

# Reconciliation and Humiliation:

## A Review by Finn Tschudi & Evelin Lindner's Responses

Discussion stimulated by 'Reconciliation and Humiliation,' in Education for Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution. A special issue of *International Review of Education*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne, Vol. 55 (no 1, 2009)

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**When is ranking incompatible with equal dignity? - Finn Tschudi, 8th July 2008**

Review of 'Reconciliation and Humiliation,' in *Education for Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution*. A special issue of *International Review of Education*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne, Vol. 55 (no 1, 2009)

Lindner gives a persuasive account of the role of humiliation in permeating human suffering and the catastrophic consequences of cycles of humiliation and revenge, dubbing humiliation the 'nuclear bomb of emotions'. She contrasts 'ranked honour' - which may be used to 'justify' severe subjugation - and 'equal dignity' which opens for peaceful dialogue when there are conflicting interests. While agreeing to the basic tenets of her analysis, the present rejoinder points to incompleteness of her analysis. First, 'Relational Theory Model', RTM<sup>1</sup> may open for a benign picture of some forms of mild humiliation (not discussed by Lindner) and a more nuanced picture of ranked honour. Second, social inequality which is largely equal to 'structural violence', is briefly considered.

RTM was introduced by Alan Page Fiske (1991). He postulates four elementary and universal forms of social relations. 1) Communal sharing, CS, where people are in some respects equivalent, and treat each other as 'all the same'. 2) Authority ranking, AR, involves asymmetry among people who are linearly ordered along some hierarchical social dimension. 3) Equality matching, EM, implies a model of balance as in turn taking (e.g. a car pool or a babysitting cooperative). 4) Market pricing, MP, builds on a model of proportionality, and relationships are organised with respect to ratios and rates.

CS derives from the universal 'need to belong', and has the strongest emotional appeal. Here love, care and intimacy motivation prosper. Lindner defines love 'as the meeting of equal hearts and minds in mutual caring'. Love and 'equal dignity' clearly belong in CS.<sup>2</sup> Which area is characterised by which type of relation and how a relation is implemented does, however, vary from culture to culture. This gives a quite different picture of stages in history than the one Lindner reads from Ury. Fiske derived the basics of RTM from two years of anthropological study among the Moose in Burkina Faso. Unlike Ury's conclusion about the transition to agriculture leading to dominance of hierarchical relations, Fiske was struck by the fact that among the Moose orientation to the land was dominated by communal sharing, 'land is a commons for all to use freely' (1991, p. 693)

RTM has a broader view of AR than Lindner's emphasis on 'coercive hierarchies' (which she treats as synonymous with 'ranked honour'). While the emphasis on power is the same, in RTM AR can also imply that the 'higher' provides protection and guidance, and the 'lower' may then look up to the 'superior ones'. Hopefully this is a prominent feature in relations between parents and children!<sup>3</sup> The primary dimensions that societal

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<sup>1</sup> A useful introduction to the theory, overview of research, and a bibliography is found on [www.rtm.ucla.edu](http://www.rtm.ucla.edu).

<sup>2</sup> While both Lindner and Fiske emphasise a core of communality, Lindner is more explicit in also emphasizing diversity which is compatible with communality. This may point to extension of RTM.

<sup>3</sup> A good relation should also 'allow' children to mock their parents if the parents come to be in a somewhat humiliated situation. Once, when my son Jon was 8-9 years old and followed me to my office I found myself in the embarrassing situation of having spilled thick juice on papers in my briefcase and on

groups are perceived along are 'warmth' and 'competence' – see Alan Page Fiske & Susan T. Fiske (2007). Being 'high' on both these dimensions clearly provides for protection and guidance, while coldness and incompetence in 'leaders' will spell disaster for underlings (Mugabe in Zimbabwe, current military junta in Burma).

A basic difference between Lindner's view and RTM is that the latter provides for far greater flexibility. Relations may change from moment to moment. In an investigation of the climate in the Norwegian labour union<sup>4</sup> an employee commented on the leadership style of the previous CEO. 'During breakfast he bit my head off, but then he came and put it back again during lunch'. This spells humiliation followed by restoration of dignity! Lindner treats humiliation and respect for dignity as two incompatible frameworks, like left vs. right driving. For milder forms of humiliation, as here, it may be possible to think in terms of more complex forms of traffic: Cars weaving in and out of different lanes in complex patterns under the aegis of a complex choreography.

Jon told me that at the research center where he works today they have invented a tradition of 'friendly bullying' when someone does something stupid. He was, however, careful to point out that there is an underlying ethos of mutual respect. The reaction is stronger the more glaring the stupidity, cf. proportionality in MP, and no one is consistently bullied (a form of EM, turn taking).

An important function of humour is to 'peg down' the haughty, pointing out weaknesses of the 'top dogs'. Needless to say there is a fine line dividing harmful irony and benign 'humiliations'. The latter may have as a by-product greater respect for the top dog (if they show that they 'can take it'). Compassion mixed with Schadenfreude?

There is a paradoxical feature of the examples here given. They both point to humiliation (e.g 'biting of the head', a derogative laugh) and denying it (putting the head back on, an underlying respect). This brings to mind Gregory Bateson (1955) (p. 51) and his analysis of play. For 'the playful bite' the 'bite' implies 'intention to hurt' but 'playful' denies such an intention.) The important point here is that:

Without these paradoxes the evolution of communication would be at an end. Life would be an endless interchange of stylized messages, a game with rigid rules, unrelieved by change or humour. (p. 51)

I like to think of such occurrences as a kind of safety valve, basically preserving social order while at the same time mocking transgressions regardless of the 'honor' of the transgressor.

The present view of AR implies a scale marked by flexibility without fixed distances between persons. Differences vary according to the situation and may even occasionally be reversed. Such flexibility is in principle compatible with equal dignity. The subordinate may without fear 'look the powerful in the eye', knowing that she is safe from arbitrary inference in her life, see Finn Tschudi (2008).

There may be advantages for everyone by experiencing both being put down

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the floor. He was on the verge of a hearty laugh but managed to stop because he understood the seriousness of the situation for me. I checked this story with him today (about 35 years later). Ever ready to confront me with erroneous thinking, he laughingly pointed out that looking at my face might have provided a stronger cue to not laugh than just the situation.

<sup>4</sup> In 2007 the female leader had to leave her post as CEO after an alleged bullying of a subordinate. This gave rise to extensive newspaper coverage. Quotation from the newspaper Dagens Næringsliv, 13.3.2007.

(humiliated) and also putting other down (humiliating). One metaphor is to regard mild humiliation as an ‘inoculation’ which may prevent larger harmful doses from having destructive properties. Knowing that a ranking is not immutable may foster courage in fighting possibly serious abuses of power. (In social psychology ‘inoculation’ is used as a metaphor for messages which may prevent one from being persuaded by overriding ideologies.)

Finally such flexibility is of basic importance in teaching children about peace. This is an area where creativity is of basic importance since we lack good ‘recipes’. Children should thus be encouraged to ‘go beyond’ what is regarded as current wisdom, and the teacher be prepared to admit her shortcomings.

Flexibility may, however, not always serve as a sufficient ‘inoculation’ against feeling humiliated by finding oneself in a lower position. What if I have regarded my research as equivalent in value to that of a neighbouring group, and I one day find that the neighbouring group gets much larger funding since they have been declared to be a ‘center of excellence’? Perhaps I may feel being placed in a relatively lower position and thus humiliated?

One answer is – as Lindner (2006, ch. 8) has clearly has pointed out - to have many different ‘anchors’ for ones identity, and thus no excessively strong tie to any specific ranking. This may be called living in a basically multidimensional world.

There is, however, a large literature pointing to the difficulty of such multidimensionality. All societies are marked by inequality, for instance as measured by the amount of money available to the 10% richest compared to the 10% poorest. Richard G. Wilkinson (2005)<sup>5</sup> convincingly shows that the ones at the bottom of the scale have shorter, and more unhappy lives which relatively often are marked by serious illnesses.<sup>6</sup>

They live more in a one-dimensional world where about the only thing they have left is a self-respect which must then at all costs be defended in a world where daily humiliations abound. Social inequality is thus a major example of ‘structural violence’, or ‘social injustice’; a difference between the potential and the actual quality of life for the downtrodden – Johan Galtung (1969). He refers to absence of ‘direct violence’ as negative peace, and absence of structural violence as positive peace. Teaching about social inequality should thus be a major task in peace education. It is, however, less visible than direct violence and thus easier to ignore?

Hopefully these comments may serve to broaden the base for understanding ramifications of humiliation. Rankings should as far as possible be seen as flexible. Structures where power is used for guiding and protecting should be encouraged. Social injustice – structural violence – is a major political issue which has only briefly been touched here.

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<sup>5</sup> See also Richard G. Wilkinson & Kate E. Pickett (2007).

<sup>6</sup> The typical conservative answer to this is, ‘the poor are inferior and thus have less satisfying lives’ is vigorously contested by Richard G. Wilkinson & Kate E. Pickett (2007).

## **Finn Tschudi & Evelin Lindner in Conversation, 8th August 2008**

### **Tschudi: Introduction**

Lindner gives a persuasive account of the role of humiliation in permeating human suffering and the catastrophic consequences of cycles of humiliation and revenge, dubbing humiliation the 'nuclear bomb of emotions'. She contrasts 'ranked honour' - which may be used to 'justify' severe subjugation - and 'equal dignity' which opens for peaceful dialogue when there are conflicting interests. While agreeing to the basic tenets of her analysis, the present rejoinder points to incompleteness of her analysis. First, 'Relational Theory Model', RTM<sup>7</sup> may open for a benign picture of some forms of mild humiliation (not discussed by Lindner) and a more nuanced picture of ranked honour. Second, social inequality which is largely equal to 'structural violence', is briefly considered.

### **Lindner: Response to Tschudi's Introduction (8th August 2008)**

May I begin by thanking Finn Tschudi for his great and fascinating review. I am deeply thankful that he so kindly invested his time and energy. I am not interested in one-sided monologues; on the contrary, I cherish indulging in intellectual exchange. And this is a wonderfully stimulating discourse, which I treasure.

I deeply appreciate Finn Tschudi's thoughts and thank him for 'forcing' me to clarify my stance. I know him not only as an exceptionally sharp-thinking and remarkably courageous and open-minded scholar, but also a profoundly humane human being, always engaged in deep intellectual inquiry and placing insight first, never narrow ego-consideration. May I take this opportunity and thank Finn Tschudi for his exceptional way of being-in-this-world, which I value profoundly.

Let me attempt to explain my stance in my responses to Tschudi's excellent reflections in an interview style, inserting my thoughts in between his reflections further down. To my view, my work cross-cuts his reflections in many ways, and the discussion is perhaps best characterised as one of misunderstanding, or of talking passed each other, or of speaking at different levels of analysis.

#### *The most fundamental problem: The scope of analysis*

Research usually focuses on the narrow confines of their topics (as to research on emotion, for example, this would be the study of affect, feeling, emotion, script, character, and personality), while larger cultural contexts and an analysis of historic periods in human history are less emphasised. Dialogue with other academic fields and other cultural realms is not easy to achieve even in today's increasingly connected world.

I remember Johan Galtung once discussing why there are so very few peace scholars

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<sup>7</sup> A useful introduction to the theory, overview of research, and a bibliography is found on [www.rtm.ucla.edu](http://www.rtm.ucla.edu).

around in the world.<sup>8</sup> The reason, he commented, was that only very few peace advocates live truly globally (as Galtung does) – most are bound to local contexts not least through such profane circumstances as having to pay back a mortgage – and this contrasts with those well-financed and well-travelled Pentagon experts who use the entire world as their basis for analysis and strategising. In other words, the lens of the average peace advocate is too narrow, both with respect to geopolitics and historical backdrop, to outweigh those who engage in traditional power politics.

I have lived as a global citizen for more than thirty years and have acquired an understanding of many cultural realms (I achieved this not least by sacrificing having a family and house to pay for). I think that my sacrifice has indeed provided me with a unique range of perspectives on the human condition. I paint a broad picture that includes large-scale historical and transcultural dimensions. In my work, the usual approach is inversed: the bird's eye view on larger cultural contexts as they were shaped throughout human history is used as lens to understand topics such as emotions and conflict. This is not to deny the importance of research on, for example, affect, feeling, emotion, script, character, and personality, but to expand it.

I am born into a displaced family, who suffered from an acute sense of non-belonging ('Here, where we are, we are not at home, but there is no home for us to go to'), who in addition struggled to get by with a minimum of resources. I shared my family's sharp and overwhelming sense of traumatic exclusion. Later in my life, by becoming a global citizen, I succeeded in creating an identity of inclusion for myself. By doing so, I have not just 'studied' one or two 'cultures', but lived in many, and made them my own. In this way my biography has provided me with a standpoint, or a range of standpoints, that few share.

In contrast, not only are many scholars' standpoints around the world more local, they usually have also more privileged backgrounds than mine. All these differences are nobody's 'fault', of course, they are merely a consequence of historical events that touch people's lives in different ways. In my case, my distressing family background and the consequences I drew, have taught me a perspective, or a range of perspectives, on the human condition that is broader than the mainstream academic horizon.

### *Two Western misperceptions*

Let me briefly reflect on how, to me, Western scholars see the world. Usually they find themselves in a very specific context, a context that is informed by human rights and its core ideal of equality in dignity for all, at least as official normative frame. In addition, particularly in some parts of Europe, intellectual inquiry enjoys considerable recognition for its own sake (at least where Anglo-Saxon emphasis of monetary utility has not undermined this orientation<sup>9</sup>).

As a result, Western scholars, academics in continental Europe in particular, are rather unfamiliar with the harshness of experiences flowing from normative frames of coercive inequality in dignity (be it expressed overtly or covertly), and thus they are shielded from

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<sup>8</sup> Johan Galtung in a personal conversation at the Higher Education for Peace Conference, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> May 2000, Tromsø, Norway.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008c).

an adequate understanding of the degree of pain that can flow from the systemic domination, a kind of pain that the majority of humankind knows only too well. This, from the point of view of my global experience, causes many Westerners (and sometimes also non-Westerners who wish to outdo their former colonizers) to fall for certain errors or misperceptions. Let me name two such misperceptions here: First, Many European academics tend to overlook the severity of the suffering that occurs in blatantly coercive hierarchies (because they are shielded from it), and this leads them to fail to *stand up* appropriately (see Ervin Staub's call on people to stand *up* and not *by* in times of atrocities<sup>10</sup>). Second, many academics from continental Europe have a propensity to underestimate the cultural and social remnants of past domination in their own psyches and behavioral scripts.

American scholars, through breathing the air of a more individualistic neo-liberal Anglo-Saxon culture, to my view, are biased in slightly different ways, however, with similar results as to which insights to seek, and what kind of action to take.

I have witnessed many situations, where Western scholars were profoundly puzzled when they were confronted with outright contempt for their expectations to be treated as equals. They were much less prepared, by their previous experiences, to live through such situations than the average member of the majority of humankind would be. To be the underling, facing unashamed dominators, is not an experience many Western scholars have to succumb to. Western professors expect respect, and most often receive it. They seldom venture into contexts where intellectuals are treated either as ridiculous contenders for definitorial power, or as outright dangerous for the established oppressive elite.

One possible remedy would be to witness others' sufferings on a regular basis, for example, through media. However, even though the world of media is slowly opening up for multi-perspectives that would make such experiences more accessible to larger audiences, including Western scholars, this is not yet strong enough a trend.

Let me briefly explain this point: Watching others suffer makes their pain palpable to the witness – recent research on mirror neurons<sup>11</sup> shows how the human brain is hard-wired for connections,<sup>12</sup> and how social pain is processed like physical pain.<sup>13</sup> As a result we can feel hurt and humiliated not only on behalf of ourselves, but also on behalf of others. This is an important insight not only for peace advocates who wish to promote Mandela-like action (in my work I treat Mandela in the spirit of a Weberian *ideal-type* approach<sup>14</sup>), but also for research on global terrorism. People in far-flung places, even

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<sup>10</sup> See Ervin Staub (2003), Ervin Staub (1999).

<sup>11</sup> Vilayanur S. Ramachandran (2000).

<sup>12</sup> Amy Banks & Judith V. Jordan (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Naomi I. Eisenberger & Matthew D. Lieberman (2005), p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> I use Weber's third kind of *ideal type* when I focus on Mandela's core constructive strategies, which are not minimized by otherwise possibly valid criticisms. Please read about ideal types in Coser, 'Weber's three kinds of *ideal types* are distinguished by their levels of abstraction. First are the *ideal types* rooted in historical particularities, such as the "western city", "the Protestant Ethic", or "modern capitalism", which refer to phenomena that appear only in specific historical periods and in particular cultural areas. A second kind involves abstract elements of social reality – such concepts as "bureaucracy" or "feudalism" – that may be found in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Finally, there is a third kind of *ideal type*, which Raymond Aron calls "rationalizing reconstructions of a particular kind of behavior." According to

though they are not involved first-hand, can be fired up to turn to violent reactions, and this effect can be magnified when media give access to the suffering of others.<sup>15</sup> Al Jazeera, for instance, is currently fuelling the feelings of the Arab world, and the strength of this effect is clearly visible, unfortunately not least in the form of counter-violence. Earlier illustrations were provided by the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, where the footage of Rodney King being beaten by police officers while lying on the ground became an international media sensation and a rallying point for activists in Los Angeles and around the United States. The recent Israel / Hezbollah prisoner swap is an example for how people can be shielded from the perspective of the Other – see Uri Avnery (2008) and his article ‘Different Planets’.

The still wide-spread practice of shielding one’s in-group from the experiences of the Other, to my view, is among the main culprits of the ‘misunderstandings’ that I try to unravel in my work. And this predicament includes scholars. Even though Western scholars may meet a few colleagues from the non-West in conferences or on field work trips, also they mainly live their lives within shielded environments.

If an intergalactic astronomer, who does not know planet Earth, were to come to Earth and talk to a biologist, he could deduct from the biologist’s discourse, that Earth has only one moon and one sun, and not several. The biologist would not explain this directly, but indirectly, through never mentioning several moons or suns, for example.

Through my global citizenship, without intending it, as a side-product, I have acquired a considerable bird’s eye view, like the intergalactic astronomer, while many others speak at the level of the biologist. To me, many Western scholars disclose, unwittingly, that they have a shielded Western perspective.

Insights of Western scholars are not seldom tacitly placed within a context that is informed by human rights, and this context, unwittingly, is treated as if it is already a fait accompli all over the world. This becomes apparent, for example, when ‘respect’ is mentioned as an after-thought, as in Jon’s report: ‘Jon told me that at the research center where he works today they have invented a tradition of “friendly bullying” when someone does something stupid. He was, however, careful to point out that there is an underlying ethos of mutual respect’. In this quote the human rights revolution is tacitly treated as something that has already succeeded (‘...careful to point out that there is an underlying ethos of mutual respect’), while it is precisely this success that has still to be won in the wider world.

### *Linguistic choices*

This point connects to the second ‘misperception’ mentioned earlier. Since Western scholars usually lack the gut feeling of pain that stems from coercion, they may be tempted to take words such as *humiliation* or *bullying* lightly. A person, who has undergone torture, in contrast, will hesitate to speak of ‘benign’ humiliation or bullying and will make other linguistic choices. By taking humiliation lightly, unwittingly,

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Weber, all propositions in economic theory, for example, fall into this category. They all refer to the ways in which men would behave were they actuated by purely economic motives, were they purely economic men’ – Lewis A. Coser (1977), p. 224.

<sup>15</sup> See also Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008b).



Western scholars can risk undermining the human rights movement in less privileged parts of the world, and even unintentionally ridicule the efforts of human rights defenders who put their lives on line.

I believe that we ought to refrain from taking humiliation lightly. Let me explain.

Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss developed the notion of the *depth of intention*, the *depth of questioning*, or *deepness of answers*. Arne Naess (1978) writes, ‘our depth of intention improves only slowly over years of study. There is an abyss of depth in everything fundamental’ (p. 143). Warwick Fox (1992), in his paper ‘Intellectual Origins of the “Depth” Theme in the Philosophy of Arne Næss’, explains: ‘The extent to which a person discriminates along a chain of precizations (and, therefore, in a particular direction of interpretation) is a measure of their depth of intention, that is, the depth to which that person can claim to have understood the intended meaning of the expression’ (p. 5). Greater depth means continuing to ask questions at the point at which others stop asking.<sup>16</sup>

Let me begin by asking why in human rights based contexts, where equality in dignity for every human being is emphasised, many make very specific linguistic choices. For example, many replace the term *mankind* with the word *humankind*. Why? Those who do this, wish to highlight that men alone ought not represent all humans. Those, who make such linguistic choices, deem the traditional ranking of men over the rest to be illegitimate, and they believe that this ranking ought to be undone, also linguistically.

In other words, human rights drive linguistic choices, and the term *humankind* is but one example among many. Even though the words *mankind* and *humankind* are used as equivalent terms by many, those who have applied a greater *depth of questioning* (Næss) in their quest to apply human rights also linguistically, object. For them, the term *mankind* is indicative of an illegitimate conceptualisation of the world, illegitimate viewed from within normative frame of human rights.

The same argument applies also to linguistic choices with respect to the word *humiliation*. Humility is central in human rights based contexts and *humbling* is a way to achieve humility. For many, *mild humiliation* and *humbling* may seem similar, however, I would recommend to take the historic shift seriously that transformed the meaning of the word *humiliation* in 1757 (in the English language, but not restricted to the English language): ‘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’ we learn from William Ian Miller (1993) (p. 175, italics in original).

This shift documents that in an emerging human rights context, the term *humiliation* is reserved for the illegitimate lowering of a person’s worthiness that violates the ideal of equality in dignity, while *humbling* describes kinds of lowering that address arrogance and transforms it into humility.

In other words, in my work, I regard the phenomenon that Tschudi labels as ‘mild humiliation’ as central and discuss it widely, however, I term it as *humbling*, be it through humour or as benevolent guidance, or any other way of erecting rankings that do not touch the inner core essence of a persons worthiness and value.

Again, I recommend taking it seriously that the meaning of the word *humiliation*

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<sup>16</sup> Warwick Fox (1990), chapters 4 and 5.

changed, as it did in the English language in 1757. I suggest we refrain from conceptualising humiliation as a variant of shame, and that we abstain from advocating 'mild humiliation' as possible prosocial intervention. In my work, I engage in linguistic engineering when I write *humankind* instead of *mankind*, because I wish to include all humans, not only men. Likewise, I suggest that *humbling* and *humility*, in a human rights context, ought not be labelled *humiliation*, even not *mild humiliation*, since also 'mild violation' of dignity remains violation. To me, in a human rights context, there is no 'mild humiliation,' there is only humbling, as much as there is no mankind (except when I intend to speak about men only).

And such linguistic choices are not trivial; they touch the very core of human rights. Humbling and humility are important terms that we can use to highlight the crucial significance of humility in human rights contexts, while we can apply the term humiliation to indicate violation. The term 'mild humiliation,' with the word 'mild' indicating that this practice could serve as a prosocial application of humiliation, humiliates any person who subscribes to human rights as much as the term mankind humiliates women when all humans are addressed and not just men. The prosocial lowering of another person, in a human rights context, must be labelled *humbling*. Therefore, as much as I do not use the word mankind, I never use terms such as mild humiliation, however, this does not mean that I neglect, or leave un-discussed, the process of humbling, on the contrary. The process of humbling is central to human rights: they can only thrive in an atmosphere of humility.

Finn Tschudi is a deeply humble person, and I know that he intensely subscribes to humility. I have nothing but profound respect for him. I would like to respectfully invite him (and every peace student and educator) to make linguistic choices that honour these virtues and give linguistic congruence to human rights advocacy.

### **Tschudi: RTM**

RTM was introduced by Alan Page Fiske (1991). He postulates four elementary and universal forms of social relations. 1) Communal sharing, CS, where people are in some respects equivalent, and treat each other as 'all the same'. 2) Authority ranking, AR, involves asymmetry among people who are linearly ordered along some hierarchical social dimension. 3) Equality matching, EM, implies a model of balance as in turn taking (e.g. a car pool or a babysitting cooperative). 4) Market pricing, MP, builds on a model of proportionality, and relationships are organised with respect to ratios and rates.

CS derives from the universal 'need to belong', and has the strongest emotional appeal. Here love, care and intimacy motivation prosper. Lindner defines love 'as the meeting of equal hearts and minds in mutual caring'. Love and 'equal dignity' clearly belong in CS.<sup>17</sup> Which area is characterised by which type of relation and how a relation is implemented does, however, vary from culture to culture. This gives a quite different picture of stages in history than the one Lindner reads from Ury. Fiske derived the basics of RTM from two years of anthropological study among the Moose in Burkina Faso. Unlike Ury's conclusion about the transition to agriculture leading to dominance of

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hierarchical relations, Fiske was struck by the fact that among the Moose orientation to the land was dominated by communal sharing, 'land is a commons for all to use freely' (1991, p. 693).

### **Lindner: RTM**

May I begin with expression my profound appreciation for the important work carried out by Susan Fiske, and Alan Page Fiske. Their work is extremely interesting and valuable.

The contemporary discourse that we observe around the world in the wake of the human rights movement, a discourse that leads to hot conflict and even genocide, is, however, not the main focus of Fiske's conceptualisations. Fiske's approach is broad because it does not address the very fault-lines that are significant for discussion of the conflicts alluded to above.

This is not a problem; it is not a criticism of Fiske's conceptualisation. More even, Fiske's approach can serve as an important starting point for a focus on conflict and/or human rights – it can be differentiated and scrutinised at levels of analysis that relate to conflict and/or human rights.

This differentiation is what I engage in, and it is crucial if we want to address conflict and reconciliation at the current point in history. Broadness, though very valuable where it is at its place, is no virtue in itself, and not everywhere. At some junctures, it is important to differentiate and be less broad; structural violence, as Tschudi discusses it further down, is such a juncture. Evidence of the presence or absence of structural violence needs to be differentiated through detailed inquiry in order to gauge positive peace. This is not aided by remaining within the general category of *violence* as unit of analysis just because it is broader. The crucial inquiry lies at a less general level of *structural violence*.

May I now respond to the following paragraph: 'Fiske derived the basics of RTM from two years of anthropological study among the Moose in Burkina Faso. Unlike Ury's conclusion about the transition to agriculture leading to dominance of hierarchical relations, Fiske was struck by the fact that among the Moose orientation to the land was dominated by communal sharing, "land is a commons for all to use freely" (1991, p. 693)'.

I absolutely agree that CS serves a universal 'need to belong', and, as Tschudi writes, has the strongest emotional appeal. Yes, 'Here love, care and intimacy motivation can prosper'.

As to the Moose, for whom 'land is a commons for all to use freely', communal sharing of land and resources among members of in-groups can indeed be observed in many parts of the world and throughout all of human history. Lee D. Ross explained<sup>18</sup>:

During Medieval Ages, to give only one example, people had common grazing grounds. It was beneficial for everybody to have increasingly more animals – yet, at a certain point, there was not enough grazing ground for all anymore.

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<sup>18</sup> During the Sommerakademie Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, 11th - 16th July 1999, in Clemenswerth, Germany.

Whenever this happens in similarly structured situations, the commons typically get exhausted and people may agree to have fewer animals.

At that juncture, however, a 'defector' will always win: he lets one more cow graze on the communal land, and gets the benefit, while the others share the cost – all other cows get a little less fat. The defining property of the tragedy of the commons is that the individual commoner is always better off having one more animal.

And history does unfold like that everywhere, in the USA, in Europe and elsewhere: Some people restrain themselves, some are greedy, some people will want to co-operate, if the others also co-operate, but not if others defect. As soon as some people get less through restraining themselves, the pressure to just have one more cow increases.

This pressure mounts when newcomers arrive. In the USA people might have agreed that everybody has as many animals as the grandfather, but what about the newcomer who has nothing? After a while all will defect and destroy the resources.

This is the situation of the earth spaceship with all its resources, and the commons' dilemma models it.

Communal sharing is a well-functioning solution that has been successfully used within in-groups through-out history. And communal sharing presents itself as key model for the sharing of the Earth's resources among all of humankind. However, it is vulnerable, both from within, but particularly from outside. I do not agree with Garrett Hardin (1968), and the conclusion many economists drew from his article 'The Tragedy of the Commons', namely that the potential vulnerabilities of this approach make it unusable. Still, communal sharing can only succeed if its vulnerabilities are understood and adequately addressed.

This line of thought is in line with William Ury's view on history (whose core elements are widely accepted by the academic community): communal sharing, a benign solution for in-groups, always risks being destroyed from outside in the malign large-scale context that characterised the past ten thousand years, leading to Ross's diagnosis of today's state of affairs: 'This is the situation of the earth spaceship with all its resources, and the commons' dilemma models it'. Globalisation, however, entails a unique change for humankind to succeed with global communal sharing in ways unseen before. For example, the more humankind succeeds to capitalise on its coming-together by building global institutions that include all, the fewer newcomers are to be expected who could undermine global communal sharing.

However, even when communal sharing succeeds, it can comprise different versions of love, one where love, care and intimacy motivation can prosper, and another where this is not the case.

In my work, I highlight two core definitions of love (again, in the spirit of the Weberian ideal-type approach explained earlier), one that places love within a context of submission/domination (usually the male head of a family dominates lower males and females), and the other within human rights contexts (hearts and minds meet in mutual caring and respect for equality in dignity or non-domination). Both definitions of love, the one placed within a context of 'equal dignity' and the other within a context of 'unequal dignity' can be part of communal sharing.

I lived and worked for seven years in Egypt (and spent much time also in other parts of Africa, and in Asia), and communal sharing was widely practised among men, and among women. For example, I frequently observed how the women in Egyptian villages shared. However, and this is my point, they still were clearly subservient to their men. Men would not share with their women. For example, typically, men would eat first, sharing among men, but not with women, who would go to the table only when their men had finished. Women would eat the leftovers. In other words, communal sharing can co-occur with *authority ranking* (AR).

Tschudi writes: ‘Which area is characterised by which type of relation and how a relation is implemented does, however, vary from culture to culture. This gives a quite different picture of stages in history than the one Lindner reads from Ury’.

To my view, cultural adaptations can be differentiated following, for example, the Weberian ideal-type approach. Ury’s differences represent the first level of abstraction (a), and are not undercut by Fiske’s conceptualisations that could be placed, among others, at the second level (b). Both views are compatible, each playing out on different levels of analysis.

The ‘dominator model’, for example, as Riane Eisler calls it, permeates, underlies, and sometimes cross-cuts cultural differences that can be conceptualised at other levels of analysis. In *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, Riane Eisler (1987) describes how otherwise widely divergent societies, from the Samurai of Japan to the Aztecs of Meso-America, were characterised by very similar hierarchies of domination and a rigidly male-dominant ‘strong-man’ rule, both in the family and state. Hierarchies of domination were maintained by a high degree of institutionalised (socially-accepted) violence, ranging from wife and child beating within the family to aggressive warfare on the larger tribal or national level.

### **Tschudi: Authority Ranking, AR**

RTM has a broader view of AR than Lindner’s emphasis on ‘coercive hierarchies’ (which she treats as synonymous with ‘ranked honour’). While the emphasis on power is the same, in RTM AR can also imply that the ‘higher’ provides protection and guidance, and the ‘lower’ may then look up to the ‘superior ones’. Hopefully this is a prominent feature in relations between parents and children!<sup>19</sup> The primary dimensions that societal groups are perceived along are ‘warmth’ and ‘competence’ – see Alan Page Fiske & Susan T. Fiske (2007). Being ‘high’ on both these dimensions clearly provides for protection and guidance, while coldness and incompetence in ‘leaders’ will spell disaster for underlings (Mugabe in Zimbabwe, current military junta in Burma).

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<sup>19</sup> A good relation should also ‘allow’ children to mock their parents if the parents come to be in a somewhat humiliated situation. Once, when my son Jon was 8-9 years old and followed me to my office I found myself in the embarrassing situation of having spilled thick juice on papers in my briefcase and on the floor. He was on the verge of a hearty laugh but managed to stop because he understood the seriousness of the situation for me. I checked this story with him today (about 35 years later). Ever ready to confront me with erroneous thinking, he laughingly pointed out that looking at my face might have provided a stronger cue to not laugh than just the situation.

### **Lindner: Authority Ranking, AR**

*Authority ranking*, if used unqualified, is a term that entails two irreconcilable core meanings (using Weber's ideal-type approach), similar to terms such as peace, reconciliation, conflict resolution, love, communal sharing, and so forth, namely *authority ranking that is coercive*, and *authority ranking that is not coercive*. As explained earlier, certain linguistic choices are necessary to implement the human rights ideals of equality in dignity, for the sake of normative clarity, even though this may seem to 'narrow' the view in some ways.

In *Making Enemies*, I write - Evelin Gerda Lindner (2006) (p. 15):

I prefer to use the term vertical ranking of human worth and value, rather than inequality, hierarchy, or stratification. The significant point for my discussion is not the absence or presence of hierarchy, inequality, or stratification, but the ranking of human worth. Hierarchy, inequality, and stratification can very well coexist with the absence of ranking. Robert W. Fuller (2003) describes this in his book *Somebodies and Nobodies*. According to Fuller, humiliation is not the use of rank, but the abuse of rank. The pilot in a plane or the captain of a ship are masters over their passengers when in the sky or at high sea. Clear hierarchy and stark inequality characterise these situations. The pilot and the captain, however, need not look down on their passengers as lesser beings.

In other words, using concepts such as hierarchy, inequality, or stratification, could be somewhat misleading, inviting objections such as, 'There have always been differences between people! Human beings have never been the same and never will be! Are you a dreamer who believes that we could or should all be the same? This is not only impossible, but boring!' Such objections are irrelevant to the discussion of this book and represent a grave miscomprehension of its focus, which is whether human worth and value can be ranked. Diversity and difference can, without a problem, go with sameness of value and worth; there is no automatic mechanism that necessarily links diversity and difference to rankings. The vertical scale of human worth is conceptually independent of hierarchy, inequality, or stratification.

Let me repeat here that I would recommend striving for the implementation of the ideal of equality in dignity by making linguistic choices, and, if needed, also creating new language.

Clearly, Tschudi makes a crucial point when he calls for protection and guidance to be core ingredients of social relations characterised by equality in dignity. Parents, like pilots, can provide protection and guidance in ways that nurture and empower.

The interesting question, however, is not only whether authority ranking exists, and what it may entail, but also how we conceptualise the two profoundly irreconcilable applications that this term entails: one application that violates equality in dignity, and the other that does not. Would it not be preferable to create new linguistic tools to produce clearer differentiations? Is it not crucial to discuss these differences?

Interestingly, these differences are at the core of many contemporary conflicts. For example, there is a Tutsi view of Rwandan history, where Tutsi rule is regarded as benevolent patronage that provided protection and guidance to Hutu underlings, who, in

turn, from the Tutsi point of view, ought to be thankful and not hateful. In contrast, the Hutu liberation movement was powered precisely by a rejection of this kind of 'Tutsi-inspired' definition of history.

Similarly, a husband who believes that *domestic chastisement* is a benevolent expression of loving guidance and protection, risks being re-conceptualised as perpetrator of *domestic violence* in human rights contexts.

This does not mean that guidance and protection are negated, it means that the ways guidance and protection are defined is profoundly re-defined in human rights contexts. Guidance and protection is no longer defined as it was before, but in starkly differing ways.

Let me repeat my appreciation for both Fiskes's important work, including the AR concept. I merely differentiate this concept at another level of analysis, and this differentiation is crucial if we want to address conflict and reconciliation at the current point in history.

Fiske defines AR relationships as being based on perceptions of legitimate asymmetries, not as inherently exploitative coercive power relationships. My focus, in my work, is the definition of legitimacy: the very same asymmetry that is deemed legitimate in contexts of ranked honour is typically deemed to be illegitimate in human rights based contexts. In other words, there are two core versions of 'legitimate' ARs around, each of which is regarded as illegitimate from the other camp. A woman's subservience in front of her husband's dominance, for example, can be either 'legitimate' or 'illegitimate', depending on the larger normative context. Domestic chastisement is legitimate, however, the very same behaviour can also be illegitimate, then labelled domestic violence. If we follow Fiske, and use the label of 'AR' only on those rankings that are perceived as legitimate, then a certain set of social dynamics could be labelled as AR in a ranked honour societies, as compared to human rights contexts, where a much smaller set of phenomena would fit into the AR category. Domestic chastisement would be part of AR, domestic violence would fall out of this category.

To discuss the work done by Alan and Susan Fiske in these ways applies their work in a certain interesting way. It is not a refutation, nor a criticism, nor a replacement of their work, but a useful application.

### **Tschudi: Flexibility**

A basic difference between Lindner's view and RTM is that the latter provides for far greater flexibility. Relations may change from moment to moment. In an investigation of the climate in the Norwegian labour union<sup>20</sup> an employee commented on the leadership style of the previous CEO. 'During breakfast he bit my head off, but then he came and put it back again during lunch'. This spells humiliation followed by restoration of dignity! Lindner treats humiliation and respect for dignity as two incompatible frameworks, like left vs. right driving. For milder forms of humiliation, as here, it may be possible to think in terms of more complex forms of traffic: Cars weaving in and out of

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<sup>20</sup> In 2007 the female leader had to leave her post as CEO after an alleged bullying of a subordinate. This gave rise to extensive newspaper coverage. Quotation from the newspaper Dagens Næringsliv, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

different lanes in complex patterns under the aegis of a complex choreography.

### **Lindner: Flexibility**

May I begin by responding to the following comment by the employee as quoted by Tschudi: 'During breakfast he bit my head off, but then he came and put it back again during lunch'. Tschudi concludes that 'this spells humiliation followed by restoration of dignity'.

I would recommend asking the participants deeper questions, for example: What did the CEO intend? What exactly was felt by the employee?

To repeat what I said earlier, there are two core frames into which this story could be inscribed: First, in a frame that does not accept the ideal of equality in dignity for all (and I label this frame one of 'ranked honour'), a CEO looks down on employees and regards them as lesser beings. As long as employees subscribe to the same fame, they are likely to accept this treatment as 'normal'. However, and this is the second frame, an employee who wishes to define the context as one of human rights, will reject being treated condescendingly. Such an employee will scrutinise his or her CEO's psychological make-up in much more depth and will try to find out whether the CEO's behaviour flows from his or her deep respect for the employee's equality in dignity, or not. If yes, the employee will interpret the CEO's behaviour as an attempt to humble, protect and guide the employee, if not, the same behaviour can lead to deep sense of violation in the employee.

Incidentally, these questions, again, can be found at the core of contemporary intractable conflicts, locally and globally. Earlier, the example of Rwanda was presented, or the example of a husband who believes in the legitimacy of domestic chastisement. The list of examples can be expanded: In South Africa, for instance, not few among the white elite defended Apartheid as an expression of benevolent patronage. Or, Israel's official position is that Israel acts as benevolent patron for Palestinians, and that the lack of due understanding and gratitude on the Palestinian side is to be blamed for most occurring problems. Some Palestinians accept that Israeli intentions may be 'good', with only their implementation sometimes being 'misguided', while others object and attribute to Israeli political strategy a profound denial of the ideal of equality in dignity of Jews and Palestinians. And vice versa. Or, the United States frame their intervention in Iraq as benevolent protection, while some Iraqis doubt. And vice versa.

Again, to my view, Fiske's conceptualisations are extremely important and useful. However, with respect to the 'flexibility' Tschudi refers to, flexibility is not a gain at the level of analysis where we aim at highlighting the very fault-lines at which hot discussions are triggered.

I would recommend engaging in more depth of questioning, the depth that human rights invite.

### **Lindner: Right-hand Driving and Left-hand Driving**

May I now react to the following paragraph: 'Lindner treats humiliation and respect for dignity as two incompatible frameworks, like left vs. right driving. For milder forms of humiliation, as here, it may be possible to think in terms of more complex forms of



traffic: Cars weaving in and out of different lanes in complex patterns under the aegis of a complex choreography’.

Let me use the example of so-called ‘honour killings,’<sup>21</sup> whose starkness and complexity may illustrate the numerous layers of humiliation and how they are defined in honour (as opposed to equal dignity) contexts: In an immigrant family to Britain, or to other Western countries, a girl who tries to live according to Western customs might risk being killed by her family to prevent the humiliation of family honor. The British police, however, will define such killings as crimes, not as prosocial cures for humiliation. Human rights defenders will stipulate that killing such a girl is equivalent to compounding humiliation, not remedying it. The immigrant family, in turn, might regard Western attitudes towards them as condescending, a humiliation of their cultural beliefs.<sup>22</sup>

The starkness of honour killings illuminates the traffic metaphor, insofar as the ranking and unranking of human worthiness is as irreconcilable as right-hand driving is with left-hand driving: one side calls for the death of the girl, the other for her life.

Asking a girl who is in fear of being killed to think in terms of complexity easily compounds humiliation. She needs very clear support and protection, as much as traffic needs clear support and protection.

Complexity can and must be nurtured at other levels, not at the core normative level.

A person who drives in the wrong lane on a highway, on confrontation course with the rest, for example, risks everybody’s lives and cannot be tackled with arguments of complexity. Police has to step in with a clear mandate. A traffic system that indiscriminately allows for complexity cannot have highways. Highways, by definition, reduce complexity. Its rules are crucial and not to be taken lightly: a so-called ‘ghost-driver’ on the motorway risks not only his own life; arguments of complexity will not ameliorate his fate.

However, complexity is present when we regard all traffic arrangements, from highways to cross-country training areas. Each solution requires a different mix of complexity and limitation of complexity, and only the entire system embraces the entire range of theoretically possible complexity.

During my seven years of working as a clinical psychologist and counsellor in Egypt, I have had the privilege of being able to study in depth the different layers of moral

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<sup>21</sup> Some of my Arab friends feel that the mere use of the case of honour killings in my work betrays a humiliating mindset on my part. To their view, I am fanning anti-Arab feelings when I mention honour killings, depicting the West as ‘good’ and the ‘East’ is ‘primitive’ and ‘evil’. Particularly my Egyptian friends feel bitterly disappointed by me, their honour and dignity soiled. In my book *Emotion and Conflict*, I explain why I use this example, and in which ways my Egyptian friends deeply misinterpret my intentions. Insulting them is certainly not my motivation, even not unwittingly – please see Chapter 5 in Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008a).

<sup>22</sup> Ayse Onal (2008). According to Stephanie Stephanie Nebehay (2000), honour killings have been reported in Bangladesh, Britain, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Morocco, Sweden, Turkey and Uganda. Nadera Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2000), prefers to use the term *femicide*; see literature she uses in her work, such as Lama Abu-Odeh (2000), Sana’a Al-Khayyat (1990), Nancy Baker, Peter Gregware, & Margery Cassidy (1999), Kenneth Polk (1994), Jill Radford & Diana Russel (Eds.) (1992), Jalna Hanmer, Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly, & Jill Radford (Eds.) (1996), and Karen Stout (1992). One of the most empathic presentations of the moral and emotional dilemmas entailed in honour killings is in *Tatort*, ARD, *Schatten der Angst*, 6. April 2008. *Tatort* (“Crime Scene”) is a long-running German/Austrian, former Swiss, crime television series.

judgement entailed in traditions such as so-called honour killings, layers that range from very clear-cut ones ('the girl has to be killed!'), to less clear-cut and more complex layers ('Are there pragmatic alternatives to 'cheat' on the clear-cut normative verdict?').

A human rights advocate who wishes to be true to her conviction, has to oppose the core verdict of 'the girl must die' equally clear-cut, with 'the girl must NOT die'. The human rights stance, though it must be carried out with respect for others, needs to be unambiguous at its normative core; otherwise it loses its credibility. Retreating to pragmatics out of cowardice or wrongly understood respect for others' values, or positing complexity at the wrong level, exposes the girl to death.

Female genital cutting is another example. Even if carried out in a hospital, under antiseptic circumstances, without any danger for the girl's life, female genital cutting is not an acceptable practice for a human rights defender. Cleaner cutting does not make this practice all right. The normative stance of a human rights advocate needs to be clear at a deep level.

Notably, however, this clarity, in order to satisfy the spirit of human rights, must not be misunderstood as a licence for arrogance. Humble and respectful clarity is what human rights require.

Let me conclude with what I wrote earlier: To my view cultural adaptations can be differentiated following, for example, the Weberian ideal-type approach. Ury's differences represent the first level of abstraction, and are not undercut by Fiske's conceptualisations that could be placed, among others, at the second level. Both views are compatible, each playing out on different levels of analysis.

William Ury's depiction of history, to me, incidentally, offers a good path to combining normative clarity with respectful humility. Ury's work fulfils my requirements of a 'Trojan horse' (meaning that a familiar outer shape covers up for radical upheaval flowing from within) for the message that the human rights revolution is two-tiered: not just dominators must be brought down (a), also systems and methods of domination must be left behind (b). This means that people, who engage in honour killings, or female genital cutting, or other similar practices, deserve respect and dignified non-humiliating treatment. These traditions evolved in contexts that represented adaptations to large-scale conditions that, unfortunately, had malign side-effects, which, fortunately, nowadays, can be surpassed.

The large-scale conditions that humankind had to adapt to during its history are, among others, characterised by sudden scarcity of resources in relation to the size of the human population. The inner dynamics of such adaptations are usually similar. Systemic scarcity that is caused by human action, when it first occurs, is typically followed (after a period of denial and misguided finger-pointing) by large-scale adaptations which are accompanied by unintended consequences, which can be malign or benign. Today, global warming announces how unpolluted air is not abundant but finite, a contemporary 'follow-up' of the first 'wake-up call' ten thousand years ago, when *circumscription* revealed that there was a problem with the surface of planet Earth, namely that it is finite and does not provide limitless untouched valleys of abundance.

The past ten thousand years, with their fear of attack (the *security dilemma*), the use of land for agriculture, the instrumentalisation of human beings as 'tools' in the hands of master elites, speak of adaptations which carried a host of unintended malign side-effects.

These were 'bad news'. The 'good news' today are that this can be undone if humankind swiftly enough creates a sense of joint stewardship for their habitat, and unlocks its potential of creativity to meet the new circumstances of ever more scarcity in constructive ways.

The chances are better than ever, in the face of problems that are graver than ever. The coming-together of humankind, its *ingathering*, offers a chance to create a historically unprecedented kind of well-planned and well-calibrated 'common grazing ground' for all, where Unity in Diversity can thrive, protected against free-riders. This outlook is unprecedented because the chance for an ingathering of *all* of humankind into *one single* family is historically entirely novel.

### **Tschudi: Friendly bullying**

Jon told me that at the research center where he works today they have invented a tradition of 'friendly bullying' when someone does something stupid. He was, however, careful to point out that there is an underlying ethos of mutual respect. The reaction is stronger the more glaring the stupidity, cf. proportionality in MP, and no one is consistently bullied (a form of EM, turn taking).

An important function of humour is to 'peg down' the haughty, pointing out weaknesses of the 'top dogs'. Needless to say there is a fine line dividing harmful irony and benign 'humiliations'. The latter may have as a by-product greater respect for the top dog (if they show that they 'can take it'). Compassion mixed with Schadenfreude?

There is a paradoxical feature of the examples here given. They both point to humiliation (e.g 'biting of the head', a derogative laugh) and denying it (putting the head back on, an underlying respect). This brings to mind Gregory Bateson (1955) (p. 51) and his analysis of play. For 'the playful bite' the 'bite' implies 'intention to hurt' but 'playful' denies such an intention.) The important point here is that:

Without these paradoxes the evolution of communication would be at an end. Life would be an endless interchange of stylized messages, a game with rigid rules, unrelieved by change or humour. (p. 51)

I like to think of such occurrences as a kind of safety valve, basically preserving social order while at the same time mocking transgressions regardless of the 'honor' of the transgressor.

### **Lindner: Friendly bullying**

First, please see earlier my comments on 'mild humiliation'.

In line with my argument for careful linguistic choices as means to implement human rights ideals of equality in dignity, I would suggest to discontinue the use of the term 'bullying' in cases as described above by esteemed Finn Tschudi, and rather use the term 'humbling'.

Second, to humour. Indeed, to forge social relations that are imbued with respect for equality in dignity for all participants, humour is a crucial safety valve. Tschudi's story has its place in contexts where people adhere to a basic sense of mutual respect of equality in dignity.

Again, there are two core frames that need to be kept apart: In an Apartheid-like system, a system that has institutionalised the ranking of human worthiness and value, the kind of humour described by Tschudi can cost an underling his or her life. And even though humour can certainly aid the oppressed, it cannot undo oppression. And treating the suffering that is caused by such oppression as a 'joke' would present a profound violation of human rights ideals.

In other words, humour and humorous ways of humbling and creating humility need to be contextualised into broader contexts than Western culture, and differences need to be discussed, probed, highlighted, and expressed linguistically.

### **Tschudi: Reversed Rankings**

The present view of AR implies a scale marked by flexibility without fixed distances between persons. Differences vary according to the situation and may even occasionally be reversed. Such flexibility is in principle compatible with equal dignity. The subordinate may without fear 'look the powerful in the eye', knowing that she is safe from arbitrary inference in her life, see Finn Tschudi (2008).

### **Lindner: Reversed Rankings**

Indeed, in a context of human rights, where a subordinate is regarded as equal in dignity, 'the subordinate may without fear 'look the powerful in the eye', knowing that she is safe from arbitrary inference in her life', as Tschudi writes so well – please see my 'pilot of the plane' example above.

To me, AR is an important concept. However, it risks being impractical, or even unwittingly injurious, as long as AR is not qualified with respect to either 'equality in dignity' or 'inequality in dignity' as underlying frame. AR, if used unqualified, is not broad and flexible, but risks, unintentionally, to condone violations.

For a scholar who wishes to help equality in dignity to be implemented, to my view, it is of primary importance to differentiate situations where equality in dignity is respected, in contrast to situations where it is not.

The point is that hierarchies must be predicated on deep respect for equality in dignity. A system that condones the vertical scale of human value *essentialises* hierarchy, inequality, and stratification. In such a social framework, a street sweeper not only does a lowly *job*, the lowliness of the task is essentialised as the inner core of his entire being: He or she *is* a lowly *person*. Something that could very well be peripheral to this person's essence, namely the task of sweeping the street, is turned into her core definition: this person is deemed to be of lower human value and worth. This essentialisation is what we find in many, if not most, traditional societies. A street sweeper and a bank director could easily be seen as fellow human beings of equal dignity, differentiated only by their occupations. However, in traditional societies, this basically neutral difference is ranked as *lesser* and *higher*. *My Fair Lady*, the musical, illustrates how Professor Higgins regards the poor flower girl Elisa as a *lower human being*, even after she has learned *higher manners*. Her essence, in his view, is fixed in lowliness. Professor Higgins does not oppress Elisa or treat her in any way unkindly, on the contrary, yet, nothing can turn

Elisa into a human being of worthiness equal to him and his class.

I coined the term *egalisation* to highlight the centrality of equality in dignity and its conceptual independence of more peripheral rankings. Egalisation cross-cuts conceptualisations of communal life, as, for example, conceptualised by Alan Page Fiske (1991). Egalisation addresses the essence of a human's worthiness. Egalisation is conceptually independent (albeit connected in myriads of ways in practical life) from terms such as hierarchy, stratification, or oppression: Even in the absence of any oppression, egalisation may still be wanting, as the example of professor Higgins illustrates, while the example of the pilot shows that egalisation can be fully realised even in the starkest hierarchy. Egalisation is best served by the complexity and flexibility of 'Unity in Diversity' (where diversity includes all rankings that do not touch the essence of a person), rather than by rigid 'Uniformity or Division.'

### **Tschudi: Inoculation**

There may be advantages for everyone by experiencing both being put down (humiliated) and also putting other down (humiliating). One metaphor is to regard mild humiliation as an 'inoculation' which may prevent larger harmful doses from having destructive properties. Knowing that a ranking is not immutable may foster courage in fighting possibly serious abuses of power. (In social psychology 'inoculation' is used as a metaphor for messages which may prevent one from being persuaded by overriding ideologies.)

Finally such flexibility is of basic importance in teaching children about peace. This is an area where creativity is of basic importance since we lack good 'recipes'. Children should thus be encouraged to 'go beyond' what is regarded as current wisdom, and the teacher be prepared to admit her shortcomings.

### **Lindner: Inoculation**

I greatly appreciate every word esteemed Finn Tschudi is writing above. I only would replace the word 'humiliation' with the term 'humbling' to make the larger normative context linguistically salient.

Finn Tschudi explains that in social psychology *inoculation* is used as a metaphor for messages which may prevent one from being persuaded by overriding ideologies. Indeed, Tschudi makes an extremely important point. Yet, I would recommend being careful with how we 'inoculate' people.

Let me explain. Probably due to their dramatic impact, negative emotions have received much more scholarly attention than positive emotions, as report Barbara L. Fredrickson & Christine Branigan (2001) (p. 123). Negative emotions (anger, fear, and distress) have been studied in their association with destructive processes ranging from violence and war to morbidity and mortality in connection with chronic disease such as cancer, asthma and cardiovascular disease.<sup>23</sup>

Fredrickson and Branigan focus on positive emotions. They offer a theoretical

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<sup>23</sup> Tracy J. Mayne (2001), p. 361.

perspective which they call the *broaden-and-build model*. This model questions common assumptions of contemporary emotion theory,<sup>24</sup> namely that emotions must necessarily entail action tendencies and lead to physical action. Rather than action, positive emotions seem to facilitate changes in cognitive activity.

What negative emotions are to threat, positive emotions are to opportunity. Traditional action-oriented models for negative emotions indicate that negative emotions *narrow* a person's momentary thought-action repertoire, an effect that is adaptive in life-threatening situations that require quick action. In contrast, positive emotions *broaden* a person's momentary thought-action repertoire.<sup>25</sup> Joy and contentment, for example, widen the array of our thought-action repertoire, while fear and anger shrink it. Constructive coping is associated with positive emotions even under the chronic stress of care-giving and bereavement.<sup>26</sup>

Fredrickson's work relates to motivational psychology and Julius Kuhl's *theory of volitional processes*.<sup>27</sup> Kuhl and colleagues propose that two earlier discussed dualities, namely positive versus negative emotions, and intuitive-holistic versus analytic-serial processing, are interdependent and form part of an *affective-cognitive regulatory* (dialectical) *system*. Positive affects and emotions promote intuitive-holistic (right hemisphere-RH) mental strategies, while negative affects and emotions further analytic-serial (left hemisphere-LH) mental strategies.<sup>28</sup>

Negative emotions are functional in emergency situations and for effective learning. Successful conflict resolution often requires a certain amount of conceptual change for which negative emotions can be instrumental (earlier, we discussed the traps of 'blissful unawareness'). Elizabeth A Linnenbrink and Paul R. Pintrich explain that too much positive emotion may hinder effective learning. 'Under situations requiring conceptual change, positive affect may both enhance (based on the mood-and-general-knowledge structure theory) and hinder (based on the dual-process theory) cognitive processing resulting in no clear relation between positive affect and conceptual change, as was found in our studies' write Elizabeth A. Linnenbrink & Paul R. Pintrich (2004) (p. 72).

What we learn is that both negative and positive feelings can be functional and that both need to be calibrated carefully. Negative emotion must always be managed carefully first, then positive emotion is needed to avoid hasty retaliatory reactions and access a broader scope of mature responses.

In other words, should conflict experts try to induce negative affect in people in order to promote conceptual change? Would humiliating people have an inoculating effect? Linnenbrink and Pintrich recommend that we diminish positive affect when conceptual change is at stake. They do not recommend, however, enhancing negative affect.

I would suggest that we do not need to put people 27 years into prison to teach them how to become more Mandela-like, nor would one year, or one day, or one hour of prison necessarily create inoculation.

In my work, I focus on the *ability* to feel humiliated, on behalf of oneself and others,

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<sup>24</sup> Barbara L. Fredrickson & Robert Wayne Levenson (1998).

<sup>25</sup> Barbara L. Fredrickson (1998).

<sup>26</sup> Judith Tedlie Moskowitz (2001), p. 325.

<sup>27</sup> Julius Kuhl (2000); Kuhl & Julius Kuhl & Arno Fuhrmann (1998).

<sup>28</sup> Juan Pascual-Leone & Janice Johnson (2004), p. 224.

in the face of violations of dignity. This ability represents the emotional engine that can connect new awareness with *conscientisation*, which, in turn, can drive systemic change. Conscientisation has been explored as a mediator between antecedent conditions and pro-democracy movements.<sup>29</sup> ‘Non-violent movements become increasingly powerful as conscientisation becomes broadly networked’ both locally and globally.<sup>30</sup> The ability to feel humiliated is a ‘bridge’ to conscientisation, a bridge on the path to creating more unity in more diversity, thus giving life to the human rights ideal of equality in dignity for all.

Mirror neurons are important for conscientisation (see above) because they help people empathise with people who suffer. Rather than inoculating people through humiliating them, inoculation should be achieved by exposing people to the suffering that flows from humiliation, and this can be done, for example through exposure to widespread media coverage of such suffering (however, importantly, this coverage would have to transcend merely reporting pain, and promote the ‘Mandela-path’ out of humiliation, rather than what I call the ‘Hitler-path,’ or the path of terror).

Inflicting humiliation on people, so as to inoculate them, may backfire and destroy their very ability to resist overriding ideologies.

Let me expand on this point. Alice Miller (1983) explained that in the period that led up to the two World Wars, leading pedagogues regarded *breaking the will of the child* an essential task of childrearing. George Lakoff & Mark Johnson (1999) describe an underlying framework they call the *Strict Father model*, in which the father expects his commands to be obeyed and enforces his moral rules through reward and punishment. Children must not be coddled, lest they become spoiled. Through their obedience they are expected to learn the discipline and self-reliance that is necessary to meet life’s challenges.

The Strict Father model ‘tends to produce children who are dependent on the authority of others, cannot chart their own moral course very well, have less well-developed consciences, are less respectful of others. Interestingly, these children have no greater ability to resist temptations than children raised in more liberal environments. The *Strict Father model* produces what Theodor Adorno called the *authoritarian personality* whose principal characteristic is obedience and readiness to follow orders blindly, irrespective of their moral contents.’<sup>31</sup>

The *Nurturant Parent model* of rearing children, on the contrary, describes a parenting style that abides by the emerging human rights ideals. What formerly was regarded as ‘good’ for children, turns into abuse and neglect in the new nurturant framework. Lakoff and Johnson write, ‘Nurturant Parent morality is not, in itself, overly permissive. Just as letting children do whatever they want is not good for them, so helping other people to do whatever they please is likewise not proper nurturance. There are limits to what other people should be allowed to do, and genuine nurturance involves setting boundaries and expecting others to act responsibly’ (1999, p. 316).

The point with the Nurturing Parent model is that ‘lessons’ are taught with firm love and humility, not by applying humiliation. The current transition from a Strict Father

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<sup>29</sup> Cristina Jayme Montiel (2006).

<sup>30</sup> Daniel J. Christie (2006), p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Theodor W. Adorno et al. (1950).

model to the Nurturant Parents model is part of the emerging human rights ideals, and only the nurturant parent will produce children who can stand up for them.

As to inoculation, John W. Dower (1999), in his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, describes the Japanese struggle for genuine *shutaisei* – true ‘subjectivity’ or ‘autonomy’ at the individual level – to resist the indoctrinating power of the state (p. 157). Dower writes about Natsume Soseki, one of the premier philosophers and novelists of modern Japan (1867–1916), who called for a spirit of ‘individualism’ vis-à-vis the state. Also the novelist and essayist Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955) affirmed the need for genuine *shutaisei*. For Sakaguchi, each individual needs to create his or her own ‘samurai ethic’, his or her own ‘emperor system’ (Ibid, p. 157).

The call for true ‘subjectivity’ or ‘autonomy’ dovetails with John Dewey (1916) and his call for *critical thinking* to make democracy viable. *Post-conventional moral reasoning* is a related concept.<sup>32</sup> Paulo Freire (1973) calls for *critical consciousness*. Elena Mustakova-Possardt (2004), in building on Freire’s work, proposes a lifespan developmental model of mature critical moral consciousness, achieved by a deepening lifelong integration of moral motivation, agency and critical discernment.

Soseki’s call for *shutaisei* also echoes Ervin Staub’s call to stand up and not by in the face of injustice and atrocities. Staub argues that the significant element in the atrocities perpetrated by Hitler’s Germany was that bystanders stood idly by instead of standing up and getting involved.

### **Tschudi: Feelings of Humiliation**

Flexibility may, however, not always serve as a sufficient ‘inoculation’ against feeling humiliated by finding oneself in a lower position. What if I have regarded my research as equivalent in value to that of a neighbouring group, and I one day find that the neighbouring group gets much larger funding since they have been declared to be a ‘center of excellence’? Perhaps I may feel being placed in a relatively lower position and thus humiliated?

### **Lindner: Feelings of Humiliation as an Important Force**

In my work, as explained above, I emphasise the importance of the ability to feel humiliated. I do not wish to make people too ‘resilient,’ or ‘desensitise’ them with respect to humiliation. The ability to feel humiliated, to me, is crucial; it is the core driver of human rights.

In other words, human rights defenders do not wish to diminish feelings of humiliation around the world. What they aim at is promoting an alternative path towards action, namely a path, not to violence, but to constructive social change.

As to the case of the Center of Excellence that Tschudi refers to, again, as commented earlier, I would suggest asking questions of more depth: How did the other group attain their privileges? Did they engage in, or were helped by, traditional power-over

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<sup>32</sup> A Neo-Kohlbergian view on moral reasoning (see also Jürgen Habermas and Karl Otto Apel) that describes a person who bases her moral standards on principles that she herself has evaluated and that she accepts as inherently valid, regardless of society’s opinion.



manoeuvres? If yes, my response would be to feel unduly violated and humiliated, my right to be treated as equal in dignity would be disrespected. I would proceed and press for constructive change, because such power-over strategies not only hurt me but human-rights based society altogether.

Alternatively, if I deem that my colleagues deserve privileges as an expression of nourishment and encouragement for creativity that otherwise could not flourish, I would feel optimistic myself that also my creativity will have a chance to elicit support.

### **Tschudi: Structural Violence**

One answer is – as Lindner (2006, ch. 8) has clearly has pointed out - to have many different ‘anchors’ for ones identity, and thus no excessively strong tie to any specific ranking. This may be called living in a basically multidimensional world.

There is, however, a large literature pointing to the difficulty of such multidimensionality. All societies are marked by inequality, for instance as measured by the amount of money available to the 10% richest compared to the 10% poorest. Richard G. Wilkinson (2005)<sup>33</sup> convincingly shows that the ones at the bottom of the scale have shorter, and more unhappy lives which relatively often are marked by serious illnesses.<sup>34</sup>

They live more in a one-dimensional world where about the only thing they have left is a self-respect which must then at all costs be defended in a world where daily humiliations abound. Social inequality is thus a major example of ‘structural violence’, or ‘social injustice’; a difference between the potential and the actual quality of life for the downtrodden – Johan Galtung (1969). He refers to absence of ‘direct violence’ as negative peace, and absence of structural violence as positive peace. Teaching about social inequality should thus be a major task in peace education. It is, however, less visible than direct violence and thus easier to ignore?

### **Lindner: Structural Violence**

With his immense body of work, Johan Galtung has contributed significantly to peace studies. His notion of the absence of *direct violence* as *negative peace*, and absence of *structural violence* as *positive peace* have become widely accepted concepts among peace researchers. In my language, viewed from a human rights perspective, structural violence is perpetrated when the core essence of people is ranked, and supposedly ‘higher’ beings dominate ‘lesser’ beings.

Indeed, as Tschudi formulates it so well, teaching about social inequality should be a major task in peace education, even though it may be less visible than direct violence and thus easier to ignore.

As I tried to explain earlier, the invisibility entailed in structural violence is precisely what I aim to expose in my work. To me, we are unwittingly complicit in perpetrating structural violence when we use *language*, *concepts* and *strategies* that do not

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<sup>33</sup> See also Richard G. Wilkinson & Kate E. Pickett (2007).

<sup>34</sup> The typical conservative answer to this is, ‘the poor are inferior and thus have less satisfying lives’ is vigorously contested by Richard G. Wilkinson & Kate E. Pickett (2007).

differentiate clearly enough between negative and positive peace. I would therefore recommend asking questions of more depth, as explained above, to diminish structural violence, and I would teach children accordingly.

### *Language*

As to language, I suggest making clear linguistic choices. As discussed earlier, in the same way in which human rights defenders use the term *humankind* and not *mankind* for *humanity*, I recommend implementing human rights linguistically by reserving the words *humbling*, *humbleness*, and *humility* to signify important prosocial *virtues* that must be nurtured in all possible ways, clearly differentiating them from *humiliation* (including 'mild humiliation') for the *violation of equal dignity*.

### *Strategies*

As to strategies, I would wish to teach students the ability to feel humiliated, on behalf of themselves and others (rather than making them 'resilient' against such feelings). I would recommend heeding recent research on mirror neurons, and use media exposure to others' pain flowing from humiliation to sensitise students. Feelings of humiliation power the conscientisation that drives the human rights movement.

The most important element of peace education would follow as a next step. Feelings of humiliating elicited by humiliating treatment of self and others, through their strength, can easily be translated into violent retaliation with new cycles of humiliation. To make such feelings serve human rights, students need to learn constructive Mandela-like responses to humiliation.

### *Concepts*

As to concepts, as explained earlier, I would advocate differentiating layers of unambiguous normative stances from other layers, and seek complexity and flexibility in the entire system, not through forcing the same degree of complexity and flexibility into each layer. More even, coercing all areas into sameness would not increase complexity and flexibility of the overall system, but diminish it.

To come back to traffic as a metaphor, clear decisions must be taken as to right-hand driving and left-hand driving. Highways are highly limited in the degree of complexity and flexibility they allow, however, without these limitations there would be no highways. This does not mean that complexity and flexibility must be absent everywhere – they are welcome in other areas, the roads in the city or village, for example, or on off-road grounds, and the entire system is one of complexity and flexibility. Turning all highways into village roads would diminish the complexity and flexibility of the overall traffic system, not enhance it. A country's traffic would collapse if all roads were treated like off-road areas.

In my work, I compare left-hand driving with a system where the girl (in the example of 'honour killing') is being killed, where *tyske tøyser* (Norwegian women who entered into love relationships with Nazi German occupiers) and their children are being

punished for having ‘dishonored’ their country, or where ‘murderous professors’<sup>35</sup> advocate mottos such as ‘either with us or against us’. Right-hand driving is when all such verdicts are inverted, when nobody’s life is being put on line on behalf of collectivist power-over strategies, not at the fault-lines between in- and out-groups, and not at the fault-lines of in-group rankings. Left-hand driving means yes to Apartheid, right-hand driving means no to Apartheid – one cannot have a bit of Apartheid, as much as one cannot have a bit of left-hand driving. (The traffic metaphor has its limits, however, when we gauge the practicalities of left-hand driving as compared with right-hand driving. Human rights offer a more functional normative frame for an interdependent world, and therefore right-hand driving, so-to-speak, is to be preferred in the current historic context.)

### **Tschudi: Concluding Remarks**

Hopefully these comments may serve to broaden the base for understanding ramifications of humiliation. Rankings should as far as possible be seen as flexible. Structures where power is used for guiding and protecting should be encouraged. Social injustice – structural violence – is a major political issue which has only briefly been touched here.

### **Lindner: Concluding Remarks**

May I again express my profound appreciation for Finn Tschudi’s extraordinary way of combining brilliant scholarship with profoundly humane humanity. Tschudi never undermines his human rights stance by engaging in arrogant behaviour, he always imbues his values with true life through an exceptional degree of dignified humility and humbleness that respects others as equals in dignity. Tschudi feels deeply humiliated on behalf of himself and others when he sees equality in dignity be disrespected; he has not ‘numbed’ himself, or attempted to become ‘resilient’ or ‘inoculated’ against feelings of humiliation. On the contrary, he nurtures an acute sense of humiliation as emotional driving force of his conscience. Importantly, however, he resists the temptation to retaliate in kind with turning new spirals in cycles of humiliation. He transforms his feelings of humiliation and channels them into his important Mandela-like work for constructive social change. He never humiliates others, not even the most arrogant of fellow beings, but always humbles them respectfully if needed. His example, to my view, is a wonderful model each peace educator should follow.

Let me take Tschudi’s last sentences and reframe them slightly. He writes, ‘Rankings should as far as possible be seen as flexible. Structures where power is used for guiding and protecting should be encouraged. Social injustice – structural violence – is a major political issue which has only briefly been touched here’.

To my view, Tschudi most remarkably uses power to guide and protect fellow human beings, while never abusing power to treat others as lesser beings. Tschudi has a very fine sensory apparatus that differentiates use and abuse of power and rank, and he reacts to abuse with due feelings of humiliation. He is very flexible with most rankings – he is extraordinarily humble and will not insist on arrogant superiority – however, he is

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Chege (1996).

staunchly inflexible when power structures are abused to maintain or erect gradients of power where supposedly 'higher' beings dominate 'lesser' beings. Tschudi is extremely sensitive to even the slightest occurrence of structural violence, and when he senses it, his flexibility reaches its limits – he takes an unambiguous stance against any inequality that is predicated on disrespect for equality in dignity.

### **Lindner: Peace Education**

Given the dire state of world affairs, both socially and ecologically, tinkering with local conflicts is not enough. A decent world is not the same as a world without conflict. A 'de-contextualized trauma-based approach' (achieving 'resilience' within the status quo) does not address the systemic and endemic factors of collective violence,' warns, for example, peace psychologist Daniel J. Christie (2006) (p. 11).

In order to make industrial production sustainable, for example, it is not sufficient to tinker with the symptoms of the malaise at the 'end of the pipe'. The entire production process needs to be taken apart, each detail has to be looked at in more detail (*deeper* questioning and differentiation), and re-assembled in more comprehensive ways (*wider* perspective, *broader* bird's eye view).

Likewise, peace education can not be relegated to a 'field' alongside others, but ought to permeate every single human intervention on planet Earth. Every single world citizen needs to become a peace student and educator.

To my view, among the severe problems that peace education faces is the disempowering split between *motivation* and *resources* its two main target groups suffer from: one group has resources but lacks motivation, while the other, if they have the motivation, lack resources. The first group comprises much of the so-called West, or all those world regions which are permeated by the letter, if not the spirit, of human rights. People living in such contexts need to understand that any progress of the human rights movement ought not to lure them into taking it lightly – considerable investment from their side is still needed, particularly with respect to including 'the rest' of the world's population, but also with respect to the cultural and social remnants of past domination in their own psyches and behavioral scripts. As to the second group, let us simply call them 'the rest', they need to be shown how much more enabling social contexts can evolve that are permeated by human rights, and they need to understand how achieve this in a constructive Mandela-like fashion, by transcending humiliation, not by maintaining and repeating it.

I propose a *Moratorium on Humiliation*, similar to the *Moratorium on Trade in Small Arms* (see the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies website, [www.humiliationstudies.org](http://www.humiliationstudies.org), for more ideas). We need to build a *decent global village*, in the spirit of Avishai Margalit (1996) and his call for a *Decent Society*, a world in which institutions do not have humiliating effects. Decent societies transcend humiliation. Decency reigns in the global village when dignity for all is made possible and humiliation is removed from the 'tool box'. Decency reigns when reconciliation is no longer sought through forcing underlings into submission, but by including everybody as worthy of equal dignity, and worthy of being protected from humiliation. Decency reigns when *regulatory pyramids* are in place that dignify the very notion of justice through offering diverse approaches – see John Braithwaite (2002) and Finn Tschudi (2006).

For a decent global society, we need better psychological, social, and cultural social mindsets, and must foster systemic change that provides us with global decency. The task has three core aspects, and requires two core loops (using the ideal-type approach explained earlier): we must create a) new awareness in every single human being for our global responsibility, b) new personal skills of cooperation, and c) new global institutional frames that enable global and local cooperation. Institutions (c) have pre-eminence because decent institutions can drive feedback loops that foster (a) and (b) in a systemic rather than haphazard way. The first loop, the initial realization of new institutions, depends on a few Mandela-like individuals like Birgit Brock-Utne and Finn Tschudi, who 'nudge' the world's systems into a more constructive frame (remember Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams' campaign to ban personal landmines). The second and subsequent loops will have the advantage of enjoying the support from the system, no longer only depending on a few gifted individuals.

Let all peace educators follow Birgit Brock-Utne and Finn Tschudi, who, with unprecedented courage and dedication, fill Margaret Mead's words with life: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has'.

### **Finn Tschudi & Evelin Lindner Conversation, 12th August 2008**

#### **Tschudi: 12th August 2008**

Thinking about it, I think for the moment we can agree to disagree. I did not in any way want to downplay the seriousness of humiliation in malign hierarchies. Trying to state the essence of my comments it would be a defense of humour and cherishing paradoxical communication, cf. the Bateson quote which was the best way I could capture this.

Concerning hierarchies of yesterday I have been thinking about the court jester, perhaps a safety valve, a way to express tension without literal decapitation. I really know nothing about this but in my imagination I like to think that the not well versed court jester might run life threatening risks.

For some reason my favourite quote here is the court jester who boasted that he could make a joke on any subject. 'Then make one on me' the king said whereupon the jester answered 'the king is not a subject.'

Hard to punish such a reply!

If I had better knowledge of history it would be interesting to see if humour, some kind of safety valves, somehow might have surprising analogues in a variety of otherwise (to us) stifling contexts.

#### **Tschudi: 13th August 2008**

My major theme here is humour... the key quotation was the one from Bateson – the warning against 'linear' communication which grows stale on you, and bars change. Of course when I first sat down with this, my thoughts turned to Arthur Koestler's 'bisociation', simultaneously enjoying two incompatible frameworks. But I just took

Janus from the shelf, saw that it was relevant and that 'humour is the back door to creativity', and I would like to add perhaps also to cultural change!

I am here 'trespassing' into areas where I am not at all well versed, but I wonder if perhaps the court jester is a necessary 'safety valve' in otherwise (close to) impenetrable, perhaps malign hierarchies. For some reason there is only one joke coming to mind to illustrate. First I think that 'my' court jester was living much more dangerous than any tightrope walker. So when he (were there female court jesters as well?) boasted that he could make a pun about any subject I sense imminent jeopardy when the king said:

'Then make one on me!'

The answer was:

'The king is not a subject!'

You must help me with completing a famous German saying about changing theories I think it was Otto von Neurath (a member of the Vienna circle). For some reason the German opening I remember has much deeper connotations for me than any Norwegian or English translation:

,Wir sind als Schiffer am See...'

The rest deals with how to completely rebuild the ship while being on the ocean. Seemingly impossible; must not something remain constant? Well, as far as I remember not necessarily so.

Can we not (at least try to) apply von Neurath's saying to cultural change?

To mix my metaphors, some of the sailors in the process of rebuilding the ship must be able to suffer some 'friendly bullying' when their attempts to do the impossible risk completely sinking the ship! In a rhetoric vein, can you imagine deep seated changes without awareness of seemingly incompatible frameworks?

Before having to put Koestler's book away, I had to smile/laugh at a couple of his humorous illustrations of bisociation which I will share with you.

The man who upon finding the catholic bishop, the honourable monsignor, in bed with his wife, opened the window and extended blessings to all the people going by. Upon queries he responded to the astonished bishop: 'You attend to my business, so I attend to yours...'

If you prefer another one: 'a sadist is a person, who is kind to a masochist'...

### **Lindner: 18th August 2008**

Thank you, dear Finn Tschudi! I love your humorous examples!

I very much appreciate the term and concept of *bisociation* by Arthur Koestler (1964). Koestler's work on *Creation* is underpinned by intercultural research, which also indicates that creativity is enhanced through *interactions of mutually contradictory but*

*equally compelling forces.*<sup>36</sup> *Disorienting dilemmas*, dilemmas that unsettle our fundamental beliefs and call our values into question, can bring about *transformative learning*.<sup>37</sup> When cultural assumptions are called into question, a 'stress-adaptation-growth' process unfolds.<sup>38</sup>

As to humour, please let me quote from my doctoral dissertation (2000):

In other parts of the world, where hierarchy was institutionalised ages ago, long before Somalia tasted it, people had to a certain extent learned to cope with it in a more 'flexible' way. The Czech 'good soldier Schweik' (a figure created by Jaroslav Hasek, 1883-1923) 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 is said to have the abilities of the 'good soldier Schweik.' Many call Egyptians, having been occupied for more than 2000 years (until 1952), 'the Czechs of the Arab World'. Conceivably, oppressed populations develop special abilities in the field of communication, abilities that cover a whole range of subtle manipulation methods, in between the categorical 'either/or' of taking up arms, or completely losing self-respect. Charlie Chaplin's films are archetypal expressions of the sabotage of oppression by the underdog (Evelin Gerda Lindner (2000), p. 310).

In other words, I very much agree with dear Finn Tschudi that 'bisociation' and humour are extremely important. Humour as a 'Trojan Horse' that undermines domination is wonderful (during my seven years in Egypt, I enjoyed this kind of humour immensely), humour that is delivered and received in a context of mutual respect is great, and disorienting dilemmas are grand stimulators of creativity. I assume that Finn Tschudi agrees with me when I reject any malign application of 'humour', let us say, I believe he concurs with me when I say that a girl does not benefit from supposedly 'friendly bullying' at the hands of a rapist.

This is precisely the 'bifurcation' that I try to highlight in my work: for example, the fault line between forms of bisociation and humour that respect dignity, and those that do not. The difference can be extremely difficult to identify. The case of the rapist is stark, the majority of situations, evidently, is much less clear. For example, women feel often slighted by misogynist remarks, and when they in addition are accused to lack 'humour' when they cannot laugh at those remarks, they feel exposed to double humiliation. The joker, on the other side, may feel utterly innocent and outright convinced that the woman is simply 'oversensitive'. Such situations are typical in times as ours, when normative frames are on the move: the man, socialised into a sense of male superiority, may be blind to the fact that this frame has shifted from being 'bon sens' to carrying the connotation of violating the dignity of women. Again, humour or bisociation are extremely important, however, my focus is not humour or bisociation in general, but their application in ways that safeguard dignity, versus those that do not.

I would never advocate violating somebody's dignity to 'teach lessons' or increase

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<sup>36</sup> Kichiro Hayashi (2003).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Jack Mezirow (1991). See also Beth Fisher-Yoshida (2008).

<sup>38</sup> Young Yun Kim & Brent David Ruben (1988).

creativity, not least because such an approach would not teach the desired lessons, particularly not in a context of human rights. Lessons can be learned in other ways (see above, for example by heeding research on mirror neurons).

As to Neurath and the ship metaphor, he uses it in several variations: 'Wie Schiffer sind wir, die ihr Schiff auf offener See umbauen müssen, ohne es jemals in einem Dock zerlegen und aus besten Bestandteilen neu errichten zu können' – Otto Neurath (1932), p. 206. English translation, 'We are like sailors who must rebuild their ship on the open sea, never able to dismantle it in dry-dock and to reconstruct it there out of the best materials' – Otto Neurath (1959), p. 201. For me, this metaphor is very real, I use it in my biography, see [www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php#globalcitizenship](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php#globalcitizenship).

As to agreeing or disagreeing with Finn Tschudi in general, to be honest, I do not see any disagreements that, to me, deserve this label – perhaps, at maximum, some discourses may play out at different levels.

Let me explain why I see only agreement: If I were to identify a person whose day-to-day behaviour illustrates my vision, then I would choose, among a few others, Finn Tschudi. Few people share his keen sensitivity for equality in dignity (and humiliation as its violation). This sensitivity is like a foreign language that some people speak clearly, and others not, or less clearly. It is a language that people do not learn usually, only some people seem to know it, perhaps through particularly educative life experiences. And dear Finn Tschudi is speaking this foreign language.

In other words, Finn Tschudi, in the way he lives in this world, epitomises and embodies what I attempt to explain in my work. In short, I cannot imagine more agreement!

Let me end this conversation with including Finn Tschudi into the last sentence of my 'Reconciliation and Humiliation' article: 'Let all peace educators follow Birgit Brock-Utne and Finn Tschudi, who, with unprecedented courage and dedication, fill Margaret Mead's words with life: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".'

The world today is in dire need of 'Mandelas.' Both Birgit Brock-Utne and Finn Tschudi, to me, are Mandelas.

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