

## **FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

As the member of the Editorial Collective assigned the responsibility of overseeing the editing of the themed articles, it has been a pleasure and instructive experience to work with our two guest editors, Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Evelin Gerda Lindner. They are both experts in the rapidly growing field of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HDHS). Indeed, Lindner is the founder and driving force behind the establishment of a very dynamic body of that name, comprising researchers and practitioners dedicated to the promotion of 'universal values such as humility, mutual respect, caring and compassion, and a sense of shared planetary rights and responsibilities.' The absence of these values occurs when people fail to recognise, respect and honour the differences in others. Unless a global community is developed where people come to enjoy the richness of diversity and realise the mutuality of their inherent or basic needs (for example, survival, well-being, identity, balance of freedom to and freedom from, environmental sustainability, etc), the prospects remain bleak for a violence-reduced future.

However, that is not the fate I read into the statements of HDHS. What Lindner calls the 'cycles of humiliation' can be arrested, and the spirals of violence that humiliation generates set on a downward path. Fortunately, the path of no return has yet to be reached.

And so on that optimistic note, while the global history of humiliation that unfolds in the following pages makes for depressing reading in one sense, in another it provides the framework for understanding how to transform such events into peaceful outcomes. Progress can be made in preventing, managing or resolving so-called intractable conflicts if the roots of the problem are unearthed. Undermining the dignity of a person or group by an act of humiliation, or in some other way depriving a party of a basic need is more apt to be avoided or abandoned once the process is grasped. Any justification for pursuing the conflict might then be totally discredited.

In addition to the collection of themed articles, I encourage readers to check out the extensive website of HDHS, <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/>.

**Ralph Summy**