subtle sabotage of their peace plans, especially if they find themselves in a culture that has developed subtle ways of protesting, is much more difficult to tackle.

During my fieldwork in Africa in 1998 and 1999 I met many humanitarian aid workers who had worked both in Somalia and Rwanda. The prevailing view among them was that Somalia is the most difficult place in the world to work in "because Somalis are aggressively honest and tell you right in your face if they don't like you." However, they added, "but at least you know where you stand." By contrast, in Rwanda, "people are much more polite, but you never know where you stand. People in Rwanda and Burundi are masters in manipulating information."

It may be concluded that a "good soldier Schweik" does not manipulate any "container;" he just keeps up his own self-image and self-respect in the face of humiliation (keeps container 1 in Figure II up), occasionally tries to subtly undermine the perpetrator's self-image (diminish container 3), and dreams of a future where the perpetrator "comes down."

Open aggression as reaction to humiliation.

An open fight may lead to various results depending on the balance of material and immaterial resources between both parties.

Open aggression from a weak position:

If the person who feels humiliated has insufficient resources compared with the resources of the humiliator, she will be destroyed in the fight, possibly even lose her life. The story of humiliation will end here, if not children or other people identify with the plight of the humiliated person and continue the fight later on.

[38] During my seven years of psychological work in Egypt, I was counselling numerous Western managers leading branches of western companies with Egyptian employees. Several reached the point of what they called "nervous breakdown" because they did not understand that their authoritarian management style that lacked the elements of care typical for Egyptian communication modes would not yield effective obedience, but quiet sabotage.

A prisoner in concentration camp may serve as an example at the individual level, or a prisoner under torture. He or she may despair, stand up against the oppression, even though he or she may expect to be killed, and perish.

History provides numerous examples at the inter-group level, examples of groups of people who stood up against oppression without having any chance to win.

In all these cases the victim perishes (container 1 and 2 as depicted in Figure II disappear).

Open aggression from a balanced position:

A person, who feels humiliated and is strong enough to take to acts of sabotage and terrorism, may gain a kind of balance of forces. In this case the story of humiliation will be ongoing, even perpetuating itself.

Examples at the individual level may be taken from tragic family cases where the father humiliates his wife and his children, and increasingly faces a struggle between equals, especially as the children grow up and learn how to defend themselves.

Examples at the inter-group level are provided by incidents such as terrorism. Extremists in Northern Ireland, or among the Kurdish people, or the Basques create an atmosphere of constant insecurity in the regions where they operate. International terrorism is even more dangerous. It threatens to hit anywhere at any time, it is impossible to absolutely guard against it; the only solution is to remove the need for it. This requires a careful handling of feelings in international relations, especially feelings of humiliation.[39]

Open aggression from a position of strength:

If the person who feels humiliated is stronger than the humiliator, she will end the story of humiliation by winning the fight and putting the humiliator down, in extreme cases the humiliator will be killed.

Children who are humiliated by their parents may serve as an example at the individual level. They may try to fight their abusive parents for many years in vain, but as soon as they grow up and gather sufficient strength, they may go as far as to kill the hated parent.

Examples at the inter-group level may be taken from the French aristocracy many of whom lost their lives to the guillotine during the French Revolution.

In all these cases the perpetrator perishes (container 3 and 4 in Figure II disappear).

Elimination of the humiliator

The following cases are related to those just described, but it is not the aggression that is prominent, but the elimination of the humiliator.

Elimination of the humiliators by removing their representation:

A humiliated person has the option of responding to humiliation with the same attitude, namely looking down upon the humiliator. She can look down upon the humiliator to such a degree that the humiliator becomes irrelevant, - as if the humiliator does not exist anymore. The humiliated person thus “kills” the humiliator, not in reality, but she removes the representation of the humiliator from her inner world, from her mind, from her psyche, from her feelings. This elimination process is an intra-psychic process. The extreme form of

[39] During my stay in Egypt I learned to comprehend the feelings of humiliation in citizens of a former high culture that descended to the state of a needy and poor member of the world community. Books like Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction From the Bottom Up (Brecher & Costello, 1994) give a glimpse of the humiliation and bitterness caused by the vast and increasing inequality between the rich and the poor in the global village. This inequality may trigger feelings of humiliation and anger that may increasingly lead to violence.

annihilation makes revenge superfluous, because there is no target person anymore. Both, perpetrator and victim look down upon each other, both regard it as no longer important to be respected by the other. At this final stage the story is not a story of humiliation anymore.

As examples at the individual level battered wives who try to get away from their humiliator may serve. They may achieve this by erasing his representation from their minds. Also employees, who are humiliated by their boss, may tackle this situation by eliminating the boss from their inner world as a human being; they just stop considering the actions of the boss as being relevant to them. People under torture may use this method of cutting themselves off in order to stay sane.

Occupied and colonised people may be taken as examples at the inter-group level, they, too, may take to such measures in order to be able to survive humiliation.

Figure V illustrates this case and shows how the victim may eliminate the perpetrator's representation in herself (container 2 in Figure II), without ever aiming at the perpetrator directly.

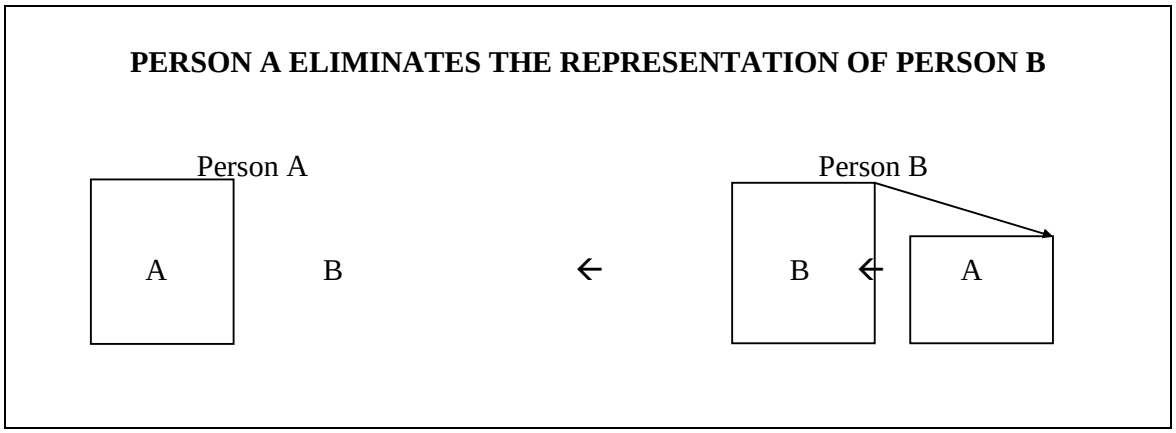

Figure V: Elimination of the humiliators by removing their representation

Elimination of the humiliators through killing them.

The elimination process may also be an extra-psychic process: The humiliated person may, as discussed above, kill the humiliator.

The killers may remove the representations of the killed persons from their minds or not. If the representations of the killed persons stay in the mind of the killers they may haunt the killers, they may give them feelings of guilt, or the killers may stay in a constant inner "dialogue" with the killed persons, the killers may also repeatedly re-live the satisfaction of having won over their humiliators.

Examples at the individual level may be taken from the above-mentioned case of traditional honour-societies where a girl's virginity represents the honour of the family. As pointed out above, if she has sex with a man before being married, voluntarily or not, it may lead to so-called honour-killing, meaning that her family's perceives it as her duty to kill the girl. In this case the killer, for example her brother, may kill her and later erase her from his memory: She brought shame upon the family, this is the killer's thought, and would have humiliated the family totally, if the family had not killed her; in his eyes she does not deserve to be remembered. Although she is far from being judged as being a humiliator if viewed

from a human rights perspective, - on the contrary, killing her is seen as atrocity, - she is perceived as such within her honour context.[40]

Also in human rights based societies a humiliator may be killed. For example, a son may kill his father after having suffered a decade of physical and psychological torture at his hands. The son may not be able to erase the image of his father from his memories after the killing, he may be haunted by it, or he may be able to erase his father's image from his mind.

Hitler and his followers may provide an example at the inter-group level. They fabricated the gruesome story that Jews were planning to exploit and humiliate the German "Volk," and the world community. Eliminating them was therefore seen as a duty. Some SS-men in concentration camps, and bureaucrats planning the Holocaust, are said to have done their "duty" with cold hearts, others were later haunted.[41]

In all these cases the "humiliator" perishes (container 3 and 4 of Figure II), and their representation in the killer (container 2) either stays on or not.

Gaining the humiliator's respect

Instead of fighting the humiliators, instead of eliminating them, the humiliated party could also try to convince the humiliators that they are wrong in looking down on the humiliated party, that their "underlings" deserve, for example, to be viewed as equals from a human rights stance.

Examples at the individual level may be taken from children. Children seem to be prone to try this strategy even under very adverse circumstances. They have a tendency to hold on to their parents, even if the parents are abusive and routinely and cruelly humiliate their children. Children seem to be willing to go very far to make their parents happy, hoping to gain their parents' acceptance, or finally even their respect as equals.

People in former colonies may provide examples at the inter-group level. They often seem to develop similar strategies to children. They oppose their colonisers on one side, but there seems often to be another side, where they try to imitate their colonisers as if they want to impress them sufficiently in order to be respected as equals. Fanon describes eloquently how he tried hard and failed (Fanon, 1986). In Rwanda Hutu are said to have an "inferiority complex" in relation to the Tutsi, who traditionally ruled. Actually, - as in the case of children, - what some call "inferiority complex" may rather be a sign of "tolerance" or "wisdom."[42]

Nelson Mandela succeeded with this strategy. He actually managed to keep his self-esteem strong in the face of humiliation and prevented humiliation from spoiling his dignity. At the end he taught the perpetrators of Apartheid as well as his followers much about respect, dignity and human rights. For thirty years most people expected a bloodbath in South Africa. It did not happen.

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[40] See Wiseberg (Human Rights Internet, HRI, www.hri.ca) for the currently increasing attention to 2honour-killings" as violation of human rights, as opposed to just being treated as private affair (Laurie S. Wiseberg at the Seminar om Sosial Utvikling og Menneskerettigheter, 10th February 2000, Diakonhjemmets Internasjonale Senter, Oslo).

[41] See also Eichmann and the description if his court case in Arendt, 1964.

[42] 'A Tutsi learned that he could kill a Hutu at any time. When Hutu got power they had no experience of ruling, which means that Hutu were the same as the Tutsi before. Hutu have an inferiority complex' (letter from a Rwandan interview partner, 1999).

Outlook

This paper plays out the dynamics of humiliation within the framework of Lakoff and Johnson's work on metaphor. It seems that humiliation has a stable, universal core, since it is embodied to a large extent, and that it is at the same time being played out in different ways in different cultures. Humiliation is, for example, understood in diametrically opposing ways in societies based on the traditional honour code within an oppressive hierarchy, as opposed to societies that build on the human rights ideology of equal dignity for every human being.

Currently, "underlings" around the world are encouraged by human rights advocates in the "international community" to rise and transform oppressive hierarchies into human rights societies. Targeted "masters" typically respond by intensifying their humiliating practices. This places the dynamics of humiliation and the options for handling humiliation more at the centre of human experience than ever before.

Humiliation may be responded to within four universal categories of reactions: i) Humiliation may be accepted, ii) it may be responded to with depression, iii) it may be countered with aggression, or iv) it may be reacted to with the elimination of the humiliators, either by annihilating their significance, or their physical existence, or by an unexpected method, namely by gaining their respect and transforming their ideology from honour to human rights.

Human rights promote a line of equality that is characterised, as mentioned above, by its modest, and humble self-limitation, contrary to "top dogs" in oppressive hierarchies who believe that they merit more than others, or to "slaves" who have internalised subservience. Moral uprightness, as introduced by Lakoff and Johnson, describes two different postures, one defending hierarchy and the other defending equality, and the handling of humiliation may vary according to which posture is chosen.

The last method is the only one that yields lasting peace. A Nelson Mandela and a Mahatma Gandhi stand for this alternative. In South Africa the humiliators and the humiliated sat down together and planned for a society in which "both black and white" could be "assured of their inalienable right to human dignity."[43]

Instead of killing and annihilating his humiliators, Mandela succeeded in convincing them that they ought to discontinue their humiliation. He impressed the white elite. He stepped out of the "humiliator"/"humiliated" dyad, he stepped out of the role of the re-actor, and became an actor. He rejected the definition of the situation given by the humiliator, and with it the "normal" response to humiliation, namely the upholding of an unbridgeable gap towards the humiliator. Mandela, as well as Gandhi, "undermined" the gruesome paradigm of humiliation, and invented a peaceful response to humiliation, namely the denial to accept the role of the victim.

Nelson Mandela also taught his followers how to overcome the pain and anger caused by humiliation under the system of Apartheid. This he could do, because he had shown to his supporters within the old hierarchical paradigm that he could be "tough" and "courageous" like any "top dog." As in Northern Ireland, where many peacemakers have fought and spent time in prison, Mandela's prior role as one who engaged in violent resistance to Apartheid proved to everybody who thought in honour lines that human rights is not something for cowards but for heroes.

Mandela's example shows how courage is linked to the concept of domination in a hierarchy, especially for men. He first had to prove that he equalled the old "masters" in toughness, that he actually could topple them; only then he could transform society and become a promoter of humility, of the self-limitation that lies in not rising to the top of a hierarchy, but to try and create and maintain an egalitarian society. Figure 1 seems not merely

[43] The quotation is taken from President Mandela's inaugural address, May 10, 1994.

to be a pedagogical illustration in this article, but more, it seems to outline the inner map of many people. The line of equality is in fact lower than the line of the top position in a hierarchy, therefore anybody who promotes the line of equality is liable to be suspected of "weakness."

Mandela's extraordinary psychological innovation of stepping outside of the "master"/"slave" dyad needs to be better understood so that it can be applied in other parts of the world where similar situations search for solutions. A "decent society" (Margalit, 1996) is in need of Mandelas and Gandhis, but also in need of more thorough knowledge concerning the psychological mechanisms lying behind their success.

To build a "decent society" is not only a national and local task, but also an international, global challenge. The global community, including its social researchers, carries the responsibility to study and understand the phenomenon of humiliation and its responses more thoroughly, in order to be better prepared for preventing and healing it. The global village should be a "decent global village." And a "decent global village" ought not to entail circles of humiliation leading to war and destruction.

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