Reports From the Field

Editorial Note: This section of the Journal is devoted to reports by traumatologists who have experience in applying traumatology principles in the field and have a perspective to share that the Editors believe is valuable but are published as they are submitted. Like a letter to the editor, this means of communication assures that the authors are able to share their perspective quickly and unedited. As with all articles published in this Journal, the Editorial Board encourages responses from the readership.

Humiliation - Trauma That Has Been Overlooked: An Analysis Based on Fieldwork in Germany, Rwanda / Burundi, and Somalia

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What differentiates trauma from humiliation? This is one of the questions this article tries to answer. Trauma may occur without humiliation, as in the case of natural disaster, however, humiliation may be the core agent of trauma. Furthermore, this paper suggests that the role and significance of humiliation for traumatic experiences has long been overlooked by researchers and practitioners. The paper highlights the macro-historical backdrop for this neglect. It is the unfolding of human rights as opposed to more traditional honour codes at all levels of society both national and international. This change is a major force in making the category of trauma increasingly important, and in moving such practices as 'breaking the will of the child,' that were once legitimate and even prescribed, into the category of trauma. The paper also addresses the fact that social science is part of this transition and would benefit from making more visible how it is deeply interlinked with this process.

Humiliation: Trauma That Has Been Overlooked: An Analysis Based on Fieldwork in Germany, Rwanda / Burundi, and Somalia

Introduction

'Humiliating somebody is more than just harming or insulting somebody' – peace researcher Johan Galtung wrote in 1999 in a personal letter: 'To humiliate has to me a different, or more special connotation: it is basically psychological (if there is physical violence then it is to obtain the psychological violence). The wound, the trauma, is not physical but a deep wound in the psyche.' [1]

Johan Galtung's comment addresses a social-psychological research project currently being carried out at the University of Oslo whose aim is to better understand the notion of humiliation. [2] The interest in studying this issue was triggered by historians' tendency to describe the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War (28th June 1919) as 'humiliating' for Germany ('Schmach,' 'Schande'). It is widely argued that this humiliation 'pre-programmed' Germans for World War II. [3] The research entailed

fieldwork in Germany, Somalia and Rwanda and Burundi. 216 qualitative interviews were carried out, from 1998 to 1999 in Africa (in Hargeisa, 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 Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, and in Belgium). [4]

The central question for the research was: What is humiliation? What happens when people feel humiliated? What is it that they experience as humiliating? Under what conditions are those particular experiences defined as humiliating? What does humiliation lead to? Which particular perceptions 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 in aggression? What can be done to overcome the violent consequences of humiliation?

The word humiliation has an extremely complicated semantic field. The word humiliation is typically used both an act perpetrated by an actor and a feeling felt by a victim. An actor may humiliate another person intentionally or not (even helping may be perceived as humiliating), and the act of humiliation entails a painful downward push at its core, namely looking down, putting down, lowering, degrading, debasing, abasing, demeaning, belittling, subjugating, oppressing, tainting, besmirching, tarnishing, treating with contempt or disgust, bullying, mobbing, abusing, dishonouring, disgracing. The act of humiliation may be played out as short-term event or as long-term structure (in line with Galtung's notion of structural violence).

On the victims' side, humiliation is a feeling that may be short-term or long-term. The victim may fight off a humiliating assault immediately, by aggressive retaliation, or may be affected by long-standing feelings of entrapment and depression, embarrassment or shame, that, in their extreme form may be so traumatic that they trigger processes such as dissociation. [5] This paper will address the issue of humiliation in its effects on the victim and probe its significance for creating a traumatic experience. The word humiliation will in this paper be used in the sense of the feelings endured by a victim.

Humiliation is a concept that connects macro, meso and micro levels - 'rogue states' are perceived as agents of humiliation just as much as are 'rogue individuals.' In other words, if we want to find out more about humiliation then we have to envisage a journey through many disciplines, from basic research in psychology, for example on emotions, to large macro-political analyses that include anthropology, sociology, philosophy and political science.

This paper claims that, to the degree that human rights take root, the significance of humiliation for the field of trauma increases, and the paper will attempt to explain why. The paper is organised in three parts that are preceded by a section on the current state-of-the-art. The first part addresses the historic transition from honour societies to human-rights societies, the second part humiliation as a form of trauma, and the third section trauma and humiliation.

The Current State-of-the-Art

The notion of humiliation has not been studied as explicitly as such fields as 'trauma.' In many cases the term humiliation is not even differentiated from other concepts. Humiliation and shame, for example, are often used exchangeably, among others by Silvan S. Tomkins (1962–1992), whose work is carried further by Donald L. Nathanson. Nathanson describes humiliation as a combination of three innate out of altogether nine affects, namely as a combination of shame, disgust and dissmell (Nathanson in a personal conversation, 1st October1999; see also Nathanson, 1992 ; Nathanson, 1987).

The list of publications that explicitly use the term humiliation is comparatively short, and spread over very disparate thematic fields. *The Journal of Primary Prevention* pioneered work on humiliation in 1991 (Klein, 1991), and 1992 (Barrett & Brooks, 1992 ; Smith, 1992). In 1997 the journal *Social Research* devoted a special issue to the topic of humiliation, stimulated by Margalit's *The Decent Society* (Margalit, 1996). Margalit's work pertains to the significant literature in philosophy on 'the politics of recognition,' claiming that people who are not recognised 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). Also Liah Greenfeld, writing in the field of political science, focuses on ressentiment and sees it's dynamics at the heart of nationalism (Greenfeld, 1992 ; Greenfeld, 1996).

In the field of psychology, Linda Hartling (Hartling & Luchetta, 1999) pioneered a quantitative questionnaire on humiliation (Humiliation Inventory). W. Vogel documents 'unforgivable humiliation' as a core obstacle in couples' treatment (Vogel & Lazare, 1990). Robert L. Hale addresses *The Role of Humiliation and Embarrassment in Serial Murder* (Hale, 1994). [6] James Gilligan, a psychiatrist, suggests that humiliation creates violence (Gilligan, 1996), while Scheff and Retzinger extended their work from shame and rage to violence and Holocaust, and studied the part played by 'humiliated fury' (Scheff 1997, 11).

William Ian Miller wrote a book entitled *Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence*, [7] where he links humiliation to honour as understood in *The Iliad* or Icelandic sagas and explains that these concepts are still very much alive today, despite a common assumption that they are no longer relevant. Cohen and Nisbett also examine an honour-based notion of humiliation (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996).

Humiliation has furthermore been addressed in such fields as love, sex and social attractiveness, [8] depression, [9] society and identity formation, [10] sports, [11] and serial murder. [12] A few examples from history, literature and film illustrate humiliation. [13]

Also relevant for the analysis of humiliation at the macro level is work on international relations, [14] as well as war and violence. [15] *Bloody Revenge* by Scheff, [16] and *Roots of Evil* by Staub, [17] are grand works that analyse emotions within their sociological environment in an integrative way, thus addressing also humiliation, though not as the only variable.

As soon as we conceptualise humiliation as trauma, we have to study PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) that has at its core the understanding of stress and the consequences of stress. Standard reading on stress psychology is Richard S. Lazarus, 1966 , *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process* and Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 , *Stress, Appraisal and Coping.*

Posttraumatic stress is directly associated with three DSM-III-R, Axis I disorders: i) Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), ii) Multiple Personality Disorder, and iii) Brief Reactive Psychosis (APA, 1987 [18]). It is similarly associated with the Axis II personality disorder Borderline Personality Disorder. [19]

Trauma has been studied in a multitude of contexts, trauma in war, [20] trauma in political situations, [21] trauma as the cause for becoming a perpetrator, [22] trauma occurring a long time after the traumatic incident, [23] and secondary traumatisation (of others), for example, wives of traumatised men, and parents of traumatised children. [24] It has been found that preparedness for torture diminishes traumatic effects. [25]

Therapy of trauma is a wide field. [26] Charles Figley and Joyce Carbonell at Florida State University have recently studied several approaches in order to determine what the active ingredients are. They included TIR, [27] Francine Shapiro's Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), [28] Neuro-Linguistic Programming's (NLP) Visual / Kinesthetic Disassociation (VKD), and Roger Callahan's Thought Field Therapy (TFT). [29] Their study suggests that all four techniques can be effective. [30]

The Historic Transition From Honour Societies to Human-Rights Societies

'Abasing human beings is illegitimate.' This sentence reflects today's attitude towards humiliation. However, this sentence can be de-constructed and revised to take account of different states of the human condition within historical time. There were periods in human history where this sentence read: 'Abasing human beings is legitimate.' And, perhaps even earlier, it read: 'Abasing human beings is unknown.'

In the following I will try to show how social psychology might narrate change. M. Michael argues that to date constructionist psychology has paid only 'scant attention' to the issue of change' (Michael, 1997 , in the Abstract of the article 'Individualistic Humans - Social Constructionism, Identity and Change). K. N. Wong, 1998, deplores 'the metaphysical and moral naivety of psychologists' that is 'shown in the way they engage in a study of social phenomena without inquiring into the agentic-moral conditions which set the phenomena in place' (Wong, 1998 , Abstract of 'The Epistemological-Moral Crisis of Psychology Re-Examined'). Wong makes the point that psychology has the duty, 'defined as that of performing an act of collective remembrance through recounting the common expressions used in a social collective.'

What 'common expressions' are related to human action? Can the individual psyche be described as a partial aspect of more comprehensive historical, societal meaning structures? Klaus Holzkamp, in 'On Doing Psychology Critically' suggests that 'Humans do not respond to external stimuli but to meaning structures which are generalized societal possibilities for action' (Holzkamp, 1992 , Abstract).

S. T. M. Lane reminds us that ideology is a ‘meaning structure’ and that ‘ideology is present in word meanings and in social institutions. These are together responsible for norms, and they imply values and expected social roles, which are themselves rooted in ideology’ (Lane, 1999 , Abstract). Lane analyses the ‘presence of ideology in psychological categories, such as consciousness, activity, affect and identity, in order to reach a scientific knowledge of human behaviour through dialectical logic.’

This section began with the sentence ‘Abasing human beings is illegitimate.’ We may now ask: Which ‘ideology’ does this sentence express? Within which ‘meaning structures,’ and in which ‘actor-networks’ is this sentence inscribed? Which ‘agentic-moral conditions’ set the phenomena of humiliation in place, and how do we avoid the ‘metaphysical and moral naivety of psychologists’ that Wong deplores, when studying it?

‘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 principles of human rights have become so all-pervading, especially in the West, that it is easy to forget that they unfolded in reaction to a traditional honour culture. The present author is familiar with many versions of traditional honour/blood feud strategies as a result of her work as a psychological counsellor in Egypt (1984-1991). It was here that she learned a lot about the role of humiliation and its significance for the key difference between the honour/blood feud scenario and the scenario associated with human rights. Within a blood feud culture it may be honourable, entirely legitimate and even highly ‘compulsory’ to ‘heal’ humiliation by killing a targeted person. The contrary is true in a society where universal human rights are acknowledged: ‘healing’ humiliation means restoring the victim’s dignity by empathic dialogue, sincere apology, and finally reconciliation.

In his book *Getting to Peace. Transforming Conflict at Home, at Work, and in the World* (Ury, 1999) the anthropologist William Ury argues that the transition to hierarchy from the relatively egalitarian social structures of hunter-gatherer societies happened around ten thousand years ago, and that humankind is currently ‘returning’ to egalitarian nomadic structures, namely in the form of the global information society. It may be hypothesised, he argues, that the egalitarian notion of human rights, with their acceptance of equal dignity for every human being, is one aspect of this last transition.

The notion of humiliation links the concepts of honour and human rights in an informative and innovative way, providing a framework for both ideologies and for the transition between them. The concept of humiliation includes three elements, which may be described as entering the cultural repertoire of humankind in three phases. These three phases may be seen as coinciding, approximately, with advances in technological and organisational capacity and shifts in the balance of power between humankind and nature and between human groups described by archaeologists and anthropologists such as Ury. These shifts are commonly labelled as the transition from egalitarian hunter-gatherer culture to hierarchical agricultural societal structure and finally to today’s egalitarian knowledge society.

During the first historic phase of hunting and gathering, the idea of subjugating nature (or abasing, putting down, keeping down, striking down) seems to have entered the human cultural repertoire. In the next phase, the building of hierarchical 'civilisations' that included the use of slavery, the idea of subjugation was extended to human beings. During the third phase, the idea became widespread that subjugating human beings was illegitimate and morally wrong (see Lindner, 2001a , 9).

Conceptualised in this way hunter-gatherers were the first human beings to 'introduce' the strategy of 'putting down' into the cultural repertoire of humankind; they did this by producing tools that helped them subjugate nature (it was still a limited subjugation that did not yet endanger ecological balance). The invention of agriculture, however, brought with it a profound change, in two ways. It firstly went beyond the previously existing small-scale technology and gave rise to the digging stick and the plough, thus launching the unlimited exploitation of natural resources that today's environmentalists lament. However, and this is more central to this paper, it did not end there: the surplus produced by agriculture supplied the material means for subjugating not just nature but also people.

The instrumentalisation of some human beings (the 'slaves') by others (the 'masters') was thus 'invented' and was added to the previous 'invention' of subjugating nature. This order embodied what Osterkamp would call 'a proven method of coming to terms with life under given power relations' (Osterkamp, 1999 , Abstract). A third elementary turning point in the sequence of social changes introduced human rights. Human rights transform legitimate traditional practices into illegitimate abuses.

The etymology of the word humiliation is a witness of the societal change described here. Miller, 1993, explains: 'According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the earliest recorded use of *to humiliate* meaning to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone does not occur until 1757. Its usual sense prior to the mid-eighteenth century is more closely related to the physical act of bowing, or prostrating oneself … The metaphoric underpinning of *humiliate* connected it more to humility and making humble than to what we now think of as humiliation' (Miller, 1993 , 175, italics in original).

Etymology documents an interesting development. At first the word humiliation entails only a spatial orientation, a downward orientation, literally a 'de-gradation.' 'Ned-verdigelse' (Norwegian), 'Er-niedrig-ung' (German), 'a-baisse-ment' (French), all mean 'de-gradation.' All these words are built on the same spatial, orientational metaphor. [31] At some point, however, the verb 'to humiliate' cannot be used as 'to humble' anymore; this becomes 'obsolete.' [32] In other words, a differentiation has taken place between 'humbling' and 'humiliating.' To 'humble' somebody may, under certain circumstances, be a beneficial process for this person, whereas to 'humiliate' is at some point defined as a painful experience.

The era of hierarchical societies of masters and underlings lasted for the past ten thousand years and still lives on in some parts of the world. It saw pyramids of power evolve in many societies around the world. These hierarchies gave everybody a rank and a certain definition of honour attached to it. 'For example, in medieval and early modern Europe, armed combat among members of the most "honourable" class, the aristocracy,

was a means of defending or enhancing family honour. Defeat in a duel lowered the loser's rank in the scale of honour. Small humiliations could be borne by those who had fought bravely. However, a cowardly response to a challenge could mean that all honour was lost. Furthermore, it was not possible to accept defeat by an opponent one did not respect. In extreme cases where no road back to honour existed, suicide was preferable. The main point is that within "honour societies," humiliation and violence were regarded as normal means of managing tensions. For the most part, people accepted them and got on with their lives. Violence did not have the strong connotation of "violation" it has since acquired [33] ' (Lindner, 2000b , 12).

If we analyse in what ways humiliation is used within a traditional oppressive hierarchy where masters rule over underlings and everybody is convinced that this is how things should be - as either sanctioned by God's will or nature's order - we can conclude that 'honour humiliation' entails roughly four variants. [34] A 'master' uses 'conquest humiliation' for subjugating formerly equal neighbours into inferiors. As soon as hierarchy is in place, a 'master' uses 'reinforcement humiliation' to keep it in place. The latter may range from seating orders according to honour 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.' 'Relegation humiliation' is used to push an already low-ranking 'underling' even further down. 'Exclusion humiliation' means excluding a party 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.

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. Both, Germany and Rwanda were also scenes of brutal Holocausts. In Rwanda Tutsi and moderate Hutu were the objects of an orchestrated campaign of genocide at the hands of extremist Hutu in 1994, [35] 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 cultural and personal structures. To quote the words of a Hutu from the North of Burundi, now an international intellectual [36] : '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 added: '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.'

The mechanism of humiliation presents itself in a fundamentally different way within a human-rights context. Dennis Smith writes in *Organisations and Humiliation: Looking Beyond Elias*: 'The human rights revolution - especially the core principle that all human beings are equally worthy of respect - has a dramatic effect upon the experience of humiliation. Once this revolution has occurred, the casual blows and insults … that used to serve as a routine proclamation of the hierarchical status quo become transformed in the mind of the victim into an outrageous forced expulsion from the community of equals…. ("How dare you deprive me of my freedom?", "how dare you make me less than I am?")' (Smith, 2000 , 8).

Smith continues: ‘In a human-rights society people still get scorned, spat upon, ignored, turned away and forced to kow-tow to authority. Humiliation is present whenever someone is made to feel fundamentally inferior and less worthy of consideration than others. Human rights do not abolish humiliation. On the contrary, they intensify the experience. In a human rights society, we do not accept humiliation as a ”normal” mechanism built into the bone and muscle of society. Instead, we reject its legitimacy.’ In other words, humiliation, already hurtful in an honour society where it is routinely used as habitual means to put people down or keep them down, becomes many times more hurtful when it occurs in a human-rights society. In a human-rights context humiliation links up to the inner core of dignity of each person qua being born as a human being, and acquires an explosive potential.

This scenario of change illuminates many problems that seem to bewitch today’s relations, because human rights place followers of the old code into direct confrontation with followers of the new code. People from the human-rights camp in the international community are dismayed by the practices of dictators who believe in honour codes, and in their ‘right’ to ‘discipline’ their ‘underlings,’ and thus ‘secure order.’ Regimes that gain from the old code are deeply reluctant to let it go, and argue strongly in favour of keeping it. International criticism of human rights abuses, for example in South East Asia, may be opposed as breaches of Asian sovereignty in the name of alien Western values. [37]

From ‘Reinforcement Humiliation’ to ‘Exclusion Humiliation’

This article claims that the above-described historic process is central to changes in the social identity of all human beings, that it deeply influences their definition of what is their core identity, and that it turns humiliation into a significant trauma.

To illustrate this argument, I would like to present a witness account from Burundi (where a Tutsi elite traditionally rules over Hutu underlings). I will quote an account that I received in 1999 because it demonstrates especially well the subtle transition; it illustrates how the concept of humiliation moves from being captured by anthropology, to being described within sociology, political science, and psychology - and how this may relate to humiliation (I do not want to disclose the name of my friend who confided in me): ‘I was born in the Burundian countryside in a Hutu family. When I grew up I did not notice that, although my family had Tutsi friends and I played with their children, it was Hutu children who fetched the water, not the Tutsi children, it was my mother who ground the flour, not the Tutsi women - the list of the chores that were done by the Hutu serfs was long, and the Tutsi were the ‘seigneurs,’ the masters. Poor Tutsi were there, but they were only few. It was structural humiliation that I did not feel [anthropologists would describe this state-of-the-world as ‘how-Burundians-lived’].’

My friend continued his account: ‘I only slowly understood the inequality in this situation, for example when my father asked me if I had money to buy a piece of land that my family always had worked on and that I had considered ours. My father also had cows, and as a child I believed they were ours, but at some point I learned that a Tutsi family had given the first cow as token for patronage [here my friend documents how he started understanding structural humiliation, and how the issue moved from anthropology to other fields, for example psychology].’

He resumed his report which now turned into a painful account: ‘Only later I was systematically humiliated in a way that made me suffer and at the same time be conscious of it: At school I was ridiculed when we were playing Volleyball - I was too short!; I was a brilliant student, but suddenly I was not the first in class anymore, but number eight or nine or ten; and whenever I made a mistake the teacher openly ridiculed me [at this point, clearly, structural humiliation transformed into open humiliation and became visible as a political tool, to be studied, for example, by political scientists, as well as turning into a field for psychological research on trauma and stigmatisation, or bullying].’

My friend carried on: ‘Later I became a teacher myself, a French teacher. After having worked for five years at a school I one day came to work in the morning and was told that I was not listed as a teacher there anymore. I was in deep shock. I inquired and was told that I had a dossier at the secret service, saying that I was having meetings in the forest at night with students. Again some time later kids would come to my house telling my people working in my house that they should tell me to leave this part of the city that was a Tutsi quarter, because I would make it “smell bad” [here we witness the start of the dehumanisation process that typically characterises societies in which genocidal killings are seen as a viable strategy].’

Then my friend blended the psychological concept of humiliation into the domain of political science and history: ‘After independence there were elections and a very good and authentic Hutu president was elected, who would have done a good job. He was killed. Micômbéro, a Hima (Pariah Tutsi) took over, he himself a very humiliated man! With him systematic torture of the worst kind started!’

Some months later my friend wrote to me: ‘Concerning your project on humiliation, I now read everything with a lot of interest. I agree totally with your reflections. Indeed, humiliation is the hard core of any conflict. It is absolutely necessary to take account of it in order to solve problems between conflict parties. Remember, for the case of Burundi, the Hutu have experienced infantilisation for the past four centuries; the Hima have been humiliated all their lives by the other Tutsi, who today take revenge on the Hutu. They kill them, torture them, push them into exile, and imprison them at all occasions. All those who want to help the Burundians have to play on this theme. Since we met, I have not stopped thinking of it. Humiliation, this is daily life in my home country!’ [38]

What happens to humiliation in this account? How does it express itself? How does it transform itself? The answer may read as follows: humiliation moves from ‘relegation humiliation’ that is comparably easy to accept to ‘exclusion humiliation’ - exclusion from humankind - that destroys the inner core of identity of any human being who is met with this kind of humiliation.

Humiliation As the Core of Trauma

I will in the following try to draw a continuum that maps out the transition from ‘pure’ trauma to trauma that is precisely traumatic because it is perceived as humiliation, see Table 1 :

A natural disaster such as an earthquake, a flood, or draught brings trauma, but not humiliation, when it occurs arbitrarily and no actor can be made responsible.

An accident involving an actor may cause trauma, but not necessarily humiliation. After a car accident the driver - who involuntarily caused the accident - may apologise to the traumatised victim. The relationship between actor and victim may thus be characterised by trauma, but not humiliation.

A misfortune happening accidentally and involving an actor may bring trauma, and it may in addition mark the entry point into a humiliating relationship. For example, rebels may kidnap people who are accidentally within their reach and treat them in a humiliating way - and although the hostages are arbitrary victims, and not the 'real' targets of the kidnappers, they will feel humiliated and develop resentment and hatred towards the kidnappers. Their families may begin hating the kidnappers and those for whose cause they stand. People who formerly were not part of any cycle of humiliation may thus, by accident, be drawn into it. This is, indeed, the strategy of rulers who hope that civil war will help them stay in power: as soon as humiliation has started somewhere, there is a good chance that it might feed itself.

A situation, involving an actor, may evolve in such a way that humiliation develops over time. Intimate relationships such as, for example, marriage may develop into humiliating relationships (Vogel et al., 1990). The same dynamics may unfold at macro levels; history shows that dictators may be loved and welcomed at first, just to bring humiliation over their followers later. Somalia enthusiastically welcomed Siad Barre in 1969. After the defeat in the so-called Ogaden war against Ethiopia in 1978 he systematically began humiliating and massacring his own people, first the Majerteen clan, then the Isaaq clan, which finally (1988) became victim to being bombed and killed in genocide-like assaults. After Barre's downfall (1991) the whole country descended into complex cycles of mutual humiliation, in short into general chaos. Hitler started his career as a 'Robin Hood' figure (Lindner, 2000c), poised to 'rescue' Germans and Germanness, as did the Rwandan Hutu elite who lifted up formerly suppressed Hutu and aimed at creating a state in which Hutu could live with dignity. Utter humiliation of neighbours and minorities, even genocide was the result in Hitler's Germany and in Rwanda.

An actor may bring trauma on a person intentionally to teach this person humility, and the victim may even accept this lesson, humbly. The *Bible* recounts how Job learned to 'understand' that God wanted to teach him humility, and the *Bible* demonstrates also that Job's 'success' in the struggle not to reject God's behaviour as gruesome humiliation but accept it as necessary humbling is exemplary for any true believer. In other cases, however, victims may react differently and not accept that they are being rightfully humbled; a prisoner waiting for capital punishment, perhaps just too poor to pay a lawyer who could prove his innocence, may be expected to object to the views of the judge that this situation is to be described as necessary humbling. In hierarchical societies 'masters' may generally be expected to believe that any abasement they inflict on underlings is 'good for them,' while the supposedly 'happy beneficiaries' may violently object to this definition.

An actor may bring trauma on a person intentionally to teach this person that she is unworthy, and this person may perceive this as perfectly legitimate. This typically happens in the context of hierarchical honour societies, where humiliation is a routine to maintain the ranking order: 'My super-ordinates violate my honour routinely, and also I defend my honour routinely by humiliating those under me.' As discussed above, this principle permeated all levels of traditional hierarchical societies. History books describe how duels were means to calibrate ranks in honourable ranking orders. At the micro level, 'breaking the will' of children was recommended as child rearing method - the aim was to teach children obedience in a hierarchy (see Miller, 1983).

An actor may intentionally subject a victim to trauma in order to teach her that she is unworthy, and she may perceive this as an illegitimate violation. This happens typically in a democratic society that is built on human rights principles where citizens expect to be treated with respect as an equal among equals.

Table 1 lays out a spectrum that may be conceptualised, ranging from trauma that does not entail humiliation (left pole) to trauma that is traumatic precisely through the presence of humiliation (right pole). It becomes apparent that the right pole is introduced by human rights ideals that protect individual dignity and turn its violation into trauma.

Table 1: Trauma and Humiliation

Trauma and Humiliation					
Trauma Without Humiliation			**Humiliation as Core of Trauma**		
No Actor		**Actors are involved, but not intending to humiliate me, at least not initially**	**An actor intends to humiliate me**		
(1) A natural disaster happens to me and I see no perpetrator	**(2) An accident happens to me and the perpetrator apoligises.**	**(3) An accident happens to me and the perpetrator treats me in an humiliating manner.**	**(4) An accident leads to a humiliating situation after some time.**	**(6) An actor wants to teach me unworthiness in a context where this is routine behavior and everybody does it.**	**(7) An actor wants to teach me my unworthiness in a context where this is not routine but illegitimate and violates by core of dignity**

Earthquate, flood.	**A car accident; the driver apologises.**	**Rebels arbitrarily kidnap people.**	**Some cases of marriage; dictators.**	**Duels; breaking the will of children; torture.**	**Mobbing and bullying.**

Conclusion

The historic social change described in this paper has deeply affected the world, and, not least, also academic fields. At the macro level, maintaining 'order' in a state, by torturing and killing unruly minorities, instead of respecting their human rights, is hotly criticised by peace research institutes around the world, and human rights institutes are in the process of becoming 'respectable' parts of universities (the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights in Oslo joined the faculty of law in 1999). Equally, at the micro level of psychology, 'breaking the will of the child,' once prescribed by highly regarded experts on child rearing as necessary strategy (Miller, 1983), has turned into a revolting, horrendous, abominable, and monstrous practice, squarely rejected by today's experts. In short, what was regarded as 'necessary humbling' in former hierarchical and oppressive societies is today being viewed as traumatic violation of dignity as enshrined in the human rights principles.

Scientists, like other human beings, are participants in a world that is undergoing this long-term historic transition, and they lend their voice to either the 'old times' or the 'new times,' or the intricate crossroads between them. Chege, 1997, in his article 'Africa's murderous professors,' describes, for example, how academia paved the way for genocide in Rwanda, while 'Subaltern Studies,' on the other side, try to locate and re-establish a 'voice' or collective locus of agency for the less privileged.

Almost every academic field, whether it acknowledges it or not, continuously struggles to define its place within a historical transition that turns what was formerly 'necessary humbling' into humiliating trauma. It may be beneficial to make this underlying effort more visible, so as to increase clarity, sophistication, and, especially, truthfulness of academic research. Humility may be called for (not humiliation!), humility among academic scholars, or, in other words, humble acceptance of the fact that academia is part of the world, and not hovering above it - as much as it may desire to 'rule' it from a supposedly 'objective' stance 'above.' Academia is not untouched by macro-historical change. Especially psychology, in its historic struggle to join the 'discourse of the master' namely natural science, by, at times, overdoing statistical analysis, could perhaps benefit from humbleness, and learn that natural science itself does not necessarily claim to have all the answers.

A humble acceptance of the fact that academia cannot escape being part of its historic and

cultural environment entails, and this is the message of this article, an acknowledgment of the increasing significance of humiliation for the field of trauma - humiliation understood as the violation of the core dignity of a person that is protected by human rights principles. Humiliation, in all its forms, is no longer 'good for you,' on the contrary, it is deeply traumatic. Researchers and practitioners may benefit from being more aware of this historic transition.

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Footnotes:

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[1] Quoted with his permission.

[2] Its title is 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. 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!

[3] See, for example, Sebastian Haffner & Bateson, 1978 , and Norbert Elias, 1996 .

[4] See for manuscripts written in the course of this research, Lindner, 1996 , Lindner, 1999a , Lindner, 1999b , Lindner, 2000d , Lindner, 2000e , Lindner, 2000f , Lindner, 2000g , Lindner, 2000h , Lindner, 2000i , Lindner, 2000c , Lindner, 2000j , Lindner, 2000k , Lindner, 2000l , Lindner, 2000m , Lindner, 2000n , Lindner, 2000o , Lindner, 2000a , Lindner, 2000p , Lindner, 2000b , Lindner, 2000q , Lindner, 2000r , Lindner, 2000s , Lindner, 2001b , Lindner, 2001c , Lindner, 2001d , Lindner, 2001a , Lindner, 2001e .

[5] ‘Dissociation refers to a compartmentalization of experience: elements of the experience are not integrated into a unitary whole, but are stored in memory as isolated fragments and stored as sensory perceptions, affective states or as behavioral reenactments… While dissociation may temporarily serve an adaptive function, in the long range, lack of integration of traumatic memories seems to be the critical element that leads to the development of the complex biobehavioral change that we call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Intense arousal seems to interfere with proper information processing and the storage of information into narrative (explicit) memory. This observation was first made by Pierre Janet, and is confirmed by a subsequent century of clinical and research data’ (van der Kolk & Fisler, 2000 , 6).

[6] See also Lehmann, 1995 ; Schlesinger, 1998 .

[7] The theme of this book is ‘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).

[8] See, for example, Baumeister, 1986 ; Baumeister, 1997 ; Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993 , Brossat, 1995 , Gilbert, 1997 , Proulx, Aubut, Mckibben, & Cote, 1994 , Vogel et al., 1990 .

[9] See, for example, Brown, Harris, & Hepworth, 1995 , Miller, 1988 .

[10] See, for example, Ignatieff, 1997 , Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000 , Markus, Kitayama, & Heimann, 1996 , Silver, Conte, Miceli, & Poggi, 1986 , Wood, Giordanobeech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994 .

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

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

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

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

[15] See, for example, Masson, 1996 , Vachon, 1993 , Znakov, 1989 ; Znakov, 1990 .

[16] Scheff, 1990a ; see also Retzinger, 1991 ; Scheff, 1988 ; Scheff, 1990b ; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991 ; Scheff, 1997 .

[17] Staub, 1989 , see also Staub, 1996 ; Staub, 1988 ; Staub, 1990 ; Staub, 1993 .

[18] American Psychiatric Association, 1987 .

[19] See, for example, Herman, Perry, & van der Kolk, 1989 .

[20] See Shay, 1995 ; Znakov, 1990 ; Znakov, 1989 ; Moses, 1999 ; Volkan, 1997 . See also *Rethinking the Trauma of War* where Bracken, Patrick J. and Petty, Celia,1998 , criticise the way of Westerners exploit war trauma, by, as I would call it, ‘flying into a disaster zone, letting children draw some pictures, and fly out again.’

[21] Chile Becker, Castillo, Gomez, Kovalskys, & Lira, 1989 ; raped Bosnian and Croatian women Kozarickovacic, Folnegovicsmalc, Skrinjaric, Szajnberg, & Marusic, 1995 ; Dybdahl, 1996 .

[22] *Pathological Narcissism and Serial Homicide: Review and Case Study* Schlesinger, 1998 .

[23] See Eitinger, 1990 ; Nadler & Ben Shushan, 1989 ; Nadler, Kav Venaki, & Gleitman, 1985 ; Bar-On, 1996 ; Bar-On, 1997a ; Bar-On, 1989 ; Volkan, 1988 ; Bar-On, 1997b ; Staub, 1993 ; Bar-On, 1992 ; Nadler, 1987 ; Staub, 1989 .

[24] See Manion et al., 1996; McIntyre et al., 1994; Mikulincer, Florian, & Solomon, 1995 ; Solomon et al., 1992 ; Baker & Kevorkian, 1995 ; Dane, 2000 ; Motta, Joseph, Rose, Suozzi, & Leiderman, 1997 ; Nelson & Wright, 1996 ; Westerink & Giarratano, 1999 ; Westerink et al., 1999 .

[25] See Basoglu et al., 1997 ; Withuis, 1998 .

[26] See Balcom, 1996 ; Coffey, 1998 ; Gabriel, 1994; Henry, 1997 ; Miltenburg & Singer, 1997 ; van der Hart & Steele, 1999 .

[27] In Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR) the client repeatedly reviews a traumatic incident, first going through it silently from beginning to end, then reporting what happened, until a point of resolution or "end point" for that incident is achieved (see Friedman, 2000). TIR has been developed by Frank A. Gerbode, M.D., of the Institute for Research in Metapsychology in Menlo Park, California. Gerbode writes: 'Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR) operates on the principle that a permanent resolution of a case requires anamnesis (recovery of repressed memories), rather than mere catharsis or coping. To understand why clients have to achieve an anamnesis in order to resolve past trauma, we must take a person-centered viewpoint, i.e., the client's viewpoint and, from that viewpoint, explain what makes trauma traumatic' (Gerbode, 2000).

[28] Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) combines imaginal exposure, cognitive restructuring and self-control techniques into specific structured protocols that are modified to meet the unique needs of each client. EMDR treatment also involves having the client focus on an external stimulus such as a) frequent back and forth finger movements b) alternating sound or c) handtapping, while the client is focused on the source of some emotional distress (see Friedman, 2000).

[29] Thought Field Therapy (TFT) is a systematic method of treating psychological distress using the energy meridians of the body. The client is asked to think about the problem (for example anxiety, anger, guilt, phobia, trauma, depression, panic, etc.) and then tap several times in a precise sequence on specific acupuncture points at various places on the body. Usually the client is also asked to hum a tune, count out loud, move their eyes in various directions and repeat certain affirmations while tapping and thinking about the distressing emotion (see Friedman, 2000). See also Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT) that is a systematic technique for reducing traumatic/emotional distress and allergies. In TAT the client puts their attention on the emotional distress/trauma. Then using 3 fingers with one hand the client applies very gentle pressure to 3 acupressure points near the eyes and the forehead while placing the other hand on the back of the head (acupressure "pose") Subsequent steps include making a positive statement about the problem, asking about the origins of the problem and asking about where the problem is stored in one's body or life (see Friedman, 2000).

[30] See, for example, Carbonell & Figley, 1996 .

[31] Lakoff and Johnson (1988) 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 & Johnson, 1980 , 14, capitalisation in original).

[32] The word 'humble' is first recorded in English in the 13th century (see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* by Hoad, T. F.,1986 , 222). In the 14th century 'humble' means 'of lowly condition.' The verb 'to humiliate' meant 'to humble' in the 16th century, but this use is indicated as an 'obsolete' use for today in the dictionary.

[33] To put it another way, honour-humiliation regards 'structural violence' (Galtung, 1996) as legitimate.

[34] See also Smith, 2000 .

[35] See Des Forges & Human Rights Watch, 1999 (also on http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/); Destexhe, 1995 ; Gourevitch, 1998 ; Guichaoua, 1994 ; Kamuka, 1995 ; de Lame, 1997 ; Ngakoutou, 1994 ; O'Halloran, 1995 ; Prunier, 1995 ; Reyntjens, 1994 ; Scherrer, 1996 ; Rakiya, De Waal, & African Rights, 1995 .

[36] He wishes to stay anonymous. The interview was carried out in December 1998.

[37] Mohamad Mahathir, the Malaysian Prime Minister, is one of the advocators of this view.

[38] Translated by the author from French: 'A propos du projet sur l'humiliation, je l'ai lu avec beaucoup d'intérêt. Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec ta réflexion. En effet, l'humiliation, en tant que cause, effet ou moyen reste pour la plupart des conflits le noyau dur. Il faut absolument en tenir compte pour résoudre les problèmes entre les partis au conflit. Souviens-toi, pour le cas du Burundi, les Hutu ont connu plus de quatre siècles d'infantilisation; les Hima ont été humiliés toute leur vie par les autres Tutsi. Aujourd'hui, ceux-ci se vengent sur les Hutu. Ils les tuent, les torturent, les poussent à l'exil, les emprisonnent à toutes les occasions. Tous ceux qui veulent aider les Burundais doivent jouer sur ce thème.'

[39] See, for example, http://www.lib.virginia.edu/area-studies/subaltern/ssmap.htm. See also Spivak's seminal essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (Spivak, 1988).

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