

Modern-Day Globalization: its Murky Underpinnings and its Even More Unsavory Future

Tina Lindhard
Dept. of Consciousness Studies
International University of Professional Studies (IUPS)
Maui, Hawaii. USA
consol.tina@gmail.com

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Abstract: By spelling out the link between Transhumanism, the 4th Industrial revolution, and globalism, which together form the economic thrust of mankind's projected future, this paper invites a rethink about the direction envisaged by modern-day society. The underlying linking factor of these enterprises is the Humanist movement that, like Transhumanism, shares a Utopian view of the world and supplies the relative ethical underpinning for these 'so-called' new advances. Three Manifestos lay out the objectives of the Humanist Association describing it as a religion that is supposed to replace other older deity-based religions. Its progressive philosophy of life without theism or other supernatural beliefs leads to a break with the past and affirms humans' "ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good." But can we live ethical lives where the accent is on fulfilling only our personal desires, which include the right to unrestricted contraception, abortion and divorce and death with dignity eg. Euthanasia and suicide? Ethical relativism is taken to a new extreme by Transhumanism, which rests on the idea that humans should embrace self-directed human evolution using technology to transcend their current natural state and limitations, ie disease, ageing, and even death. According to this author, it is time we moved beyond the limited materialist view, not through global movements like Humanism and Transhumanism, but through exploring and discovering our spiritual nature and the spiritual underpinning of reality. Through this endeavor, we can learn to live in harmony with each other and nature, where the accent is on service to others. Based on experience, we soon realize that our happiness depends on others being happy and includes looking after the weak, the aged, and the infirm. Ethical relativism and lack of clear values will not get us there; on the contrary, they will probably lead to hell on earth.

Keywords:

Globalism; Transhumanism; 4th Industrial Revolution; Humanism; technology; Ethical relativism, values, evolution; Spirituality

I. INTRODUCTION

Most humans desire peace and a decent future for their children; however, World War II devastated most nations and their inhabitants; many countries were in ruins. There was a great fervour for peace near the end of this war, with "50 countries gathering at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, California from 25 April to 26 June 1945. It took two months to draft and sign the UN Charter, on which a new international organization, the United Nations (UN) stands. By this endeavour, Nations hoped they could prevent another world war like the one they had just lived through" (United Nations, n.d. para 1).

But the UN cannot be separated from other international organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), which encompasses the trade-based driving force behind globalization. Global trade began in the silk road city of Xi', more than 2,000 years ago. At first, this trade was tiny as it only involved silk and spices, both luxury goods; however, it opened the world to global trade links and became a goldmine for the many middlemen involved. Great empires dominated much of the route, and when "trade was interrupted, it was most often because of blockades by local enemies of Rome or China" (Vanham, 2019, Silk roads (1st-century BC-5th century AD, and 13th-14th centuries AD), para 1).

Space does not permit us to go into a complete history of global trade; it is sufficient to give a brief account of some of the phases where different nations, cultures and the growth of various religions have played leading roles.

The founder of Islam, the prophet Mohammed, was famously a merchant, as was his wife Khadija. Trade was thus in the DNA of the new religion and its followers, and that showed. By the early 9th century, Muslim traders already dominated Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade; afterwards, they could be found as far east as Indonesia, which over time became a Muslim-majority country, and as far west as Moorish Spain" (Vanham, 2019, Spice routes (7th-15th centuries, para 1)).

However, it is the Age of Discovery that helped make trade global. European explorers connected East and West and, in doing so, accidentally discovered the Americas. "Aided by the discoveries of the so-called "Scientific Revolution" in the fields of astronomy, mechanics, physics and shipping, the Portuguese, Spanish, and later the Dutch and the English first "discovered", then subjugated, and finally integrated new lands in their economy" (Vanham, 2019, Age of Discovery (15th-18th centuries), para 1).

The 19th century consolidated this initial start to globalization; "by the end of the 18th century, Great Britain had started to dominate the world both geographically, through the establishment of the British Empire, and technologically, with innovations like the steam engine, the industrial weaving machine and more. It was the era of the First Industrial Revolution" (Vanham, 2019, First wave of globalization (19th century-1914), para 1). This period also encompassed and depended on technologically driven communication such as the telephone, which allowed people to order goods from different parts of the world without leaving their offices, as well as the ability to invest in internationally active joint stock companies. Britain benefited most from these developments as it had the most capital and technology,

In 1914, World War 1 terminated this expansive, high-living period. The great depression in America followed, as did World War II, resulting in trade, as a percentage of world GDP, falling to 5%.

But, as Vanham (2019) points out, the story of globalization was not over. The USA became the dominant influence in the global arena, consolidated by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. New technological developments such as cars and aircraft, both fruit of the 2nd Industrial Revolution, accompanied this rise in globalization. In its day, the central planning system adopted by the Soviet Union also showed an augmentation in trade. Commercial activity increased during this period involving institutions like the European Union and others that supported free trade; middle-class incomes rose sharply.

The cyber-world marks the 3rd Industrial revolution of today by creating a new way forward. A digital economy based on e-commerce, digital services, and 3D printing forms parts of this thrust.

II. THE DARK SIDE OF GLOBAL EXPANSION

None of the phases mentioned above has excluded a dark side. For example, in the age of discovery, the empires created both a mercantilist and a colonial economy that was "chiefly one of exploitation, including the shameful legacy of the slave trade" (Vanham, 2019, Age of Discovery (15th-18th centuries), para. 4). What Vanhan identifies as the first true wave of globalization, was also not without its negative aspects. Countries, which had previously been strong, like India, China, Mexico, or Japan, either failed to adapt to the new industrial global trends or were not allowed to. By 1900, all the independent African countries, except Ethiopia, were grabbed by the different European industrialized countries (Khan Academy in Vanham, 2019). Many workers also failed to benefit from globalization, which depended on industrial machinery and imports.

Consumerism is part of globalist expansion; promoting the production and consumption of globally traded goods and brands affects local cultures and markets linked to traditional ways of living. "Consumers no longer shop just locally; instead, they frequently purchase products across borders both on and offline, driving economic growth in a capitalist economy" (Jansson-Boyd, 2020, para 1). Merchandizing has also harmed the world's ecosystem, with rainforests being cut for timber or destroyed to make way for pastures to raise cattle to feed the American carnivorous eating habits. We are also facing the mass extinction of species and the general degradation of ecosystems globally. Change is the fundamental characteristic of climate; it is, therefore, vital to identify if these changes are accelerating due to man's activities, and if so, which ones. A fossil-based economy influences the climate by augmenting greenhouse gasses, but scientists are still unsure what these changes will entail. Not all are negative; milder winters might help reduce the death rate from health issues like strokes (Nichols, 2019). On the other hand, a hotter climate might make it difficult to grow crops and thus lead to food shortages. "The effects of globalization are not separate, encapsulated events, but multifaceted phenomena that have a domino-like effect on the environment... (including, for example) the changes in ocean waters cause lower protein content in fish" (McMichael in Nichols, 2019, Globalization Causes Environmental Changes That Affect Health, para 1).

Our health is also affected by man-made products like Roundup, a broad-spectrum glyphosate-based herbicide, and the production of genetically engineered seeds tolerant to glyphosate, which are other probable human carcinogens as classified by The International Agency for Research on Cancer, a unit of the World Health Organization, in 2015 (Cressey, 2015). Glyphosate affects not only humans but birds, insects, and organisms in the soil and finally gets into the water system.

Wi-Fi studies and other microwave frequency EMFs have shown that “they cause oxidative stress causes sperm/testicular damage, neuropsychiatric effects including EEG changes, apoptosis, cellular DNA damage, endocrine changes, and calcium overload” (Pall, 2018, abstract). One can well ask why Governments permit the sale of products like these in their countries. Our children are our future, and what we give them to eat directly affects their long-term health, as does their exposure to Wi-Fi and other microwave-frequency EMFs.

Although serious, it is possible to put these aspects down to human greed, but are they? In 2010, for example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation revealed its not-so-innocuous interest in eradicating disease and feeding the world’s poor when it bought up half a million shares in Monsanto, which produces glyphosate and is involved in genetically engineered crops. The big tax-exempt foundations appear to be a niche for activities that are not necessarily in the best interest of all (Lindhard & Ramirez, 2022). One needs to investigate the operations of these foundations if we are to truly understand more about who is running the world.

III. THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

My wake-up call came while listening to Nail’s keynote address on the so-called benefits of the 4th Industrial Revolution during the Sand conference, in Italy, in June 2019. My blood literally ran cold, and I was compelled to ask the organizers if I could change part of my keynote talk, entitled *Our Embryonic Development: The Universe Within*. to contest some of the issues he had brought up. Women have traditionally been the guardians of life, and the vision he had laid out was certainly not mine.

The main issues Nail talked about involved the increased use of artificial intelligence, computers, and robots, which would take over our workplaces, thereby making many workers redundant. He also talked of the need to find other planets we could migrate to, forgetting that until we learn to live in peace and harmony on this one, we are unlikely to fare any better by going to another.

But what affected me most was his stress on the development of an artificial womb and the accelerated use of artificial reproduction, a technique increasingly being used without much thought by consumers about what it involves. When first developed, the process known as In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) takes place in a Petry dish with an ovule and hundreds of sperm present. What van der Wal describes as ‘the dance of love’ took place naturally as it would in the womb, with the egg finally letting one sperm in. For the first time, humans could witness this incredible process that is also on film. The fertilized egg is then introduced into the womb. We learned this creative act requires hundreds of sperm – there is one of her and many of him, she is huge and he is tiny, she is almost immobile and he is highly mobile; they are a polarity where ‘he’ has what she hasn’t, and vice versa. As complementary opposites, they are in the visible realm, whereas what joins them, according to the Goethean way of doing science and perceiving ‘reality’, is the invisible spirit in the nonphysical realm (van der Wal, 2003/2014). Fertilization of the egg, as a creating act, takes four hours or more; to save time and when there are difficulties, technicians developed a technique involving sperm injection where they select one ovule and one sperm, cut off her protective crown and his tail, and force the selected sperm into the egg using a tiny needle, called a micropipette. This procedure is called Intracytoplasmic Sperm (ICSI). She buckles, and when I saw it filmed, I wanted to cry, and I had to hold my womb as if I, too, had been hurt; I can only describe it as rape.

I feel for women who might read this and have submitted themselves to this process; I know first-hand about the desire to have a child who does not come and/or repeatedly miscarries. In my heart, I feel we are not here to acquire all we want through unnatural means. Man is playing with nature with little understanding of the long-term consequences. Women today are specifying whether they want a boy or a girl, blue or brown eyes; rather like in any supermarket. In addition, we are mixing and matching sperm from different fathers and ovules from diverse women in a further attempt to meet our desires, little thinking of the ordeal a woman goes through when she donates her eggs and the high dose of hormones, she needs to release several ovules at once. Donating ovules has become a business, with the highest prices going to students from Stanford, Yale, and Harvard. This practice has also been referred to as “free market eugenics” with the girls doing it not only for money often to pay their high University fees, but also for narcissistic reasons. “We are not giving help to the infertile; we are selling beauty, brains or brawn to buyers,” said Caplan of the University of Pennsylvania (Wiess, 2001). However, “egg-selling has become a business fraught with moral--and perhaps legal—peril”, when the ‘product’, ie the baby, turns out to be defective in one way or another. What most girls do not realize, however, is that they may become sterile, and some have died. There is no insurance or compensation in either of these cases. There is also no control in the case of sperm; it is up to the male to declare when he last donated, leading to the possibility that numerous children from different mothers have been the fruit of the same male. The records are not controlled and are in the hands of private clinics.

The development of an artificial womb allegedly to help premature children, and to save women from having to go through the pains of childbirth, is an enigma. True to patriarchal values, nobody seems to have asked women what they want. We must also inquire who is funding this research and for what reason; conducting research is not cheap. Billions are often spent on issues that only solve a problem for the isolated few, so there must be other reasons that are not so obvious. Following the money can often give us clues. The whole artificial fertilization business is now highly lucrative, but the initial research had to be funded by some organization.

When I spoke about these issues at the Sand conference, little did I realize the Covid pandemic, or what some call the ‘Covid plandemic’, was still wrapped up in the folds of time, with the first case registered in Wuhan Dec 2019. The virus quickly extended to the rest of the world, and in many if not most countries, lockdowns accompanied it; this had a major impact on many aspects of social life and the economy, doing immeasurable harm to small businesses. The big multinational online companies flourished.

During Covid, the infirm and especially the old were left to die by themselves; never has this happened on such a vast scale with family members and friends forbidden to visit their dying loved ones. During wars, soldiers risked their lives to retrieve a seriously wounded or dead friend who had fallen behind the enemy’s lines. Caring for others was, at one stage, considered the heart and hallmark of a civilized society (Bachofen in Garcia Ledger 2017). What or who was behind this change?

IV. HUMANISM AND TRANSHUMANISM

We cannot separate Transhumanism from the 4th Industrial revolution as it depends on the perfection and use of so-called NBIC technologies - nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science. In turn, we cannot disconnect these movements from globalism as they form the economic trust of humanity's projected future. Although Baurman (2010) argues that Transhumanism did not evolve out of Humanism (Baurman, 2010), both movements involve a utopian vision of the world where the fulfilment of human desires plays a leading role. Below this motivation, more sinister aims like control over others and selective breeding might also be linking factors. A poster depicting a man sowing seeds that states ‘Only healthy seeds must be sown - check the seeds of hereditary disease and unfitness by eugenics’ comes to mind.

“The Humanist Manifestos are a series of statements which outline the core beliefs of the Humanist movement. The first, Humanist Manifesto I (1933) was primarily written by Raymond Bragg with 34 co-signers and published in the May/June 1933 issue of the New Humanist. Unlike subsequent manifestos, this one refers to Humanism as a “religious movement” that would transcend other religious systems steeped in the supernatural. Humanist Manifesto II (1973) was written by Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson and published in the September/October 1973 issue of The Humanist. It was intended as an updated version of the first manifesto and was specifically directed at a few of the political and social events of the day, such as racism, birth control, and weapons of mass destruction. Humanist Manifesto III is the subtitle of the 2003 statement by the American Humanist Association, titled Humanism and Its Aspiration. This document echoes many of the same themes as its predecessors but in brief (Harvard University, n.d.)

These three manifestos are different in tone and content with the first describing humanism as a religion that was supposed to replace other older deity-based religions. Humanism is self-described as a “progressive philosophy of life that is without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfilment that aspire to the greater good” (American Humanist Association in Definition of Humanism, para 1). It is also self-described as “Good without a God”. The following statement indicates the tone and objects of what Manifesto I, primarily written by Raymond Bragg, hoped to achieve:

“Today man’s larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and his deeper appreciation of brotherhood have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfaction may appear to many people as a complete break from the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to the traditional religions, it is nonetheless obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age” (Wilson, 1933, Chap. 13, para 3).

Although Transhumanism does not rest on any stated manifesto, this movement, like Humanism, advocates humans should embrace self-directed human evolution. The second Humanist Manifesto stresses the right to choose unrestricted contraception, abortion and divorce and death with dignity ex. Euthanasia and suicide. In Transhumanism, technology is seen as a way of taking this even further by transcending humanity’s current natural state and limitations, ie disease, ageing, fertility problems and even death. The oft-quoted lines of the 2nd Humanist Manifesto ‘No deity will save us; we must save ourselves’, is an equally apt motto for transhumanists where the NBIC technologies are promoted as being the tools which will enable people to enjoy greater "morphological freedom; in other words, people can choose to take on new forms through prosthetics or genetic engineering, select their sexuality, or advance their cognitive capacities through the use of brain-computer interfaces that link humans to advanced artificial intelligence (AI) (Thomas, 2017). Although this ‘sales talk might captivate many, to understand the motivations behind transhumanism we need to go into the history of the concept (Lindhard, 2022).

The term transhumanism was coined by Julian Huxley, an evolutionary Biologist and an active member of the British Eugenics Society being its President from 1959 to 1962. He was the first director of UNESCO 1946 – 1948 but he did not complete his term probably based on his left-wing tendencies and ‘humanism’, which for him involved restraining population growth through birth control. Julian Huxley was a signatory to the Humanist Manifesto II, which one needs to read carefully to understand all its implications. People were encouraged to sign even if they did not agree with all the clauses, and, as some of the clauses are acceptable to most people, this manifesto has many signatories despite other clauses being questionable. Most people would agree with the political stand of opposing racism, weapons of mass destruction, supporting human rights and a proposition on an international court. Where things get sticky is the right to unrestricted contraception, abortion and divorce and death with dignity ex. euthanasia and suicide and its absolute rejection of theism, deism and belief in any afterlife.

Through the stress on our individual right to choose, we ignore that there are laws of the universe, one being whatever we sow, we shall reap. For example, “repeated induced abortions in the women's physiological history are very dangerous and could lead to

developing uterine cancer” (Stoicescu, et al, 2017, abstract). Furthermore, research suggests there might be a link between abortions and the later development of breast cancer (Parkins, 1993), although a review of recent research indicates otherwise (Watson, 2017). These possible health risks should be pointed out in schools to girls before them starting sexual activity, but the short- and long-term psychological effects of abortions also need to be discussed as research indicates that there are possible long-term lingering feelings of guilt and shame and anxiety when pregnancies had been willfully terminated (Poureza & Batebi, 2011; Broen, Moum, Bødtker, et al. 2005).

Along with promoting abortion, the 2nd Humanist Manifesto emphasizes sex and stresses “no forms of sexual behaviour between consenting adults should be prohibited, short of resulting in harm to others” (Morris 2002, para 11). The tenets of humanism are presumed to evolve with the culture, but we must not forget they are also creating a culture through their acceptance of the promotion of certain activities.

“Humanism is considered as a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfilment that aspire to the greater good of humanity” where “ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience” (American Humanist Association n.d. para 1 and para 6). They claim the conceptual boundaries of their affirmations are based on a consensus of what they believe and not on what one should believe. But maybe we need to ask who is included in this consensus. As their webpage states they are “committed to building an inclusive America grounded in an embrace of reason, ethics, scientific inquiry, and compassion- rather than religious dogma” (American Humanist Association), maybe the consensus refers to certain Americans and their values.

The relativism of the Humanist’s ethical position is worrying, as is the ethical, or lack of one, in the Transhumanist movement. “When natural constraints are increasingly non-existent and moral constraints are entirely up to the individual, what can liberty be but choice for the sake of choice, or mere willfulness? Transhumanism is really just relativism of a hyper-modern sort, and being a card-carrying transhumanist, a renegade against all moral norms is just as important as (and perhaps more important than) transhumanist science” (Rubin, 2006). When decisions concerning the use of technologies are in the hands of individuals, one cannot surmise these technologies will not be used to harm others. To assume the mere introduction of new technologies, no matter how much one feels they will increase intelligence, will suddenly change society into one that is more just and fair, is blatantly naïve. “Whether the power of enhancement is distributed by a progressive government, or held by a small handful of “Controllers,” or left entirely to the libertarian marketplace, what else but power will govern human relationships in this world of post-human demigods?... Lured by a compassionate drive to assist those in need, we find ourselves switched to a morality of “me, me, me! Promised that technology will satisfy our desires and free us of “master narratives,” we find ourselves at the mercy of our own unconstrained desires and potentially subject to our neighbours’ more powerfully restless wills” (Rubin, 2006).

We also might find that unwittingly humans are falling prey to people who support eugenics and want to push an agenda that involves reducing the world population and selective breeding. In his book *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to create a Master race*, Black (2003/2012) points out that “hundreds of thousands of Americans and an untold number of others were not permitted to continue their families by reproducing. Selected, because of their ancestry, national origin, race or religion, they were forcibly sterilized, wrongly committed to mental institutions where they died in great numbers... In America, this battle was fought not by armies with guns nor by hate sects at the margins. Rather, this pernicious, white-gloved war was prosecuted by esteemed professors, elite universities, wealthy industrialists, and government officials colluding in a racist, pseudoscientific movement called eugenics. The purpose: create a superior Nordic race”. Their ideas, concocted on Long Island at the Carnegie Institution’s eugenic enterprise at Cold Spring Harbor (Black, 2003/2012, p.iv), were practised in America before the Holocaust and World War II. After the eugenics movement gained a bad name after being ‘perfected’ by Hitler who outdid the American aspirations in velocity and ferocity, the “remnant eugenics movement reinvented itself and helped establish the modern, enlightened human genetic revolution” (Black, 2003/2012, p. xvii). This movement is unsustainable without the big “corporate philanthropic largess” (p. xvii), and the names of the eugenic institutions in America were changed “from eugenics to genetics” (p. xvii).

Encouraging abortions, euthanasia, and contraception are possible ways of controlling population growth, as are aspects of the transhumanism movement, such as encouraging youngsters to modify their sex and morphology, which effectively reduces or eliminates their capacity to reproduce later in their lives. Whereas people were previously selectively chosen to undergo sterilization, these new movements encourage self-destructive behaviours that will bring about the objectives of those who support eugenics and the reduction of the population without them being directly involved. Most of the population does not appear fully conscious of the dangers of these new technologies and how they may affect them. The possible link between Humanism and the AI-linked transhumanism movement with eugenics now rebranded as genetics, will most likely not benefit humanity.

V. SUMMING UP

We cannot separate Transhumanism from the 4th Industrial revolution, which involves the perfection of so-called NBIC technologies - nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science. In turn, we cannot disconnect Transhumanism from the Humanist movement, which too shares a utopian view of the world and supplies the relative ethical underpinning for these ‘so-called’ new advances. These movements, in turn, cannot be disconnected from globalism as they form the economic trust of humanity’s projected future.

I must admit I have great difficulty being an impartial scientist when writing about these interconnected movements. I am a woman, and my mothering instinct urges me to protect life. I cannot help but feel that the turn humanity is now taking is not for the highest good of all, according to Divine Will. Despite the Humanist association's use of the first part of this phrase, they ignore there is a higher Intelligence, which might not only be behind the Universe but also participating in it through all living beings. This embodied spiritual understanding runs through many traditions, including the Christian as held by Santa Teresa of Avila, who felt that the mystery is not abstract but is alive and vibrates through us and is what animates every cell in our body; we are an embodiment of this living mystery (Tsoukatos 2011; Lindhard, 2021). This comprehension changes how we view ourselves and others, it elicits respect, which is the basis of love. Traditional societies knew that we were only here for a short time, and the task of the elders was to protect their way of life based on respect for one's parents, community, and Nature; it was not about experimenting with society and letting youngsters and others do what they want according to their whims and fancies. Immediate gratification has never made anyone stronger and more resilient to life's challenges, and most of us learn that as children. An education system that encourages children to question their sex under the motto that we are all the same ignores that biologically males and females are different - neither good nor bad but complementary opposites who can join to bring another being into the world. If we want to stop unwanted pregnancies, sacred sex based on consideration and reverence for the other needs to be taught and stressed; this understanding does not come from experimentation or one-night stands.

A spiritual perception of life needs to be revived; religions often forget or do not stress that spirituality is the basis of all true religions, and their leaders had to work hard to discover and realize their true essence or Self. We are not here to experiment and play around; there is much more to life than just the material plane, which we can discover through meditation, prayer, and other introspective methods. The scope of materialistic science is the material world, but that does not mean the spiritual world does not exist. The laws discovered by physical science are not material; yet we know they exist and influence physical reality. Why is it therefore so hard for us to comprehend that spiritual laws exist and affect us? Western science stripped the original view of Newton and Darwin of their belief in a divine intelligence underpinning all of creation and replaced it with one of radical philosophical materialism (Grof, 1985, p.20). According to this author, it is time we moved beyond the limited materialist view, not through global movements like Humanism and Transhumanism, but through exploring and discovering our spiritual nature, and the spiritual underpinning of reality, and learning to live in harmony with each other and with nature once again where the accent is on service to others including looking after the weak, the aged, and the infirm. When others are happy, we are happy (Arka, 2005). Ethical relativism and lack of clear values will not get us there, on the contrary, they will probably lead to hell on earth.

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Tina Lindhard was born in Cape Town, South Africa. She earned her PhD from the International University of Professional Studies in Consciousness Studies and her MA in Transpersonal Psychology from Sofia University (ITP). She is an academic mentor at IUPS, and a qualified teacher in the Intuitive Meditation method, also known as *Arka Dhyana*. Her many publications are available on Research Gate <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tina-Lindhard-2/research> and Academia Edu. Her chief interest at present is Women's' Consciousness, which involves an embodied spiritual understanding of reality. Dr. Lindhard is currently president of the nonprofit organization CCASpain, and chair of Consciousness Research of CICA, an international scientific organization.