

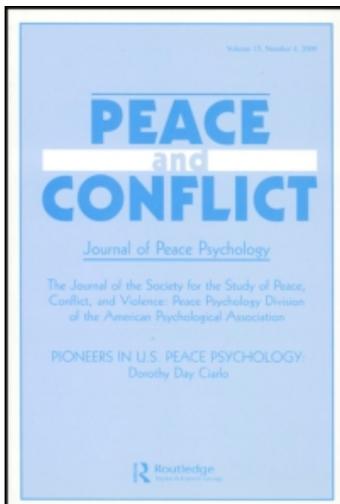
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To Move the World

David Bargal^a

^a Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

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Gender, Humiliation, and Global Security: Dignifying Relationships From Love, Sex, and Parenthood to World Affairs, Evelin Lindner, 2010. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

To Move the World

David Bargal

*Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*

Reading Evelin Lindner's book, one is reminded of Archimedes's famous saying: "Give me a place to stand and with a lever I will move the whole world." In this book especially and in the former ones as well, Evelin Lindner seeks a place to stand in order to move the whole world from being hostile and humiliating into a place of humility and dignity.

The author, Evelin Lindner, undertakes in this book a problematic task. Although she focuses on the issues of love, gender, and humiliation, she states in the introduction that the book is concerned "not merely about gender, humiliation, love, and dignity. It is about cultural and institutional change, locally and globally" (p. xvii). This is a remarkable idealistic and a very demanding mission, which is already being carried out by her for several years and via different channels: writing books, arranging biannual conferences, delivering lectures, and establishing academic programs to promote her ideas.

Evelin Lindner describes herself as a transdisciplinary scholar in social sciences and the humanities. Being trained as a physician, as well as a psychologist, she has been dedicated to the cause of promoting dignity on the expanse of humiliation and violence. This is true as regards personal and interpersonal relations, as well as regarding relations among communities and nations.

Correspondence should be addressed to David Bargal, Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus 91905, Israel. E-mail: msbargal@pluto.mscc.huji.ac.il

Evelin Lindner was brought up in a German family that had been displaced from Silesia, Poland in 1946, and grew up in West Germany. Some of the roots of her intellectual interests regarding dignity and humiliation she attributes to the hardships that her family endured prior to and following its displacement. Later events in her personal life may have also contributed to the feeling of “being put down and hurt” in Evelin Lindner’s own words. Hence, the origin of humiliation is “embedded in relationships. People and institutions inflict humiliation on those who are at the receiving end” (Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, n.d., p. 1).

The book is a sequel to Evelin Lindner’s previous books: *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* (2006) and *Emotion and Conflict: How Human Rights Can Dignify Emotion and Help Us Wage Good Conflict* (2009). The book is comprised of three parts that are divided into nine chapters. The first part is titled, “Gender, Humiliation and Lack of Security in Times of Transitions,” and the second part is titled, “Gender, Humiliation and Lack of Security Today.” In both chapters, the author analyses and explains the relation between gender, masculine preference, and humiliation. Hierarchy and high rank also contribute to looking down on low-ranked people, and especially women. The third part carries the heading, “Global Security Through Love and Humility in the Future.” Following the analysis of the roots and manifestations of humiliation as presented in the two previous parts, the author introduces and discusses her vision of a new global humanistic order.

Evelin Lindner is concerned with the unending intergroup and between-states conflicts and wars. According to her conception, a paradigm shift should occur in interpersonal, intergroup, and globally. Nowadays, relationships on all levels are based on humiliation and the subjugation of women in their relationships to men, as well as between countries and religions. To remedy this continuously humiliating world condition, there should prevail a spirit of humility and collaboration among groups in society, as well as internationally between nations. She is aware of the rigidity of the social structures in contemporary society where honor codes dominate many cultures. She calls for abolishing the national sovereignty and the honor codes that it entails. She suggests that a systematic transformation will take place where globalization will be humanized by *egalization* (Lindner’s word for globalized equal dignity); and quoting her closest collaborator, Linda Hartling, in their common enterprise for promoting world egalization, “This book calls us to forge a heroic, yet humble path forward celebrating and enlarging men and women’s potential and capacity to work together for a better world” (p. 177).

The book mission’s is very important and worthy. The author’s knowledge of theories and research in the realms of social and behavioral science is impressive. The concepts used are based on the updated knowledge from

cognitive psychology, anthropology, and political science—a real transdisciplinary and holistic approach to social issues.

Evelin Lindner, beyond doubt, joins a very important gallery of idealistic people who have devotedly cared about the fate of the world and tried to cure it relying on the spirit of love, dignity, and humility. Among them we may mention Gandhi, Desmond Tutu, and Schweitzer.

However, opposite to these idealistic voices, there are others who have perceived human nature and its capacity to strive for peace in very gloomy terms. In the famous correspondence between Einstein and Freud—Why war, the latter is very doubtful of the “likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity’s aggressive tendencies”; and he added, “What we may try is to divert it into a channel other than that of warfare If the propensity for war be due to the destructive instinct, we have always its counter-agent, Eros All that produces ties of sentiment between man and man must serve us as war’s antidote” (Freud, 1932).

Evelin Lindner devotes her life to create sentiments of humility, dignity, and respect among all human beings. According to this book, she seemed to have found an Archimedean place to stand. The only question is whether the lever she uses will indeed be sufficient to move the conflictual and highly divided world.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David Bargal is a Gordon Brown professor (Emeritus) at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He has extensively published in professional journals and authored and edited 10 books and journals. His book (with H. Bar), *Living With Conflict* (Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Israel, 1995), reported on 5 years of action research of conflict management workshops for Palestinian and Jewish youth. For the last several years, a similar type of conflict management has been carried out and evaluated in four high schools in Michigan (reported in a special issue of *Small Group Research*, 2008).

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