# How Becoming a Global Citizen Can Have a Healing Effect

Evelin G. Lindner, M.D., Ph.D. (Dr. med.), Ph.D. (Dr. psychol.)
Social Scientist
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Founding Manager of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, http://www.humiliationstudies.org),
anchored at the Columbia University Conflict Resolution Network, New York,
furthermore affiliated with the University of Oslo, Department of Psychology (see http://folk.uio.no/evelinl/),
Senior Lecturer at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Department of Psychology (see http://psyweb.svt.ntnu.no/ansatte/),
and affiliated with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris
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## Introduction

First versions of this paper were written for the 2006 ICU-COE Northeast Asian Boundary-spanning Dialogue Project ("Sharing Narratives, Weaving/Mapping History," February 3-5, 2006, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan). The participants were divided into four circles and encouraged to present their personal histories. A great sense of enthusiasm, almost exhilaration, permeated the Dialogue weekend. One of the most exiting aspects was that everybody had the permission to be a "human being" – as opposed to "a Chinese," or "a Korean," or "a Japanese." Usually, by stepping out of in-group definitions, one has to pay by sacrificing one's sense of belonging and mutual connection. During the Dialogue weekend, nobody was punished for failing to be adequately "loyal" to their in-group; nobody was ostracized for failing to be sufficiently "Japanese," or "Korean," or "Chinese." On the contrary, a new "in-group membership" was on offer – the membership in all humankind. No longer had the participants to carefully hide "unfitting" aspects of themselves; on the contrary, everybody was encouraged to just be "me" and would still be connected and loved. In the Dialogue weekend, everybody was allowed to break out of narrow in-group boundaries and forge a new in-group community, *humankind*.

   In this paper I will first outline how I initially felt a painful sense of not-belonging (I am born into a refugee family) and how I proceeded to building a deeply fulfilling and satisfying global identity. In the subsequent section I discuss what I gained with this approach. I conclude with advocating that we all need to cooperate in building an inclusive world for all.

   My reflections derive from more than twenty years of international therapeutic experience coupled with the social psychological research on humiliation that I began in 1996. My four-year doctoral research project in social psychology was 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* (Lindner, 2000, University of Oslo). My book *Making Enemies Unwittingly: Humiliation and International Conflict,* will be published soon (Lindner, 2006, Westport, CT: Praeger).


**My journey from not-belonging (to a particular place) to belonging to the world**

A major characteristic of many conflicts around the world is the question of "home." I recently wrote a paper on the Middle East conflict, please see Lindner, Walsh, and Kuriansky (2006). When we reflect on the Middle East conflict, we realize that both Palestinian and Israeli suffering is embedded in the need – and demand – for a "home." This is related to the claims for land on both sides. During my fieldwork in the region in 2003 and 2004, I was exposed to the profound and intense emotionality that is connected to the concept of home, on both sides. Let us turn to the Palestinian side. Abu al-Abed professes:

> Every human being who has his land invaded, all he possesses taken and his rights denied has a right to resist. …This is a war of liberation, and it is a war to the end. What I mean by saying we seek death more than we seek this life is that everything we do is an attempt to achieve happiness and peace in our land and to regain control over our holy places (quoted from
> http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/middle_east/2002/voices/abu.stm).

Israelis, too, have a deep yearning for a "homeland." During my stays in the region I heard many voices. A man in his seventies, who moved from the United States to Israel after retirement, confessed to me, "You have no idea of the healing effect of having a homeland! To have a place for your culture! I am no longer the only one among my colleagues and neighbors to celebrate Jewish feasts! This is so healing!"

My personal experience of homelessness makes me identify in great sympathy with the quest for "home" and belonging and its potential to cause violent conflict. My personal life experience resembles that of many Jews who, over centuries, felt at home in their dreams of Jerusalem without ever having been there; it also resembles that of Palestinians who feel that Haifa, for example, is their home, even though they were born in a distant refugee camp and have never set foot in Haifa. I was born into a displaced family from Silesia, which is now part of Poland. Together with millions of others, they lost their homeland in 1945. My parents have lived in continuous trauma since that time. The loss of their homeland broke their hearts. During the first twenty or thirty years of my life, my identity was like a "black hole" of non-belonging. This is how I felt: "Where my family lives, we are not at home, we are rather unwelcome guests; however, there is no home to go to."

From 1984 to 1987, I opened one chapter of "book Earth" in more depth, namely the chapter "Arab World." I was first a psychological counselor and clinical psychologist at the American University in Cairo, till 1987, and then had my own private practice in Cairo, from 1987 to 1991. I offered counseling in English, French, German, Norwegian,

and, in time, also in Egyptian-Arabic. My clients came from diverse cultural backgrounds, many from the expatriate community in Cairo – Americans, Europeans, Scandinavians, Palestinians, and citizens of other African countries – as well as from the local community, both Western-oriented, and traditionally-oriented Egyptians. Part of my work was "*culture-counseling*," meaning that foreign companies working in Egypt asked me for my support in understanding Egyptian culture, Arab culture, and Islam.

From 1991 to 1993, I wrote my doctoral dissertation in social medicine about quality of life, or how a "good life" is being defined in Germany as compared to Egypt. I furthermore collected experience as a politician and activist (see www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php).

In 1996, I began with my current social psychological research, initially with a four-year doctoral research project in social psychology – see Lindner (2000) – 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*.  Since 2001, I dedicate my time to developing a *theory of humiliation* and promoting *humiliation studies* as a new global and transdisciplinary field – please see Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, HumanDHS, http://www.humiliationstudies.org, and Lindner (2006).

Given my background in a displaced family, I could be tempted to wish to reclaim "my homeland." But I have chosen another path. The world has become my "homeland" and I am a "global citizen." I do not feel the need to fight for Silesia where my parents were born, because wherever I am, I consider my home. I am at the forefront of a growing number of people who are developing a global or at least multi-local identity and become citizens of the world. My home is now what William Ury (1999) calls the *global knowledge society*.

Practicing to be a "global citizen" demonstrated to me that human beings all over the world indeed are connected in their wish for recognition, a wish that turns into feelings of humiliation when this recognition is felt to be failing. I have learned that this universal human desire for recognition and connection can make me feel at home everywhere.

Admittedly, embracing all humankind as "my family" has often been a painful process. Such a process is like building a ship while at sea. It meant learning to "swim" and not to "cling." Developing a global identity meant that I transformed from being attached to lost land (Silesia) in pain, to connecting to the global knowledge society in joy. In other words, I have replaced a circumscribed piece of land (Silesia) with knowledge and with the entire planet Earth and all humanity. As a consequence, I do not wish to stir up resentment and ultimately war against Poland in order to "re-conquer" Silesia and reinstate the Silesian culture of my parents. Not only would the price be too high (war) – the world and I no longer use land as a main resource.

True, by identifying primarily with all humanity, in many ways I am betraying my parents' Silesian culture, accepting what Judith Viorst (1987) writes about in *Necessary Losses*. This I do, even though I love my parents deeply, profoundly resonate with their suffering, and would be overjoyed if their cultural practices could survive. Losses hurt. I do not let go of "my culture" easily. However, this loss also enriches me. It teaches me to appreciate diversity and understand the conditions for diversity to be enriching.

I deeply resonate with Ury's conceptualization that for many millennia (since the inception of complex agriculture around 10,000 years ago), humankind has been caught

in the rather malign win-lose framing that is brought about when land is the resource that people depend on. The emerging *global knowledge society* today promises to bring back the more benign win-win framing that hunter-gatherers enjoyed prior to the era of agriculture, this time knowledge – not wild food – being the expandable resource that renders win-win framings.

**What I gained**

What I gained through building a global identity as my primary identity is personal healing and a deeper understanding of what the world needs to heal.

The loss of "my homeland" and "my culture" has given me a keen sense of the value of cultural diversity. I am flabbergasted when I see people throw away "their culture," even against their own apparent self-interest. Why are local solutions currently displaced by global uniformity? Why is so-called "Western style" conquering the world, even when it is utterly dysfunctional in so many local settings? As mentioned earlier, I lived in Egypt for seven years and was deeply saddened to see that old architectural solutions – reinvented, chiefly, by the great architect Hassan Fathy – were despised (fortunately, this trend it now turning in Egypt). Traditional architecture with its thick walls of lime stone and mud brick is particularly suitable for the hot Egyptian climate – houses built in this way are warm in winter and cool in summer. More even, not only functionality is gained, also beauty – this architecture gives an unparalleled gift of humanizing aesthetics to their residents. Wealthy Americans understood this long before most Egyptians; Hassan Fathy's work was embraced in hot Arizona, in Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. In contrast, the large concrete blocks that clog the desert of Egypt are not only despicably ugly, but require expensive air condition to be livable. This is only one example, the list of examples I came across all over the world is deplorably long. I call this "subaltern" rejection of valuable local solutions, in the futile hunt for "Western" status, "voluntary self-humiliation."

In other words, we all wish to belong and be recognized for who we are. However, at the current point in history, to my view, the desire for belonging is lived in two malign ways (at least), one linked to local culture and the other to "Western" culture. The first case follows the motto "Jerusalem is mine only": Those who link the essence of their identity to divisive aspects of local cultural definitions may stoke violent conflict; I decided to relinquish Silesian culture because I cannot see that it could be maintained without blood shed. The second case follows the motto "The West is best, even if it kills us": Those who identify with dysfunctional cultural solutions from the "West" in order to acquire what they believe to be higher status may eradicate local cultural solutions that would be most valuable to preserve for humankind as a whole; the very creativity that humankind depends on in order to solve global problems is lost. I therefore suggest that both, "local" and "Western" identifications ought to be scrutinized ruthlessly as to whether they are inclusive, functional and dignifying for all.

**I gained authenticity and freedom from incapacitating traps**

I have experienced a great sense of liberation when I identified with humankind as a whole and defined "who I am" as "I am a human being." The affiliation to all humankind renders the same deep sense of belonging as choosing smaller in-group identities as one's essence ("I am German, or, "I am Christian," or, "I am a woman," and so forth), however, in addition it liberates from a host of problems that typically accompany identifications with sub-units of humanity. Those problems are threefold (at least): firstly, there is a problem with "purity," secondly there is a problem with bias, and thirdly we create division and potential enmity in the world.

*The problem of purity*

When I choose to define "my essence" as belonging to a particular sub-group of humanity (as opposed to all humanity), I am easily caught in a quest for purity that is inherently impossible to satisfy. I may condemn myself to eternally feeling insufficient. We are never adequately "German," or "Christian," or "feminine," and so forth. Be honest: Most of us who identify with sub-groups of humanity usually feel that fellow members in our in-group are true "insiders," while "I" deviate and need to hide certain sides of myself. When we want prove our "femininity" we need to hide our "male" tendencies and vice versa, when we wish to define our essence as "Christian" (or any other similar adherence) we must hide our religious doubts, and when we are "German" (or any other national or ethic label) we are uneasy about our out-groups connections. As a result our confidence is undermined. We are continuously on our guard to conceal those sides of ourselves which do not "fit" into our in-group (or the collection of in-groups we subscribe to), for fear to be ostracized. We are always tense and inauthentic.

   This problem can be ameliorated by refraining from viewing "cultures" as "containers" with clear boundaries that we "have" or "possess." We can make a first step towards liberating ourselves from the malignancies of group affiliations by acknowledging that what we call "culture" is a fluid phenomenon that does not possess any inherent coherence or cohesion aside from what is provided by those who identify with it. Authors such as Anderson (1991) – in his classic *Imagined Communities* – explain how we construct and *imagine* our communities. However, even though de-essentializing culture is a liberating step, why not refrain from imagining out-groups altogether? The self-definition that is inclusive of and consistent with all shades of all people, including the past and the future, and thus ultimately liberating, is that of defining our essence as living creatures, as human beings, and as nothing artificially "smaller."

   A participant in the 2006 ICU-COE Northeast Asian Dialogue weekend complained that he feels profoundly bored and uneasy in all these well-intentioned cross-cultural meetings that supposedly foster peace by bringing people together. The problem, he exclaimed, is that "nobody is interested in *me*!" Everybody addresses him as a *Chinese*, he said. Once he was asked whether he ate specific Chinese food items for particular feasts and he replied, profoundly annoyed: "No!" I do *not* eat this stuff! Why do you always want to press me into what *you* in *your* mind imagine to be *my personal* culture?"

With advocating all humankind as only truly inclusive source for our personal identity, I do not want to insinuate that cultural differences are unimportant. Cultural diversities are enriching, however, only when embedded into an awareness of the greater common good. When minorities attempt to gain visibility and rise from being disenfranchised, this is beneficial for everybody. Cultural diversity is as enriching and crucial as biodiversity: we need it, not least as a source for creative solutions for local and global problems. The Ainu in Japan, the Sami in Scandinavia, in short, the formerly downtrodden groups around the world, are currently rising up, and the list is long. Any person who suffers discrimination, be it a woman, or a person of color, or a member of a minority, enriches the world by creating her own space. However, there is a danger. In the process of moving out of lowliness, it is tempting to essentialize one's belonging to one's sub-group as a means to gain strength. When people are oppressed, they appear weak. Yet, essentializing sub-group identities may lead to solutions that do not rescue our world but endanger it. The Hutus, the former underlings in Rwanda, when they had succeeded to rise to power in their country, were no longer feeble and their extremist leaders were certainly not peace-loving. In 1994, they attempted to exterminate their former elite, the Tutsis, in a genocide.

Therefore, I suggest that all individuals who wish to empower themselves take the fact to be born as human beings as sufficient rationale for why they deserve respect for equal dignity, not any sub-group identity. We all deserve space, qua being human; we do not need to take detours via sub-group identities. I suggest that we find other ways of protecting diversity, more inclusive ways than contesting land frontiers or cultural boundaries that we imagine to possess inherent "purity" and "essence." I propose that we are very careful with saying "my country" or "my culture" and equally cautious with asking others "what is your sub-group affiliation?" In 1998, I came to Somalia. It is a failing state, reeling in continuous misery since 1991. The wisest among my Somali friends refuse to disclose into which clan they were born, because the mere label triggers immediate malign friend/enemy categorizations. When I came to Rwanda in 1999, I was informed that I ought to refrain from asking "are you Hutu or Tutsi?"

To conclude, I suggest that we learn the lessons from the suffering that group-affiliations caused and still cause in Rwanda, Somalia and other places, and discontinue labeling people according to their nationality or any other group affiliation wherever we can (in conferences, in meetings, wherever the passport is not necessary as administrative tool) and let the label "unique human being with a unique individual biography" suffice for each single person inhabiting the Earth.

*The trap of bias*

The second disadvantage of defining oneself as belonging to a sub-group of humanity is the trap of bias. A host of biases usually occurs in relationships between in- and out-groups.

Phenomena such as the *false polarization effect*, which makes us underestimate what we have in common with out-groups, or the so-called *attribution error* that I explain further down are central. Solomon Ash (1907-1996) was a pioneer in studying biases such as *reactive devaluation*. Reactive devaluation means that any proposition for compromise that is put forward by an out-group is rejected, regardless of its contents, while the own group's arguments are regarded by its members with sympathy, merely because they come from within the group. As a result, even the best solution is rejected: I cannot embrace your proposal, even if it is marvelous and totally I agree, because I would betray my in-group.

To summarize, the destructive outfall of in-group/out-group biases is that urgently needed efforts to find joint solutions to destructive conflicts and safeguard world-wide cohesion are hampered. The involved parties are incapacitated in their efforts to cooperate on finding and implementing good solutions, among others due to blindness as to the fact that we all have more in common than we think, and secondly, because urgently needed good solutions are rejected.

To conclude, humankind is well advised to avoid in-group/out-group differentiations. The solution is to define all humankind as *one single* in-group, with *no* out-group.


*The problem of enmity*


The third problem of defining one's belonging to a sub-group of humanity (as opposed to all humanity) lies in the consequences of biased approaches to the world. The *attribution error* describes the human tendency to believe that *our* successes are *ours*, while our failures are due to adverse circumstances; this evaluation is turned into its opposite when *others* are judged. *Others'* successes are perceived as due to favorable circumstances, while only their failures are *theirs*. As long as our out-groups do not know how negative we think about them, there is no problem. However, our world increasingly grows interdependent. When the world learns how we forgive ourselves what we do not forgive others, and how we deem us to be noble and others not, feelings of humiliation can cause violent rifts that otherwise would not be there.

In 1993, I wrote my doctoral dissertation in social medicine on the topic of quality of life. I asked Egyptians and Germans "What is a good life for you?" (Lindner, 1993, *Quality of Life: A German-Egyptian Comparative Study,* Hamburg: Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Hamburg). What I found was that all have in common the wish for society to be cohesive and harmonious. All desire a world in which their children can prosper and be happy. The difference was that *secular distance to religion* was seen as a guarantor for social cohesion by many of my German interview partners, while the Egyptian interviewees saw *secular distance to religion* precisely as a hindrance to a "good life." In other words, all parties wished for society to offer a good future to their children, but they differed on the methods: religious beliefs were seen in opposing ways, either as a beneficial force that holds society together, or as a potential divider.

In the case of the "Cartoon Wars" of 2006, triggered by Danish cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, all sides feel that their most noble beliefs are being exposed to humiliation, namely their noble vision for a world that offers a good life to their children. All participants feel deeply hurt and humiliated. All sides regard the others' attacks as evil. Muslims imagine that the cartoons are part of a "Western" conspiracy against Islam, and in the West, many construe the situation to mean that Muslims wish to attack "our freedom." Both sides are wrong. Both endanger world peace with views that are the result of biases such as the above-discussed false polarization effect, attribution error and reactive devaluation, which obscure that we all wish for the same, a world that is livable for future generations.

To conclude, our commonalities need to be our priority, not our differences. Diversity enriches, however, only when embedded into our commonalities.

**Concluding remarks**

The question of "home" is profoundly relevant for the inhabitants of planet Earth. It is relevant for the identity of each citizen, for the solution of conflicts around the world, and for the kind of world that we envisage to build for our children in the future. Do we wish to build a world of domination/submission, where a few have luxurious homes and the rest has virtually nothing? Or do we want a world that provides everybody with a dignified home? Do we envisage a world of separate nations (with "enemy nations" endangering our homes)? Or do we want the entire world to be our nation that gives home to all? How should local and global aspects of identity be combined? What should we reply, when we are asked, "Where are you from?"

I have discussed these questions at great length with my dear friends on all sides of the divides of conflicts in many world regions. There are two ways out of homelessness, two ways out of being denied a dignified home: violent fight for a limited piece of land, or building a profoundly new global world of all-encompassing inclusiveness. Nobody forces us to define "homeland" in narrow ways. We are free to adopt the entire planet as our home and transform it, in the future, to house all humankind in a sustainable way. I regard such a struggle to be more benign than competition for narrowly defined pieces of land. Safety is not to be found in "owning" territory, because the concept of ownership is relational – it is dependent on its larger social context. Safety emanates only from building secure relationships among all world citizens in an all-encompassing home. The mere option of such a vision, I hope, can facilitate compromises by reducing the despair with which people hold on to every inch of land they believe is "not yours."

Michio Kaku (2005), renowned physicist, concludes his book on *Parallel Worlds* with the following paragraph:

The generation now alive is perhaps the most important generation of humans ever to walk the Earth. Unlike previous generations, we hold in our hands the future destiny of our species, whether we soar into fulfilling our promise as a type I civilization or fall into the abyss of chaos, pollution, and war. Decisions made by us will reverberate throughout this century. How we resolve global wars, proliferating nuclear weapons, and sectarian and ethnic strife will either lay or destroy the foundations of a type I civilization. Perhaps the purpose and meaning of the current generation are to make

sure that the transition to a type I civilization is a smooth one. The choice is ours. This is the legacy of the generation now alive. This is our destiny (Kaku, 2005, p. 361).

Kaku's type I civilizations points at the same vision that philosopher Avishai Margalit (1996) describes in his book entitled *The Decent Society*, where he calls for societies to build institutions that no longer humiliate their citizens. I call for a *decent global village* harnessed by a *Moratorium on Humiliation*. I believe that there is an extremely important role for the international community which needs to become more active and facilitate constructive social change towards a *decent global village*, which includes all citizens of the world in dignified ways.

I personally reply to the question "Where are you from?" with the following sentence, "I am from planet Earth, I am a living creature, I am a human being, like you." I define Russian history to be as much "my history" as Japanese or German or Arab or American history: my history is all humankind's history. This entails that I accept feeling shame and disgust for the destruction that all humankind ever perpetrated. And I wish to carry the responsibility for doing something constructive about it. I feel responsible for not repeating what Stalin did, or Hitler, or any other dictator.

In the same spirit I feel proud of all the achievements of humankind, of all the great literature, art and wisdom that have emerged all over the globe. I feel responsible for protecting and celebrating the cultural diversity of this world – with a caveat. I wish to preserve and cherish only those aspects of diversity that are not divisive. I suggest that we let go of cultural aspects and spheres that can only be kept alive through violence (for example, I let go of my family's Silesian culture).

In other words, while I am deeply troubled when people protect their cultural sphere by violence, I am equally distressed when I see that people abandon valuable cultural solutions without good reason. Cultural diversity, as much as bio-diversity, represents a precious treasure trove of inspiration and knowledge for humankind. I decry the fact that much cultural diversity is currently being squandered. The big cities of this world, and their citizens, for example, look increasingly identical. If this change were for the better, I would be inclined to accept it. However, the problem is that a host of dysfunctional solutions is being adopted. "Western status," providing the illusion to belong to the rich of the world, is the driving force. I label this subaltern yearning for "Western status" "voluntary self-humiliation."

For me the human tendency to think in terms of status is as damaging as ancient Chinese foot-binding. Ranking humans in *higher* and *lesser* beings incapacitates the world. This is because the *lesser* beings' creativity is underused, the *higher* beings' health is undermined, and the *world*'s resources are depleted in the competitive rush for status. Everybody loses out. Drawing one's meaning-of-life and one's definition of success-in-life from accumulating riches and dominating others is dysfunctional for all. Meaning and success are better drawn from everybody connecting in mutual respect for equal dignity and jointly caring for our world.

In other words, I oppose both, the violent over-protection of cultural diversity that characterizes current world affairs as much as its self-humiliating under-protection.

The first paragraph of article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, reads: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." If we wish

to give life to this motto, I suggest that we build a world of *global inter-human relations*. Everything else should be secondary. Diversity is enriching, as opposed to divisive, only if we relegate sub-group affiliations to a second place. Inter-national relations or inter-cultural relations need to be embedded into *global inter-human relations.*

Therefore I would like to advocate that we stop pressing people into group identities and that we discontinue using labels such as inter-national relations or inter-cultural relations when individuals meet. These terms ought to be reserved to those cases where we expressly speak about relations between nations or cultural spheres, for example when we analyze the activities of diplomats or heads of states in their capacity as representatives of their groups. I suggest that we cease categorizing citizens of the Earth by the passport they carry, or what we call their "nationality," except when we expressly talk about passports as administrative tools.

Land, nations, ethnic or religious group delineations should not provide the essence of identity to people, lest we wish to open the door for the malignancies of in-group/out-group relations. When we delineate the essence of our identity as belonging to in-groups whose definition depends on out-groups, we give tyrants potential hate-tickets: What do we do when we are told that we betray our country or our group when we do not kill? Hutus had to prove their "Hutuness" by killing Tutsis and a Serb killed his wife when she was not Serb. Primary identity built on sub-segments of the land of the Earth, or erected on national, ethnic or religious delineations, precludes what we need most when we wish to cooperate for building a better world: in-group trust. The maximum one can obtain with out-groups are friendly alliances. We never give the unconditional bonus of trust to out-groups – even the most friendly ones – that we give to our fellow in-group members (the word "fellow" is precisely reserved for in-group members). Pressing people into in-group/out-group delineations is as much "foot-binding" as ranking people's worthiness hierarchically. Both incapacitate the world. We need to give due priority to our commonalities, to our belonging to *one single* in-group of humankind, where everybody enjoys respect for equal dignity.

Identity is best conceptualized like a sunflower: At the center is our essence, our being human; at the periphery are the petals, our "local" affiliations. In my case, for example, my "petals" are global and I cherish them all. I am deeply connected with my friends all around the world, whom I call my close family. I am furthermore attached to lots of cultural practices and countless geographical places. For example, I love aspects of Egyptian cultural practices and the Egyptian desert as much as Norwegian cultural gifts to the world and its fjords and mountains – my list is long. My "personal culture" entails a puzzle of bits and pieces from all over the world. I think and dream in a mosaic of languages. My meaning-of-life is not to accumulate anything, neither power nor material goods. I derive my definition of "success" for my life from me living as a full human being wrapped into nurturing and empowering connections with my global friends, from cherishing cultural practices from all corners of the world, and appreciating geographical locations everywhere on our globe. In sum, the entire ecosphere and sociosphere is my home. Particularly since we live in times of emergency where this world, my home, is at a tipping point and in danger of self-destruction, I do not wish to lose a single minute, nor a single ounce of energy, in trying to find "my true roots" or the "essence of my identity" in potentially divisive and therefore dangerous sub-group affiliations.

To summarize, cultural diversity can only be enriching when it is embedded into respect for equal dignity for all people and an awareness that we, all humanity, need to cooperate to protect ecological and social sustainability for coming generations. The world believes that Germans during World War II ought to have stood up and not stood by when Jews were transported away. 6 million people died in the Holocaust. Today, 12 million children die each year before they are 5 years old, of preventable diseases and poverty. I identify with that. Global exploitation of resources and the destructive effects of the way we use them makes our world unlivable for coming generations. I do not want to stand by. And in order to stand up, I identify with all humankind as my first priority, as my home, and relegate all "local" identities to a second plane. The *global village* is my home, I call it my *World House* (see also Immanuel Kant's term "Welthaus"), and I wish to have as many diverse rooms in it as possible, however, only if they do not destroy the house. Currently, we live in an *undignified* and *ramshackle Welthaus,* where millions suffer. In order to stand up, I do my utmost to design my life as a global citizen and try to do whatever I can to protect my family. This orientation not only heals my wounds from feeling homeless, but also leads me to believe that my experiences may be helpful to others and stimulate fruitful visions for a sustainable future world.

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