# THE MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF SHAME

Edited by ALESSANDRA FUSSI and RAFFAELE RODOGNO

# The Moral Psychology of Shame

# Series: Moral Psychology of the Emotions

***Series editor***: Mark Alfano, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Delft University of Technology

How do our emotions influence our other mental states (perceptions, beliefs, motivations, intentions) and our behavior? How are they influenced by our other mental states, our environments, and our cultures? What is the moral value of a particular emotion in a particular context? This series explores the causes, consequences, and value of the emotions from an interdisciplinary perspective. Emotions are diverse, with components at various levels (biological, neural, psychological, social), so each book in this series is devoted to a distinct emotion. This focus allows the author and reader to delve into a specific mental state, rather than trying to sum up emotions en masse. Authors approach a particular emotion from their own disciplinary angle (e.g., conceptual analysis, feminist philosophy, critical race theory, phenomenology, social psychology, personality psychology, neuroscience) while connecting with other fields. In so doing, they build a mosaic for each emotion, evaluating both its nature and its moral properties.

### Other titles in this series:

*The Moral Psychology of Forgiveness*, edited by Kathryn J. Norlock
*The Moral Psychology of Pride*, edited by Adam J. Carter and Emma C. Gordon
*The Moral Psychology of Sadness*, edited by Anna Gotlib
*The Moral Psychology of Anger*, edited by Myisha Cherry and Owen Flanagan
*The Moral Psychology of Contempt*, edited by Michelle Mason
*The Moral Psychology of Compassion*, edited by Justin Caouette and Carolyn Price
*The Moral Psychology of Disgust*, edited by Nina Strohminger and Victor Kumar
*The Moral Psychology of Gratitude*, edited by Robert Roberts and Daniel Telech
*The Moral Psychology of Admiration*, edited by Alfred Archer and André Grahle
*The Moral Psychology of Regret*, edited by Anna Gotlib
*The Moral Psychology of Hope*, edited by Claudia Blöser and Titus Stahl
*The Moral Psychology of Amusement*, edited by Brian Robinson
*The Moral Psychology of Boredom*, edited by Andreas Elpidorou
*The Moral Psychology of Hate*, edited by Noell Birondo
*The Moral Psychology of Envy*, edited by Sara Protasi
*The Moral Psychology of Shame*, edited by Alessandra Fussi and Raffaele Rodogno

# The Moral Psychology of Shame

Edited by
Alessandra Fussi and Raffaele Rodogno

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
*Lanham • Boulder • New York • London*

Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE, United Kingdom



British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available**

ISBN 9781538177693 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781538177709 (epub)

♾™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

# Contents

# Introduction

Alessandra Fussi and Raffaele Rodogno

Few emotions have divided opinion as deeply as shame. Some scholars have argued that shame is essentially a maladaptive emotion used to oppress minorities and reinforce stigmas and traumas, an emotion that leaves the self at the mercy of powerful others. Other scholars, however, have argued that the absence of a sense of shame in a person – their shamelessness – is tantamount to a vicious moral insensitivity. As the eleven original chapters in this collection suggest, however, current scholarship no longer seems polarized in this way, but more typically embraces both faces of shame as faithful to the emotion.

If there is any one theme that runs through all the contributions, it is that of the role of intersubjectivity in the structure of shame. In the end, it is precisely attunement to the other, in its various forms, that explains why shame has darker as well as brighter features, and why we may wish to keep it at armlength while not wanting to let go of it altogether. No matter how fundamental the role of the Other in one's theoretical understanding of shame, this emotion is a stark reminder of what it means to say that human beings are social beings.

Shame can be seen as a painful emotion close to self-disappointment on the one end of the spectrum and as an existential feeling of being unworthy on the other end. In some cases, the gaze of others is only a trigger to the emotion. Sometimes concrete or internalized others are causally involved, and it is theoretically and empirically important to ascertain how the relationship between episodic shame and the phenomenon described by feminist philosophers as shame-attunement, that is, a shameful way of being in the world, is to be understood.

Episodic shame need not have devastating effects. One might argue that it becomes destructive when it targets all aspects of the self. Sophocles' Ajax,

who ends up killing himself out of shame, can be taken as a limiting case, because his identity is entirely at stake. It would be misleading to consider the Greek hero's fate of interest only as an object of antiquarian history, or as an occasion to congratulate ourselves on having radically overcome the limitations embedded in the so-called 'cultures of shame'. As Williams (1993, 84) noticed, if Ajax felt he could not go on living, it was because of a reciprocal structure in the fabric of his life between 'what he expected of the world and what the world expects of a man who expects that of it'. The contributions to this volume aim to fill the gap between understandings of shame that interpret it as the expression of the relationship between autonomous agents and their own ideals, and those that reduce the role of individuals to a minimum, by interpreting shame as a sign of submission to standards one is, consciously or unconsciously, compelled to embrace. Studying this emotion, thus, entails reflecting on the ways in which ideals of the self and socioculturally shared practices reciprocally affect each other.

Shame is certainly not the only emotion in which the relationship with others plays a relevant role. We could not feel envy if comparison were not at the core of many of our activities, compassion if we did not care deeply about the lives of others, anger if we did not deem the actions of others capable to reveal disrespect, spite or injustice. Shame, however, is an emotion of self-assessment that entails a negative appraisal of some aspect of our identity (in some sense of 'identity'). This may suggest that others have little to do with one's experience of shame. Indeed, as Vendrell Ferran shows in this volume, Max Scheler considered the fundamental (and positive) role of this emotion to consist in a form of self-relationship: shame both protects valuable aspects of the self and has a self-disclosing function. On this interpretation, shame reveals to us that a certain aspect of our identity, or a certain situation in which we find ourselves, threatens our self-worth. Scheler considers shame as a universal emotion rooted in the self. In his view the encounter with others and the interiorization of social norms play a role in certain specific forms of shame, but do not belong to its fundamental structure. Several papers in this collection, however, argue that the Other is relevant to shame in more fundamental ways. We take an interest in the concrete or imagined judgement of others because we care about being certain kinds of people, about embodying certain values. Hence, shame is a painful emotion of self-evaluation, but it also reveals to us that we deem certain aspects of ourselves worthy of protection. What we deem valuable may be aspects of our identity that are intersubjectively shared, and this is why shame may involve others in many different ways. On some accounts, shame essentially involves or is significantly characterized by negative exposure to (or reproach by) another. In turn, the other may be intended not only as a concrete individual but also as an internalized figure. Furthermore,

otherness can be crystallized in cultural standards that influence the formation or attribution of one's identity.

Sartre famously observed that in the experience of shame we feel frozen, objectified. The continuous flux of our mental life seems to come to a stop when we recognize ourselves as possible objects of the gaze and the judgement of others. It is debatable, however, if the self-assessment involved in this emotion makes us 'objects' to ourselves or if it allows us to become 'others' to ourselves. The answer to this question is connected to the way one understands intersubjectivity. Why give priority, even in shame, to the objectifying aspect? Why not consider that, in a world of shared practices, we can take the other's perspective as relevant without losing our participant attitude? Why focus on the opposition between isolated subjects who reciprocally objectify each other, rather than consider shame in the framework of our being active members of different situated communities? Why not consider the 'social we' that may be involved when 'I' am ashamed?

Because we think that questions of this sort open new ways to address this emotion, a second theme that runs through the contributions in this volume is the role of culture in understanding the moral psychology of shame. Some contributors examine the effect that dominant cultural views and standards have on the shame experienced by members of marginalized groups or subcultures, such as women or individuals on the autism spectrum; in that case the focus falls on the relationship between episodic shame and shame-attunement, and attention is paid not only to what in general can be thought about the cultural biases that certain subordinate groups are subjected to, but to the views expressed by these same groups on their specific experiences of shame.

It is often the case that philosophical reflections are identified as historically, systematically or psychologically oriented. One may want to study the thought of this or that historically relevant author or reflect theoretically on the nature of a certain problem, from the point of view of philosophy or psychology. One of the main purposes of this volume is to overcome this kind of fragmentation. That the main focus of each chapter may appear to fall in one category rather than another is something we deem useful to our readers, and we organized the table of contents accordingly at least to some extent. However, the chapters collected here are the result of a productive dialogue between its authors. We have chosen to present accounts of shame and its moral psychology in non-Western or non-contemporary settings along with chapters in which cultural aspects of shame are discussed in a contemporary framework, but theoretical, historical and psychological aspects are relevant in each one of them. We may not agree with each other on everything, but we have certainly made an effort to understand the different perspectives from which we view the problem, very much in the spirit of this series, and we hope our readers will find this helpful.

In the last few years, philosophers have increasingly drawn on empirical results from psychology to inform their views and arguments. The collection opens with a contribution by psychologist Tjeert Olthof (chapter 1) that shows instead how psychology can benefit from philosophical thinking and, indeed, how the two disciplines cross-pollinate. Olthof offers a quick overview of the psychology of shame during the last thirty years, with an eye to its conceptualization and operationalization. The chapter explains to the neophyte how psychologists measure an emotion such as shame and how different theories of shame have led to conflicting views of its adaptiveness. Olthof himself defends the view that shame implies the threat of an unwanted identity, a view that recurs in various guises in many of the subsequent chapters. He then goes on to ask whether the idea of unwanted identity more specifically amounts to one's fear of having shown oneself to be fundamentally incoherent and therefore as being unfit to be taken seriously as an interaction partner. If valid, this view would imply that shame does not so much reflect one's evaluation of being a bad person, but rather one's fear of not being seen as a person at all.

Personhood, or more appropriately, humanity and its connection to shame is similarly an important theme in JeeLoo Liu's study of the moral efficacy of Confucian shame in chapter 2. According to Mencius (371–289 BCE), for one, someone without the sense of shame and disgust does not qualify as a human being. Along with Mencius, Liu examines the work of Confucius (551–479 BCE) himself and Xunzi (ca. 340–245 BCE). Rather than focussing on episodic shame, as much modern psychology does for the reasons explained by Olthof, these thinkers seem to be more interested in the *sense of shame*, understood as a form of internal *disgust* with oneself derived from the agent's cognitive assessment of her own conduct and thought. While Liu does not ignore disagreements among Confucian scholars on matters as fundamental as the ultimate goodness of human nature, she highlights their basic agreement on shame: in superior moral agents (or 'gentlemen'), the sense of shame is not a reactive self-loathing feeling generated by external pressures or critique, but the reflection of the agent's internal self-commitment to objective moral principles:

> The gentleman can do what is honourable, but he cannot cause others to be certain to show him honour. He can act in a trustworthy fashion, but he cannot cause others to be sure to trust him. He can act so that he is employable, but he cannot cause others to be certain to use him. Hence, the gentleman is *ashamed* not to cultivate himself, but he is *not ashamed* to appear to have flaws. He would be *ashamed* not to be trustworthy, but he is *not ashamed* that he does not appear trustable. He would be *ashamed* to be lacking in ability, but he is *not ashamed* that he remains unused. For these reasons, he is not seduced by praise and is

> not made apprehensive by criticism (*The Xunzi* 6:12; Knoblock 1988, 228, emphasis added).

In a way that displays enticing differences and similarities with Xunzi, in chapter 3, Alessandra Fussi shows how for Plato there is a fundamental difference between the fear of the consequences of a bad reputation, and the authentic shame we may feel when we feel torn between our desires and our ideals. There are certainly many more interesting differences and similarities between the early Confucian and the Ancient Greek views on shame, and Liu touches upon some of them herself. In her discussion of shame in Plato's *Republic*, *Gorgias* and the *Symposium*, however, Fussi sets her gaze on recent Platonic scholarship. For Plato, she argues, the ultimate source of shame is not reason but *thumos* (spiritedness), that is, the part of the soul that responds to ideals, is receptive to the values endorsed by education and aspires to intersubjective recognition. Philosophic or Socratic shame is not solipsistic but relies on intersubjective recognition. What values one endorses and thereby what behaviours shame will tend to inhibit is a function of the relationship between the individual soul (whether it is ruled by reason, by spiritedness or by the appetitive part) and the city or environment in which an individual happens to live (whether the city is governed by philosophers, is a timocracy, an oligarchy, etc.).

On the Platonic view of shame Fussi presents, it follows that shame as such is neither good nor bad. Even this cautious and nuanced conclusion, however, would not have been endorsed by the next historical figure discussed in the collection, to wit, David Hume. In chapter 4, Lorenzo Greco considers the puzzling fact that Hume seems to write remarkably little directly on shame: the terms 'shame' and 'shameful' appear less than ten times in the *Treatise* and the *Enquiries* combined! It is yet possible to find room for shame in Hume, argues Greco, by looking at the passions of humility and pride, about which Hume has indeed much more to say. According to Hume, it is pride, rather than shame or humility, that guarantees a solid basis for our sense of self and warrants the consciousness of one's own value and standing in society thus protecting individuals from self-annihilation. By contrast, shame and humility produce a distorted and repressed conception of the self, and lead to an oppressive and stifling ethical perspective.

Just as readers may be surprised by the paucity of direct references to shame in Hume, they may also be surprised to learn that Nietzsche refers to shame [*scham*, schmach*, schand**] in more than one hundred passages in all of his published and authorized works, from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Ecce Homo* – at least five times as often as he refers to resentment/*ressentiment*. In chapter 5, Mark Alfano applies digital humanities methods to investigate

what Nietzsche has to say about shame in these passages. Very much in line with the spirit of this collection, Nietzsche is ambivalent about shame. His ambivalence, however, can be explained by the fact that shame serves different functions, some of which are embraced, and others rejected by Nietzsche. There are four main functions. First, in a society of near-equals, it regulates interactions and incentives in ways that preserve game-theoretic equilibria. Second and relatedly, Nietzsche associates the capacity to experience nuanced and appropriate feelings of shame – and to anticipate them in others – with the pathos of distance, a virtue that he associates with nobility. Third, when shame is directed towards fixed aspects of human nature, it transforms those aspects into vices; by contrast, when it is directed towards malleable aspects of human nature, it may foster self-improvement and virtue. Nietzsche frequently laments the way that shame targets immutable aspects of ourselves. Finally and relatedly, Nietzsche casts counter-shame on those who would direct first-order shame on fixed aspects of human nature, as well as a paradoxical form of uplifting shame on their victims. If this is right, then Nietzsche does not offer a univocal verdict on shame. Instead, like many other emotions and emotional capacities, shame is inescapable, complex and function-relative.

In chapter 6, Ingrid Vendrell Ferran presents the fascinating and original ideas of Max Scheler on shame. As in Mencius, the theme of humanity is central to Scheler, as are some of the dynamics between the appetitive and the spiritual spheres reminiscent of Plato's view of shame. Shame is human and only human because it involves a conflict between our animal drives and our spiritual sphere: as we are absorbed in some spiritual activity, shame involves our turning our attention back to our spatially and temporally limited, animal-like existence with all its urges and needs. To be precise, for Scheler, human beings feel shame before the spiritual in them. Shame is a specifically human form of individual – rather than social – self-consciousness aimed at protecting the spiritual self. 'Ultimately, man feels ashamed of himself and feels shame "before" God in him (1987, 6; 1957, 69).' In shame, then, it is the higher spiritual value of the self that is protected from a devaluation, making Scheler's shame somewhat reminiscent of Hume's pride.

In the modern discussion, Scheler is one of the first to draw attention to the fact that, while shame is always felt before a self, the self targeted in shame need not be one's own. A consequence of this view is that being ashamed does not necessarily involve feeling shame about one's own self. It is this type of possibility that is at the core of chapter 7, in which Alba Montes Sánchez and Alessandro Salice examine the moral standing of three varieties of shame that involve group identification, namely: shame of you (singular), as when I am ashamed of my friend's racist remark; shame of

you (plural), as when I am ashamed of actions done by my country to which I didn't partake; and shame of us, as when I am ashamed of something we have done collectively. According to Montes Sánchez and Salice, shame as such is neither good nor bad – its moral status depending on the values that help generate it. Hence, an instance of shame would be good if, say, elicited by the look of a homeless beggar or the testimonies of racism, possibly revealing that these people care about the dignity of others. Having the right values, however, is not enough to make shame virtuous. Realizing that one feels shame is only a first step in an important process of self-understanding that eventually leads to critique and transformation of the self and/or the relevant social norms.

In chapter 8, Imke von Maur picks up the thread of social transformation where Montes Sánchez and Salice had left off and applies a *multidimensional* situatedness framework to illustrate how shame has the power to (re)shape whole spaces of meaning and the practices associated with them. Whether something is experienced as shame-worthy, however, depends upon shared spaces of meaning that are intelligible only against the background of concrete practices and forms of living. These 'little worlds', as von Maur calls them, are historically and spatially contingent and thus in need of justification and open to critique. Whether shame occurs in conjunction with a certain object is a function of situational factors, as well as the individual's own emotional dispositions and repertoire, and the active efforts of others to elicit shame in the individual, say, by engaging in acts of (public) shaming. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the moral appropriateness of shame along lines partly similar to those explored by Montes Sánchez and Salice.

Rather than focussing on external efforts to elicit shame in an individual, in chapter 9, Heidi Maibom turns her gaze to the puzzling and often unsolicited phenomenon of shame as experienced by victims of violence and neglect. Why is it that victims of trauma tend to be ashamed of what happened to them, ashamed of their failure to prevent it, and, as time passes, feel shame more often and in a wider range of circumstances? As things stand, most accounts of shame have trouble finding a good answer. According to Maibom, the answer begins with acknowledging the evolutionary origins of shame, and in particular, the fact that it descends from submission in nonhuman animals. This, in turn, means that shame is intimately connected to power. The shamed are overpowered. They cannot protect themselves and are at the mercy of others. Expressing their helplessness through shame might save them. Later in human psychological and cultural evolution, shame becomes closely associated with social and moral norms. In these contexts, the function of shame is to protect us from social threats by teaching us to act in accordance with certain norms and ideals. The *way* it does so, however,

is through a show of power, by those who raise us and by our peers. Power, in one form or other, underwrites norms. This connection to power explains why the ones without social standing or power, and those who are abused by others, feel shame despite the fact that they have not failed to live up to relevant norms or standards.

Questions of social power and shame are also at play when noting, as does Krista Thomason in chapter 10, that feelings of shame are often marshalled to reinforce women's subordinate position in patriarchal societies. Unlike Maibom, however, Thomason is primarily interested in what feminist philosophers might call shame-attunement, that is, a shameful way of being in the world, and in the connection of shame-attunement with episodic feelings of shame. What the two have in common is a troubled sense of self. More precisely, in episodic shame, we feel defined by features of our identity that are determined by how others see us and that overshadow who we ourselves think we are, our self-conception. When we feel shame, we feel our sense of ourselves shaken or called into question. For members of marginalized groups, the part of their identities that indicates their marginalization is thrust regularly into the spotlight. As such, it frequently feels as though it overshadows the rest of them or that it is the first or only thing that people notice about them. The distorted images that confront marginalized people in the social world make their sense of self unstable. From the first-person perspective, then, marginalized people constantly confront the same dynamic that is present in episodes of shame. They experience a long-standing tension between who they think they are and who the world tells them they are. Shame-attunement is the prolonged or repeated feeling of a mismatch between one's sense of self and one's identity.

Finally, in chapter 11, Krause-Jensen and Rodogno also discuss the idea of shame as pervasive affective attunement though mostly in connection with individuals on the autism spectrum. Unlike Thomason, however, they argue that this attunement amounts to an existential feeling, a feeling of being and, in particular a feeling of being of lesser worth, unfitting or simply 'wrong'. They then illustrate the vicious affective dynamics taking place between this feeling and episodic shame and argue that these dynamics explain why shame among marginalized groups such as people on the autism spectrum tends to be experienced as an unconstructive and self-destructive emotion. In the rest of their chapter, Krause-Jensen and Rodogno make use of autobiographical materials and qualitative studies to sketch a picture of the quality of shame among people on the spectrum, a topic hitherto by and large neglected.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Knoblock, John. 1988. *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*. Vol. I. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Scheler, Max. 1987. "Shame and Feelings of Modesty." In Max Scheler (Ed.), *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays*, edited and translated by Manfred Frings, 1–85. Dordrecht: Nijhoff.

Williams, Bernard. 1993. *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

*Chapter 1*

# Themes in Current Psychological Research on Shame

Tjeert Olthof

Although shame has been recognized as an important and useful emotion since ancient times, in much of recent psychological theorizing shame got a bad press as an ugly remnant of our evolutionary past that we should preferably get rid of. Understandably, this was, and often is, the dominant view on shame among clinical psychologists who regularly see patients whose well-being is compromised by intense shame. At the end of the twentieth century, the view of shame as a problematic emotion was reinforced by an impressive body of theoretical and empirical work by social psychologist June Price Tangney and her colleagues (see Tangney and Dearing 2002; Tangney et al. 2007 for overviews). Although even then others objected to the uniformly negative view on shame (Ferguson 2005, 381; Ferguson et al. 2007, 344–345; Sabini and Silver 1997, 6–9), Tangney's account soon became dominant and still is influential. However, in recent years psychologists' view on shame has changed considerably. The first aim of the present chapter is to document the shift in psychological theorizing and research on shame by describing current strands of psychological research on shame and a second aim is to sketch an outline for a new psychological theory of shame.

In doing so, the focus will be on research addressing questions that are of interest to both psychologists and philosophers, like the nature of shame, the role of others in shame, and how to evaluate shame in terms of its contribution to people's lives. This focus implies that less attention will be directed at psychological research that primarily aims to help clinicians understand the nature of particular forms of psychopathology, or therapists to understand the nature of their patients' problems. The differential aims of psychological research on shame affect how researchers measure shame, without that always being made explicit. Accordingly, to understand and evaluate results

obtained in psychological research on shame, it is useful to first look at the different types of instruments that are used to measure shame.

## MEASURING SHAME

Psychologists have used many different approaches and instruments to measure shame and giving a full overview is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, to understand and evaluate the results of psychological research on shame, it is useful to be aware of some of the characteristics of measures that have been used in the psychological literature. A first source of difference among instruments concerns whether and how shame-eliciting situations are used in the measure. A second source of difference concerns the nature of the response scales that are used to capture respondents' shame-related responses. Both are discussed below.

### Shame-Eliciting Situations

One way to characterize how measures of shame deal with shame-eliciting situations is in terms of whether the measure is generalized, that is, abstracted from particular experiences of shame, or contextualized, that is, reflecting respondents' responses to particular potentially shame-eliciting events (Kim et al. 2011, 74–75). In addition, measures can also be characterized in terms of the time frame that is covered.

Some instruments are designed to measure state shame, that is, the actual feelings of shame that an individual has at one particular moment in a particular situation, for example after being subjected to a shame-inducing manipulation in a psychological experiment. Such measures are by nature contextualized and the time frame is limited to the particular moment respondents are in the shame-eliciting situation.

Researchers can also aim to measure anticipated shame. Such measures reflect respondents' personal expectations of the shame they would experience if they would at some future moment be in a particular situation, for example after having committed a criminal or otherwise antisocial act. Anticipated shame resembles state shame in being situation-specific and therefore by nature contextualized. The difference is that the time frame concerns some future moment and that the situation is imagined rather than real. Anticipated shame could therefore well be characterized as imagined state shame.

A third type of measure is designed to reflect dispositional shame, that is, people's general tendency to feel shame that manifests itself in any potentially shame-eliciting situation and at any particular moment in time. Such measures can be either generalized or contextualized and they can rely on

respondents' reports of past shame-related experiences or on their responses to potentially shame-eliciting scenarios (Tignor and Colvin 2017, 343–344).

An example of a generalized dispositional shame measure that relies on respondents' reports of their past experiences, is the Personal Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ-2) (Harder and Zalma 1990, 734). This instrument requires respondents to rate the frequency of having experienced several shame-related feelings. An advantage of this type of procedure is that the resulting measure reflects respondents' actual experiences of shame (Tignor and Colvin 2017, 344), but a potential disadvantage is that such measures not only reflect respondents' disposition to respond with shame to potentially shame-eliciting situations, but also the actual frequency of having been in shame-eliciting situations. For example, being poor, being a child of a criminal parent, or having a disfigured face, may lead one to often experience shame and consequently to score high on PFQ-like measures, without such scores necessarily reflecting a disposition to feel shame in situations that are unrelated to the reasons for feeling ashamed frequently.

Contextualized measures that do not directly rely on past experiences, require respondents to indicate the likelihood that they would respond in particular ways to a range of imaginary and potentially shame-eliciting scenarios. Accordingly, such measures necessarily reflect the authors' choices concerning the scenarios that are used, which yields an important source of differences between such measures. Compare, for example, Tangney et al.'s (2000) Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA), which is a frequently used instrument in psychological research on shame- and guilt-proneness, to Novin and Rieffe's (2015, 57) Brief Shame and Guilt Questionnaire for Children (BSGQ). Each of the TOSCA scenarios was designed to potentially elicit both shame and guilt depending on the respondent's dispositions. Therefore, each scenario describes a moral failure, for example, 'You make a mistake at work and find out a co-worker is blamed for the error'. In contrast, the BSGQ shame-eliciting scenarios were designed to measure shame proneness while minimizing contamination with guilt-proneness. Accordingly, the authors only included shame-eliciting scenarios in which no harm is caused to others, like 'You get a very bad grade at school' and 'You are going to school. You have cut your own hair. You feel stupid'. As a consequence of the type of scenarios included in these measures, TOSCA shame proneness does not cover people's tendency to feel ashamed because of non-moral failures, and BSGQ shame proneness does not cover children's tendency to feel shame because of moral failures.

## Response Scales

A further source of differences between measures of shame concerns the response scales that researchers use to capture the intensity or frequency of

respondents' shame-related feelings. One option is to simply use the label *shame*. This often is the option of choice when measuring state shame (e.g., de Hooge et al. 2008, 936). Some measures of dispositional shame also use *shame* as a response scale. For example, Novin and Rieffe's BSGQ requires children to rate how much shame they would feel in each of the shame-eliciting scenarios. Ratings of shame have also been used successfully in developmental research on children's understanding of the difference between shame and guilt (Olthof et al. 2000, 62; Olthof et al. 2004, 391); and on how children's dispositional or anticipated shame is related to their involvement in bullying other children (Menesini and Camodeca 2008, 187; Olthof 2012, 377); in research on group-based shame (e.g., Allpress et al. 2014, 1274) as well as in evolutionary psychology studies examining the nature of shame (e.g., Sznycer et al. 2016, 2626).

Instruments measuring dispositional shame that focus primarily on helping clinicians and therapists to understand the nature of particular types of psychopathology, often consist of a number of response scales each of which reflecting a feeling that is conceptually and empirically related to shame, without necessarily reflecting shame as such. For example, the shame scale of Harder and Zalma's (1990, 734) PFQ-2 includes items like 'embarrassed', 'feeling ridiculous', and 'feeling humiliated', which implies that the resulting shame scores should not be taken to reflect shame as different from feeling embarrassed or humiliated.

Some measures of dispositional shame that are designed to measure shame rather than related emotions, use shame-related responses rather than the label *shame* in their response scales. For example, the TOSCA uses self-critical cognitions that respondents might have in response to the event depicted in a scenario as well as their behavioural tendencies to hide wrongful behaviour or withdraw from the situation. Examples are 'You would feel small . . . like a rat' and 'You would keep quiet and avoid the co-worker'.

## TANGNEY ON THE (MAL)ADAPTIVENESS OF SHAME

Because much of the current psychological research on shame is at least partly a response to the work by June Price Tangney and her colleagues, it is appropriate to first discuss that body of work. Following Helen Block Lewis' (1971) seminal account, Tangney theorized that both shame and guilt arise in response to the individual's awareness of having done something wrong. The two emotions are assumed to differ, however, in that guilt implies a focus on the badness of one's behaviour, whereas shame implies a focus on the overall badness of oneself as a person. Because behaviour can be changed relatively easy, guilt is theorized to elicit approach behaviour like apologizing for

one's bad behaviour and trying to make up for the damage that was caused, which makes guilt an adaptive response to wrongdoing. Because changing one's whole bad person hardly is an option, shame is theorized to rather elicit avoidance behaviour like withdrawing from social interaction and hiding oneself, which makes shame a maladaptive emotional response.

In a study that is often cited in support of the bad-person-versus-bad-behaviour theory of the shame-versus-guilt contrast, Niedenthal et al. (1994, 588) asked participants what should have been different to prevent them from feeling ashamed (guilty), in particular shame (guilt)-eliciting situations. The authors expected that people would alter qualities of the self to 'undo' shame and qualities of their behaviour to undo guilt. In the authors' interpretation of their findings, this was exactly what they found. In their discussion, they stressed the difficulty of changing one's self and the resulting tendency for shame to have undesirable effects on the individual's mental health and behaviour. However, a close look at the study's results actually reveals that the findings do not at all indicate that shame implies that one attributes one's wrongdoing to an overall bad and unchangeable self. As pointed out by Rodogno (2008, 152), one-third of the 'undoing shame' responses actually concerned altering momentary and transient aspects of the self (as in 'If only I hadn't been absent-minded') with another 30 per cent concerning altering one's behaviour (Rodogno 2008, 152). Since there is no reason to think that momentary and transient aspects of the self are less open to change than one's behaviour, Niedenthal et al.'s results are actually quite compatible with the view that shame can stimulate attempts at self-improvement.

Findings corroborating such a positive view on shame, however, were lacking in most empirical psychological research of the time. In their overview of the links between moral emotions and moral behaviour, Tangney et al. (2007, 354) concluded that there was virtually no evidence for the adaptive nature of shame. This negative verdict on shame was confirmed in a later developmental study from their lab that showed ten- to twelve-year-old children's shame proneness to be a risk factor for deviant behaviour as young adults (Stuewig et al. 2015, 224). However, these negative results had much to do with the way shame was measured. Many of the studies discussed in Tangney et al.'s (2007) review as well as Stuewig et al. (2015, 220), used a version of the TOSCA and, as described in the previous paragraph, none of the TOSCA shame response scales reflects attempts at self-improvement. That this is an important omission is clear from Ferguson et al.'s (2007, 334–340) thorough analysis of the TOSCA measures of shame and guilt. Specifically, these authors' participants thought that they themselves, others in general and morally admirable individuals in particular, but not morally unworthy individuals, would feel shame in response to the TOSCA scenarios. At the same time participants also thought that the actual TOSCA 'shame'

responses to the same scenarios would be unlikely for themselves, for others in general and for morally admirable individuals in particular. These findings suggest that people see shame, but not the TOSCA shame responses, as a morally warranted response to the TOSCA scenarios. These findings also cast doubt on whether TOSCA shame actually reflects genuine feelings of shame. In line with this analysis, several other authors have pointed out that TOSCA shame selectively focuses on the emotion's maladaptive aspects (Cohen et al. 2011, 955; Luyten et al. 2002, 1383; Rodogno 2008, 161–162), which gives shame as measured with the TOSCA little chance to reveal its adaptive side. That such an adaptive side nevertheless exists, is a common theme in much, although not all, psychological research on shame that was carried out since the Tangney et al. (2007) review. Because the claim about shame being a maladaptive emotion is closely tied to the claim that shame implies an overall negative evaluation of oneself as a person, recent research has challenged that claim as well. Some of this work is described in the following paragraphs.

## DISPOSITIONAL SHAME, INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING AND INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING

Recent research on the role of shame in individual well-being has confirmed existing views that having a strong disposition to feel shame is problematic. Dispositional shame was found to be related to several kinds of psychopathology, including depressive symptoms (Kim et al. 2011, 85–87) and eating disorders (Nechita et al. 2020, 36) to just cite two meta-analytic reviews. In much of the reviewed research dispositional shame was measured using instruments like the TOSCA that stress shame's maladaptive action tendencies, which may have strengthened the reported links with psychological problems. However, studies using other measures yielded similar results. For example, Muris et al. (2018, 274) found dispositional shame in young adolescents as measured with Novin and Rieffe's (2015) BSGQ, to be related to symptoms of anxiety disorders. In sum, the literature leaves little room to doubt that shame is a deeply disagreeable emotion and that having a strong disposition to feel shame compromises the individual's well-being.

The evidence concerning the links between dispositional shame and interpersonal and moral functioning is more equivocal. A meta-analytic review by Tignor and Colvin (2017, 351) largely confirmed Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek's (2007, 354) negative verdict on the interpersonal adaptiveness of shame. Specifically, having a strong disposition to feel shame was generally found to be related to hostility and a lack of empathy/forgiveness, even though a small number of studies also showed shame to be related to morality. Another meta-analysis focused on delinquency as the outcome variable

while including both dispositional and state shame as independent variables (Spruit et al. 2016, 14). This study yielded slightly more favourable results in that there was a weak negative relation between shame and delinquency. However, because there was a considerably stronger negative relation between guilt and delinquency and because shame and guilt were positively related, the authors downplayed the favourable results for shame by attributing them to shame's association to guilt (Spruit et al. 2016, 18).

The mainly unfavourable results for shame should not be surprising as many of the studies included in both reviews measured dispositional shame using the TOSCA or a closely related predecessor. To get a feel for how the nature of the measure may have affected the results, it is helpful to take a close look at one of the studies that was included in both reviews, that is, Cohen et al.'s (2011) introduction of their Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP). The GASP generally resembles the TOSCA, but was specifically designed to distinguish between the behavioural tendencies and self-critical cognitions components of shame and guilt. The GASP's behavioural avoidance and negative self-evaluation components of shame, although only weakly related to each other, were both related to low individual well-being. However, only the behavioural avoidance component was also related to antisocial behaviour. The negative self-evaluation component of shame rather resembled both components of guilt in that antisocial behaviour was inhibited. Based on the overall pattern of their findings, Cohen et al. (2011, 962) concluded that the avoidance component of GASP shame should not be seen as reflecting dispositional shame, but rather as a maladaptive behavioural tendency. In their review, Spruit et al. (2016) acknowledged not taking this conclusion into account when incorporating the Cohen et al. study, and Tignor and Colvin (2017) also seem to have ignored the distinction between both components of GASP shame. To me, the finding that the GASP avoidance and negative self-evaluation components were differentially related to antisocial behaviour, casts doubt on results obtained with measures of dispositional shame that take behavioural avoidance to reflect shame.

Apart from doubts about particular measures of dispositional shame, the research strategy of relating individual differences in dispositional shame to individual differences in other domains, is not the only, and perhaps also not the best, way to increase our understanding of the nature and workings of shame. Dispositional shame research is especially informative if one is interested in what to expect from people who have a strong disposition to feel shame. However, because such people are by definition exceptional, there likely are better ways to increase our understanding of how shame affects the daily functioning of people who are unexceptional in terms of how often they feel ashamed. For that purpose, I now turn to the much smaller body of research on state shame and anticipated shame.

## BEHAVIOURAL CONSEQUENCES AND CORRELATES OF STATE SHAME AND ANTICIPATED SHAME

The usefulness of studying state shame is nicely illustrated in a series of experimental studies by Ilona de Hooge and colleagues that examined the motivational and behavioural consequences of feeling ashamed. State shame was induced in a psychology lab in several ways, including imagining or recalling instances of feeling intense shame and letting participants believe that they performed badly in a public event. Shame was found to promote (1) prosocial behaviour in an economic game (de Hooge et al. 2008, 936–939), (2) prosocial daily behaviour (de Hooge et al. 2008, 939–940), and (3) spending time in the company of others over being alone (de Hooge et al. 2018, 1675). In two further studies, the participants' motivation to restore and to protect their threatened self was also measured. Findings suggested that shame primarily promotes approach behaviours in an attempt to restore one's threatened self. Only if such behaviours are impossible or imply the risk of further threats to the self, protecting the threatened self becomes relatively more important, together with the avoidance behaviours that figured so prominently in the TOSCA measure of shame proneness (de Hooge et al. 2010, 122; 2011, 944).

In their review, Tangney et al. (2007, 354) cited findings by Tibbetts (1997) that shame proneness (measured as frequently having shame-related thoughts and feelings) was related to being prepared to commit criminal offences. However, these authors did not cite another finding that Tibbetts reported in the same paper, that is, that people who *anticipated* to feel shame in the imaginary event that they would commit criminal offences, rather indicated that they would refrain from committing them (Tibbetts 1997, 247). Although at first sight contradictory, such a pattern of findings actually makes sense. After all, one reason for people to often have shame-related thoughts and feelings is that they often behave, or plan to behave, in ways that makes them feel ashamed. The frequency or intensity of having shame-related thoughts and feelings can thus be expected to be related to the frequency of shameful behaviour, including instances of wrongdoing. As was already pointed out by Aristotle when discussing his concept of *aidos* (Fussi 2015, 114–116; this volume), anticipated shame for wrongdoing, in contrast, can rather be expected to lead people to avoid feeling ashamed by not committing the shameful behaviour in the first place. Further evidence supporting this hypothesis comes from a study that examined the relation between anticipated moral affect and antisocial behaviour in ten- to thirteen-year-old early adolescents (Olthof 2012). Participants were first asked to imagine that they would participate in bullying a classmate. They then reported the expected intensity of their feelings of guilt and their feelings of shame before

their teachers and parents. The participants' actual antisocial behaviour was measured using reports from teachers and peers. Findings indicated that not only participants who reported high levels of guilt actually refrained from behaving antisocially, but those who reported high levels of shame did so as well (Olthof 2012, 384).

## GROUP-BASED SHAME

A rapidly increasing body of research that both reflects and contributes to psychologists' changing views on shame, concerns group-based shame. People can feel shame because of other people's failures or characteristics if being related to those others somehow is part of their own identity (Montes Sánchez and Salice, this volume; Salice and Montes Sánchez 2016, 8–11; Welten et al. 2012, 845). This is often true for one's family members, present or past fellow countrymen, not-too-far-away ancestors, and others to whom one feels related. In terms of the earlier made distinction between state shame, anticipated shame, and dispositional shame, group-based shame can be seen as a kind of state shame because the shame is felt in response to the specific situation of (being informed about) wrongdoing by group members.

In an early study in this area, Iyer et al. (2007, 584) found that United States and British citizens' shame responses to a news story about the negative consequences of their nations' interventions in Iraq, predicted their support for withdrawal from Iraq. The authors interpreted this response as being in line with the then-dominant view that shame leads people to withdraw from the situation, but later researchers found group-based shame to also stimulate downright prosocial responses. For example, Gausel et al. (2012, 957) found that majority members' shame about the bad treatment of a minority group in their country, predicted their contrition towards the victimized minority group members, which in turn predicted their support for prosocial action towards them, for example by making restitution. Similarly, Allpress and colleagues found that Australians' shame about their country's immoral behaviour towards Aboriginal Australians and British citizens' shame about the morally problematic behaviour of British military forces during the struggle for independence of Kenya (Allpress et al. 2010, 85–86) and in the Iraq war (Allpress et al. 2014, 1275–1276) was related to supporting making apologies and compensating victims.

Both groups of researchers found group-based shame to be a prosocial emotion, but to be able to reach this conclusion they had to isolate shame, or a particular form of shame, from related emotions or from other forms of shame. For example, Allpress and colleagues distinguished shame reflecting concern about one's moral standing (*moral shame*) from shame reflecting

concern about one's social image (*image shame*) and only moral shame appeared to be related to prosocial outcomes (Allpress et al. 2014, 1281). Allpress et al. justified the distinction between both forms of shame by referring to Deonna et al.'s (2012) argument that shame arises when people's behaviour severely undermines one or more of the values that define their identity. When group members behave immorally, people who value a positive collective image are likely to feel image shame, whereas people who value their moral standing are likely to feel moral shame. A somewhat similar distinction was made by Berndsen and Gausel (2015, 733–734) who differentiated between two ways of identifying with one's nation, that is, (1) nationally glorifying identification which implies showing unconditional devotion to one's nation and its symbols and (2) nationally attached identification which implies feeling strongly connected to one's nation and its inhabitants. These authors subsequently found that only nationally attached identification was related to feeling shame for the immoral behaviour of one's fellow citizens towards a minority group (Berndsen and Gausel 2015, 736–737).

Instead of distinguishing between different forms of shame like Allpress et al. (2014), Gausel and Leach (2011, 475) took a more radical approach by defining shame in such a way that many of the antisocial or otherwise maladaptive behaviours that have traditionally been associated with shame could be attributed to other feelings like feeling inferior or rejected. Specifically, these authors defined shame as 'a dysphoric experience of contrite self-criticism about a failure in a domain important to the self-concept'. In two ways, this definition restricts the scope of the construct *shame*. First, the 'contrite self-criticism' aspect implies that people's reports of feeling ashamed because of being physically deformed, severely disabled, having a low status, being poor, or being seriously victimized, and so on, reflects something else than shame. Actually, Gausel and Leach argued that the shame reported by victims of sexual assault should rather be seen as expressing a fear of being condemned by their family or community (Gausel and Leach 2011, 477). These authors thus seem to declare the shame reported by people who are not involved in any type of failure or wrongdoing, not to be shame at all. To me, this seems questionable when seen in the light of several philosophical (e.g., Maibom, this volume; Thomason 2018; Velleman 2001) and psychological (e.g., Crozier 1998; Olthof 2002; Olthof et al. 2004; Robertson et al. 2018) accounts of shame in which precisely such cases are central to the analysis.

The second restriction implied by Gausel and Leach's definition of shame follows from the 'domain important to the self-concept' aspect. In the model underlying their empirical work, Gausel and colleagues took shame to only reflect appraisals of specific, rather than global, self-image defects. This makes sense given these authors' focus on group-based shame. After all,

people who feel shame about their country's or their fellow citizens' present or past immoral behaviour, feel bad about a specific aspect of who they are, that is, their membership in a particular group, rather than about their person as a whole. Although this is at odds with Tangney's claim that shame reflects a globally negative evaluation of the self, the claim that shame can be elicited by specific self-image defects is in line with other accounts of shame (e.g., Olthof 2002, 194; Olthof et al. 2004, 397–402). However, Gausel and colleagues' position is unique in arguing that appraisals of global self-image or social image defects do not elicit shame at all, but rather feelings of inferiority or rejection, respectively (Gausel and Leach 2011, 470; Gausel et al. 2016, 119–120). To me, this claim seems hard to defend, given that feeling small and worthless and realizing that one might be looked at with disgust and horror, can be prominent aspects of people's phenomenological experience of shame (Lindsay-Hartz 1984, 694). In general, it seems to me that their zeal to portray shame as a beneficial and prosocial emotion led Gausel and colleagues to defining shame in a too restrictive way.

A further weakness of much of the group-based shame research is that the choice of response scales used to measure shame (or a form of shame) leaves room for doubt about what exactly was measured. For example, both Gausel and Allpress and their colleagues included response scales using *humiliated* and *disgraced*. As testified by the Cambridge dictionary descriptions of these terms as, respectively, 'having *been made* ashamed' and 'having lost *people's respect*' (my emphasis, T.O.), both terms emphasize being seen in a negative light by others. Feeling humiliated has also been found to have a commonality with anger (Elshout et al. 2017, 1592) and to be more strongly related to aggression and a lack of reparative behaviour than shame (Silfver-Kuhalampia et al. 2015, 226), which makes it doubtful whether such response scales should be used to measure shame.

## EVOLUTIONARY APPROACHES

Researchers studying shame increasingly take an evolutionary perspective (Fessler 2007; Gilbert 2007). Because Gilbert's theory recently inspired a productive line of psychological research on the nature of shame, I focus on his account here. Gilbert (2007, 289) argued that it is essential for humans to have information about how one is seen and evaluated by others. Being informed that one is seen in a positive light by others in one's social environment, implies that one is safe in the presence of those others, and that one can expect them to provide support if necessary, and to cooperate when that is mutually beneficial. In line with philosophical accounts that portray shame as a self-protective emotion (Deigh 1983; Velleman 2001), Gilbert

further argued that it is shame that provides such information by warning the individual one is at risk of being considered unattractive by others. Accordingly, rather than being a maladaptive emotion, shame is an essential guide to maneouvering one's social world.

A similar idea underlies Daniel Sznycer's *information threat theory* of shame. Sznycer argued that one of the functions of shame is to give guidance about one's future course of action by monitoring how such behaviour would affect the chances of being devalued by others in one's social environment (Sznycer et al. 2016, 2625–2626). One implication is that people can feel shame if they know or suspect that others think negatively about them, even when they themselves know such thoughts to be unjustified. Sznycer and colleagues tested this hypothesis by asking participants to imagine being a waiter who inadvertently gives a colleague the impression of stealing tip money, when actually only taking change out of the tip box in exchange for the equivalent amount of money in banknotes (Robertson et al. 2018, 568). Results indicated that participants felt ashamed despite having done nothing wrong. Although this result is in line with several psychological and philosophical accounts of shame (e.g., Crozier 1998, 276; Maibom, this volume; Olthof 2002, 194; Thomason 2018, 23–40), it contradicts a key element in Tangney's account, that is, that shame implies a belief in the overall badness of oneself as a person.

A further implication of Sznycer's theory is that one does not need to actually feel shame to profit from shame's role as a monitor of the risk of being devaluated. Being able to anticipate how much shame one would feel, is sufficient to guide one's behaviour. For shame to function in this way, there should be a close relation between the intensity of the shame people feel when behaving in a particular way or when having particular characteristics, and the degree of devaluation by others in their social environment that might be elicited by their behaviour or characteristics. To test this hypothesis, Sznycer et al. (2016) confronted participants from the United States, India, and Israel with a relatively large number of scenarios in which something unfavourable was said about a protagonist. The unfavourable information varied in terms of seriousness (ranging from having no idea how to load or fire a gun, via having bad table manners, to stealing from a neighbour's shop). In each cultural group, the authors then asked half of the participants to rate the scenarios in terms of how much shame they would feel if they were the protagonist, and the other half to rate the scenarios in terms of how negatively they would view the protagonist. The researchers then examined the correspondence between the scenario's mean shame and negativity judgements by computing correlations across the scenarios. The correspondence appeared to be substantial and this was also true in several other samples, including another US sample (Cohen et al. 2020) and samples from fifteen non-Western small-scale

communities from all over the world (Sznycer et al. 2018). The authors took these results as strong support for their hypothesis that shame is designed to precisely predict the magnitude of devaluation in one's social environment if one were to behave in a particular way (see also Sznycer 2019 and 2021 for overviews of the research from his lab).

Although the correspondence between both types of judgements is in line with the hypothesis, there are reasons to doubt whether the evidence is sufficiently strong to support the hypothesis and also whether the currently available evidence is fully consistent with the hypothesis. First, it should be noted that the hypothesis concerns the correspondence between (1) differentially intense feelings of shame that one particular individual experiences across a range of potentially shame-eliciting situations and (2) differentially negative judgements by the same individual's social environment across the same situations. However, the supporting evidence only reflects a correspondence between averaged shame intensities and averaged negativity judgements at the group level. The hypothesis would be on a stronger footing if it could be shown that the same correspondence also exists at the level of individuals.

That the currently available evidence is not fully consistent with the hypothesis, can be seen when looking at the actual judgements (presented in the supplementary information to Sznycer et al. 2016). These indicate that the overall correspondence between the shame and negativity judgements was caused by scenarios like the protagonist stealing goods from a neighbour's shop (intense shame and high negativity), having bad table manners (moderate shame and moderate negativity), and having no idea how to load or fire a gun (low shame and low negativity). However, in each cultural group there were also scenarios that elicited considerably higher shame than negativity judgements. Cultures differed somewhat in terms of which scenarios showed the strongest discrepancies, but in all three of Sznycer et al.'s (2016) samples as well as in Cohen et al.'s (2020) replication sample, scenarios about one's brother stealing money from a stranger and about one's spouse being sexually unfaithful, elicited considerably higher shame than negativity judgements. In the United States and Israel, the same pattern was also found for having a disfigured face because of an accident. It is not difficult to see why these scenarios elicited relatively low negativity judgements. After all, nothing in the protagonists' behaviour or characteristics justified evaluating them negatively. Sznycer et al.'s scenarios did not include known elicitors of shame like being a victim of sexual abuse (Vidal and Petrak 2007; McElvaney et al. 2021) or of bullying (Simonds et al. 2016, 552), that can be expected to also produce shame-negativity discrepancies, at least in Western samples. Such discrepancies are also likely for most of the shame-but-not-guilt-eliciting situations used in the developmental studies by Olthof et al. (2000, 64), Olthof et al. (2004, 390), and Novin and Rieffe (2015, 57).

To my knowledge, Sznycer and colleagues did not discuss the shame-negativity discrepancies in their data, but they could perhaps save their hypothesis by arguing that people's negativity judgements do not always reflect how they actually would feel about, and behave towards, someone who has a disfigured face or whose brother is a thief. Perhaps people's imagined shame better reflects how an audience feels and behaves than the audience's own negativity judgements. An alternative interpretation could be that in ambiguous situations it might be wise for shame to err on the safe side when predicting the risk of being devaluated. It might be worth testing these possibilities empirically, but another possibility is that the concept of *devaluation* needs to be rethought. This possibility is discussed in the next paragraph.

## IMPLICATIONS AND BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF SHAME

As is clear from the work discussed earlier, the once-dominant psychological view on shame as a maladaptive emotion reflecting a globally negative self-evaluation, is seriously challenged. Below I discuss the implications of the new research both with respect to the adaptiveness of shame and with respect to the cognitions associated with feeling ashamed. Finally, I sketch the outlines of what might become a new psychological account of shame.

### (Mal)adaptive?

From the work discussed so far it is clear that psychologists increasingly recognize that shame, although a disagreeable emotion that may in extreme cases compromise one's mental health, also helps people manoeuvre in their social world, avoid immoral behaviour and even behave prosocially. In fact, it is precisely its disagreeableness that allows shame to play an important role in people's social and moral life. This implies that researchers and theoreticians should resist the temptation to define and operationalize shame in such a way that the results obtained fit their conceptions of shame as a maladaptive or rather a prosocial emotion (see Cibich et al. 2016, 471–472; Deonna et al. 2012, 99; Thomason 2018, 23–40 for similar recommendations).

The shift in psychological research to recognizing the adaptive side of shame was accompanied by critical analyses of the measurement paradigm used to measure shame proneness, as well as by an increasing focus on non-dispositional shame. Although dispositional shame still figures prominently in clinical psychological research, researchers increasingly focused on types of shame that could be shown to have adaptive value. Nevertheless, even non-dispositional shame is not necessarily adaptive. For example, Sander Thomaes

and colleagues induced state shame in young adolescents by letting them lose a competitive computer game from opponents who were introduced as being very bad at the game. Some participants, that is, those with narcissistic traits who also had high self-esteem, subsequently took the opportunity to blast their opponents with loud noise, suggesting that their shame for having lost the game led them to behave aggressively (Thomaes et al. 2008, 1797). A meta-analytic overview of studies on whether episodic (that is, non-dispositional) shame would lead to constructive approach behaviour revealed that shame only elicits such behaviour when the shame-inducing failure can be repaired (Leach and Cidam 2015, 997). Shame elicited by irreparable failures, for example because one's victim is physically unavailable, or because self-improvement seems impossible, was negatively related to constructive approach.

## Bad Self?

The work discussed earlier makes clear that the once-dominant psychological view of shame as implying a globally negative self-evaluation, is no longer tenable. For example, the work on group-based shame has provided ample evidence that appraisals of specific, rather than global, self-deficits can underlie shame. There even is increasing evidence that shame can also occur without the individual being critical about the self at all. Even in the heyday of Tangney's approach to shame, some psychologists already made this point. In a thoughtful essay, Crozier (1998, 280–282) discussed several convincing examples of shame without self-criticism. My own discussion of this issue (Olthof 2002, 194) was inspired by our finding that children and adolescents attributed moderately intense shame to hypothetical agemates who suffered from a medical problem (e.g., epilepsy) that caused them to show strange behaviour in public settings (Olthof et al. 2004, 394). Because the protagonists in these scenarios could hardly be expected to perceive the self as globally bad, or even to be bad in any respect, it seemed unlikely that such beliefs necessarily underlie shame. As described earlier, Robertson et al. (2018, 568) experimentally confirmed that people can feel shame without thinking they did anything wrong.

## Building Blocks for a New Psychological Account of Shame

Given the evidence discussed earlier, the once-dominant psychological view on shame clearly is in need of being replaced. In my view, a new psychological account of shame should be explicit both about the cognitions and phenomenological experiences associated with feeling ashamed, and about the function of shame and its action tendencies. Finally, the account should be able to explain the occurrence of shame in the full range of situations that are known to elicit shame.

One such building block could be Sznycer's evolutionary approach, according to which shame serves as a monitor of how one is evaluated in one's social environment. However, the previously discussed shame-negativity discrepancies suggest that more thought should be given to Sznycer's concept of *devaluation*. If audiences do not have very negative views of victims of sexual abuse or bullying, and of people with a disfigured face, a stealing brother or an unfaithful spouse, what then elicits such people's shame? In earlier writings, my colleagues and I used the notion of an *unwanted identity* to refer to the cognitions underlying shame. An unwanted identity is one's realization that, when seen from the perspective of important others, one seems to be what one does not want to be (Ferguson et al. 2000, 136; Olthof et al. 2000, 53, Olthof 2002, 194; Olthof et al. 2004, 383–388). I further proposed that such an unwanted identity might not so much concern one or the other unfavourable characteristic that one might have, but rather one's fear that, when seen from the perspective of a relevant audience, one's behavioural or appearance-related manifestations to the outside world give the impression of not being authored by a coherent and consistent self (Olthof 2002, 194–195; Olthof et al. 2004, 401). Such an impression might in turn lead audiences to devalue the individual in terms of being an autonomous agent, which implies the risk of not being taken seriously as a community member and a potential interaction partner and thereby of being socially excluded. Having a disfigured face, a stealing brother, an unfaithful spouse or being a victim of sexual abuse or bullying, all may elicit such fears. The same is true of behaviours that reveal the self to be incoherent or inconsistent, for example by not performing as well as one has announced one would, or by not keeping up to standards that one is known or assumed to adhere to. Many of the situations that Simonds et al.'s (2016, 552) adolescent and Lyhne and Wagoner's (2022, 296–302) young adult participants mentioned as elicitors of shame satisfy this characterization. These include doing not as well as one could in a test/exam/sports; giving into peer pressure; lying/betrayal; letting others down/not doing as others expected; arguing/fighting; getting told off/into trouble; doing/getting something wrong; being a bully; and physically/emotionally hurting others, committing crimes and showing a lack of self-control, for example when being drunk.

More eloquent and better-argued versions of a similar idea are central to both Velleman's (2001) and, to a lesser extent, Thomason's (2018) accounts of shame. To cite Velleman (2001, 37): 'Threats to your standing as a self-presenting creature are thus a source of deep anxiety, and anxiety about the threatened loss of that standing is, in my view, what constitutes the emotion of shame.' Velleman further linked one's standing as a competent self-presenter to being 'acknowledged as a potential partner in conversation, cooperation, or even competition and conflict' (Velleman, p. 37). Although

Thomason objected to the latter claim, she also explained at least some cases of shame in terms of being seen while being 'lost in oneself' and when letting go 'our sensitivity for how we look' (Thomason 2018, 115), thus stressing the importance of one's unauthorized manifestations to the outside world as elicitors of shame.

If correct, one implication of the present account is that Sznycer's construct of *devaluation* by an audience should not be conceptualized and measured in terms of the audience's generally negative judgements about the individual, but rather in terms of the extent to which the audience feels that the individual's behaviour or characteristics detract from her value as a community member and interaction partner. For example, even if people do not give negative evaluations of someone whose brother they know to be a thief, this knowledge might nevertheless lead them to value the individual less as a community member and a potential interaction partner. As pointed out before, examining the correspondence between people's shame and the audience's judgements should preferably be done at the level of individuals, rather than at the level of groups. Doing so would, however, raise another issue that is usually ignored in psychological research on shame (but see Olthof 2012, 373–374), that is, the perspectival nature of shame. We can look at ourselves from many different perspectives with dramatic consequences for our shame. For example, when in the company of my well-to-do friends who own big and fancy cars, I might feel ashamed because of my owning a small and fairly old car. But when looking at myself from the perspective of Greta Thunberg and her climate activist friends, I might feel ashamed of owning a car at all, especially when considering the excellent infrastructure in terms of public transport and bicycle travel in the country I am a citizen of. Empirical examples illustrating shame's perspectival nature can be found both in early (Smith 1915, 231) and recent (Lyhne and Wagoner 2022, 397) qualitative psychological work on shame. Ideally, a test of the correspondence between people's feelings of shame and the relevant audiences' judgements should take the perspectival nature of shame into account.

In terms of the proposed account, anticipated shame serves as a monitor of one's standing as being coherent and consistent and able to authorize one's manifestations to the outside world. As such, anticipated shame helps the individual to refrain from behaving in ways that would compromise that standing. If such efforts fail, people's actual shame serves as a signal that they acknowledge the damage done to their standing as the author of their manifestations to the outside world, or, in Velleman's terms, as a competent self-presenter. Some, or perhaps even all, of the action tendencies associated with shame can be seen as attempts to restore one's sense of agency. Such attempts can take the form of constructive approach to others (Cibich et al. 2016, 476; Leach and Cidam 2015) similar to the kindness to others

that Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1878) Hester Prynne used to restore her sense of agency (Thomason 2018, 120). But as argued by Olthof (2002, 201) and Thomason (2018, 120–121) the individual can also try to restore her sense of agency by getting angry and showing proactive aggressive behaviour, as did Thomaes et al.'s (2008) narcissistic adolescents. Thomason (2018, 120) suggested that the action tendencies traditionally associated with shame, for example hiding oneself, should also be seen as attempts to restore one's sense of agency. Because hiding oneself does little to convince an audience of one's restored agency, I would prefer to interpret such behaviours as reflecting the individual's feeling that for the time being it is impossible to undertake restorative activities.

## Final Remarks

I hope it is clear from the work discussed in this chapter that many psychologists have stopped to only see shame as an ugly emotion that people should leave behind as soon as possible. Although still being acknowledged as a disagreeable emotion that might in extreme cases compromise one's personal well-being, shame is now also seen as playing an important role in people's social and moral life.

Let me end by making an observation that is both personal and methodological: About fifteen years ago, I happened to meet a couple of philosophers who worked in a field they called *moral psychology*. As a psychologist who had spent quite some time doing research and teaching on moral affect and moral development, I was surprised to discover that there was a whole area of scholarship that seemed highly relevant for what I was doing, but that I knew virtually nothing about. Since that time, I caught up a bit and found it both inspiring and helpful to read philosophical work about topics that I only knew from the psychological literature. From that experience, I can only encourage both psychologists and philosophers to get familiar with each other's work and I hope this chapter is helpful in that respect.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allpress, Jesse A., Fiona Kate Barlow, Rupert Brown, and Winnifred R. Louis. 2010. "Atoning for Colonial Injustices: Group-Based Shame and Guilt Motivate Support for Reparation." *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 4(1): 75–88. https://doi.org/10.4119/ijcv-2816.

Allpress, Jesse A., Rupert Brown, Roger Giner-Sorolla, Julien A. Deonna, and Fabrice Teroni. 2014. "Two Faces of Group-Based Shame: Moral Shame and Image Shame Differentially Predict Positive and Negative Orientations to Ingroup Wrongdoing."

*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40(10): 1270–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214540724.

Berndsen, Mariëtte, and Nicolay Gausel. 2015. "When Majority Members Exclude Ethnic Minorities: The Impact of Shame on the Desire to Object to Immoral Acts." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 45(6): 728–41. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2127.

Cibich, Mikaela, Lydia Woodyatt, and Michael Wenzel. 2016. "Moving Beyond 'Shame is Bad': How a Functional Emotion Can Become Problematic." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 10(9): 471–83. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12263.

Cohen, Adam Scott, Rie Chun, and Daniel Sznycer. 2020. "Do Pride and Shame Track the Evaluative Psychology of Audiences? Preregistered Replications of Sznycer et al. (2016, 2017)." *Royal Society, Open Science* 7: 191922. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.191922.

Cohen, Taya R., Scott T. Wolf, A. T. Panter, and Chester A. Insko. 2011. "Introducing the GASP Scale: A New Measure of Guilt and Shame Proneness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100(5): 947–66. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022641.

Crozier, W. Ray. 1998. "Self-Consciousness in Shame: The Role of the 'Other'". *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 28(3): 273–86. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00075.

de Hooge, Ilona E., Marcel Zeelenberg, and Seger M. Breugelmans. 2010. "Restore and Protect Motivations Following Shame." *Cognition and Emotion* 24(1): 111–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930802584466.

de Hooge, Ilona E., Marcel Zeelenberg, and Seger M. Breugelmans. 2011. "A Functionalist Account of Shame-Induced Behaviour." *Cognition and Emotion* 25(5): 939–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2010.516909.

de Hooge, Ilona E., Seger M. Breugelmans, Fieke M. A. Wagemans, and Marcel Zeelenberg. 2018. "The Social Side of Shame: Approach Versus Withdrawal." *Cognition and Emotion*, 32(8): 1671–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2017.1422696.

de Hooge, Ilona E., Seger M. Breugelmans, and Marcel Zeelenberg. 2008. "Not So Ugly After All: When Shame Acts as a Commitment Device." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95(4): 933–43. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011991.

Deigh, John. 1983. "Shame and Self-Esteem: A Critique." *Ethics* 93(January): 225–45. https://doi.org/10.1086/292431.

Deonna, Julien A., Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni. 2012. *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Elshout, Maartje, Rob M. A. Nelissen, and Ilja van Beest. 2017. "Conceptualising Humiliation." *Cognition and Emotion* 31(8): 1581–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2016.1249462.

Ferguson, Tamara J. 2005. "Mapping Shame and its Functions in Relationships." *Child Maltreatment* 10(4): 377–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559505281430.

Ferguson, Tamara J., Daniel J. Brugman, Jennifer J. White, and Heidi L. Eyre. 2007. "Shame and Guilt as Morally Warranted Experiences." In *The Self-Conscious*

*Emotions: Theory and Research,* edited by Jessica L. Tracy, Richard W. Robins, and June Price Tangney, 330–48. New York: Guilford Press.

Ferguson, Tamara J., Heidi L. Eyre, and Michael Ashbaker. 2000. "Unwanted Identities: A Key Variable in Shame–Anger Links and Gender Differences in Shame." *Sex Roles* 42(3–4): 133–57. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007061505251.

Fessler, Daniel M. T. 2007. "From Appeasement to Conformity: Evolutionary and Cultural Perspectives on Shame, Competition, and Cooperation." In *The Self-Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research*, edited by Jessica L. Tracy, Richard W. Robins, and June Price Tangney, 174–93. New York: Guilford Press.

Fussi, Alessandra. 2015. "Aristotle on Shame." *Ancient Philosophy* 35(1): 113–35. https://doi.org/10.5840/ancientphil20153517.

Gausel, Nicolay, and Colin W. Leach. 2011. "Concern for Self-Image and Social-Image in the Management of Moral Failure: Rethinking Shame." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 41(4): 468–78. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.803.

Gausel, Nicolay, Colin W. Leach, Vivian L. Vignoles, and Rupert Brown. 2012. "Defend or Repair? Explaining Responses to Ingroup Moral Failure by Disentangling Feelings of Shame, Rejection, and Inferiority." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102(5): 941–60. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027233.

Gausel, Nicolay, Vivian L. Vignoles, and Colin W. Leach. 2016. "Resolving the Paradox of Shame: Differentiating Among Specific Appraisal-Feeling Combinations Explains Pro-Social and Self-Defensive Motivation." *Motivation and Emotion* 40(February): 118–39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-015-9513-y.

Gilbert, Paul. 2007. "The Evolution of Shame as a Marker of Relationship Security: A Biopsychosocial Approach." In *The Self-Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research*, edited by Jessica L. Tracy, Richard W. Robins, and June Price Tangney, 283–309. New York: Guilford Press.

Harder, David W., and Alysa Zalma. 1990. "Two Promising Shame and Guilt Scales: A Construct Validity Comparison." *Journal of Personality Assessment* 55(3–4): 729–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.1990.9674108.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. 1878. *The Scarlet Letter*. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company.

Iyer, Aarti, Toni Schmader, and Brian Lickel. 2007. "Why Individuals Protest the Perceived Transgressions of Their Country: The Role of Anger, Shame, and Guilt." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33(4): 572–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206297402.

Kim, Sangmoon, Ryan Thibodeau, and Randall S. Jorgensen. 2011. "Shame, Guilt, and Depressive Symptoms: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Psychological Bulletin* 137(1): 68–96. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021466.

Leach, Colin Wayne, and Atilla Cidam, A. 2015. "When is Shame Linked to Constructive Approach Orientation? A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 109(6): 983–1002. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000037.

Lewis, Helen B. 1971. *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press.

Lindsay-Hartz, Janice. 1984. "Contrasting Experiences of Shame and Guilt." *American Behavioral Scientist* 27(6): 689–704. https://doi.org/10.1177/000276484027006003.

Luyten, Patrick, Johnny R. J. Fontaine, and Jozef Corveleyn. 2002. "Does the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) Measure Maladaptive Aspects of Guilt and Adaptive Aspects of Shame? An Empirical Investigation." *Personality and Individual Differences* 33(8): 1373–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00197-6.

Lyhne, Regitze, and Brady Wagoner. 2022. "Shame Experienced by Self and Others: A Relational Approach." *Culture & Psychology* 28(3): 289–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X211073919.

Marschall, Donna, Jennifer Saftner, and June Price Tangney. 1994. *The State Shame and Guilt Scale*. Fairfax, VA: George Mason University.

McElvaney, Rosaleen, Rusan Lateef, Delphine Collin-Vézina, Ramona Alaggia, and Megan Simpson. 2021. "Bringing Shame Out of the Shadows: Identifying Shame in Child Sexual Abuse Disclosure Processes and Implications for Psychotherapy." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211037435.

Menesini, Ersilia, and Marina Camodeca. 2008. "Shame and Guilt as Behavior Regulators: Relationships With Bullying, Victimization and Prosocial Behavior." *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 26(2): 183–96. https://doi.org/10.1348/026151007X205281.

Muris, Peter, Cor Meesters, and Mike van Asseldonk. 2018. "Shame on Me! Self-Conscious Emotions and Big Five Personality Traits and Their Relations to Anxiety Disorders Symptoms in Young, Non-Clinical Adolescents." *Child Psychiatry and Human Development* 49(April): 268–78. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-017-0747-7.

Nechita, Diana-Mirela, Samuel Bud, and Daniel David. 2021. "Shame and Eating Disorders Symptoms: A Meta-Analysis." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 54(11): 1899–1945. https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23583.

Niedenthal, Paula M., June Price Tangney, and Igor G. Gavanski. 1994. "'If Only I Weren't' vs 'If Only I Hadn't': Distinguishing Shame and Guilt in Counterfactual Thinking." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(4): 585–95. https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.67.4.585.

Novin, Sheida, and Carolien Rieffe. 2015. "Validation of the Brief Shame and Guilt Questionnaire for Children." *Personality and Individual Differences* 85(October): 56–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.04.028.

Olthof, Tjeert. 2002. "Shame, Guilt, Antisocial Behavior, and Juvenile Justice: A Psychological Perspective." In *Punishing Juveniles*, edited by Ido Weijers and Antony Duff, 193–205. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Olthof, Tjeert. 2012. "Anticipated Feelings of Guilt and Shame as Predictors of Early Adolescents' Antisocial and Prosocial Interpersonal Behavior." *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 9(3): 371–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2012.680300.

Olthof, Tjeert, Anneke Schouten, Hilde Kuiper, Hedy Stegge, and Aagje Jennekens-Schinkel. 2000. "Shame and Guilt in Children: Differential Situational Antecedents and Experiential Correlates." *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 18(1): 51–64. https://doi.org/10.1348/026151000165562.

Olthof, Tjeert, Tamara J. Ferguson, Eva Bloemers, and Marinda Deij. 2004. "Morality- and Identity-Related Antecedents of Children's Guilt and Shame Attributions

in Events Involving Physical Illness." *Cognition and Emotion* 18(3): 383–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930341000077.

Robertson, Theresa E., Daniel Sznycer, Andrew W. Delton, John Tooby, and Leda Cosmides. 2018. "The True Trigger of Shame: Social Devaluation is Sufficient, Wrongdoing is Unnecessary." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 39(5): 566–73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2018.05.010.

Rodogno, Raffaele. 2008. "Shame and Guilt in Restorative Justice." *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 14(2): 142–76. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013474.

Sabini, John, and Maury Silver. 1997. "In Defense of Shame: Shame in the Context of Guilt and Embarrassment." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 27(1): 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00023.

Salice, Alessandro, and Alba Montes Sánchez. 2016. "Pride, Shame, and Group Identification." *Frontiers in Psychology* 7: 557. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00557.

Silfver-Kuhalampia, Mia, Ana Figueiredob, Florencia Sortheixa, and Johnny Fontaine. 2015. "Humiliated Self, Bad Self or Bad Behavior? The Relations Between Moral Emotional Appraisals and Moral Motivation." *Journal of Moral Education* 44(2): 213–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2015.1043874.

Simonds, Laura M., Mary John, Chris Fife-Schaw, Susie Willis, Helen Taylor, Heidi Hand, Masuma Rahim, Harriet Winstanley, and Holly Winton. 2016. "Development and Validation of the Adolescent Shame-Proneness Scale." *Psychological Assessment* 28(5): 549–62. https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000206.

Smith, Theodate L. 1915. "Note on the Psychology of Shame." *American Journal of Psychology* 26(2): 229–35. https://doi.org/10.2307/1413252.

Spruit, Anouk, Frans Schalkwijk, Eveline van Vugt, and Geert Jan Stams. 2016. "The Relation Between Self-Conscious Emotions and Delinquency: A Meta-Analysis." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 28(May–June): 12–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.03.009.

Stuewig, Jeffrey, June Price Tangney, Stephanie Kendall, Johanna B. Folk, Candace Reinsmith Meyer, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2015. "Children's Proneness to Shame and Guilt Predict Risky and Illegal Behaviors in Young Adulthood." *Child Psychiatry and Human Development* 46(April): 217–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-014-0467-1.

Sznycer, Daniel. 2019. "Forms and Functions of the Self-Conscious Emotions." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 23(2): 143–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2018.11.007.

Sznycer, Daniel, Aaron Sell, and Debra Lieberman. 2021. "Forms and Functions of the Social Emotions." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 30(4): 292–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214211007451.

Sznycer, Daniel, Dimitris Xygalatas, Elizabeth Agey, Sarah Alami, Xiao-Fen An, Kristina I. Ananyeva, Quentin D. Atkinson, B. R. Broitman, T. J. Conte, C. Flores, and S. Fukushima. 2018. "Cross-Cultural Invariances in the Architecture of Shame." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 115(39): 9702–7. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1805016115.

Sznycer, Daniel, John Tooby, Leda Cosmides, Roni Porat, Shaul Shalvi, and Eran Halperin. 2016. "Shame Closely Tracks the Threat of Devaluation by Others, Even Across Cultures." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 113(10): 2625–30. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1514699113.

Tangney, June Price, Jeff Stuewig, and Debra J. Mashek. 2007. "Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior." *Annual Review of Psychology* 58(1): 345–72. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070145.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2002. *Shame and Guilt.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Tangney, June Price, Ronda L. Dearing, Patricia E. Wagner, and Richard H. Gramzow. 2000. *The Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3 (TOSCA-3).* Fairfax, VA: George Mason University.

Thomaes, Sander, Brad J. Bushman, Hedy Stegge, and Tjeert Olthof. 2008. "Trumping Shame by Blasts of Noise: Narcissism, Self-Esteem, Shame, and Aggression in Young Adolescents." *Child Development* 79(6): 1792–1801. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01226.x.

Thomason, Krista K. 2018. *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tibbetts, Stephen G. 1997. "Shame and Rational Choice in Offending Decisions." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 24(2): 234–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854897024002006.

Tignor, Stefanie M., and C. Randall Colvin. 2017. "The Interpersonal Adaptiveness of Dispositional Guilt and Shame: A Meta-Analytic Investigation." *Journal of Personality* 85(3): 341–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12244.

Velleman, J. David. 2001. "The Genesis of Shame." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 30(1): 27–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2001.00027.x.

Vidal, Maria Elena, and Jenny Petrak. 2007. "Shame and Adult Sexual Assault: A Study With a Group of Female Survivors Recruited From an East London Population." *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 22(2): 159–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681990600784143.

Welten, Stephanie C. M., Marcel Zeelenberg, and Seger M. Breugelmans. 2012. "Vicarious Shame." *Cognition and Emotion* 26(5): 836–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2011.625400.

## *Chapter 2*

# The Moral Efficacy of the Confucian Sense of Shame

JeeLoo Liu

Ethicists and moral psychologists are all interested in promoting altruism in our society, and moral sentimentalists typically focus on the sentiment of sympathy or empathy as the most essential foundation for human altruism.[1] However, a more fundamental requirement for the making of a moral society is the prevalence of justice – justice for all, not just justice for those who are *like us*, with whom we can empathize or sympathize. Universal altruism is fine and dainty, but it is a goal, an ideal, something we humans should strive for but not always obtainable. On the other hand, there ought to be a certain bottom line for human decency, a moral barricade that we should not cross. I argue that this bottom line is established through our sense of shame, the sprout of the virtue of righteousness according to Mencius. Under Mencius' moral psychology, the sense of shame is not separable from the sense of moral disgust – both are strong emotions accompanied by some moral judgement. Shame is looking inward to oneself while disgust is looking outward at others' conduct, but both sentiments are aroused by the agent's moral judgement on right and wrong. This chapter analyses the nature of the sense of shame in the Confucian conception as a form of internal *disgust* with oneself, which is derived from the agent's cognitive assessment of her own conduct and thought. The work that shame does in morality is to have the agent self-regulate in alignment with her chosen moral principles. In the Confucian moral framework, there are objective rules of propriety (*li*) and norms of righteousness (*yi*) that moral agents should endorse as their own moral principles. Hence, for mature moral agents, the '*gentlemen* (*junzi*)', or noble moral agents, the '*sage* (*sheng*)', their sense of shame is always a 'moral shame' rooted in their own moral judgements.

In this chapter, we will begin by looking at how the sense of shame is depicted by three leading early Confucian masters: Confucius (551–479

BCE), Mencius (371–289 BCE), and Xunzi (ca. 313–238 BCE). We will explore how they assessed the proper function of shame, what they considered as shameful, as well as their conviction of the moral efficacy of shame. In addition, we also examine the private versus the public dimensions of the sense of shame in the Confucian conception. We can see how such a sense of shame plays an essential role in the moral agent's path to virtue from the Confucian perspective.

## 'SHAME' IN THE CHINESE USAGE

To begin with, I want to emphasize that the Chinese notion of *shame* has a slightly different connotation from those of the English word 'shame'.[2] Many sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers have raised concerns about the negative impact of the arousal of shame (which is sometimes called 'toxic shame') or the employment of *shaming* on individuals and on society[3]; however, these criticisms are not necessarily applicable to the Chinese notion of *shame*. Even if we can assume that the mental state of *feeling ashamed* could be a natural kind of emotion in human psychology – possibly a fuzzy kind with vague or indefinite scope delimitation, the triggering cause of shame and the associated meanings of 'shame' are not exactly the same in different cultures because of the various social expectations, different etymology, different ethical teachings as well as different associated 'shame cultures'.[4] In other words, we need to distinguish the natural feeling of shame, which could arguably be universal in humankind, from its arousal conditions, which are socially and culturally diverse. We also need to separate the arousal of the feeling of shame in specific contexts from humans' innate capacity to be so aroused, which presumably many animals do not possess. While *the feeling of shame* is considered 'a peculiarly problematic emotion' because it is a negative emotion 'that, unlike anger or grief, which can be cathartic, we wish to avoid whenever possible' (Barrett 2014: 144), having *the sense of shame* (i.e., being able to feel ashamed) is highly valued in Confucian ethics as an indispensable moral trait. The Chinese notion of *shame* reflects this distinction: it is divided into two categories: the first is the *sense* of shame, which is considered a positive trait in human mind and an essential moral emotion for humans; the second is the feeling of embarrassment, guilt, self-loathing, regret, remorse and other shame-associated emotions. Only the second category of the Chinese notion of *shame* is comparable to that of the English notion of *shame*. As Bernard Williams explains this psychological affective state of *shame*: 'the expression of shame, in general as well as in the particular form of it that is embarrassment, is not just the desire to hide, or to hide my face, but the desire to disappear, not to be there' (Williams 2008: 89). We

shall see later in the Confucian texts that some examples listed as the feeling of shame do indicate this kind of psychological tendencies.

The English word 'shame' is rendered either as *xiu* 羞[5] or *chi* 恥 in Chinese. The Chinese character *xiu* 羞 originally has nothing to do with the psychological state of shame. Chinese words are often made up of different parts, each of which has its meaning. The Chinese word *xiu* 羞 has *sheep* as its radical, and it originally meant sheep for religious offering. An extended meaning for this word is 'cooked food' or 'delicious food'. The other part of this word symbolizes 'hand', and thus the etymological meaning of the word is to grab food or to offer food. The foods that can be offered to the gods or lords in official ceremonies are generally called *xiu*. The earliest usage of the word *xiu* in today's usage as 'shame' seems to be in the *Yijing* (Gong 2009; Zayats 2012), which arguably predates Confucius' times.[6] The *Yijing*'s hexagram *Heng* says, 'Not persevering (*heng* 恆) in one's virtues could often lead to shame (*xiu*)[7]' (*Heng*, Line Three, the *Yijing*). Beginning with the *Analects*, however, the word has taken up the meaning of *shame* or *disgrace* in its standard usage.[8] With the amended connotation of *disgrace*, the word *xiu* is used either in association with or interchangeably with another Chinese word *chi* 恥, which is also commonly translated as 'shame'. The Chinese word *chi* 恥 is an ideogram made up of two parts: 'ear' on the left and 'heart' on the right, and according to the earliest Chinese dictionary, its original meaning is 'disgrace' or 'humiliation'. The construction of the ideogram seems to indicate that this sense of disgrace or humiliation involves outside criticisms: one's ear hears the reproach and one's heart feels the disgrace, hence the shame. This etymology of the word indicates that it was originally a notion about one's being judged negatively by others or one's concern for losing one's good reputation. Even though the two Chinese words *xiu* and *chi* have different origins, the two words *xiu* and *chi* are frequently used together as a noun *xiuchi* 羞恥, and there is prima facie no clear demarcation between the mental state of *xiu* 羞 and that of *chi* 恥. Both notions signify the moral reflection on the disgrace that one has incurred or is about to experience, as well as the introspection of being ashamed in one's own conduct, thought or even in one's associations. It was Mencius who first introduced a subtle distinction between the two concepts.

Kwong-loi Shun argues that the moral sentiment expressed in the Chinese conception of *chi* 恥 is different from the psychological state of *shame* in the Western notion.

> Though often translated as 'shame', *chi* differs from contemporary Western notions of shame in important respects. It can be directed towards something contemplated as well as something that has already come about. It is associated not with the thought of being seen or the urge to hide oneself, but with

> the thought of being tainted and the urge to cleanse oneself of what is tainting. *Chi* is linked to a resolution to either remedy the disgraceful situation if it has already obtained, or to distance oneself from or preempt a potentially disgraceful situation if it has not yet come about (Shun 2015: 184).

In other words, Shun thinks that in the Chinese moral psychology, one's sense of shame is rooted in one's *own* moral cleanliness, not with others' criticisms or contemptuous attitude. Shun links the Chinese notion of *shame* with the standard of cleanliness and holiness.[9] Furthermore, he argues, one's having a sense of shame is a testimonial to one's 'self-commitment', by which Shun means that one is committed to abide by some ethical standards that one chooses for oneself. Early Confucianism advocates ethical self-commitment, and the superior moral agent (*junzi* 君子, a special term in Confucianism designating those moral agents who have achieved some degree of moral maturity) is someone who can detach himself from outside judgements or external pressures that he does not endorse. Such a person, knowing his own moral standard, can maintain a state of 'reflective equanimity' even in the face of adversity. According to Shun, this form of self-commitment would not fall into self-indulgence if the concern for one's own ethical qualities or moral standard does not preoccupy the moral agent's thought and does not play 'a directly motivating role' in his action (Shun 2015: 195). Shun has correctly pointed out the 'self-inspection' and 'self-admonishment' aspects of the Chinese notion of *shame*, and it is this association with the individual's internal standard in this connotation of the word *chi* 恥, rather than the original etymological connotation of external reputation, that plays the crucial role in the Confucian notion of *shame*.

In this chapter, we will examine how 'shame' is mentioned in the early Confucian texts, the *Analects*, the *Mengzi* and the *Xunzi*, to see how early Confucian masters define the notion of *shame*.

## THE CONTENT OF ONE'S SHAME IN CONFUCIUS' *ANALECTS*

In the *Analects*, there is only one example of the usage of *xiu*, which is when Confucius cited the *Yijing*: 'Not persevering (*heng* 恆) in one's virtues could often lead to shame (*xiu* 羞)'. In quoting this remark, Confucius commented that if one does not persist in keeping one's virtue, then one will definitely incur shame and there is no need to consult divination to know the outcome (*The Analects* 13:22). The *Analects* typically uses the word *chi* 恥 to express shame. To begin with, Confucius separated 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' feelings of shame. One should be ashamed of using cunning words, having

an obsequious face, and expressing utter servility; one should be ashamed of concealing one's resentment against a person while appearing friendly with that person (*The Analects* 5:25). One should be ashamed if one's words exceed one's action; that is, if one is all talk and little action (*The Analects* 4: 22; 14:29). On handling oneself in the political world, Confucius says, 'When [*Dao*] prevails in the empire, then show yourself; when it does not prevail, then become a hermit. When [*Dao*] prevails in your own state and you are poor and in a humble position, be ashamed of yourself. When [*Dao*] does not prevail in your state and you are wealthy and in an honourable position, be ashamed of yourself' (8:13, modification of Chan 1963: 34). That is to say, a scholar should not be thinking merely about his promotion or his own safety. He has a moral obligation to provide his service when the world is sound, and to decline offering his service to a vile ruler. Confucius even defines 'shame (*chi*)' in this context. When a student asked about shame, Confucius replied: 'When good government prevails in a state, to be thinking only of salary; and, when bad government prevails, to be thinking, in the same way, only of salary – this is shameful' (14:1, Legge 1867: 75).

On the other hand, the kind of things that ordinary people might be embarrassed about, such as having lowly attire or meagre food in front of others (The *Analects* 4:9) or seeking advice from those who are beneath oneself in rank and position (The *Analects* 5:15), in Confucius' assessment, are all nothing to be ashamed of. If anyone is ashamed of these trivial matters based on external standards, then that person is a petty person not worth discoursing with in Confucius' mind.

From these examples, we can see that there is a normative dimension in the Confucian sense of shame. Confucius was not interested in analysing *why* and *how* people felt shame; in other words, he was not giving a psychological description of people's feeling of shame. Rather, he was delineating the normative scope of one's sense of shame in moral and political discourses. To him, having a sense of shame is the foundation of one's moral propriety: knowing and doing the right thing. Even if ordinary people could often feel ashamed for the wrong reasons, setting the correct scope of *shamefulness* is an important step in Confucius' moral teaching. The examples also show that having the arousal of shame is post-cognitive: one first makes the judgement whether something one does or some state one is in is 'shameful', and this judgement brings about one's sense of shame. This feeling of shame is not intuitive, and not universal in all humans. The moral judgement of 'x is shameful' in the *Analects* is made in two orders: the individual *A* judges *x* to be shameful and thus feels ashamed; Confucius judges whether *A* should be ashamed to feel ashamed of being or having *x*. The normative dimension of the sense of shame comes in the second-order evaluation of the individual's feeling of shame.

Moreover, Confucius took the ideal goal of rulership to manifest in the people's having a sense of shame, which could only be achieved by the ruler's teaching of virtues and rules of propriety:

> Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honour and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety (*li* 禮), and *they will have a sense of shame and, moreover, set themselves right* (2:3, Chan 1963: 22, emphasis added).

In this quote, Confucius expresses his conviction that the sense of shame has the moral efficacy of self-rectification. However, the quote seems to imply that the sense of shame is 'cultivated' from outside influences: *if* the people are led with virtues and regulated by the rules of propriety, *then* they *will*[10] have a sense of shame. Of course, in Confucius' moral hierarchy, there are those superior moral agents (such as 'the superior people [*junzi* 君子]' or the so-called 'sage [*sheng* 聖]' who would not need the ruler's coaching and will set themselves right. Nonetheless, they are those who have cultivated their virtues in their lifetime and have achieved a moral maturity not inborn in them. Therefore, even though Confucius did not specify that the sense of shame is completely from the outside, he also did not affirm the innateness of our sense of shame. It would be Mencius who first established and highlighted the innate sense of shame for Confucianism.

## THE SENSE OF SHAME IN *THE MENGZI*

Mencius was the first Confucian philosopher to develop a moral psychology on the basis of the Confucian moral metaphysics. In *the Mengzi*, the sense of shame and the sense of moral disgust are conjoined as one unified sentiment. According to an esteemed Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi's (1130–1200 CE) commentary, *shame* arises from the self-criticism of one's own immorality, while *moral disgust* has others' immorality as the target. What an individual feels a strong shame for in her own conduct and what she feels indignant about in others' doing often go hand-in-hand. Bernard Williams makes the same observation on the Greek notions of *shame* and moral indignation. According to Williams, the Greek word for 'shame' (*aidos*), and the Greek word for indignation (*nemesis*) are a 'reflexive pair' (borrowing James Redfield's term), 'People have at once a sense of their own honour and a respect for other people's honour; they can feel indignation or other forms of anger when honour is violated, in their own case or in someone else's. These are shared sentiments with similar objects, and they serve to bind people together

in a community of feelings' (Williams 2008: 80). The pairing of shame and disgust is a manifestation that both sentiments are implicitly an ethical judgement; they are not merely an affective mechanism reacting to whatever displeases the agent.

Mencius takes the sense of shame and disgust to be *innate* in all humans, and he calls them 'the sprout of *righteousness*' (*The Mengzi*: 3A6), or simply 'righteousness [*yi* 義]' (*The Mengzi*: 6A6). In his commentary, a late-Ming dynasty neo-Confucian Wang Fuzhi (1619–1692) highlighted this association of the sense of shame and disgust and the virtue of righteousness in Mencius' view: 'Mencius sees *righteousness* only in humans' sense of shame and disgust, hence he says that *righteousness* is "internal to humans". This sense of shame and disgust is what each person has within himself, and *not mutually induced by one another*' (Wang 1974: 538, emphasis added). This association shows that for Mencius, the sense of shame and disgust serves as the psychological foundation for our moral standards or our personal uprightness (*yi*). It is an indispensable moral sense, not just a natural emotion. This innate moral sense will develop into the moral virtue of righteousness with proper cultivation. Wang Fuzhi also pointed out that Mencius' opponent Gaozi's taking the contemporary world's standard of right and wrong as rightness (*yi*) was to 'miss the internal sprout of righteousness in his own heart' (Wang 1974: 540). The famous disagreement between Mencius and Gaozi on whether the standard of rightness is internal (in one's mind) or external (in the society's standard) manifests clearly that Mencius is indeed an internalist when it comes to the sense of shame and the standard of rightness.

For Mencius, the innate sense of shame and disgust has no a priori propositional content: it is not predetermined through evolution (or by 'Heaven's mandate') *what* one should be ashamed of or be morally disgusted with. In other words, the intuitive reaction of shame and disgust with which we are endowed is not accompanied by a set of 'evaluative judgements'. According to Ni Liangkang (2007), there are two dimensions in Mencius' sense of *shame* and *disgust*: one is biological and inborn; the other is cultural and developed. The former refers to our ability to feel shame and indignation, while the latter refers to the content of our shame and indignation. I think another way to delineate the two dimensions of Mencius' sense of *shame* and *disgust* is to distinguish, on the one hand, our ability to feel shame and indignation, and on the other, the content of our particular shame and the target of our indignation. The sense of shame and indignation is inborn, but the content of shame and the arousal of indignation must be culturally grounded and developed in social contexts. In this respect, Mencius' view is similar to that of Confucius: the content or the target of our sense of shame is established after birth, mostly through external influences and one's mature moral reasoning.

Indeed, for each individual in a given social context, there is a judgement-laden sense of shame and disgust aiming at particular conduct of oneself or of others. Those judgements are subject to our standard of decency, but they are not evolutionary based and are not innate in us.

In Mencius' thinking, one's sense of shame is reflected in one's choice of action when the situation demands a difficult decision. According to Mencius, for any person there is always *something* that they would not do even in the face of death: 'There are cases when a man does not take the course even if by taking it he can preserve his life, and he does not do anything even if by doing it he can avoid danger. Therefore, there is something men love more than life and there is something men hate more than death' (*The Mengzi* 6A:10, Chan 1963: 57). Although different people may have different moral assessments of what is acceptable and what is not, everyone has an upper limit of what they could tolerate and the bottom threshold of what they would deem acceptable. This sense of shame sets the psychological boundary for what one would consider to be morally acceptable or morally outrageous *in one's own conduct*. It can be seen as one's moral compass, without which one could not be an autonomous moral agent, being guided by one's own moral sense. Furthermore, a person without the sense of shame would have nothing to stop them from becoming a sensible knave in Hume's term, or a Glauconian moral sceptic who would consider doing any immoral deed as long as he could get away with it without suffering any bad consequence for himself.[11] According to Mencius, someone without the sense of shame and disgust is not even qualified as a human being (2A:6).

When Mencius introduces the sense of shame in conjunction with the sense of disgust as one of our inborn *four moral sprouts* (*siduan* 四端),[12] the word he uses for 'shame' is *xiu* 羞. In the context of Mencius' discourse on moral sentiments, *xiu* is definitely used in the sense of *chi* and both can be translated as 'shame'. However, Mencius also uses the word *chi* separately. We can see that the two words express slightly different connotations in his usage. Mencius gives three examples where one's sense of shame (*xiu*) is aroused. A state official named Liuxia Hui was *not ashamed* of serving a tainted ruler, nor did he disdain occupying a minor position. Mencius praises him as being a 'sage who was accommodating' (*The Mengzi* 5B:1; Ivanhoe 2009: 111). A charioteer was *ashamed* to be associated with the archer, whom he considered to be a petty person with bent morals, because the latter would prefer him to conduct the chariot in a cunning way so that he could catch more birds. The charioteer therefore declined the master's request to drive the archer (*The Mengzi* 3B:1; Ivanhoe 2009: 62). Mencius commented that even a charioteer would be ashamed to bend his principle improperly, thus if he himself would bend his principle to appease the princes, as his interlocuter had suggested, then how could he conduct himself? In both contexts, what Mencius depicted

seems to be more like a sense of embarrassment due to what one considers to be below one's moral standard rather than a vehement sense of disgrace one places upon oneself. However, having this sense of shame is sufficient to incline one not to act in the way that would incur one's shame (or in Liuxia Hui's case, he was not deterred to bringing himself into the situation because he did not consider it shameful). In this way, this sense of shame has the moral efficacy of motivating one to act in a certain way.

In *the Mengzi*, there is one other example of the word *xiu* expressing the sentiment of shame bordering disgust with the conduct of one's associates. The feeling of shame in this case might be close to what Williams depicts as 'a desire to disappear, not to be there' (Williams 2008: 89). Someone in the nation of *Qi* lived with his wife and concubine. He often went out and satiated his appetite for meat and drink before returning. When his wife asked with whom he dined, he would brag about having a feast with 'prosperous and honorable people'. And yet no such people ever came to their home for a visit. So one early morning the wife followed him around and discovered that no one in the city ever talked to him. The husband simply roamed about gravesites where people were performing sacrifices to the dead and begged for food. He continued begging from one gravesite to another until he had enough to eat and drink. After the wife reported her findings to the concubine, they wept together in the courtyard while the husband strutted in from outside, with an air of self-importance, expecting to impress his wife and concubine. Mencius commented: 'From the point of view of the noble person, how few of those who seek wealth and honour, profit and success do so without giving good cause to their wives and concubines to weep together *in shame*!' (The Mengzi 4B: 33, Ivanhoe 2009: 95–96). Mencius interpreted the wife and the concubine's mental state in this case as a form of shame (*xiu*), rather than expressed concerns about their livelihood. Before and after the discovery, the two women's socioeconomic status had not truly altered, but their awareness of their husband's dishonourable lifestyle had brought deep shame in their hearts. This shows that in Mencius' assessment, even ordinary people would associate dishonour with shame without needing explicit external sanction.

In all three cases, the feeling of shame is related to one's association, not with one's own doing. I interpret this sense of shame as a form of strong embarrassment, that is, one is embarrassed to the point of self-denunciation (the charioteer), self-denial (or the lack-of as in Liuxia Hui's case) or even self-loathing and despair (the wife and the concubine). It might be closer to Aristotle's notion of *shame* (*aidos*), which is defined as 'a certain fear of disrepute', 'appear in some way to be bodily, which seems to be more a mark of a passion than of a characteristic'. Therefore, Aristotle judges it 'not fitting to speak about a sense of shame (*aidos*) as a particular virtue' (*NE* 1128b10-16, cited in Fussi 2015: 115). Similarly, the sense of shame (*xiu*) in Mencius'

usage depicts an affective state, a natural emotion, which is not deemed a particular virtue. Even though this sense of shame (*xiu*) is post-cognitive, deriving from one's judgement of one's social standing and social relations, it is hardly a moral sentiment. And yet Mencius chose this word *xiu* to be the 'sprout' of one's virtue of righteousness. I think the reason may be that this sense of shame is *natural* in human mind and is *universal* to all humans. The metaphysical claim that Mencius wishes to establish for the four moral sprouts is exactly their *innateness* and their *universality.*[13]

On the other hand, Mencius also uses the word *chi* 恥 in multiple contexts where he discusses people's sense of shame, and this word has a much clearer moral connotation. The sense of shame expressed in *chi* can be deemed as 'rightful shame'; in other words, this is a moral sense of shame that is different, and more morally justified, than the natural biological sense of shame. This sense of shame is not accompanied by any visceral reaction or emotional distress. It seems to be a rational sentiment, or even a rational judgement. Furthermore, it is a self-willed and self-aware sense of shame. The moral agent needs to consider something as shameful (*chi*) to choose the right path, and the moral consideration itself is already generating the sense of shame. The moral efficacy lies in one's having this sense of shame itself. We can see this connotation in the following examples in the *Mengzi*:

King Hui of Liang considered it shameful on his part that during his seven-year reign, his nation had lost the wars against other nations, it had lost a lot of lands to another nation, and his eldest son died on the battlefield. He asked Mencius what he ought to do. Mencius gave the advice that the king should aspire to be a 'humane king', to have his people well cared for, and in this way, he would become invincible (*The Mengzi* 1A:5; Ivanhoe 2009: 5). In this example, we see that Mencius attempted to motivate the king to do the right thing on the basis of the king's self-aware shame (*chi*). In another example, Mencius discusses how the ancient King Wu led the troops and combined armies from other nations to attack Shang, overthrowing the last king of Shang to establish the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1046 BCE). Mencius described this event as arising out of King Wu's sense of shame: Wu was ashamed (*chi*) that during his time, the world was ruled by one evil tyrant Zhou of Shang. Mencius depicts King Wu's overthrowing the tyrant king Zhou as having 'a burst of anger' due to his sense of shame, and eventually 'brought peace to all the people in the world' (*The Mengzi* 1B:3; Ivanhoe 2009: 16). In this example, Mencius allocated the sense of shame a powerful moral efficacy: King Wu's sense of shame motivated him to take action to overthrow a tyrant and to establish a new dynasty. In this historical event, there are many other psychological factors that could have been at play in King Wu's revolution, and yet Mencius attributed it to Wu's sense of shame (*chi*).

In other contexts, Mencius also presents the motivational connection between one's feeling shame (*chi*) and one's cultivating the virtue of *humaneness* (*ren* 仁). In the Confucian teaching, the virtue of *humaneness* is considered to be the highest virtue that a moral agent should cultivate, and Mencius is advocating that one's sense of shame should motivate one to be humane. For example, he discusses the different mindsets of makers of arrows and makers of armour:

> Is the maker of arrows less humane than the maker of armor? The maker of arrows fears only that people will not be hurt; the maker of armor fears only that people will be hurt. . . . To be the servant of others yet ashamed of his service is like the maker of bows who is ashamed of making bows or the maker of arrows who is ashamed of making arrows. *If one is ashamed of this, there is nothing better than to be humane*. One who would be humane is like the archer. The archer corrects his position and then shoots. If he shoots and misses, he does not blame those who are more adept than he; rather, he turns within and seeks within himself. (The Mengzi 2A:7; Ivanhoe 2009: 36, emphasis added)

What is also important is that in the political context, Mencius argues that the sense of shame should motivate a ruler to take the path of humane kings and emulate their resolve: 'Now the small states model themselves on the great states and yet are ashamed to receive their orders. This is like a disciple being ashamed to receive commands from his teacher. For one who feels thus ashamed, there could be no better course than to take King Wen as his teacher. With King Wen as a model, he will, in five years, if his state is large, or in seven years, if his state is small, be sure to govern all-under-Heaven' (*The Mengzi* 4A:7; Ivanhoe 2009: 77). In other words, instead of just feeling ashamed of what one does not do, one should simply take the action to do it.

In Mencius' discourse on shame, he clearly makes an evaluative judgement on what others take to be shameful and offers his verdict: some are wrongfully ashamed while some are wrongfully *not* ashamed. Mencius also gives his own judgement on what counts as shameful: 'To stand in the ruler's court and not have [*Dao*] carried into practice is shameful' (*The Mengzi* 5B:5; Ivanhoe 2009: 116). On a personal level, Mencius says, 'A noble person is ashamed (*chi*) to have a reputation that exceeds actuality' (*The Mengzi* 4B:18; slight modification of Ivanhoe 2009: 89).

On the whole, Mencius gives great emphasis on the moral value of this sense of shame (*chi*). He says, 'The sense of shame is of great importance to a person. One who is adept at clever schemes has no use for shame. If he is not ashamed that he is not like other people, how can he become their equal?' (*The Mengzi* 7A:7; Ivanhoe 2009: 145). What he means here is that if a person is without the sense of shame and does not care that they are not others' equal (in their moral cultivation), then this person will forever be

below others. Mencius also remarked: 'A person must not be without shame (*chi*). *The shame one has when one is without a sense of shame is truly shamelessness (wu-chi*, here "wu" means the negation or the absence of) itself' (*The Mengzi* 7A:6, emphasis added[14]). In this quote, other than seeing how Mencius deems having the sense of shame to be essential to personhood, we can also see that it is *possible* for one to be without this sense of shame (*chi*). This shows exactly how this sense of moral shame is different from the psychological shame (*xiu*) that Mencius considers to be an inborn disposition universal to all humans.

From the above textual analysis, I argue that for Mencius, the shame that is innate and universal (*xiu*) is distinct from the sense of shame (*chi*) that is in itself a form of moral judgement in the following ways: *xiu* is a natural psychological disposition that all humans have, and it can be aroused by the individual's assessment of their social situations; *chi* is a cultivated moral disposition that has a normative dimension, and its content can be developed through culture and education. I think that non-human animals could be attributed to the feeling of shame in the biological sense (*xiu*), but never the sentiment of shame in the moral sense (*chi*).[15] In Mencius' moral psychology, the foundation for human righteousness is the sense of shame in the biological sense (*xiu*), because he wanted to affirm the innateness and universality of the sense of shame. Ultimately, however, what he would want to advocate is actually the post-education, post-cultivation sense of shame (*chi*) that has a higher moral significance in one's being a humane person or a humane king.

## THE SENSE OF SHAME IN THE *XUNZI*

In Xunzi's writings,[16] both the word *xiu* 羞 and *chi* 恥 are also used to depict the mental state of shame.[17] We will first take a look at the contexts where the word *xiu* is used. In the following examples, we can see that Xunzi also uses *xiu* as a natural psychological reaction that may or may not have any moral significance. In other words, *xiu* could be a form of *amoral* emotion in some cases. Xunzi seems to take the sense of shame (*xiu*) to be a natural sentiment that ordinary people would all have, and this sentiment signifies the attitude of *rejection* or *reluctance* towards certain associations. Xunzi says, 'If the gentleman is capable, others will consider it an honour to learn from him, and if he lacks ability, they will be pleased to inform him about things. If the petty man has ability, others will consider it contemptible to learn from him, and if he is capable, they will be *ashamed* (*xiu*) to inform him about thing' (*The Xunzi* 3:3, Knoblock 1988: 175). Xunzi also discusses how ordinary people (the average lord, the average father, and the average man) would be *ashamed* (*xiu*) to be associated with someone who is all appearance and no

substance (even though the women would all be attracted to him) (*The Xunzi* 5:2, Knoblock 1988: 205). In both these examples, the sense of shame is closer to the attitude of *reluctance* than with the feeling of *embarrassment* as we saw in Mencius' examples. If people would be ashamed of having certain associations, then they would avoid establishing such connections with those for whom they have a low regard.

Xunzi clearly thinks that one's sense of shame (*xiu*) in the sense of reluctance also affects one's conduct and speech: this sense of shame can motivate or alter one's action. For example, 'Among the disciples of Confucius, even the young lads considered it *shameful* (*xiu*) to speak in praise of *the five hegemons*.[18] How can this be the case? I say: It is indeed so – to praise them is truly worthy of shame' (*The Xunzi* 7:1, Hutton 2016: 105). Here Xunzi is referring to the young people on the path of moral cultivation, and he judges them to have the decency to make a sound judgement on rulership and to refrain from praising morally depraved rulers who cared only about amassing their power. According to Xunzi, the youth's reluctance to praise the five hegemons, however powerful and successful these rulers were in their times, was built on these young people's sense of shame. But we can also see that the youth's sense of shame must have been derived from their prior negative moral judgement on the conduct of the five hegemons. This shows that for Xunzi, even this emotional sense of shame (*xiu*) is preceded by a moral judgement. Furthermore, in Xunzi's examples, the sense of shame is *prospective* rather than *retrospective* – it is a considered, forward-looking attitudinal choice, rather than a spontaneous, backward-looking feeling about something that has happened. This subtle difference in the examples that Mencius and Xunzi presented reflects a deeper divergence between Mencius' sentimentalist spirit and Xunzi's rationalist disposition.

The sense of shame (*xiu*) is also manifested in superior moral agents, and Xunzi considers this kind of psychological inclinations as praiseworthy. For example, he says that the so-called 'scholar officials (*shishi* 仕士)'[19] in the ancient times possessed the virtues necessary for being a good official: 'They were devoted to their duties and to reasoned order and were *ashamed* (*xiu*) to keep wealth for themselves alone' (*The Xunzi* 6:11, Knoblock 1988: 227). Xunzi also remarked that in the old days, ancient kings would have been ashamed to employ rewards and punishments, the two things that the ancient Legalists (*fajia* 法家) regarded as essential to rulership, as ways to motivate the people to do the right thing, because they are 'inadequate to harmonize the great masses or to refine the nation' (*The Xunzi* 15: 5, Knoblock 1990: 231). As for the people who have obtained the virtue of humaneness (*ren* 仁), Xunzi says that they would consider it 'shameful (*xiu*)' if 'one does not care that one's conduct will not succeed, but instead one merely goes about gaining profit by improper means' (*The Xunzi* 16:4, Hutton 2016: 277).

Just as there is good, morally proper, shame, there is also 'bad shame', those psychological inclinations that people entertain and yet are *not* morally praiseworthy. Xunzi presents some examples, one of which is when someone is not abiding by the societal hierarchical order as the standard for their behaviour. Xunzi says, 'That the young should serve the old, the base the noble, and the unworthy the worthy is the pervading moral rule throughout the world. Yet there are some men whose station in life is not high, but who are *ashamed* (*xiu*) to be inferior to others. Such is the frame of mind of a scoundrel' (*The Xunzi* 7:5, combination of Knoblock 1990: 62 and Hutton 2016: 110). This quote shows that for Xunzi, the public norm and the private standard must be unified, such that one's sense of shame should reflect the proper social order established by the rules of propriety (*li* 禮). The sense of shame (*xiu*) that Mencius regarded as a natural universal human emotion is now regulated by a normative demand: the natural sentiment must conform to the public moral standards.

As Confucius did before him, Xunzi also advocated the moral efficacy of the sense of shame (*xiu*): If the supreme moral order *Dao* prevails in the world, then the people's sense of shame would stop them for committing thievery and robbery in tomb raiding even when the tombs are filled with extravagant jewels (*The Xunzi* 18:7, Hutton 2016: 292). In another passage, Xunzi writes that if the ruler stresses morality, then 'everyone, from knights to the highest officials', will feel ashamed of being eager for profits, and 'will not compete with the people for goods' (*The Xunzi* 27:63, slight modification of Knoblock 1994: 222). An interesting thing is that in this treatise, Xunzi acknowledges that 'a sense of righteousness and a sense for profits are two things humans possess'. Even though Xunzi argues laboriously against Mencius' view that human nature is good and that humans have inborn moral sprouts, here he recognizes both a sense of righteousness and a sense of profit as the common traits in human psyche.[20] Such psychological dispositions can be nurtured and be brought to fruition: 'When superiors stress the importance of morality, morality overcomes profit; when they stress profit, then profit overcomes morality' (*The Xunzi* 27:63, slight modification of Knoblock 1994: 222). In a society where everyone has the proper sense of shame (*xiu*) that is the manifestation of their sense of righteousness, 'they will find enjoyment in their portions and grants, considering it disgraceful to engage in accumulating [hoards]'. The public's mentality can also effectively change the distribution of wealth in any society: 'This being the case will result in the people not being beset with difficulties over goods and in the poor and wretched having something to lay their hands on' (*The Xunzi* 27:63, Knoblock 1994: 223).

Xunzi also uses *chi* in many discourses. While the sense of shame associated with *xiu* 羞 signifies a mental state that can be appraised as morally proper or improper, the sense of shame associated with *chi* 恥 seems to be exclusively

a morally praiseworthy mental state. Furthermore, Xunzi typically uses *chi* in conjunction with another word *lian* 廉, which stands for 'uprightness' or 'integrity'. Knoblock explains that the virtue of *lian* can 'sharpen one's sense of shame' (Knoblock 1988: 291). From Xunzi's association of the two words, we can see that he too regards the sense of shame expressed by *chi* as what keeps one on the moral path. Xunzi says, 'If you are evasive, timorous, and shirk your duties, if you lack any sense of integrity (*lian*) and *shame* (*chi*) and have an inordinate fondness for food and drink as well, you are properly called a despicable youth' (*The Xunzi* 2:12, modification of Knoblock 1988: 157). In other words, if young people lack any sense of shame, and neglect their duties, then they are 'despicable'. Xunzi depicts those people who quarrel over food and drink, 'having neither scruples nor shame, not knowing right from wrong', as falling into the category of *beast* – having only the bravery of the dog and the boar (*The Xunzi* 4:4, Knoblock 1988: 188). In this regard, he is clearly in agreement with Mencius that this sense of moral discretion and psychological inhibition is essential to *personhood*.

A morally mature agent such as a Confucian gentleman (*junzi*) is someone who would discern the proper content of their sense of shame (*chi*). Xunzi says,

> The gentleman can do what is honourable, but he cannot cause others to be certain to show him honour. He can act in a trustworthy fashion, but he cannot cause others to be sure to trust him. He can act so that he is employable, but he cannot cause others to be certain to use him. Hence, the gentleman is *ashamed* not to cultivate himself, but he is *not ashamed* to appear to have flaws. He would be *ashamed* not to be trustworthy, but he is *not ashamed* that he does not appear trustable. He would be *ashamed* to be lacking in ability, but he is *not ashamed* that he remains unused. For these reasons, he is not seduced by praise and is not made apprehensive by criticism (*The Xunzi* 6:12, Knoblock 1988: 228, emphasis added).

This quote shows that the sense of shame in a gentleman does not arise out of the external environment or social pressure. In other words, the mature moral agent's sense of shame is not a reactive mental state in response to others' criticisms (real as well as imagined); rather, it is a self-imposed standard that one adopts as one's moral guidance. It is not the *internalization* of peer pressure, but the *manifestation* of one's internal moral self-assessment. This is akin to Bernard Williams' notion of *autonomous* shame, the shame that 'expressed inner personal conviction' rather than 'merely followed public opinion' (Williams 2008: 95). Williams explains the different levels of one's sense of shame. At the most elementary level, the avoidance of shame serves as a motive: 'You anticipate how you will feel if someone sees you' (Williams 2008: 79). At the next level, the motive is 'fear of shame at what

people will say about one's action' (Ibid.). Williams says, 'If everything depended on the fear of discovery, then motivations of shame would not be internalized at all' (Williams 2008: 81). At a yet higher level, according to Williams, 'the other may be identified in ethical terms' rather than with a particular individual or a social group. And yet, 'Those alternatives leave out much of the substance of actual ethical life. The internalized other is indeed abstracted and generalizes and idealized, but he is potentially somebody rather than nobody, and somebody other than me' (Williams 2008: 84). At the highest level, on the other hand, a mature moral agent's consciousness 'is most obviously directed to a demand that transcends mere social esteem, and, even more, reaches beyond self-assertion' (Williams 2008: 85). This description of the autonomous moral shame is similar to what Xunzi depicts as 'the gentleman's shame'.[21] A mature moral agent has established his own moral voice and has no need to appeal to the imaginary others for sanction. The agent appeals to some external, objective moral standards that are not defined by the local public voices or the present-day conventional norms. They are 'self-committed', as Shun puts it, and they pursue the conviction of abiding by the right way (*Dao*).

According to Xunzi, a gentleman would also be ashamed of behaving like a beast in violation of human decency: 'If one morning one should have to bury one's revered parent, and if in attending to the ceremonies of the funeral one shows neither grief nor respect, then one has conducted oneself as a beast would. The gentleman would be *ashamed* of such behavior' (*The Xunzi* 19:4c, Knoblock 1994: 65). What Xunzi praises in a Confucian gentleman is their self-regulation: the gentleman's sense of shame is from their inner examination, not derived from external treatments or criticisms. Such a moral exemplar's sense of shame is post-cognitive, based on one's own moral standard for oneself, and not affected by outside judgements. This is the proper sense of shame according to Xunzi. In contrast, Williams seems to be sceptical of this kind of 'autonomous self-legislation', since it 'may become hard to distinguish from an insensate degree of moral egoism' (Williams 2008: 100).[22]

The highest moral exemplar for the gentlemen is Confucius himself, and Xunzi attributed the following remark to Confucius: 'There are things that I consider shameful. There are things that I consider vulgar. There are things that I consider dangerous. Not being able to devote one's strength to learning when one is young, and so having nothing to teach others when one is old – this I consider *shameful* (*chi*)' (*The Xunzi* 28:6, Knoblock 1994: 249). This remark clearly shows how one's decision on 'x is shameful' is a considered judgement and not necessarily accompanied by any emotional or visceral reaction. The superior moral agents are making the judgement themselves and they have their own internal moral standards to go by. One's judgement

of what counts as 'shameful' reflects the kind of person one is. Knoblock explains Xunzi's sense of shame this way: 'Xunzi concludes this book with the admonition that the gentleman should not be ashamed that he does not hold office and is unable to cause others to believe that he is honorable and trustworthy because shame comes *not from what others think of him but from what he really is*' (Knoblock 1988: 222, emphasis added).

On the other hand, lacking such a sense of shame is also the main reason for a person's moral downfall. Xunzi criticizes the scholars who were 'dispirited and passive, evasive, timorous, and irresolute'. He says, having failed to perform their official duties and yet '*lacking integrity and a sense of shame* with regard to others' reproof', they are to be regarded as 'devious and scheming' scholars (*The Xunzi* 6:13, modification of Knoblock 1988: 229, emphasis added). He also criticizes other scholars who were lazy, irresponsible, timid and afraid of getting involved; furthermore, '*lacking integrity (lian) and a sense of shame (chi)*, they were interested only in food and drink', and Xunzi regards them as 'lowly scholars' (*The Xunzi* 6:13, modification of Knoblock 1988: 229, emphasis added). In Xunzi's judgement, if anyone lacks a sense of shame, then they would succumb to moral excuses to become a morally depraved person, and there is nothing stopping them. This attitude seems to echo that of Mencius' remark cited earlier: 'A person must not be without shame (*chi*). The shame one has when one is without a sense of shame is truly shamelessness itself' (*The Mengzi* 7A:6). Having no sense of shame is thus the lowest possible mental state one could have in the Confucian assessment.

However, contra Mencius who believed that the root of human morality comes from human nature, Xunzi was an ethical externalist. He frequently stresses the indispensability of appropriate external influences, such as the teachings of moral teachers, the policies of moral rulers, and the pervasive implementation of rites and rules of propriety in the society, for the individual's moral cultivation. Earlier we have seen that he asserts the coexistence of both the sense of righteousness and the sense for profit as 'common in all humans', but elsewhere, and especially in his noteworthy chapter 'Man's Nature is Bad' (Chapter 23, *xing er*), he repeatedly declares that the sense for profit is part of humans' inborn nature and is furthermore the dominant inclination in the natural disposition of human mind. In Chapter 23, Xunzi declares: 'The nature of man is such that he is born with a love of profit. Following this nature will cause its aggressiveness and greedy tendencies to grow and courtesy and deference to disappear' (*The Xunzi* 23:1, Knoblock 1994: 151). In Chapter 4 ('On Honor and Disgrace [*rong ru*]'), Xunzi also remarks: 'All men possess one and the same nature: when hungry, they desire food; when cold, they desire to be warm; when exhausted from toil, they desire rest; and they all desire benefit and hate harm. Such is the nature

that men are born possessing' (*The Xunzi* 4:9, Knoblock 1988: 191). Furthermore, Xunzi argues that humans are more inclined to seek profits over righteousness:

> The inborn nature of man is certainly that of the petty man. If he is without a teacher and lacks the model, he will see things solely in terms of benefit to himself. . . . Now the mouth and stomach of a man can only lead to smacking and chewing away, feasting and gorging himself to satisfaction. How can they be aware of ritual principles and his moral duty? Or know when to offer polite refusals or to yield precedence? Or know [uprightness (*lian*) and] *shame* (*chi*) more keenly or sharpen what he accumulates? If a man lacks a teacher and the model, then his mind will be just like his mouth and stomach. (The Xunzi 4:10, modification of Knoblock 1988: 192)

In this discourse, we can see that Xunzi does not take either the moral sense of shame (*chi*) or one's sense of integrity (*lian*) to be an inborn trait of human mind. Both of these mental states have to be nurtured with proper teachers, proper moral examplars and proper external practices, that is, rites and rituals.

Xunzi also believes that a profit-seeking mindset is doomed to lead one into a shameful situation. In his view, the pursuit of profit is incompatible with the pursuit of righteousness, because the obsession with profit is the wrong mindset to begin with for any moral agent. Xunzi attributed the following remark to Confucius' major disciple Zeng Zi: 'If the gentleman is able to rid himself of any consideration of profit at the cost of morality, shame and disgrace will never come' (*The Xunzi* 30:3, Knoblock 1994: 257). In this quote, the word 'shame' (*chi*) is associated with 'disgrace' (*ru*) and both signify one's social status, rather than representing one's mental state. That is to say, one could incur shame and disgrace in the public realm if one pursues profit over one's principle of righteousness.

Xunzi believes that the reformation of ordinary people's mind has to come from their superior leaders. He says,

> When superiors love moral conduct, then the people conduct themselves in a refined manner even in private. When superiors love wealth, then the people are willing to die for profits. These two are the crossroads to order and anarchy. A proverb among the people says: 'Do you desire wealth? You will have to bear *shame*, throw out scruples, destroy yourself, cut yourself off from old friends and old ties, and turn your back on duty and station in life.' If superiors love wealth, then the conduct of their subjects will be like this. (The Xunzi 27:66, Knoblock 1994: 223)

In this discourse, Xunzi again reaffirms Confucius' conviction that the propagation of the proper sense of shame can be done in a top-down manner:

If the political leaders set up the right example and implement the policy in a moral way, then the people will learn to develop their moral sense of shame and refrain from committing any ill acts. Since Xunzi also believes that the pursuit of profit is the natural inclination of all humans, he argues that the rulers must not continue to prioritize wealth over rightness. To transform the people from naturally profit-seeking individuals into righteousness-guided individuals, the political or moral leaders must recognize that the arousal of the people's sense of moral shame (*chi*) is the first step. In this way, the sense of shame in Xunzi's moral schema has an even more heightened role to play – it is what binds the society and what prods individuals along their path of moral cultivation.

## THE CONFUCIAN SENSE OF SHAME: THE INTERNAL REFEREE OF THE EXTERNAL SITUATION

To sum up the above textual explications from the three early Confucian masters, we can say that the Confucian sense of shame is distinct from a reactive self-loathing feeling generated by or in response to external pressures such as a shaming culture or the contempt of others. As Bongrae Seok puts it, 'Real Confucian shame concerns how one feels inside one's self, not how one looks to others' (Seok 2017: 82). Mark Berkson also points out that the Confucian sense of shame 'does not require one to be judged in the eyes of the community to feel shame, but rather emphasizes failing to live up to who you essentially *are*' (Berkson 2021: 8, original italics). In a nutshell, the Confucian sense of shame is not indirectly derived from 'an internalized other'; it is already based on the moral agent's internal self-commitment to the objective moral principle (*Dao*). We have seen how all three early Confucians delineate the rightful sense of shame from the wrong kind of shame, and the morally superior agents can be trusted to have the right sense of shame, even when those around them hold a different attitude. Their self-confidence in their own moral judgement would not be swayed by outside criticisms.

However, social norms and external ethical codes must also play some roles in the moral agent's sense of shame. With the origin of a particular shame, there is always an intricate interplay between public sanction and private reflection. As we explained from the outset, the Chinese word *chi* 恥 has both the 'ear' and the 'heart' as parts, and it signifies that this sense of shame is partially derived from one's hearing others' criticisms. So how can the sense of shame be established purely as an internal referee, as a private moral judgement? Owen Flanagan poses this question about the difference between *shame* and *guilt*: 'Is shame always outer, the emotion that results from the real or imagined scrutiny of others, the disapproving gaze, whereas guilt is always

inner, the voice of a stern parent metabolized eventually into one's own conscience?' (Flanagan 2021: 131) However, Berkson argues against such a delineation when it comes to the Confucian sense of shame. He explains that the Confucian shame is an internal self-reflection on whether one has matched one's *ideal self*[23]: 'In Confucian thought . . . the sense of shame is not directed towards who you fundamentally are, but at the gap between who you are now and who you could be. The tension between the present state of your character and the ideal state of character produces shame' (Berkson 2021: 8). Therefore, 'the guilt/shame distinction does not map onto the internal/external distinction in the Confucian sense' (Berkson 2021: 11). I think this 'internal referee' interpretation of the Confucian shame is very fitting for all three early Confucian thinkers' view of shame in the connotation of *chi*.

Presumably, the sense of shame would have no function for a lone subject. If a person were to be born in the wild with no moral guidance and peer sanction whatsoever, then it is questionable whether this person would have a fully developed sense of shame ('*chi*'), even if he would be biologically equipped with this capacity (in the form of '*xiu*') according to Mencius. As Nathaniel Barrett puts it, 'Shame is inherently relational. That is, while shame tends to focus on the self, it is not something we feel about ourselves in isolation, even if we are alone. Rather, it is always felt vis-à-vis someone or something, perhaps even "the world". . . . Shame is feeling bad about who we are vis-à-vis some other or otherness in relation to which some limitation of our self is defined' (Barrett 2014: 150). A prerequisite of a fully developed sense of shame is thus a social culture in which there exists multifold interpersonal critiques and expectations. From the individuals' senses of shame, we end up having reciprocal evaluative attitudes, which constitutes what Bernard Williams calls a 'shame culture' – 'a coherent system for the regulation of conduct' (Williams 2008: 82). This might not be a bad thing, according to Williams, since these reciprocal attitudes are further 'internalized' in one's moral consciousness, which feeds the evaluative judgement to one's sense of shame. 'If that were not so, there would be . . . no shame culture, no shared ethical attitudes at all' (Williams 2008: 84). Society's evaluative judgements often influence individuals in the arousal of shame. Even though the sense of shame is individualistic and private, the conditions that arouse shame are often socially constructed. Williams calls the locus of genuine social expectations 'the internalized other', who represents the social standards by which one evaluates one's own conduct or attitude (Williams 2008: 84). As long as the social expectations are the *right* sort of moral expectations, one's having the sense of shame could lead to 'attempts to reconstruct or improve oneself' (Williams 2008: 90).

The content of the evaluative judgement cultivated alongside our innate sense of shame has to be socially developed – whether by intentional

education or nonintentional immersion. This is both Confucius' and Xunzi's emphasis on the importance of external influences, especially within the top-down political structure. This kind of intentional cultivation of the people's sense of shame is underscored in Confucian moral political philosophy. For the Confucian moral agents, however, the external social norms exemplified in the rules of propriety (*li*) and the objective moral principle epitomized in the notion of righteousness (*yi*), can be, or have been, *internalized* as the individual moral agent's personal referee. For those who have achieved the highest level of moral cultivation, the sages (*sheng*), the internalized moral principle is even in line with the supreme principle: the *Dao*. This is why a sage such as Confucius could go with what his heart desires and never transgresses moral boundary (The *Analects* 2:4). Such a person would no longer have the actual occasion of experiencing the sense of shame. As Barrett explains it, the Confucian sense of shame is deeply rooted in the Confucian moral agent's value system, and

> Any time we are sensitized to certain kinds of values, we are also thereby sensitized to feelings of shame in connection with these values. Moreover, insofar as value sensitivity is the basic function of the human heart/mind (*xin*), the feeling of shame is part of our 'natural endowment' and deeply rooted in human experience. . . . Also, because of this intimate connection to value sensitivity, a cultivated sense of shame does not only help to guide action according to predetermined values: it also helps us to discern what the morally relevant values are. Shame, for this view, is part of our basic capacity for moral discernment. (Barrett 2014: 156–158)

I see this *internalization of objective moral standards*, rather than the *internalized others* (other people in the community), as the essential feature of the Confucian sense of shame. This notion of shame is not a passive, reactive, guilt-associated self-loathing sentiment. It is rather a powerful, positive moral trait of all of us as long as we are properly attuned to the objective value system. Our cultivated sense of shame enables us to develop the sensitivity to the public realm of morality, so that we will *voluntarily* adhere to the social norms of which we approve.

Finally, in another classic Confucian text *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Confucius is quoted as saying that those who love learning would practice with vigour, and know how to have a sense of shame, are people who could regulate their personal life (Chan 1963: 105). A Confucian moral agent not only checks her own conduct, but also monitors her own mind to 'see that there is nothing wrong there', so that she can be 'free from shame' (*Doctrine of the Mean*, Chan 1963: 113). We may conclude that under Confucian moral psychology, the sense of shame plays an important role of ensuring

*moral autonomy*. In Berkson's explication, Confucian sense of shame is a 'moral shame', and moral shame is key to becoming a good person because it involves

1) the recognition that one has fallen short;
2) the awareness that the character or conduct of which one has fallen short is, in fact, admirable and worthy of attaining;
3) the negative feelings that ought to accompany that recognition; and
4) the commitment to improve. (Berkson 2021: 20)

Therefore, 'in the classical Confucian context, shame is an essential moral faculty that is necessary for one's character development' (Berkson 2021: 13). Having the Confucian sense of shame in the connotation of either *xiu* or *chi* in our psychological makeup warrants our status as moral creatures.

## NOTES

1. The representatives are David Hume, Adam Smith and contemporary sentimentalist Michael Slote. By common usage, 'sympathy' is the compassion for another's suffering from one's vantage point, while 'empathy' is putting oneself in the circumstances of the other and employing a vivid imagination of the other's suffering. Empathy requires the ability of imagination. As Adam Smith points out: 'As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation'. Our senses cannot give us direct access to others' feelings, and 'it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations' (Smith 1759: Pt I, Ch.1). Empathetic imagination carries more motivational force for altruism than mere sympathy does.

2. I shall not for this reason refrain from using the English word 'shame' to discuss the Chinese notion of *shame*, for the same reason that Bernard Williams indicated for his choice of using 'shame' to render the Greek notion of *aidos*: 'In this discussion, I have been using the English word "shame" in two ways. It has translated certain Greek words, in particular aidos. It has also had its usual modern meaning. I have been able to use it in both these ways without its falling apart, and this shows something significant. What we have discovered about the Greeks' understanding of these reactions, that they can transcend both an assertive egoism and a conventional concern for public opinion, applies equally well to what we recognise in our own world as shame. If it were not so, the translation could not have delivered so much that is familiar to us from our acquaintance with what we call "shame"' (Williams 2008: 88).

3. See, for example, Nathaniel F. Barrett's summary: 'A quick survey of relevant literature turns up a wide variety of arguments for and against shame, from those

who view it as maladaptive or prone to pathology or abuse (e.g., Gilbert 2003; Lewis 2008) to those who view it as a useful or even indispensable tool of self-regulation and moral improvement (e.g., Appiah 2011). Meanwhile, others have argued that shame is systematically denied or suppressed by modern societies, especially Anglo-American societies (e.g., Cohen 2003; Jordan et al. 2012), almost to the point of being taboo' (Barrett 2014: 143). Psychologist June Tangney argues that the feeling of shame is more negative than the feeling of guilt, in that the latter could motivate people to veer towards a different direction so as to repair the harm, while the former tends to make people more inclined to hide themselves: 'Shame often motivates denial, defensive anger and aggression'" (Tangney and Dearing 2004: 2). *Scientific American* also reports that 'People who feel shame readily are at risk for depression and anxiety disorders' (Kämmerer 2009).

4. I can only speak of the English notion of *shame*, even though the word is translatable into other terms in Romance languages or Germanic languages. I do not presume to engage a comparative study of the Chinese notion of shame with the *Western* notion of shame.

5. The translation of the Chinese word *xiu* into 'shame' is not without controversy. Kwong-loi Shun (2015), for example, argues that the word commonly translated as 'shame' is *chi* 恥, and even that word has a slightly different connotation from that of the English word 'shame.' We shall explain Shun's view shortly. Here we are simply following the standard translation of *xiu* as 'shame' in the context of Confucian moral psychology. Neither the Chinese notion of *xiu* or *chi*, nor the English notion of *shame*, is a *natural kind term* that denotes a distinct category of emotional state with a clear boundary. Chinese words, in particular, often have overlapping meanings and usages. According to Gordon G. Chang, the author of *The Coming Collapse of China*, there are more than one hundred terms in Chinese for the concept of *shame* (Chang 2010).

6. Even though some people explain the transition of connotation in terms of the connection between food offering during sacred ceremonies and the sense of shame derived from poor offering, the transition of the usage of the word *xiu* is not clearly understood.

7. In this chapter where original Chinese texts are cited, the translator's name will be mentioned if I use their renditions; otherwise, only the original text itself will be cited.

8. See later for a detailed discussion on the sense of *shame* in the *Analects*.

9. Flanagan and Williams (2010) also likens Mencius' moral modularity of shame/disgust to Jonathan Haidt's social intuitionist's modularity of purity and sanctity.

10. Chinese verbs do not have past, present, future tenses, but the English translation of "will" is apt here since Confucius is presenting a cause-and-effect relationship.

11. Glaucon is best known as a primary interlocutor with Socrates in Plato's *The Republic*. In the dialogue on justice, Glaucon invoked the ring of Gyges of Lydia, and claimed that if anyone had possession of the ring to make themselves invisible, then they would all do bad things to benefit themselves as long as they had no fear of being caught.

12. Mencius advocates that all humans have four sentiments in their inborn nature: the sense of commiseration, the sense of shame and disgust, the sense of reverence and humility, and the sense of right and wrong. If well-cultivated and well-nourished through one's learning, reflection, and emulating moral exemplars, these sentiments can become full-blown virtues of *humanness*, *righteousness*, *propriety*, and *wisdom*; hence they are called the four 'sprouts' – the sprouts of morality. These four moral sentiments are natural to all human beings, in the sense that they are spontaneous feelings without having been taught, and they are accompanied by no calculated self-interest or other ulterior motives. As Mencius put it, 'If you let people follow their feelings (original nature), they will be able to do good. This is what is meant by saying that human nature is good' (*The Mengzi* 6A: 6, Chan 1963: 54). Confucian moral sentimentalism, derived from Mencius' assertion of our innate moral sense, is exactly the claim that these moral sentiments 'play a leading role in the anatomy of morality' (This is how Kauppinen defines 'moral sentimentalism'. See Kauppinen 2014).

13. Shun (1997) and Cua (2003) also tried to explain why the word *xiu* rather than *chi* was chosen. I don't find Shun's explanation helpful; however, I would endorse Cua's speculation: 'Perhaps *xiu* conveys more clearly the emotive or affective aspect of *xin* [heart] rather than *chi*' (Cua 2003: 164).

14. The italicized quote here has very different interpretations and translations. Philip J. Ivanhoe translates it as 'Shamelessness is the shame of being without shame' (Ivanhoe 2009: 145). D. C. Lau translates the whole sentence as 'A man must not be without shame, for the shame of being without shame is shamelessness indeed' (Lau 1987: 240). James Legge's translation is totally different from the above two: 'A man may not be without shame. When one is ashamed of having been without shame, he will afterwards not have occasion to be ashamed' (Legge 1861b: 327). Here I am adopting Lau's reading and give a modified rendition myself.

15. Mencius clearly separates humans from beasts, but he said that the distinction between the two is 'slight'. Wang Fuzhi interprets Mencius as saying that humans are separated from beasts in their innate senses of commiseration, shame and disgust, reverence, right and wrong – the four moral sprouts (Wang 1974: 680). In other words, only human beings have the sense of shame, among other innate moral senses, while other animals do not have it.

16. The translations of Xunzi's quotes are either from Knoblock 1988–1994 or from Hutton 2016, depending on which version is better. The numbering of Xunzi's text follows Knoblock.

17. In Antonio Cua's 'The Ethical Significance of Shame: Insights of Aristotle and Xunzi', he focuses on a different word *ru* 辱 and renders it as 'shame'. I think this word has a much stronger negative connotation and is usually translated as 'insult', 'humiliation', or 'disgrace'. Cua is using the English term 'shame' as a 'generic term for a family of specific terms, such as "disgrace" and "humiliation"' (Cua 2003: 155). My focus in this paper is the more narrowly defined shame as a mental state, excluding such notions as humiliation or disgrace.

18. 'The Five Hegemons (*wubo* 五伯)' refers to the five powerful lords in the Spring and Autumn Era (770–ca. 476 BCE) in ancient China. At this time, the

sovereign of Zhou Dynasty established by the praiseworthy King Wen and King Wu was already in decline, and the five lords competed to become the next sovereign. Hence, the Spring and Autumn Era was plagued with constant warfare, leading to neglect, starvation, and death of the people.

19. In the *Analects*, one of Confucius' leading students *Zixia* remarked: 'After a scholar has completed his learning, he should apply himself to be an officer to serve the nation' (the *Analects* 19:13). This idea of learning in order to serve the country is a prevalent attitude of the intelligentsia in ancient China. In this context, Xunzi is referring to those who have been well-educated and can now devote themselves to serving the nation by having an official post. He compared the scholar-officials in the ancient times and in his times; he praised the former but criticized the latter.

20. He does not assert that they were inborn in human nature, however. To say that the sense of righteousness is commonly possessed by humans, is not to commit to a Mencian form of moral metaphysics in which human nature is defined to be the source of moral goodness. *The Doctrine of the Mean* further defines the metaphysical foundation of human nature as the *Dao* of heaven. Xunzi would not embrace such an *a priori* essentialism. What he acknowledges here is about the common traits in human *mind*, not in human *nature* – the different implications are too complicated to be explained in this article.

21. Williams, however, does not take *autonomous shame* to be what characterizes the Greek notion of *shame*, and he does not seem to endorse this form of shame either. He says that we might salute these 'just people' as 'morally autonomous', and we might praise them for their power of reason; however, since 'the power of reason is not enough by itself to disguise good and bad', 'we should hope that there is some limit to these people's autonomy, that there is an internalized other in them that carries some genuine social weight' (Williams 2008: 100). In other words, Williams thinks that it is necessary for the sentiment of shame to originate implicitly from some public sanction.

22. Whether a Confucian gentleman or a sage could become a moral egoist is a deeper question to be considered outside the scope of this chapter.

23. I should emphasize that this notion is different from the Freudian 'ego-ideal' because there is no demarcation of the self in the Confucian moral psychology as in Freud. According to Deonna, Teroni and Rodogno, a distinction between shame and guilt stems from the psychological and psychoanalytic literature and can be traced back to Freud: 'Shame, it is said, arises from a failure to live up to standards of the ego-ideal, guilt results from violating prohibitions imposed by the superego (Freud 1923; Lynd 1958; Piers and Singer 1953). The latter is nothing other than external (especially parental) authority internalized as a figure exerting normative control over the subject, while the former is an idealized figure – a "better self", a model – the subject wishes to resemble. In a nutshell, the claim is that shame is linked to failures that undermine our goals or ideals, guilt is linked to infringements of prohibitions' (Deonna et al. 2011: 75–76). In contrast, the Confucian moral psychology does not posit an imaginary 'ideal self' that one can look up to in measuring one's own self. The ideal is more likely a moral exemplar (such as the sage) that the moral agent embraces as the model that she wishes to emulate.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2011) *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Barrett, Nathaniel (2014) "A Confucian Theory of Shame." *Sophia* 54: 143–163.

Berkson, Mark (2021) "A Confucian Defense of Shame: Morality, Self-Cultivation, and the Dangers of Shamelessness." *Religions* 12(1): 32. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010032.

Chan, Wing-tsit (ed.) (1963) *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chang, Gordon G. (2010) "The 'Shame' Concept Goes Back to Confucius." *The New York Times*, July 31, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/07/31/china-shaming/the-shame-concept-goes-back-to-confucius.

Cohen, Dov (2003) "The American National Conversation About (Everything But) Shame." *Social Research* 70(4): 1075–1108.

Cua, Antonio S. (2003) "The Ethical Significance of Shame: Insights of Aristotle and Xunzi." *Philosophy East and West* 53(2): 147–202.

Deonna, Julien, Fabrice Teroni, and Raffaele Rodogno (2011) *In Defense of Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flanagan, Owen, and Robert Anthony Williams (2010) "What Does the Modularity of Morals Have to Do With Ethics? Four Moral Sprouts Plus or Minus a Few." *Topics in Cognitive Science* 2(3): 430–453.

Fussi, Alessandra (2015) "Aristotle on Shame." *Ancient Philosophy* 35: 113–135.

Gao, Xuede (2013) "A Study on Shame: Its Concept, Structure and Evaluation (羞耻研究:概念、結構及其評定)." *Advances in Psychological Science* 心理科學進展 21(8): 1450–1456.

Gilbert, P. (2003) "Evolution, Social Roles, and the Differences in Shame and Guilt." *Social Research* 70(4): 1205–1230.

Gong, Huanan 貢華南 (2009) "Why is Shame Necessary? A Study Focusing on Mencius. 羞何以必要？－以孟子為中心的考察." *Confucius Studies* 孔子研究 1: 23–33.

Hutton, Eric (2016) *Xunzi: The Complete Text*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. (ed.) (2009) *Mencius*. Translated by Irene Bloom. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jordan, William R., III, Nathaniel F. Barrett, Kip Curtis, Liam Heneghan, Randall Honold, and Todd LeVasseur. (2012) "Foundations of Conduct: A Theory of Values and Its Implications for Environmentalism." *Environmental Ethics* 34: 291–312.

Kämmerer, Annette (2009) "The Scientific Underpinnings and Impacts of Shame." *Scientific American*, August 9, 2019.

Kauppinen, Antti (2014) "Moral Sentimentalism." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2014 Edition)*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/moral-sentimentalism/.

Knoblock, John (1988) *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*. Vol. I. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Knoblock, John (1990) *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*. Vol. II. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Knoblock, John (1994) *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*. Vol. III. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lau, D. C. (1987) *The Analects*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Legge, James (1861a) "Confucian Analects." In *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*. Hong Kong.

Legge, James (1861b) "The Works of Mencius: Confucian Analects." In *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*. Hong Kong.

Lewis, Michael (2008) "Self-Conscious Emotions: Embarrassment, Pride, Shame, and Guilt." In *Handbook of Emotions*, edited by M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones, and L. F. Barrett, 3rd ed., 742–756. New York: Guildford Press.

Liu, Xiusheng (2002) "Mencius, Hume and Sensibility Theory." *Philosophy East and West* 52(1): 75–97.

Ni, Liangkang 倪梁康 (2007) "The Origin of the Sense of Shame/Indignation and Moral Consciousness '羞恶之心' 與道德意識的來源." *Dongnan Xueshu* 2007(2).

Scheler, Max (1913/1987) "Shame and Feelings of Modesty." In *Person and Self-Value*: *Three Essays*, edited by Max Scheler, 2–85. Dordrect: Springer.

Seok, Bongrae (2017) *Moral Psychology of Confucian Shame*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Shun, Kwong-loi (1997) *Mencius and Early Chinese Philosophy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Shun, Kwong-loi (2015) "Ethical Self-Commitment and Ethical Self-Indulgence." In *The Philosophical Challenge From China*, edited by Brian Bruya, 183–203. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Smith, Adam (1759) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Marxists Org. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/works/moral/index.htm.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing (2004) *Shame and Guilt*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Wang Fuzhi (1974) *Du-shi-shu-da-quan-shuo* (*Discourse on Reading the Great Collection of Commentaries on the Four Books*) 1665. Taipei, Taiwan: He-luo-tu-shu Publishing.

Williams, Bernard (2008) *Shame and Necessity*. University of California Press. First published in 1993.

Zayats, Anatoli 扎業茲 (2012) *The Connotations of the Concept of 'Shame' and Its Related Usage* (羞概念的語意範圍及相關的詞匯運用). Master's Thesis. Dalian University of Technology.

*Chapter 3*

# Plato on Shame

Alessandra Fussi

## FOUR POSITIONS ON PLATONIC SHAME

Both Plato and Aristotle addressed the ethical significance of shame, but only Aristotle discussed the emotion in terms that scholars can employ in contemporary debates without too much adjustment (Williams 1993; Cairns 1993, 2008; Konstan 2006, 2020; Fussi 2015). While Aristotle discusses inhibitory as well as retrospective forms of shame in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Rhetoric* (the Greek terms are *aidos* and *aischyne*), in Plato's dialogues shame is indeed thematized, but it is difficult to speak of a 'Platonic theory' concerning this emotion (Candiotto and Renaut 2020). With Plato, this is not an unusual problem. Identifying clearly where he stands even with respect to concepts that have traditionally been considered 'Platonic' (e.g. the theory of ideas) is no easy task, because he is a notoriously reticent author. He never speaks in the first person in his works. Some dialogues have a narrator, in others he portrays direct conversations, but he never includes himself as a character, nor does he otherwise explicitly indicate what he thinks about the philosophical theses to which he gives voice.

In some instances, shame occurs at the dramatic level (Futter 2009; Tarnopolsky 2010). In the *Republic* Thrasymachus blushes when Socrates leads him to admit that an unjust person is likely to be ignorant and bad, so that the rhetorician's aggressive praise of injustice loses all credibility.[1] That shame occurs at certain important junctures in the dialogues reveals that Plato gave it a central role to play, but the absence of clear indications from Plato himself led scholars to some problematic claims. For brevity's sake I will limit myself here to four positions that are worth discussing.

1) McKim (1988, 35) maintains that in the *Gorgias* we find an attempt to prove the so-called 'Socratic Axiom' that 'virtue is always supremely beneficial to the moral agent himself as well as to those toward whom he acts virtuously, whereas vice, in addition to the material harm it inflicts on others, is always supremely harmful to the agent, being bad for the health of the soul'.

According to McKim the Axiom is not demonstrated logically, but through shame:

> Socrates does not purport to expose inconsistencies within anticonventional morality but rather exploits our sense of shame to reveal that we do not really believe in it, despite the fact that we may say or even think we do. In short, although he agrees with Callicles that whatever all men believe by nature must be true, the two take opposite views of what that is. Whereas Callicles says that men assert out of shame what they really believe to be false, Socrates thinks that men assert out of shame what they really believe to be true; and whereas Callicles says that men are ashamed to say what they really believe to be true, Socrates thinks that they are ashamed to assert what they really believe to be false. (McKim 1988, 40)

While I agree that the refutations in the *Gorgias* are understandable only if we consider the interaction between Socrates, his interlocutors and the public in attendance, I find McKim's position ultimately untenable. His premise is that, according to Plato, shame gives us access to absolute values, values we believe in by nature. Supposedly, this is why the examples of shame in the *Gorgias* allow us to discover that all the characters, and indeed all of us readers, are deeply tied to the Socratic Axiom and consider it true.

My objection is that for the most part shame in the Platonic dialogues is indeed revealing, but of personal attachments to values that individuals acquire mostly by education. As we shall see, in the *Republic* it becomes clear that the dominant principle in a certain form of government will heavily influence the values embraced by the citizens (may it be the acquisition of honours, wealth, pleasures of all sorts, etc.). Values that are strictly connected to one's identity depend on the political environment in which one happens to grow up and on the type of intrapsychic organization that characterizes each individual. Ultimately, it is not a Platonic thesis that shame per se allows us access to absolute values, and I see no particular reason to attribute it to Plato in the *Gorgias*.

2) Following McKim, Candiotto (2015) identifies in the *Gorgias* two kinds of shame. The first leads to *aporia* and hence to the recognition

of ignorance. In her view, this particular form of shame plays a major role in Gorgias's refutation:

> The movements exemplified here represent the cognitive and emotional dynamics that develop between Socrates, the interlocutor and the audience, and that find their realization in a specific moment of Socratic dialogue, the aporetic state. In 461c Polus says that Gorgias was ashamed to maintain certain statements, e.g. that he did not know what justice was and that, as he did not know, he could not teach it. (Candiotto 2015, 225)

The second kind of shame is what she calls 'shame of shame' (Candiotto 2015, 237). It betrays the strong attachment certain characters have to their social identity and it prevents them from admitting their mistakes and accepting the refutation. Hence, it is an obstacle to the purification brought about by the first kind of shame.

Candiotto's interpretation has the merit of acknowledging, like McKim and others (Kahn 1983; Fussi 2000; Stauffer 2006; Tarnopolsky 2010), the importance of the dramatic setting. However, her reading of Gorgias's refutation is not persuasive. As Polus clearly states at 461c, Gorgias's shame does not stem from *aporia*. Rather, because Gorgias feels the social pressure under which he is speaking (he is a stranger in Athens, surrounded by potential students and other citizens), he is ashamed to admit his real view, that is, that he does not care to teach justice to his students (Kahn 1983; Woodruff 2000; Fussi 2002). According to Polus, Gorgias, like everybody else, would never deny that he knows what justice is and that he is willing to teach it to others. His shame is meant to conceal, rather than reveal, what really matters to him.

If Candiotto's thesis that Gorgias reaches an aporetic state is not persuasive, can we perhaps explain the rhetorician's predicament as one caused by 'shame of shame'? This seems more promising. However, the Greek tradition gives us concepts that can better explain such cases. When Gorgias, in order to avoid being refuted, defends theses he does not believe in, he is moved by the fear of losing his reputation, that is, by the fear of dishonour. Gorgias is a rhetorician who lives off his reputation. If he ended up being seen as a totally unscrupulous person, he would be dishonoured. For this reason, he cannot affirm either that he does not know what is right, nor that he is unwilling to teach it. I am afraid that the concept of 'shame of shame' is more confusing than illuminating in this context.[2] We will turn shortly to the relation between fear and shame in light of Aristotle's analysis of *aidos* and *aischyne*.

3) If Mckim and Candiotto concentrate on the shame felt by Socrates' interlocutors, Woodruff (2000, 144) relates Socratic shame to solipsism. He speaks of 'solipsized or Socratic shame', and argues that it is

> 'a full awareness that one has betrayed values that are entirely one's own'. But if someone is willing to examine and defend the values on which his self-evaluation is based, I don't see why we should call him a solipsist, even if his interlocutors don't happen to agree with him. The philosophical discussions we bear witness to in the dialogues open the possibility that others, in the next stages of the conversation or some other time in the future, may understand Socrates's point of view. The interlocutors are constantly invited by Socrates to explain what prevents them from sharing the values by which he believes one ought to live. In contrast, an ethical solipsist would not care at all about different positions. His own intuition would be sufficient and final. Reducing Socratic shame to intuitions that are entirely his own makes Socrates dangerously similar to a madman whose views are unshakeable.

The problem of dramatic irony (Ferrari 2008; Griswold 2002) of course complicates things. For example, when in the *Phaedrus* Socrates pronounces his first speech with his head covered in shame (*Phaedr*. 237a), Phaedrus does not understand why Socrates is ashamed. He probably does not understand it even after Socrates gives his second speech, in which he explains why his first speech was shameful. The conclusion we should draw, however, is not that Socrates's shame is based on values that are *entirely his own*, but that his particular interlocutor in the dialogue does not understand or share his values. Others (the readers perhaps) might understand.

4) This brings me to the last problem raised by interpreters, namely the debate regarding the source of shame. Some scholars have claimed that shame is a function of reason (Fortenbaugh [1975] (2002), 32). I agree with Cairns (1993, 381–385), who understands it as stemming from the part of the soul that cares for honour and recognition.[3] As I will argue, shame originates in the spirited part of the soul, but whether it hinders or helps reason depends on the goals that the soul as a whole is pursuing.

In what follows, I am going to analyse different functions of shame in the Platonic dialogues. In doing so, I will also answer the question concerning its source in the soul's tripartition. Before discussing Plato, however, in the next section, I will concentrate on relevant Greek words and concepts, in light of Aristotle's discussion of shame in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Rhetoric*. This will allow me to show how these same concepts are introduced and defended by Plato in the narrative of the *Republic* and in the *Symposium*.

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO UNDERSTAND *AIDOS* AND *AISCHYNE*

1) *Submission*. The word *aidos* (but also the verb *aischynein*) can be used in Greek to indicate a form of shame that we might call performative. Someone may feel *aidos* before someone else because he deems the other an object of reverence and respect. *Aidos*, in this sense, expresses submission to someone who is deemed superior in a given hierarchical context (e.g. a parent, a teacher, a priest, a god).[4] The agent expresses submission by abstaining from words and actions that would inappropriately put him on the same level as the other. What is inhibited is not so much the content one would want to communicate, as the act of speaking itself. We find an example of this form of performative shame in Plato's *Gorgias* (455cd) when Socrates claims that many prospective students are present in the room, who would like to ask Gorgias some questions but are ashamed to do so (*oi isos aischynoint' an se anеresthai*). Gorgias is a very famous man who just finished an impressive rhetorical speech. Socrates implies that the prospective students in attendance don't dare ask him questions. They are shy. What Socrates claims he wants to do is question Gorgias for them. What are they going to get from Gorgias if they become his pupils?
2) *Prospective inhibitory shame*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle clarifies that *aidos* is an emotion, not a disposition. More specifically, it is a form of fear:

> Shame is not properly spoken of as a virtue, since it is more like a feeling than a state of character (*pathei gar mallon eoiken e hexei*). Anyway, it is defined as a kind of fear of disrepute (*phobos tis adoxias*), and it has an effect very like that produced by the fear of something horrible: people blush when they feel ashamed (*oi aischynomenoi*), and turn pale when they are afraid of death. So both seem to be in some way bodily conditions, and this seems to be more characteristic of a feeling than a state. (*NE* 1128b10–6; Crisp translation, slightly amended)

Generic fear (*phobos*) is pain and agitation caused by the imagination of evils that appear imminent and capable to cause painful evils and destruction (Arist., *Rhet*., II, 1382a21–23). Shame, a specific form of fear, is caused by imagining that certain actions or words might endanger one's reputation. Its function is essentially prospective (regarding the future) and inhibitory (it prevents certain actions). In other words, shame is an emotion of self-protection (Taylor 1985, 81; Williams 1993, 89; Scheler 1987; Deigh 1996), and it works as a quasi-virtue, since it helps people who are not yet fully virtuous, for example the young, to stick with their virtuous goals rather

than follow their impulses and act shamefully (the adjective *aischron*, which means 'shameful', 'vulgar', 'ignoble', has the same root as *aischyne*, 'shame').

In Plato's *Laws*, we find the same association between fear and prospective shame. The terms employed are *aidos* and *aischyne*. At 646e10–647a2, the Athenian Stranger states that there are two kinds of fear (*phobos*): the first is in relation to evils that we expect to occur. The second is fear for one's reputation: 'And often we fear reputation, when we think we shall gain a bad repute for doing or saying something base, and this fear we (like everybody else, I imagine) call shame (*aischyn*e)'. This second kind of fear can oppose the first (in the sense that fear of disgrace gives us the strength to endure pain and other evils). For this reason, the Athenian Stranger suggests, shame is held in high regard by legislators and decent people, and it is also called modesty (*aidos*).[5]

Going back to the *Gorgias*, we do not need 'shame of shame' to understand Gorgias's predicament. A more accurate reading would be that he did not say what he really thought out of prospective shame, that is, because he was afraid to endanger his reputation before the Athenian public in attendance.

3) *Retrospective shame*. Sometimes, even if we feel prospective shame with respect to actions or words that might endanger our reputation, we end up acting against our best judgement. As a result, we may feel ashamed of what we did. This is a retrospective shame (*aischyne*). If a character is not yet well balanced, attempts at self-control may fail. This is why Aristotle claims that *aidos* and *aischyne* are appropriate to young people, while they are not praiseworthy emotions in adult life. As Burnyeat (1980, 78) aptly stated, from an Aristotelian perspective 'shame is the semi-virtue of the learner'. Self-control implies internal conflict, but virtue, as a steady disposition to act in view of the noble, is superior to self-control. Hence, a virtuous person will rely as little as possible on prospective shame, and, by behaving in the right way, she will have no need of retrospective shame.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics aischyne* and the relative verb *aischynein* refer mostly to retrospective shame, while *aidos* indicates prospective shame. In the *Rhetoric* the two concepts are unified under the definition of *aischyne*:

> Let shame [*aischyne*] be [defined as] a sort of pain and agitation concerning the class of evils, whether present or past or future, that seem to bring a person into disrespect, and [let] shamelessness [be defined as] a belittling about these same things. (*Rhet*. II.6, 1383b13–16)

What the two kinds of shame have in common is that they are both caused by certain kinds of evils – they can be actions or words that betray a bad character, but also situations in which the agent finds himself in a condition of inferiority with respect to his peers, or suffers humiliation without being able to obtain redress. Such evils can be located in the past (in this case, one feels retrospective shame), or may be imagined as future events (in this case, one feels prospective shame). In both cases, the object of concern does not coincide with the evils themselves, but with *adoxia*, that is, with the loss of reputation that such evils can cause among people whose opinion one respects.

4) *Fear of the consequences of disgrace*. The word *aischyne* in Greek indicates an emotion. But it can also refer to a condition, in which case it means *dishonour*, or *disgrace*. One can fear dishonour (*aischyne, adoxia*) without feeling shame. It is possible, that is, to fear the loss of reputation for its practical consequences, without having any regrets about actions or words that are judged shameful by a certain public. One can be afraid of the negative effects of a bad reputation (incurring punishment, losing power, etc.), without sharing the negative judgement that leads others to see our actions as dishonourable. For example, I may fear the loss of reputation in a community that demands my respect for certain laws, and yet feel no shame if I find those same laws unjust. In more contemporary terms: someone who belongs to a minority and is expected to behave in ways that she finds diminishing may feel no shame when she acts differently from what is expected of her by those who hold authority in the community in which she works. However, she may well fear that if her reputation is endangered, she will have to pay the consequences of a behaviour that she finds in no way blameworthy.[6] In other words, she finds the expectations of her workplace *intimidating*.

Throughout his discussion of shame in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle insists that shame entails some form of respect for the opinions of those before whom our reputation might be endangered. Hence, he distinguishes shame from the generic fear one might feel about the consequences of a loss of reputation:

> Since shame is imagination [*phantasia*] about a loss of reputation and for its own sake, not for its results, and since no one cares about reputation [in the abstract] but on account of those who hold an opinion of him, necessarily a person feels shame toward those whose opinion he takes account of. (*Rhet*. II, 1384a22–24)

As we will now proceed to see, Aristotle's distinction between fear of the consequences of a bad reputation and actual shame presupposes the arguments developed in Plato's *Republic* concerning the different kinds of motivations that may guide our lives. The reflection developed between Book II and IV leads Socrates to posit *thumos* (spiritedness) as a third part of the soul beside the appetitive part and reason. In the narrative of the *Republic*, this corresponds to the passage from Glaucon's account of human nature to Socrates' tripartition of the soul. The development is exemplified by the different behaviours of two men: Gyges and Leontius.

## FEAR OF THE CONSEQUENCE OF A BAD REPUTATION: GYGES

Three questions in Plato's *Republic* are clearly linked together: (1) what is justice? (2) why should we care about justice? (3) what is it in ourselves that leads us to care about something at all?[7]

These problems lead Socrates and his companions to formulate conceptions of the soul that are progressively refined. Each time one of the participants in the discussion proposes a theory concerning the nature of justice, he also offers paradigmatic examples, from which we are supposed to see what kind of society, what kind of individual behaviour, and which fundamental desires follow from the theory or are explained by it. It is interesting for our purposes to understand the connection between Glaucon's genetic theory of justice, which he articulates in Book II, and Socrates's tripartition of the soul, first developed in Book IV and then further refined in the following books.[8]

Glaucon gives an account of the genesis of justice that aims to explain why it came to be and why people continue to consider it necessary even though they find injustice more desirable.

The argument (*Rep.*, 358e–359b) runs as follows: Originally, that is, before there were any laws, people were motivated only by their natural desires. The highest good, that is, what everybody desired by nature, was to have more than others, while the worst evil was being wronged by others. When they had time to experience the two typical outcomes, that is, getting the better of others and being overpowered by others, they realized that the disadvantages of the latter were not repaid by the advantages of the former. They also understood that it was impossible to enjoy (what was later called) doing injustice without suffering injustice in return. Only someone with supernatural powers would be able to systematically pursue injustice without suffering retaliation. Finally, they concluded that they had to establish a covenant, and they gave up all attempts to get the better of others to avoid reciprocal injustice. This is how the laws were generated. Justice was born out of necessity, as something

in between the best and the worst. Nobody considered it desirable, but everyone had to accept it.

One could imagine that once the laws were established and new forms of behaviour became habitual, the selfish and violent desires that characterized the state of nature would be mitigated and transformed. Glaucon, however, takes for granted that human nature is unchangeable. Nature and convention run parallel to each other, as two rivers that never mingle. Under the surface of justice, everyone is moved by the same old desire to have more than others (*dia ten pleonexian*; *Rep*., 359c5). Hence, Glaucon claims, if two men, one just and one unjust, were offered the chance to commit a crime with impunity, they would both do it.

He asks his companions to imagine the paradigmatic case of a just man, a shepherd called Gyges, who suddenly discovers the way to act unjustly without been seen. After a big earthquake, a chasm opens in the ground. He goes down, and finds a huge corpse wearing a gold ring on its finger. He takes the ring, comes out of the chasm, and later discovers that the ring renders him invisible when he turns the setting towards himself. Hence, he can continue to count on being protected by the laws without having to fear any consequences if he breaks them. Basically, Glaucon gives Gyges the opportunity to return to the state of nature while everybody else continues to live under the law. Since nobody knows that he can break the original pact as he wishes, they will all continue to behave as usual towards him. After experimenting a bit with the ring while he is at an assembly with other shepherds, he asks to be sent to the king as a representative. Once there, he enters the palace undetected by the guards, and he seduces the queen. With her help, he kills the king and takes over his kingdom.

There are two problems with this account. The first is that it is not clear why we should assume that everybody under normal circumstances would behave in the same way as someone who is endowed with fantastic powers. As Irwin puts it:

> Why should the fact that we would prefer injustice if conditions were radically and unrealistically different show that there is something objectionable about our commitment to justice in actual circumstances? [. . .] If we say that a concern for justice in specified empirical circumstances is not a genuine concern for justice, why might we not equally say that the supposedly unjust person is not really unjust? For if there were an adequate supply of wealth, honor, and so on available without injustice, he would have no reason to value injustice. (Irwin 1995, 186; cfr. Annas 1981, 69)

The second problem, more relevant to our present discussion, is that it is not easy to see Gyges as 'one of us'. By assumption, he is a just man. We can understand that at some point, given the opportunity, he may choose to

act unjustly. Still, the lack of internal struggle appears strange. We hear of no hesitation, of no subsequent regrets. Glaucon describes Gyges as under no stress whatsoever. One day he is a shepherd, the next day he is a thief, a murderer, a tyrant. Bernard Williams found this deeply unsatisfactory:

> Glaucon claims (on behalf of Thrasymachus and his associates) that someone armed with Gyges' ring would act unjustly, as (effectively) an exploitative and self-seeking bandit. An immediate objection to this is that, with regard to many people, it is not very plausible. Even if justice is in some abstract sense a second-best, a contractually acceptable midpoint (359a) between the best option (unpunished self-seeking) and the worst (being the victim of others' injustice), it is likely, if an ethical system is to work at all, that the motivations of justice will be sufficiently internalized not to evaporate instantaneously if the agent discovers invisibility (Williams 2006, 100).

Implicit in Glaucon's account is a division of the soul into essentially two parts: the appetites set the goals and reason calculates how to satisfy them. He does not seem to have the conceptual premises in place to explain emotions like shame, self-reproach and self-disappointment. Suppose he tells us that shame is a concern for one's reputation: people are prevented from committing crimes by the fear that they might be detected. When the absence of witnesses allows Gyges to feel confident that his reputation is not in danger, he does not hesitate to plunder a corpse.

However, as we have seen in II.3, there is a difference between shame and fear, even when one's reputation is concerned. Gyges is worried about the consequences of a bad reputation, but he does not seem capable of shame. He does not care for his reputation per se. Suppose he turned the ring's setting towards himself at the wrong moment. The shepherds would have a chance to think that he is up to something, the guards could arrest him, the king could have him executed. He can fear all that, even while in possession of the magic ring. This is a partial answer to Irwin's objection: Gyges remains human, he can make mistakes, he is still vulnerable to being exposed as a criminal, he can still fear what might happen if he gets caught. Yet, he is only afraid of external sanctions. There is no trace of concern for the kind of person he might become by taking the path he is taking.

Moral choices, even in a so-called culture of shame, proceed from internalized values as well as from the capacity to imagine and take into account the reactions of others (their blame, their contempt, their indignation). To feel ashamed, Gyges would need to feel pain at the thought that certain people might consider him a thief, a murderer and a usurper, even if they lacked the power to punish him (since Gyges ends up as a tyrant, this scenario is not implausible). However important visibility might be, more is needed for shame. We need to know by whom one fears to be seen (if by someone whose opinions

one respects or by just anybody who happens to be present), and why.[9] I can feel ashamed before people who find my behaviour unjust if I share their view that my unjust behaviour makes me look like a person I do not want to be.[10] Instead, what Glaucon gives us is a totally superficial feeling, indistinguishable from other forms of fear. He portrays someone who does not care at all about the kind of person he is and whose identity is not even partially rooted in inter-subjectively shared values. But, as Williams suggests, if a society is to work at all, the pact of justice must be kept in place not only by a coercive system with a deterrent and punitive function, but also by emotions that, in the soul of the citizens, act as a counterbalance to the desire to have more and to overwhelm others. Glaucon portrays an implausible man in an implausible society.

That his view of human nature is oversimplified can be seen also from his second thought experiment, which includes two men: the first is completely unjust but has a reputation for justice and lives a totally comfortable life, with power, a good marriage, and so on; the second is a perfectly just man who has a reputation for injustice and is punished accordingly. Glaucon wants to keep 'being just' separated from 'having a reputation for justice' because, he claims, only so can it be clear that the reasons one has to choose justice are not polluted by the desire for honours and rewards. Predictably, the just person with a reputation of injustice comes to a bad end:

> [He] will be whipped, stretched on a rack, chained, blinded with a red-hot iron, and, at the end, when he has suffered every sort of bad thing, he will be impaled, and will realize then that one should not want to be just, but to be believed to be just. (*Rep*., 361e–362a)

The harsh punishment the just man endures may remind us of Socrates's fate. However, we should not think that Glaucon defends a satisfactory view of what it is to be moral in the eyes of Plato. I believe Williams is right about the problem entailed in Glaucon's thought experiment, but too quick to attribute it to Plato:

> We are given the convictions of the just man himself, and those are taken to be both true and unshakeable. But suppose we decline to stand outside and to assume the man's justice. Suppose we change the terms of the solipsistic experiment and arrange it from the agent's perspective, rather than from ours or from Plato's; suppose we make it, in effect, an exercise in ethical Cartesianism. Then we should describe the situation in these terms: this is a man who thinks that he is just, but is treated by everyone else as though he were not. If he were given merely that description of himself, it is less clear how steady his motivations would prove. Moreover, it is less clear how steady we think they should prove. For given simply that description, there is nothing to show whether he is a solitary bearer of true justice or a deluded crank (Williams 1993, 99).

In Glaucon's first thought experiment, shame is reduced to the fear of being seen by a concrete public doing things that will incur punishment (with no need for Gyges to consider himself blameworthy). In the second thought experiment, someone who believes himself to be perfectly just does not need any external recognition to be certain that his self-evaluation is correct. But this, as Williams points out, reduces Glaucon's perfectly just person to a solipsist.

We are back to the problem raised by Woodruff (2000, 144): 'solipsized shame'. With respect to justice, someone can go wrong in at least two ways, that is, from the point of view of conceptual knowledge, and from the point of view of a correct self-evaluation. Left to himself, one may not realize that his beliefs, if tested, would not withstand refutation. Or he may not see clearly that his behaviour and his intentions are not really those of a just man. For example, he may mistake an insensitive, uncompromising, self-righteous attitude with one that embodies justice. To avoid self-delusion, one would need to consider himself from the perspective of others, enter into a conversation with them, and take their views seriously. In conclusion, we are faced with extreme and unrealistic heteronomy when we consider the unjust man, and with a form of autonomy bordering on solipsism when we consider the just man.

One reason to doubt that Glaucon's solipsist may represent Plato's image of a just man comes from the dramatic presentation of Socrates in the dialogues. As mentioned in I.3, Socrates is not portrayed as a hermit, or as a mystic who lives in his own separate world. Sometimes he is conspicuously alone (*Symp*., 175a–c), or absent from the scene during public displays of rhetoric (*Gorg*., 447a). Then he joins others and invites them to philosophical discussion. Even when his position appears shameful to other characters, as it happens in the *Gorgias*, Socrates may disagree on the values upon which a character's contempt is based, but he still thinks that he needs others as interlocutors and judges. This becomes clear towards the end of his discussion with Callicles. They deeply disagree. The philosophical life seems to Socrates the best choice, while Callicles finds it shameful. Callicles tells Socrates that continuing to do philosophy beyond the right age (that is, when one is no longer young) is unworthy of a self-respecting person. A man like Socrates, if accused, will not know how to defend himself in the courts, and will not be able to come to the aid of friends when they are in trouble. He will remain whispering on a street corner with three or four young men, and prove unable to speak in the political arena, as any good citizen should do. From Callicles' point of view, someone like Socrates deserves to be beaten (*Gorg*., 485d). In a later passage, Socrates states that he is well aware that many think like Callicles. Indeed, he is convinced that if he were brought to court, it would not be strange at all if he were sentenced to death. But,

he adds, 'I'll be judged the way a doctor would be judged by a jury of children if a pastry chef were to bring accusations against him' (*Gorg*., 521e). And while Callicles objects that being unable to defend himself in court is far from admirable, Socrates responds by appealing to different values on which shame and honour ought to be based. The only reliable form of self-protection, he claims, is to live in such a way that one never does injustice to any men or to the gods. Socrates would only feel ashamed if someone could prove that he is not a just person:

> Now, if someone were to refute me and prove that I am unable to provide this protection for myself or anyone else, I would feel shame at being refuted, whether this happened in the presence of many or of a few, or just between the two of us; and if I were to be put to death for lack of this ability, I really would be upset. But if I came to my end because of a deficiency in flattering oratory, I know that you'd see me bear my death with ease. (*Gorg*., 522d-e)

Socrates knows very well that he and Callicles measure what is admirable and what is shameful on the basis of irreconcilable values. Because he does not share the view that the philosophic life is dishonourable, and since he despises the kind of rhetoric admired by Callicles, he is not ashamed of being condemned to death. One might suggest that he could still fear the consequences of disgrace: he could fear death. To this, he responds that one ought not to be attached to life at all costs.

Socrates is not shameless. Nor should we see his position as an appeal to solipsized shame. He does not exclude the possibility of being refuted. He imagines feeling ashamed before someone who might prove that he betrayed the values by which he thinks one ought to live.

Intersubjective recognition is fundamental for Socratic shame. As we are about to see, in Book IV of the *Republic*, it becomes clear that the emotions of self-evaluation are rooted in spiritedness. This entails that even philosophic shame is based on a world shared with others.

## INTERNALIZED VALUES, SELF-EVALUATION, HONOUR

That Glaucon's account needs to be corrected becomes apparent when in Book IV Socrates introduces *thumos* (spiritedness) as a third part of the soul, besides the appetitive part and reason. The dramatic setting is revealing: Socrates explicitly involves Glaucon, by asking him if a third part should be added to the first two. Glaucon answers that the appetitive part is sufficient to explain anger and other emotions of this sort (*Rep*., 439e). At this point

Socrates introduces the example of Leontius, who to all effects can be taken as the narrative counterpart to Gyges:

> Leontius, the son of Aglaeon, was going up from the Piraeus along the outside of the North Wall when he saw some corpses with the public executioner nearby. He had an appetitive desire to look at them, but at the same time he was disgusted and turned himself away. For a while he struggled and put his hand over his eyes, but finally, mastered by his appetite, he opened his eyes wide and rushed toward the corpses, saying: 'Look for yourselves, you evil wretches; take your fill of the beautiful (*kalon*) sight'. (*Rep*., 439e–440a)

Looking at the corpses of people recently executed is not forbidden or unjust, but Leontius clearly finds the desire base, and struggles to overcome it.[11] When he is overwhelmed by it and rushes towards the scene, he sarcastically scolds his eyes. In fact, the spectacle they want to feed upon is the opposite of *kalon* (beautiful, noble); it is *aischron* (ugly, shameful). As mentioned above, the adjective *aischron* is connected to *aischyne*, shame. *Aischron* behaviour moves a decent person to shame. While Gyges is only concerned with external sanctions, Leontius feels revolted by his own desire. Significantly, the absence of witnesses is no protection against his negative self-evaluation. The only person present at the scene is the executioner. Probably because of his low social standing, Leontius ignores him.

The point Socrates wants to make is that spiritedness cannot be reduced to the appetitive: it can fight against it in the name of integrity (about being one, and yet divided and at odds with oneself, see *Gorg*., 482b–c; Arendt 1990, 85; Woodruff 2000, 144). Socrates adds that spiritedness cannot be reduced to the rational part either, because children are capable of *thumoeidetic* emotions well before they can give a reasoned account of what they do (*Rep*., 441a).

As Socrates clarifies in Book IX, each part of the soul has its own goals: the appetitive part aims at bodily pleasure as well as wealth and profit (to obtain most pleasures, wealth is often necessary). The natural object of reason is truth; it is the 'learning-loving and philosophic' part (*Rep*., 581b). The spirited element, in turn, aims at 'mastery, victory, and high repute'. It is called 'victory-loving (*philonikon*) and honor-loving (*philotimon*)' (*Rep*., 581a).

Spiritedness gives depth to morality. Negative affective reactions towards oneself, like self-blame, shame or self-disgust, stem from the capacity to feel that failing to live up to certain standards is self-debasing.[12] Furthermore, an affective attachment to honour makes one sensitive to the way it is distributed, and hence to justice. Honour is what people living together in a *polis* owe each other. When I find my behaviour shameful, I am judging myself from the perspective of a 'we'. I can feel ashamed before people who find my behaviour unjust if I agree with their assessment: my action was indeed wrong and it reveals an aspect of my character that is seen as debasing by

those who share my same core values. I care to be a just person, and it pains me to be seen as someone who falls below the expectations *we* have about the sort of person *we* call just. Spiritedness builds a bridge between the conception one may have of oneself and the recognition one expects from others. If others behave towards us in such a way that we feel diminished or offended, we react with anger and do not calm down until our honour is restored (*Rep*., 440c). If, however, we believe we deserve treatment that in normal circumstances we would deem dishonourable, as for example when we undergo punishment, we do not respond with anger, but we accept it as our due (*Rep*., 440b–c).

Emotions originating in spiritedness can sustain the goals of reason, as when one is proud of a discovery, fights courageously to defend a principle, or is ashamed by the temptations of flattery. However, spiritedness can also support the appetitive part against reason, or, if it becomes the ruling principle, it can subordinate the goals of reason to public recognition.

The lover of honour finds that appetitive goals are unworthy of but intellectual activities do not fare better in his eyes: 'Doesn't he think the pleasure of making money is vulgar, while the pleasure of learning – except to the extent that learning brings honor – is smoke and nonsense?' (581d).

In turn, when a community is ruled by the ideal of wealth, people who unreflectively grow up admiring the rich are inclined to despise any activity that is not instrumental to making money. This, for example, is the case of the oligarchic individual, discussed in Book VIII:

> And I suppose he makes the rational and spirited elements sit on the ground beneath it, one on either side, and be slaves. He won't allow the first to calculate or consider anything except how a little money can be made into more; or the second to admire or honour anything except wealth and wealthy people, or to love being honoured for anything besides the possession of wealth and whatever contributes to it (*Rep*., 553cd).

In this case, shame is provoked by failing with respect to values that from a philosophic perspective would not be approved at all. One may feel diminished by being unable to show off expensive possessions. At the same time, vices like ignorance, vulgarity and arrogance may not necessarily cause a negative self-evaluation. Inquiries that do not contribute to the acquisition of wealth receive no recognition.

The best city and the best individual mirror each other. As we learn in Book V, if philosophers were to become rulers, they would organize a city in such a way that the three classes by which it is formed would all promote the goals of reason (philosophers, warriors and the artisans are analogous in the city to the three parts of the soul: reason, spiritedness and appetite).

The correspondence of course is not mechanical: in a city ruled by the oligarchic principle of wealth someone may still live according to *thumoeidetic* ideals, while others may be inclined towards philosophy. In any case, philosophers in actual cities are rare. Potential philosophers have excellent intellectual talents. Unfortunately, this is also why they are easily corrupted (*Rep*., 492a): they can be flattered by success in politics or turn to other activities in which their intelligence may shine. In fact, someone endowed with great philosophic talent can become truly evil:

> Or haven't you ever noticed in people who are said to be bad, but clever, how keen the vision of their little soul is and how sharply it distinguishes the things it is turned toward? This shows that its sight is not inferior, but is forced to serve vice, so that the sharper it sees, the more evils it accomplishes. (*Rep*., 519a)

Intelligence by itself is not enough to lead a good life. Socrates argues that perfect virtue implies a well-governed soul. To achieve true happiness, one ought to turn 'the whole soul' (*Rep*., 518c) towards intelligible objects. Spiritedness plays a fundamental role in this process because it is through the affective attachment to certain ideals that someone endowed with a philosophical potential becomes interested in philosophy rather than in lower (even criminal) activities. Ultimately, the 'beautiful city' (*kallipolis*) created by Socrates and his companions in books II to IV is built with an eye to shaping spiritedness in such a way that the best form of life may be realized without the many impediments that make it so rare in actual cities. The main goal is to lead children and young adults to seek honour and feel shame with respect to values that, once they grow up, they will be able to recognize as reasonable.

This happens through gymnastic, but especially through music (by music Socrates means activities traditionally inspired by the Muses, which include different forms of art). While philosophers living in cities that are ruled by timocratic, oligarchic, democratic or tyrannical governments practice an activity that is mostly considered useless, if not downright harmful and shameful, in the ideal city philosophy finds recognition. Children are educated in such a way that they form strong attachments to things beautiful and noble and feel revulsion towards what appears ugly and shameful. They internalize noble values not by formal teaching, but by being surrounded by beauty (which entails proportion and harmony). Their keen sensitivity is addressed to aesthetic as well as to ethical aspects of life:

> Anyone who has been properly trained will quickly notice if something has been omitted from a thing, or if that thing has not been well crafted or well grown. And so, since he feels distaste correctly, he will praise fine things, be pleased by them, take them into his soul, and, through being nourished by them, become

> fine and good. What is ugly or shameful, on the other hand, he will correctly condemn and hate while he is still young, before he is able to grasp the reason. And, because he has been so trained, he will welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with himself. (*Rep*., 401e–402a)

*Kallipolis* allows its citizens to develop their talents and dispositions in such a way that their souls become harmonious, under the guidance of reason and thanks to the help of spiritedness. Those subject to desires that break internalized norms may be blamed (and blame themselves) as if their characters were made of a cloth that is discoloured or stained (*Rep*., 430a). Yet, Socrates does not reject entirely Glaucon's contribution: visibility remains very important. Rulers cannot own any property; they must live in common and share most activities; there cannot be secret places where one might hide illicit gains (Gyges would have a hard time finding a ring of invisibility in *kallipolis*). Socrates explicitly appeals to the joint role played by shame and fear in the inhibition of certain behaviours:

> And, unless the rulers command it, it is unlikely that a younger person will ever employ any sort of violence against an older one, or strike him. And I do not imagine he will fail to show him respect in other ways either, since two guardians – fear and shame – are sufficient to prevent it. Shame will prevent him from laying a hand on his parents, as will the fear that the others would come to his victim's aid – some because they are his sons, some because they are his brothers, and some because they are his fathers.

Shame depends in large part on internalized values (Lear 1992). However, we should not conclude that it is entirely determined by the education one receives. When Socrates claims that the best person is one whose soul is governed by reason, he also implies that the reasons for shame can be analysed and, if necessary, rejected or replaced by better reasons. For example, when in Book V he argues that there should be women philosophers among the rulers, he also proposes that, like the other guardians, they exercise naked in the gymnasium. He understands this new practice could cause scandal, but he invites his companions to consider how people's opinions have changed:

> it is not long since the *Greeks* thought it shameful and ridiculous (as many barbarians still do) for *men* to be seen stripped [. . .] But when it became clear, I take it, to those who employed these practices, that it was better to strip than to cover up all such parts, the laughter in the eyes faded away because of what the arguments had proved to be best. (*Rep*., 452cd)

If deeply ingrained beliefs can be revised, so can the reasons for shame. Those who no longer recognize as valid the social expectations that lie behind

certain forms of derision and contempt will cease to find tradition their only normative source. They will start to imagine different ways in which a person may be worthy of respect. When spiritedness sustains reason in this way, shame and conformity part ways.[13]

## SHAME AND AMBIVALENCE

In Plato's *Symposium*, shame plays a central role. As in the *Republic*, the discussion in this dialogue runs parallel to the narrative. The theses that appear persuasive when they are first introduced by Phaedrus are later criticized by Socrates and put in a new light by the story told by a character who is drunk as he speaks. The theory of tripartition is not yet formalized in the *Symposium*, but Plato provides readers with a study of characters that offers all the elements to understand ambivalence and internal struggle in light of the desires stemming from spiritedness (love of honour and love of victory). The concept of shame, introduced by Phaedrus at the beginning of the dialogue, is then linked to the desire for immortality through fame in Socrates's final speech. It comes back with an ironic twist in Alcibiades's final speech. Rather than playing an educational function in erotic relationships (178d), as Phaedrus initially suggests, in Alcibiades's case shame, mixed with anger (Alcibiades voices his desire for revenge at the start of his speech; *Symp*. 213d; 214e), has no positive effect.

Phaedrus gives us a superficial version of prospective shame (one of the main problems in his speech is that his theses seem to change with the different examples he offers). His initial claim is that love and shame work together towards virtue. Since lovers and beloveds are afraid of looking bad in the eyes of each other, shame makes them abstain from actions that would appear dishonourable. Initially, he seems to imply (much like Glaucon with the example of Gyges) that the relevant concern is sheer visibility. Eventually though, Phaedrus suggests a more complex view (Fussi 2008). Lovers and beloveds are especially sensitive to shame because they desire admiration and honour. Hence, the fear of being seen doing something shameful is symmetrical to the desire to be seen doing something honourable. Phaedrus's ideal is the creation of an army of lovers, whose heroic deeds would supposedly make them victorious everywhere. Thanks to their mutual rivalry for honour (*Symp*., 178e–179a), lovers and beloveds will distinguish themselves for their extreme courage. The thesis is compatible with the views expressed by Socrates in Book IV of the *Republic*. The lovers' reciprocal gaze is only a trigger. Shame and pride presuppose that the lovers share some ideals (of courage and heroism in battle, for example) and that they aspire to forms of recognition that are not limited to the two members of the couple (Phaedrus's

examples include praise received by all citizens, honour bestowed by the gods, etc.). That *thumoeidetic* motivations can explain Phaedrus's sketchy views about shame becomes evident when Socrates, later in the dialogue, affirms that heroic acts are not motivated only by personal erotic attachment to one individual. The willingness to sacrifice one's life for another, Socrates somewhat cynically suggests, is never disjoined from the desire that one's noble gesture be noticed and remembered. The real motivation is love of honour (*Symp*., 208 c). Even Phaedrus's heroes – Alcestis, Achilles – were moved by the desire to gain immortal fame (208d–e).

When all the characters have spoken, Alcibiades arrives drunk at the party and demands to give a speech in praise of Socrates rather than in praise of *eros*. The speech is a masterpiece of ambivalence. Alcibiades is clearly moved by *thumoeidetic* motivations: his portrait of Socrates is almost entirely focused on honour, the desire to prevail, Alcibiades's fear to succumb (Hobbs 2000; Fussi 2008).

In his effort to seduce Socrates, he tries to gain power over him. He views Socrates's wisdom as a good he can conquer in exchange for sexual favours. When Socrates refuses to accept the exchange, he takes his response as an offence against his honour spurred by an overwhelming sense of superiority on Socrates' part. Alcibiades feels slighted and belittled by Socrates: 'He completely defeated me, and despised (*katephronesen*) and mocked (*kategelasen*) and insulted (*hybrisen*) my beauty' (*Symp*., 219c).

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle claims that anger is caused by three forms of slight: contempt (*kataphronesis*), spite (*epereasmos*), and insult (*hybris*). Those who are offended feel belittled, exposed. Sometimes disrespect (*oligoria*) takes the form of mockery. Of the three, *hybris* is the worst because, Aristotle explains, 'insult is doing and speaking in which there is shame to the sufferer, not that some advantage may accrue to the doer or because something has happened, but for the pleasure of it' (*Rhet*., Book II, 1378b23–26; cfr. 1384a18). Alcibiades feels both insulted by Socrates and ashamed of not being recognized as valuable by him. Being a lover of honour himself, he reads all Socrates does in light of the desire for honour.

Socrates's fundamental motivation, according to Alcibiades, is to prove superior – a clear case of love of victory. He goes so far as to suggest that when Socrates showed his incredible endurance while serving in the army with him at Potidaea – barely covered by his light coat he used to walk barefoot on ice, unaffected by the cold – the soldiers thought he was doing that out of contempt for them (*hos kataphronounta sphon*; 220b). Not only does Socrates despise the sorts of things people admire most (beauty, wealth, honour). The truth is, Alcibiades affirms, that Socrates despises everybody, and treats people just like playful things (*Symp*., 216d–e). If Socrates wants to affirm his superiority wherever he goes, the person who most painfully

experiences his *hybris* is Alcibiades himself: 'He thinks he has to get the better of me every single time' (*Symp*., 222e). Alcibiades feels at a loss and enslaved by Socrates (219e), who often tried to persuade him that before pursuing a political career, he should cultivate his character and develop his talents. The young man refused to follow his advice and took refuge in politics. However, the negative judgement continued to haunt him:

> What I have felt in the presence of this one man is what no one would think I had it in me to feel in front of anyone, and that is shame. And it is only in front of him that I feel it, because I am well aware that I cannot argue against him or deny that I ought to do as he says. Yet when I leave him I am equally aware that I am giving in to my desire for honor from the public. So I skulk out of his sight like a runaway slave, and whenever I do see him I am ashamed of the admissions I have made to him. There have been many occasions when I would have been glad to see him disappear from the land of the living; but if that were to happen I know that I would be far more grieved than glad. The consequence is that I have no idea how to deal with this person. (*Symp*., 216b–c)

Alcibiades's emotional reaction to his failings contradicts Phaedrus's claim that lovers become virtuous through shame, but it does not contradict the general view of shame that emerged from our previous analysis.

Whether shame has positive or negative consequences depends on the motivational forces that lie behind it. It can help someone see how to become a better person when the spirited part is not set up against the goals of reason (in particular against the love of learning). In this case, one's attachment to certain values is not disjoined from the capacity to reflect on them, in solitude, or with the help of others.

Shame can have negative effects, however, when someone is ruled by the appetitive part or by spiritedness. The case of Alcibiades shows what can happen to a *thumoeidetic* individual who is in love and feels rejected. The desire to learn would require from Alcibiades an independence that he cannot muster. He does not want to understand if Socrates is right or wrong. What he loves is Socrates himself and the recognition he initially hopes to receive from him. His desire to gain power over Socrates coexists with a constant fear of succumbing to his power. Right before he mentions his feelings of shame, Alcibiades compares Socrates's words to a Siren song: they can enthral him and make him feel like a slave (*Symp*., 216a). In his interpretation, philosophy is confused with powerful rhetoric.

In contrast with the lovers Phaedrus mentions in his first speech, Alcibiades and Socrates do not really share the same view of the failings that are supposed to cause shame. Alcibiades finds himself in between two systems of values. When he is with Socrates, he feels ashamed of spending his time in the political arena. On the other hand, if he were to follow Socrates and

embrace the philosophical life, he would also feel ashamed, because, like Callicles in the *Gorgias*, he finds it unbecoming of an adult Athenian man worthy of respect (*Symp*. 216a; cfr. *Gorg*., 485a–d). Alcibiades's portrait is a striking example of what might have been on Plato's mind when he had Socrates claim in the *Republic* that young people with the intellectual talents necessary for philosophy are easily flattered and corrupted by politics.

In the dialogues we examined there is no thesis on shame that we can attribute directly to Plato. Hence, we both analysed the arguments and paid close attention to their particular position in the dramatic presentation. We identified different forms of shame (as an act of submission, as a prospective and inhibitory feeling, as a retrospective feeling). By studying the narrative development between Book II and Book IV of the *Republic*, we understood that shame (as distinguished from the sheer fear of the consequences of disgrace exemplified by Gyges' example) originates in spiritedness. Leontius does not need the presence of witnesses to become ashamed of his overwhelming desire to look at the corpses of recently executed people. Even if he is alone, in his mind he carries with him a community that views his curiosity as morbid.

The role of shame in a person's life depends on the intrapsychic organization of each individual, which in turn is strongly influenced by the political setting in which one lives and by the education one receives. Of course, motivations for shame can change over the course of a lifetime. When someone who grows up in a timocratic family embraces oligarchic values, he starts to despise the honours pursued by his father and finds in the acquisition of wealth new reasons for recognition and respect.

Spiritedness has a role to play in all kinds of intrapsychic organizations, and this includes the philosophic soul. With respect to Socrates, our discussion led us to reject the hypothesis of 'solipsized shame'. Even someone who refers to values that are not contingently shared by his present interlocutors needs intersubjective recognition. As we saw in the *Gorgias*, Socrates appeals to future interlocutors who might be able, more than Callicles, to examine his arguments. If, together, they discovered that he failed to live the way he is convinced he should live, Socrates would feel ashamed.

Since the reasons for shame can be philosophically examined, they can also be rejected. In the case of women philosophers, in the *Republic,* Socrates is dismissive of the idea that it would be shameful if they exercised naked in the gymnasium. What could have aroused shame in the past must not continue to arouse shame in the present if, upon scrutiny, the citizens realize that the previous norms were untenable.

Finally, we examined a case of ambivalence in Plato's *Symposium*. Much like Callicles in the *Gorgias*, Alcibiades is portrayed as a *thumoeidetic* individual who is attracted to philosophy. He finds himself between two ways of

life, which entail different sets of values, and different motivations for honour and shame. Alcibiades can neither live with Socrates nor without him. He despises his way of life, but from a different perspective he also admires it. Shame is one of the symptoms of his turmoil, and in his particular situation of internal struggle, it does not lead to virtue. On the contrary, shame makes Alcibiades hope that the person he loves most might die, so that he can finally reach some peace of mind.[14]

## NOTES

1. *Rep*., 350d3; cfr. *Euthyd*. 297a8 for a similar case, and Gooch (1987–1988) for instances of shame and embarrassment in the Platonic dialogues.

2. See, however, FitzGerald (2015), for a conception of 'shame of shame' as a meta-emotion that reveals to the agent her core values, in contrast with values that are only peripheral to her identity. Out of anxiety about her reputation, someone may betray her deeply held values, give in to social pressure and lie about buying food at a discount market. Subsequently, however, she may feel ashamed about her previous episode of shame. It is not the same to feel a meta-emotion, an emotion about another emotion (being ashamed of my previous feelings of shame), as in FitzGerald's example, and to feel prospective shame, as in the case of Gorgias.

3. Cfr. Militello (2020) on the arguments supporting both views. On the relationship between narrative development and theoretical development in the *Republic*, see Roochnik (2003).

4. This aspect of shame is relevant in contemporary debates. For example, Maibom (2010) suggests that we should understand shame as deriving from a primitive form of submission; see also Darwall (2006, 145) for the difference between recognition respect between mutually accountable persons and recognition respect in a culture of honour.

5. On fear and shame in the *Laws*, see Pfefferkorn (2020), Bartels (2020).

6. For the relationship between shame and blame in group identification, see Sanchez & Salice in this volume.

7. In Book IV of the *Republic,* question (3) takes the following form: Is it with our whole soul that we desire bodily pleasures, the recognition we receive from others, and what we believe to be intrinsically good for us, or are we led to different desires by different and potentially conflicting parts within the soul? (Cfr. *Rep*., 436a–b for the exact formulation of the question).

8. By strengthening Thrasymachus's thesis that the life of the unjust person is superior to that of the just, Glaucon wants to offer Socrates a better opportunity to refute Thrasymachus. Scholars have wondered whether he remains faithful to it. I believe he does not. Cfr. Fussi (2007).

9. Suppose someone I respect makes sarcastic comments about the way I drive. Because having superior driving skills is not a relevant value for my identity, it is unlikely that she will make me feel ashamed, unless she represents a group by which

I want to be accepted for reasons that do not have directly to do with my driving skills. For example, we both work in a lab. She is considered an authority, while I was only recently hired. Her jokes might be taken to suggest that I cannot be entrusted with machines, that I am absentminded, clumsy, and deserve to be treated like a child. My own self-presentation in the group is put at risk, and this is the reason I could feel ashamed. This situation is different from the one I discussed in 2.4. This is a case of shame, while in 2.4 I described a case of fear (a bad reputation was an object of preoccupation only for fear of its consequences). Calhoun (2004) criticizes Williams's position on internalized values by arguing that certain kinds of criticisms can make someone feel ashamed even when she does not share them. This is possible because the shamer expresses an authoritative viewpoint within a certain moral practice. See also Thomason (2018, 88–102) and Thomason (this volume) for a discussion of problems related to social identity and self-presentation.

10. See the concept of 'unwanted identity', in the psychological literature discussed by Olthof in this volume.

11. If we understand appetitive desires strictly as bodily desires (for food, drink, or sex), it is not clear why Socrates chooses the desire to look at corpses to exemplify a struggle with spiritedness. Reeve (2004, 128) offers the following explanation: 'A fragment of the comedy *Kapêlides* by Theopompus (410–370 BCE) tells us that a certain Leontinus (emended to Leontius because of Plato's reference here) was known for his love of boys as pale as corpses. So, his desire is probably sexual in origin, and for that reason appetitive'.

12. See Deonna, J., Rodogno, R. Teroni, F. (2012) for a contemporary view of shame that explains it in terms of failure with respect to values that are strictly connected to the agent's identity and only accidentally linked to intersubjective recognition.

13. Following FitzGerald (2015), I suggest that the critical revision of the norms to which one previously adhered can offer a basis for meta-shame. One can become ashamed of past episodes of shame, because they reveal one's previous uncritical acceptance of shallow and unjustified values.

14. My gratitude goes to Alba Montes Sánchez, Alessandro Salice, Heidi Maibom, Raffaele Rodogno, David Roochnik and Alfredo Ferrarin, who read earlier versions of this contribution and gave me invaluable comments.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annas, J. (1981). *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Arendt, H. (1990). "Philosophy and Politics." *Social Research* 57(1): 73–103.

Aristotle, and Crisp, R. (2000). *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aristotle, and Kennedy, G. (2007). *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bartels, M. L. (2020). "Plato's Seasick Steersman: On (Not) Being Overwhelmed by Fear in Plato's *Laws*." In *Emotions in Plato*, edited by L. Candiotto and O. Renaut, 147–168. Leiden: Brill.

Burnyeat, M. F. (1980). "Aristotle on Learning to be Good." In *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by A. O. Rorty, 69–92. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Cairns, D. L. (1993). *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cairns, D. L. (2008). "Look Both Ways: Studying Emotion in Ancient Greek." *Critical Quarterly* 50(4): 43–62.

Calhoun, C. (2004). "An Apology for Moral Shame." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11: 1–20.

Candiotto, L. (2015). "Aporetic State and Extended Emotions: The Shameful Recognition of Contradictions in the Socratic Elenchus." *Etica & Politica/Ethics & Politics* XVII(2): 219–234.

Candiotto, L., and Renaut, O. (2020). "Introduction: Why Plato Comes First." In *Emotions in Plato*, edited by L. Candiotto and O. Renaut, 1–14. Leiden: Brill.

Darwall, S. (2006). *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect and Accountability*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Deigh, J. (1996). "Shame and Self-Esteem: A Critique." In *The Sources of Moral Agency*, edited by J. Deigh, 226–248. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deonna, J., Rodogno, R., and Teroni, F. (2012). *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ferrari, G. R. F. (2008). "Socratic Irony as Pretence." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 34: 1–33.

FitzGerald, C. 2015. "'Review Article: Defending Shame'. Extended Critical Review Essay on J. Deonna, R. Rodogno, & F. Teroni, *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 12(2): 221–234.

Fortenbaugh, W. W. [1975] (2002). *Aristotle on Emotion: A Contribution to Philosophical Psychology, Rhetoric, Poetics, Politics and Ethics* (2nd ed.). London: Duckworth.

Fussi, A. (2000). "Why is the *Gorgias* So Bitter?" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 33: 39–58.

Fussi, A. (2002). "Socrates's Refutation of Gorgias." In *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 17, 123–145. Leiden: Brill.

Fussi, A. (2007). "Inconsistencies in Glaucon's Account of Justice." *Polis, The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought* 24(1): 43–69.

Fussi, A. (2008). "The Desire for Recognition in Plato's *Symposium*." *Arethusa* 41: 237–262.

Fussi, A. (2015). "Aristotle on Shame." *Ancient Philosophy* 35: 113–135.

Futter, D. B. (2009). "Shame as a Tool for Persuasion in Plato's *Gorgias*." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47(3): 451–461.

Gooch, P. W. (1988). "Red Faces in Plato." *The Classical Journal* 83(2): 124–127.

Griswold, C. L., Jr. (2002). "Irony in the Platonic Dialogues." *Philosophy and Literature* 26: 84–106.

Hobbs, A. (2000) *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Irwin, T. (1995). *Plato's Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kahn, C. H. (1983). "Drama and Dialectic in Plato's Gorgias." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1: 75–121.
Konstan, D. (2006). *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.
Konstan, D. (2020). "Afterword: The Invention of Emotion?" In *Emotions in Plato*, edited by L. Candiotto and O. Renaut, 372–381. Leiden: Brill.
Lear, J. (1992). "Inside and Outside the *Republic*." *Phronesis* 37(2): 184–215.
Maibom, Heidi. 2010. "The Descent of Shame." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80: 566–594.
McKim, R. (1988). "Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*." In *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings*, edited by C. Griswold, 34–48. New York and London: Routledge.
Militello, C. (2020). *Αἰσχύνη and the Λογιστικόν in Plato's Republic*. Edited by L. Candiotto and O. Renaut, 238–251. Leiden: Brill.
Pfefferkorn, J. (2020). *Shame and Virtue in Plato's Laws: Two Kinds of Fear and the Drunken Puppet*. Edited by L. Candiotto and O. Renaut, 252–269. Leiden: Brill.
Plato, and Bury, R. G. (1926). *Laws* (2 Vol.). Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
Plato, Howatson, M. C., and Sheffield, F. C. C. (2008). *The Symposium*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.
Plato, and Reeve, C. D. C. (2005). *Republic*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
Plato, and Zeyl, D. J. (1997). *Gorgias*. In *Plato. Complete Works*, edited by J. M. Cooper. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
Roochnik, D. (2003). *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's "Republic."* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Scheler, M. (1987). "Shame and Feelings of Modesty." In *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays*, translated by M. S. Frings, 1–86. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.
Stauffer, D. (2006). *The Unity of Plato's Gorgias: Rhetoric, Justice, and the Philosophic Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Tarnopolsky, C. H. (2010). *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants: Plato's Gorgias and the Politics of Shame*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Taylor, G. (1985). *Pride, Shame, and Guilt; Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Thomason, K. (2018). *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
Williams, B. (1993). *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Williams, B. (2006). *The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Woodruff, P. (2000). "Socrates and the Irrational." In *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy*, edited by N. D. Smith and P. Woodruff, 130–150. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## *Chapter 4*

# Hume on Shame

Lorenzo Greco

What does David Hume have to say regarding shame? To answer this question, we cannot ignore Hume's wider project, carried out by him through virtually all his intellectual enterprises, from *A Treatise of Human Nature* onwards, of developing a science of human nature. Hume's 'science of MAN' (T Intro 4)[1] consists in an empirical investigation of the elements and faculties composing the human mind; faithful to the teaching of Isaac Newton, Hume aspires to arrive at a few principles so as to provide a 'geography' (EHU 1.13) of the mind's structure and functions. Hume's method is a form of associationism, whereby mental phenomena derived from experience – perceptions, of which Hume distinguishes impressions and ideas – are brought together and connected according to certain relations. In fact, this science reveals itself to be far more elaborate than the mere analysis of the mind. By drawing from a mix of elements belonging to what today would be classified as psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, ethics, and political science, in the three books of the *Treatise*, and then in his later work, Hume provides an extremely sophisticated illustration of human nature that is not limited to the analysis of mental phenomena but considers human beings as flesh and blood creatures guided by passions and sentiments rather than reason, and related to one another on different levels.

Given this enlarged picture of human nature, one of the central tasks that Hume gives to himself as the 'anatomist' (EHU 1.8) of human nature is that of listing those passions and sentiments, drawing distinctions among them, analysing their inner processes and how they are interconnected together. Surprisingly, shame appears to have little space in Hume's survey. He mentions shame a few times in his ponderous *History of England*, while the occurrences of 'shame' in the *Treatise* and in the two *Enquiries* can be counted on the fingers of two hands. 'Shame' appears in the *History* thirty-seven times,

but the *Treatise* sees just five occurrences of the term, and the two *Enquiries* only one each. As for the adjective 'shameful', again it appears fifteen times in the *History* but only once in the *Treatise* and in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Shame does not seem to play any significant role in Hume's explanation of the operations of human nature as presented in his philosophical works; there are many other passions and sentiments that Hume elaborates on which have a structural role in his conception of human nature, but shame is not among them. How is that possible?

One option is that Hume indeed considered shame but recognized it under another term. Therefore, a plausible way to proceed if we want to understand what Hume thought about shame is that of looking at other passions and sentiments within Hume's system that appear to be similar to shame, although they are catalogued under different names. I believe that this is in fact the correct way to proceed.

## THE MECHANISMS OF SHAME: GABRIELE TAYLOR, BERNARD WILLIAMS, AND RICHARD WOLLHEIM

I shall base my reconstruction of shame in Hume mainly by contrasting it with Gabriele Taylor's account. Her *Pride, Shame, and Guilt* offers an excellent reference point for the purposes of this chapter; not only does it represent a milestone in studies on shame and on emotions overall, but it also explicitly tackles Hume, dwelling at length on his reflections on human sentiments and in turn comparing her own theoretical proposals in light of those offered by Hume.

In chapter 3 of her book, Taylor highlights two fundamental aspects of shame. This emotion, she says, 'introduces first of all the notion of an audience, for feeling shame is connected with the thought that eyes are upon one' (Taylor 1985: 53). From her approach, shame emerges as a social emotion, that is, it implies the presence of a shared context in which the one who feels shame is immersed; as Taylor stresses, it appears that shame needs 'an audience' to be activated. Furthermore, and crucially, Gabriele Taylor understands shame as one of those 'emotions of self-assessment' that contribute to define the practical identities of human beings. Thanks to those emotions, which for Taylor include pride and guilt as well, people come to understand themselves in relation to others, recognizing themselves as individuals and acquiring self-consciousness through their reciprocal emotional exchanges. In the specific case of shame, Taylor believes that it is an 'emotion of self-protection' (Taylor 1985: 81), that is, an emotion that allows us to preserve our sense of self, protecting it from being annihilated once we find ourselves

in certain situations. According to Taylor, what qualifies shame as a source of one's sense of self is that

> [it] requires a sophisticated type of self-consciousness. A person feeling shame will exercise her capacity for self-awareness, and she will do so dramatically: from being just an actor absorbed in what she is doing she will suddenly become self-aware and self-critical. It is plainly a state of self-consciousness which centrally relies on the concept of another, for the thought of being seen as one might be seen by another is the catalyst of the emotion. (Taylor 1985: 67)

This, Taylor continues, would make shame superior to pride, since 'the point of view, the seeing eye, is not built into the structure of pride as it is built into the structure of shame' (Taylor 1985: 67). What makes the difference, Taylor points out, is that only shame really places the person in relation to others by showing her to an audience, which represents a point of view that the person can embrace and through which the person can judge herself. Thanks to shame, the person gains a more favourable and objective perspective on her practical identity as it is expressed in the social context in which she is immersed. This more favourable and objective perspective, Taylor concludes, helps the person to ground the self-respect that gives her value as an individual:

> A person has no self-respect if he regards no circumstances as shame-producing. Loss of self-respect and loss of the capacity for feeling shame go hand in hand. The close connection between these two makes it clear why shame is often thought to be so valuable. It is, firstly, that a sense of value is necessary for self-respect and so for shame, so that whatever else may be wrong about the person feeling shame he will at least have retained a sense of value. And secondly, it is a sense of value which protects the self from what in the agent's own eyes is corruption and ultimately extinction. (Taylor 1985: 80–81)

Thus, two components emerge from Taylor's analysis of shame: shame is the result of being visible to someone, and it contributes to shape the practical identity of the one feeling shame by making her aware of a point of view from which her value and self-respect can be appraised. Taylor is not alone in connecting shame to these two elements. In Taylor's wake, something similar can be found in Bernard Williams and Richard Wollheim.

In *Shame and Necessity*, Williams identifies shame as the sentiment which allows us to put ethics in the right perspective – a perspective that, for Williams, was blurred by modern morality's focus on guilt, but that can be clarified by looking at how ancient Greeks understood the virtuous person as emerging through the lens of shame. In doing this, Williams (who openly refers to Taylor's work) understands shame as a social sentiment whereby its

basic experience 'is that of being seen inappropriately, by the wrong people, in the wrong condition' (Williams 1993: 78). 'The root of shame', Williams specifies, 'lies in exposure in a more general sense, in being at a disadvantage: in what I shall call, in a very general phrase, a loss of power. The sense of shame is a reaction of the subject to the consciousness of this loss' (Williams 1993: 220). Like Taylor, Williams conceives the experience of shame as an awareness 'of being seen by an observer with a certain view' (Williams 1993: 82). Through shame, the judgement of an 'imagined observer' (Williams 1993: 82) comes to be internalized, a judgement that provides 'the focus of real social expectations, of how I shall live if I act in one way rather than another, of how my actions and reactions will alter my relations to the world about me' (Williams 1993: 84). Again, shame provides the gauge to relate to the context we find ourselves in, expressing a '"whole person" response' that helps us to correctly understand ourselves as bodily human beings interrelated to other creatures like us (Williams 1993: 61).[2] As Williams comments when considering the case of Ajax in the *Iliad*, 'the necessity with which we started, the necessity that Ajax recognised, was grounded in his own identity, his sense of himself as someone who can live in some social circumstances and not in others, and what mediated between himself and the world was his sense of shame' (Williams 1993: 101).

In a similar vein to Williams, in *The Thread of Life*, Wollheim provides an explanation of how people come to conceive of themselves in relation to morality along the lines of psychoanalysis. The emotion of shame is part of a wider process of introjection of a superego that represents the claims, demands, and threats of an external figure that the person fears (Wollheim 1984: ch. 7). In this scenario, too, shame represents the reaction to the gaze of an internalized figure with whom the person identifies:

> There are two mandatory features of this phantasy. It must contain a figure whom the person otherwise centrally imagines: that is, it must contain someone with whom the person identifies. And it must represent the person as appearing before this figure, whose gaze rests on him. And this is because the essence of shame, or what is reverberatory about it throughout the psychology, lies in the look, in the disparaging or reproving regard, whereas the essence of guilt lies in the voice, in the spoken command or rebuke. (Wollheim 1984: 220)

All three thinkers emphasize how shame is an unpleasant emotion that involves feeling exposed to the stare of someone – be it an actual audience or the internalization of the opinion of someone whose judgement we consider important – and that contributes to the person becoming aware of herself as an individual. These elements are also present in Hume; however, we shall see that his reflection eventually differs in some critical ways when compared to what has come up so far. I started by noting that the term 'shame' is nearly

absent in Hume, but that shame may indeed be present under a different guise, so let us check if this is correct. When questioning what shame is for Hume, there are three notions we can refer to: chastity, modesty, and humility. I start with the former two.

## HUME ON CHASTITY AND MODESTY

There is a place in the *Treatise* where shame plays a notable part, and that is in the discussion 'Of Chastity and Modesty' (T 3.2.12). Presented by Hume as artificial virtues together with justice, promises, allegiance, and good manners (T 3.3.6.1), chastity and modesty 'belong to the fair sex' (T 3.2.12.1) and regulate women's sexual habits. In his genealogy of the evolution of human society, Hume observes that

> whoever considers the length and feebleness of human infancy, with the concern which both sexes naturally have for their offspring, will easily perceive, that there must be an union of male and female for the education of the young, and that this union must be of considerable duration. But in order to induce the men to impose on themselves this restraint, and undergo cheerfully all the fatigues and expenses, to which it subjects them, they must believe, that the children are their own, and that their natural instinct is not directed to a wrong object, when they give loose to love and tenderness. (T 3.2.12.3)

The most effective way to achieve this is not so much the imposition of explicit punishments for all misbehaviours by women, but rather the development of customs and habits by which women are themselves led to refrain from certain behaviours, on pain of being exposed to bad reputation: 'In order, therefore, to impose a due restraint on the female sex, we must attach a peculiar degree of shame to their infidelity, above what arises merely from its injustice, and must bestow proportionable praises on their chastity' (T 3.2.12.4). So, women are induced by society to develop certain character traits, such as chastity and modesty, which confer a sense of shame that prevents promiscuous behaviour that might jeopardize men's confidence that their offspring are, in fact, their own. This can be achieved through education and the inevitable exposure to the judgement of others to which human beings are subjected in their social lives. As Jacqueline Taylor comments,

> women are not naturally modest but are taught to be so from an early age, and their behavior is reinforced when they sympathize with the sentiments of others who approve of modesty and disapprove of immodest behavior (T 3.2.12). Hume's observation that 'education takes possession of the ductile minds of the fair sex in their infancy' again emphasizes the role of education and sympathy

> with the beliefs and sentiments of others in fashioning character and manners and influencing how someone experiences the passions (T 3.2.12.7). (Taylor 2015: 65)

Gabriele Taylor also mentions lack of chastity as a possible source of shame for women. This happens when they live within a shame culture whose members see chastity as defining the value of female individuals (Taylor 1985: 54–57). Similarly, notice how in Hume's reconstruction, chastity and modesty are not parts of the natural inclinations of human beings but are seen as social expedients, by no means inevitable, that address particular interests; they respond to social needs that reveal contingent power dynamics that can be questioned and possibly rejected if circumstances change.[3] And it is indeed the case that chastity and modesty as Hume describes them reflect a precise form of exercise of control by men over women existing in a patriarchal society such as that of Hume's Britain (and of Europe more generally), an exercise of control that Hume was well aware of, criticised and helped to expose.[4]

In Hume's analysis, the shame that is produced by women feeling chaste and modest responds to the two characteristics seen above: it depends on women running the risk of being exposed to public scorn for their 'lewdness or impudence' (T 3.2.12.7), and it contributes to the very personalities of those who develop those character traits, adopting certain models of behaviour that ensure that they are recognized and accepted by themselves and others as decent people. However, notwithstanding the importance of chastity and modesty within Hume's system, the discussion of shame as it appears in T 3.2.12 by no means exhausts what Hume has to say on the subject. To gain a truly comprehensive perspective on his understanding of shame, we need to move on to the notion of humility.[5]

## SHAME AS HUMILITY

Hume's taxonomy of pride and humility is a clear example of his associationist method. Let us see how he proceeds and why what he says about humility is of interest to our discussion of shame. Hume conceives humility, together with its positive counterpart, pride, as 'indirect passions'. While direct passions such as 'desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security' (T 2.1.1.4) 'arise immediately from good and evil, from pain or pleasure' (T 2.1.1.4), indirect passions such as love and hate, pride and humility, are structured according to 'a double relation of impressions and ideas' (T 2.1.5.5). When the idea of a certain thing that we find painful is related to the idea of ourselves, it causes in us a disagreeable impression, the impression of humility. The same goes with pride, the only difference being that the impression of pride is agreeable (T 2.1.2.4; T 2.1.5.5; T 2.1.9.6). Despite the complex

constitution of pride and humility, Hume also says that they are experienced as unitary and simple impressions, without consciously going through the different stages just mentioned:

> The passions of PRIDE and HUMILITY being simple and uniform impressions, 'tis impossible we can ever, by a multitude of words, give a just definition of them, or indeed of any of the passions. The utmost we can pretend to is a description of them, by an enumeration of such circumstances, as attend them: But as these words, *pride* and *humility*, are of general use, and the impressions they represent the most common of any, every one, of himself, will be able to form a just idea of them, without any danger of mistake. (T 2.1.2.1)

So, pride is recognized by us in phenomenological terms as 'that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfied with ourselves' (T 2.1.7.8). It is the same with humility, the only difference being that its causes are painful, thus generating in us a disagreeable impression. The causes of pride and humility can be either qualities of our mind and body, or whatever object or person is related to ourselves (T 2.1.2.5). Among these causes, however, virtue and vice stand out:

> For if all morality be founded on the pain or pleasure, which arises from the prospect of any loss or advantage, that may result from our own characters, or from those of others, all the effects of morality must be deriv'd from the same pain or pleasure, and among the rest, the passions of pride and humility. The very essence of virtue, according to this hypothesis, is to produce pleasure, and that of vice to give pain. The virtue and vice must be part of our character in order to excite pride or humility. What farther proof can we desire for the double relation of impressions and ideas? (T 2.1.7.4)

Hume establishes a direct link between virtue and pride, on the one hand, and vice and humility, on the other; virtue and pride are paired in that they both generate, and depend on, pleasure, whereas vice and humility generate, and depend on, painful experiences. This link relies on the fact that we human beings are related at the sentimental level; thanks to sympathy, we react to the opinions of one another and depend on those opinions to draw a correct picture of who we are, both in our eyes and in the eyes of others. In turn, this same sympathetic interconnection among human beings is what gives rise to the common point of view from which we morally assess ourselves and other people.[6]

It is the case that various interpreters think that when Hume talks of humility, what he has in mind, or what he should have said, is in fact shame. Páll S. Árdal remarks that

> it is clear from his [Hume's] account of humility that he is not really interested in the ordinary concept of humility; his concern is with self-valuing. Humility to him is essentially the opposite of thinking highly of oneself (pride), and these passions are in each case induced by pleasure-creating or pain-arousing characteristics in something belonging to, or closely related to, the proud or the humble person. It may be suggested that Hume should have used the word 'shame' rather than 'humility' to stand for the opposite of pride. People are often ashamed of their appearance, their lack of intelligence, or their families. It seems much less plausible to suggest that these characteristics and relations make people humble. (Árdal 1966: 34)

Terence Penelhum agrees that

> in the case of humility, the heterogeneity of the phenomena Hume describes is even more obvious, since, as Árdal says, one does not feel humble *of* anything; at the most one feels humble because of it, and the humility one feels is, roughly, a generally low or negative estimate of oneself. What one feels with regard to the fact that occasions humility here is *shame*. (Penelhum 2000: 68)

In *A Progress of Sentiments*, Annette Baier systematically utilizes 'shame' in place of 'humility'. On her part, Gabriele Taylor starts her chapter on shame by noting that 'it seems prima facie that shame (and not as Hume claims, "humility") is the polar opposite of emotional pride' (Taylor 1985: 53). And Hume himself, in one of the few passages of the *Treatise* where shame is mentioned, explicitly refers to 'humility and shame [that] deject and discourage us' (T 2.2.10.6).[7]

It would seem, therefore, that within the Humean system, humility represents the closest thing to shame; all the more so since the role that Hume accords to these indirect passions – pride and humility or shame – closely resembles what has been argued so far: both are activated in a social contest, both require us to be sensitive to the judgement of another, and both contribute to our self-awareness. Despite these similarities, though, the key aspect of Hume's analysis is that in so far as both pride and humility or shame are forms of self-evaluation, it is the former only that eventually guarantees a solid basis for our sense of self. It is pride and not humility or shame that warrants those features – such as the consciousness one has of one's own value and standing in society – that according to Gabriele Taylor allow people to preserve their sense of themselves, protecting them from self-annihilation. Thus, Hume presents a picture that is equal and opposite to hers; the practical identity of individuals does depend on an emotion of self-assessment that is structured socially and reflexively, but that emotion is not shame but pride. As I shall argue, not only does shame so understood fail for Hume to provide what Gabriele Taylor claims it provides but it has the opposite effect, ending up as a vice that one should attempt to excise from one's

character. However, to understand how this is so, we need to see how pride works in the determination of our self-consciousness in Hume.

## A DUE DEGREE OF PRIDE

Not all expressions of pride are acceptable to Hume: 'An excessive pride or over-weaning conceit of ourselves is always esteem'd vicious, and is universally hated' (T 3.3.2.1); the proud person focuses on herself, and this may have the unfortunate result of making the proud person odious to others. It is a general rule that 'the proud never can endure the proud' (T 3.3.2.7); besides, more often than not, our pride is nothing but a form of vanity – and it is not by chance that Hume often talks of 'pride or vanity' (T 2.1.2.6; T 2.1.10.10; Hume 1983: vol. 3, ch. 68, para. 7).[8] However frequent this may be, this is not always the case. Eventually, Hume's description of the truly proud person diverges from that of the vain person. The distinction between 'proto-pride' and 'well-founded pride' in Hume drawn by Pauline Chazan (Chazan 1992; 1998: ch.1) comes to our aid in clarifying this point.

Chazan argues that in Hume pride and our awareness of ourselves as particular individuals always go together. We sustain our pride, and with it our self-awareness, through the continuous perception of qualities and attributes that are related to us, and this perception is fostered and promoted, through sympathy, by the opinions of other people. We receive confirmation of the qualities and attributes that define us mainly from their being recognized and approved by others, which is why we sometimes build up a false image of ourselves. That may happen when we misinterpret the approval expressed by others as being directed at qualities or attributes that we believe we possess when, in fact, this approval is not directed at us as the possessors of those qualities or attributes. Otherwise, we build up a false image of ourselves when we feel pride for qualities or attributes which we do not possess at all. In circumstances such as these, the self-awareness generated by pride ends up being weak, because the pride we feel is not deserved; Chazan calls this proto-pride. To explain what she means, Chazan introduces the case of an acrobat who feels pride in the appreciation that an audience shows for her dexterity. However, Chazan notes, the acrobat may be mistaken; the audience's admiration may not be directed at her in particular, but only at the fact that the audience is witnessing a well-performed exercise, without specifically considering the performer. Nevertheless, given the structure of pride, which has the idea of the self as its object, the acrobat will inevitably end up directing the pleasure expressed by the audience towards herself, constructing an erroneous self-image due to the satisfaction the acrobat derives from the audience's pleasure. This is an example of proto-pride in

that we are faced with a misleading interpretation of the pleasure response from others as if it were directed at us as the owners of a certain admired quality. A different case of proto-pride is found in Hume when he talks about the vainglory we experience when we congratulate ourselves on a successful banquet in which we have taken part as if we had actually organized it:

> We may feel joy upon being present at a feast, where our senses are regal'd with delicacies of every kind: But 'tis only the master of the feast who, beside the same joy, has the additional passion of self-applause and vanity. 'Tis true, men sometimes boast of a great entertainment, at which they have only been present; and by so small a relation convert their pleasure into pride: But however, this must in general be own'd, that joy arises from a more inconsiderable relation than vanity, and that many things, which are too foreign to produce pride, are yet able to give us delight and pleasure. (T 2.1.6.2)

As Chazan notes, in the Humean explanation of indirect passions, pride, of whatever kind, always reveals itself to us, phenomenologically, as pleasure. This being so, to the extent that proto-pride is due to our taking pleasure in some quality or attribute that we perceive as related to us, it is pride to all intents and purposes. And yet it is only proto-pride because, once we investigate the quality or attribute in question, we will see that in fact its connection with us is not justified at all. In the case of the boastful guest, he may well take pleasure in the fact that the feast he is attending is particularly sumptuous, but he will have no reason to be proud of it, since it is not he who organized the feast but is merely taking part in it; only the host may feel pride and is entitled to do so, not him.

The fundamental difference between proto-pride and well-founded pride is that proto-pride generates an unstable self-consciousness that depends on the fortuitous occasions when we happen to feel proud of something that may in fact be associated with us only by chance. It is one thing, then, to feel proud in such cases; quite another to feel worthy of pride, in which the resulting consciousness of ourselves produced by pride is due to an appreciation for qualities of our person that really belong to us and identify us. Well-founded pride does not derive from transient pleasures that are only incidentally related to the person experiencing this passion, but from an evaluation of the person directed at qualities that she actually possesses. In Hume's own words, 'tho an over-weaning conceit of our own merit be vicious and disagreeable, nothing can be more laudable, than to have a value for ourselves, where we really have qualities that are valuable' (T 3.3.2.8). The self-confidence supplied by a well-grounded pride roots our sense of being a recognizable individual, with a clear practical identity:

> And 'tis certain, that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprizes. Whatever capacity any one may be endow'd with, 'tis entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it. 'Tis requisite on all occasions to know our own force; and were it allowable to err on either side, twou'd be more advantageous to overrate our merit, than to form ideas of it, below its just standard. Fortune commonly favours the bold and enterprizing; and nothing inspires us with more boldness than a good opinion of ourselves. (T 3.3.2.8)[9]

Chazan believes that her distinction makes it possible to pin down a stable sense of self in Hume by referring to well-founded pride. She calls it a 'non-metaphysical self', since it does not correspond to the bundle of perceptions Hume discusses in the chapter of the *Treatise* devoted to personal identity (T 1.4.6).[10] On the contrary, the passion of pride allows us to conceive the self as a unified agent. Such a different perspective on the self in Hume is highlighted by numerous scholars and emerges from the positive self-evaluation generated by our feeling justifiably proud of who we are. For example, Jane McIntyre says that 'Book 2 [of the *Treatise*] depicts the role of the passions in the creation of a self which is unified through time. It details how the Humean self can be affected by its past and concerned with its future' (McIntyre 1989: 557). According to Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'the idea of the self produced by pride is that of the self as an agent, with a concern for its future, an agent who has reasons to weight the motivational force of her passions, to give them a ranked priority beyond previously experienced pleasurable intensity and duration' (Rorty 1990: 258). Similarly to Chazan, Gerald Postema also observes that

> the self of which we speak here is not the subject of the philosophical debate over personal identity famously discussed in *Treatise*, Book 1. Rather, the self of *Treatise*, Book 2 is the focus of 'the concern we take in ourselves' (T 1.4.6.5; SBN 253), our 'present concern for our past or future pleasures and pains' (T 1.4.6.19; SBN 261). This is not a metaphysical substance, but the relatively (but contingently) stable focus of practical concern. This self, Hume tells us, can only exist by contextual comparison. (Postema 2005: 267)

I have been arguing that Hume's indirect passions of pride and humility, like Gabriele Taylor's emotions of self-assessment, provide grounding for our self-awareness. In the same vein as Gabriele Taylor, but also Williams and Wollheim, Hume believes that this process is inherently intersubjective and takes place in a public context in which people submit to the opinions of others, internalizing their views and making them their own: 'Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and

even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others' (T 2.1.11.1). We resonate with others, and our self-appraisal is directly affected by the feedback we get from those around us. In this continual rebound of reciprocal assessments, we test our self-esteem, hence putting on the line our very sense of ourselves as agents. Unlike Gabriele Taylor, however, according to Hume it is not so much shame – as presented in the form of humility – that secures the foundations for the individual's sense of self, but its opposite, pride. In order for a person to perceive herself as stable and continuous through time, Hume believes it is necessary that the underlying passion be positive, that is, pleasant. Pride's pleasantness makes it a positive passion, in the sense that it enables us to nurture our sense of self, making us recognize ourselves in a defined practical identity that we wish to pursue and fully realize. It does so in a proactive way, making us stand firm in our intentions, enabling us to pursue our own projects, giving us confirmation that who we are is something valid and admirable, deserving to be appreciated both by others and, above all, by ourselves. When justified, pride guarantees dynamism to the self through a self-affirmation that is steady and constant over time, holding together a coherent self-image of ourselves as specific individuals that can be identified by those character traits that really belong to us and define us as persons worth of esteem.

In this regard, a due degree of pride functions for Hume as a 'calm passion'. Of this type are all those passions, such as moral sentiments, which, through constant repetition – through habit or education – generate a stable principle of action. Although they are not obvious in their manifestation, they nevertheless work under the radar and determine people's behaviour by making them capable of achieving the ends they have set for themselves. That a passion presents itself as calm, for Hume, does not at all mean that it is weak. Quite the opposite, the characteristic feature of calm passions is that they are strong, that is to say, persistent, lasting, continuous in their influence on the will, whereas violent passions, precisely because of their immediacy, most often die out without a trace immediately after presenting themselves, revealing themselves to be in reality weak:

> 'Tis evident passions influence not the will in proportion to their violence, or the disorder they occasion in the temper; but on the contrary, that when a passion has once become a settled principle of action, and is the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation. As repeated custom and its own force have made every thing yield to it, it directs the actions and conduct without that opposition and emotion, which so naturally attend every momentary gust of passion. We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt a calm and a weak passion; betwixt a violent and a strong one. (T 2.3.4.1)

Shame or humility, on their part, produce the contrary effect to a well-founded pride. The self-consciousness of the one who is ashamed or humble may be painfully intense – that is, in Humean terms, violent – but precisely because it is painful it lacks, for Hume, the firmness that allows us to stabilize our practical identity according to a model of ourselves with which we can want to identify. We can therefore conclude that, from a Humean perspective, there is a risk that shame or humility, far from protecting us from self-annihilation, may on the contrary drive us away from the gaze of others as much as of ourselves, making us want to disappear as individuals.

Commenting on the nature of the proud person, Tara Smith claims that 'the proud person is his own in the truest sense, by winning his own approbation. Self-evaluation is what counts. The good opinion that a proud person seeks is his own' (Smith 1998: 75). This is true for Hume, too, since it is only from within herself that eventually the proud person can obtain the final confirmation of her value. Gabriele Taylor acknowledges this aspect of Hume's take on pride: 'The discussion of the Humean system has made it plain that an analysis of pride must be in terms of the agent's own view of the situation, where this includes both, how he sees his own role within this situation, and his evaluation of this or that aspect of it' (Taylor 1980: 392). In the end, however, Taylor considers pride to be a vice. This is due to her neo-Aristotelian stance, according to which the fully virtuous 'get their reasoning right, they possess practical wisdom, a kind of knowledge or sensitivity' (Taylor 2006: 2). On the other hand, when we give in to pride, we run the risk of focussing excessively 'on the self and its position in the world, [becoming] destructive of that self and [preventing] its flourishing' (Taylor 2006: 2, 1). And she is convinced that for Hume 'we are proud of qualities etc. only in so far as they are likely to gain the admiration and approval of society' (Taylor 1985: 26). This, however, is a limited reading of Hume. For him, validation by society alone is insufficient; other people's opinions as carried by sympathy do matter in our feeling positively or negatively about ourselves – 'the mind of men are mirrors to one another' (T 2.2.5.21), Hume says – but only a judgement on ourselves asserted from the common point of view of morality possesses that stability that allows us to acquire a firm consciousness of ourselves.[11] It is our taking part in virtue for Hume that reinforces our sense of ourselves through the passion of pride, not just the superficial fact that someone shows interest or applauds us – be it an audience for whom we are performing, or the whole of our society judging us (see Taylor 2011: 271; Baier 1980: 417). Only when our pride is a solid, reflectively sustained 'pride in virtue' (see Baier 1980; 1991: ch. 8; Besser 2010; Taylor 2011, 2015: ch. 5) can we be justly proud of ourselves as the possessors of those virtuous traits that define us as virtuous agents – in Chazan's terms, only then can we develop a well-grounded pride. When this happens, a virtuous circle is established between

virtuous action and self-esteem, with the result that our self-consciousness as virtuous agents comes out stronger. So, pride in virtue constitutes both a form of self-evaluation, in the form of the self-dignity we develop as bearers of virtuous characters, and a motivating drive to act according to virtue. In fact, although pride for Hume is not a direct motive to action (see Reed 2012; Taylor 2015: ch. 2.2), nonetheless – in Tara Smith's words – it 'heightens and fortifies one's commitment to other moral virtues', serving 'as an engine of morality [. . .] propelling a person's moral growth'. In this sense, pride can well be taken as a 'healthy love of self' (Smith 1998: 81, 82, 85). Smith does not examine pride from a Humean perspective, but what she says in this regard suits Hume well.[12]

The architectural role played by pride in determining a stable sense of self leads Hume to regard pride itself as a virtue. This is because pride works as 'a meta- or regulative virtue' (Herdt 2008: 313) that puts in motion a reflective process of self-confirmation that is dependent on the sympathetic nature of human relations:

> Who indeed does not feel an accession of alacrity in his pursuits of knowledge and ability of every kind, when he considers, that besides the advantage, which immediately result from these acquisitions, they also give him a new lustre in the eyes of mankind, and are universally attended with esteem and approbation? And who can think any advantages of fortune a sufficient compensation for the least breach of the *social* virtues, when he considers, that not only his character with regard to others, but also his peace and inward satisfaction entirely depend upon his strict observance of them; and that a mind will never be able to bear its own survey, that has been wanting in its part to mankind and society? (T 3.3.6.6)[13]

In this progression towards the affirmation of a well-grounded self, ethics plays an indispensable role. It is in fact pride in virtue, and not feeling humiliated or ashamed, that provides solidity to our selves as moral agents, guaranteeing that the qualities for which we praise ourselves, and are praised by others, are not transitory and accidental but essentially belong to our characters.

## VICIOUS SHAME

Pride and humility are therefore conceived by Hume not only as the outcomes of virtue and vice but also as virtuous and vicious character traits themselves. However, once again, the roles are reversed with respect to what Gabriele Taylor says. For Hume, it is the character trait of pride that is a virtue, while humility ends up in the list of vices. Hume deems a trait of character that is

either useful or immediately agreeable to other people or to oneself to be virtuous, and pride is indeed useful and agreeable to the person who possesses it (T 3.3.2.14). In making us aware of our own merit, and in giving us confidence in our projects and enterprises, pride is virtuous, since someone who is self-aware of his or her own true value will be more successful in his or her undertakings,[14] while humility and shame leave us prostrate, undermining the confidence we have in our own worth. Pride can also be useful and agreeable to others, thus meeting all the four criteria for a character trait to be virtuous in Humean terms. By being self-reliant, we can grow well-balanced connections with those around us, developing a more precise sense of other people's individualities and of the relations they have with us, ending up treating them in morally appropriate ways. Thanks to pride, we can be recognized and valued by others as 'a safe companion, an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, or an indulgent father' (T 3.3.3.9). Far from being self-referential, as Gabriele Taylor depicts it, pride for Hume is the passion that makes us reach out to other people, and that is possible because pride gives us that self-assurance that stabilizes our identity as moral agents. On the contrary, someone who is humble and ashamed runs the risk of withdrawing from confrontation with others, thereby depriving herself of a proper perspective of judgement on others and on the situation.

We have seen that Gabriele Taylor does not see pride in a good light. For her, it is very easy and natural for pride to turn into vanity, arrogance, and conceit (Taylor 1985: 43–52). And the specific problem with Hume's conception of pride is precisely the fact that Humean pride is dependent on pleasure to be activated (Taylor 1985: 24–25). Yet again, Taylor's interpretation of Hume, and of pride in general, is one-sided. On the one hand, we have seen that Hume does recognize vanity, arrogance and conceit as possible facets of the passion of pride, but they correspond to forms of proto-pride that, even if they are indeed real passions, do not represent the only ways in which pride can reveal itself. On the other hand, on closer inspection, Taylor's uneasiness with the presence of a pleasant element in pride reveals certain evaluative assumptions. To conclude her survey of pride, Taylor, too, like Hume, presents her definition of '"false" as well as "true" or "proper" pride' (Taylor 1985: 51). While 'pride is regarded as false if it involves a muddled value-judgement, a setting too much store by some things and not enough by others' (somewhat similar to Hume's proto-pride), when it comes to defining 'proper pride', the possession of which can be seen as a virtue, Taylor overlaps it 'with humility the (Christian) virtue' (Taylor 1985: 51) and refers to Thomas Aquinas' understanding of it:

> The humble who occupy and accept a lowly position on some hierarchical scale may be merely poor and meek. But to be virtuously humble is not to accept

> meekly just any sort of inferior position. Aquinas thinks of humility as that virtue which tempers and restrains the mind 'lest it tends to high things immoderately'. . . Being virtuously humble does not mean losing one's human dignity and self-respect. The humble will still 'have their pride', still think that a certain kind of treatment is due to them, and that a certain kind of behaviour on their part is due to others. They will get right what kind of treatment to give and to expect. (Taylor 1985: 51)

The reference to one's human dignity and self-respect connects Taylor's reflections on humility to her conception of shame. At bottom, pride 'in all its forms concerns the status of the self . . . his conception of his standing in society, his abilities, and so on' (Taylor 1985: 43), all things that, despite their contribution to identifying the self within a certain social context, are far from guaranteeing what is really important for Taylor: human dignity, self-respect, and with them the preservation of one's sense of self. Thus, where the only truly acceptable pride corresponds to virtuous humility – and this, in turn, reveals human dignity and self-respect – pride in its most general sense ends up being branded as a 'sin': 'The humble, unlike the proud, will not exalt himself above others, nor will he be complacent about himself. He will therefore not suffer from the blindness towards both the worth of others and his own defects which is so characteristic of sinful pride' (Taylor 1985: 52).[15]

We seem to hear an echo of this in Hume when he calls modesty into question again in T 3.3.2, but his conclusions are far from those of Taylor. When pride is correctly grounded, Hume tells us, it is naturally paired with 'modesty, or a just sense of our weakness' (T 3.3.2.1). Although the term 'modesty' is the same as the one we met when talking of the artificial virtue of chastity, Hume is thinking here about something very different. In this case, modesty is not paired with shame or humility, but is, quite the opposite, one of the forms that pride can take. '[A] genuine and hearty pride, or self-esteem, if well conceal'd and well founded' (T 3.3.2.11) will not be blatantly exhibited. It is part and parcel of such a passion to be controlled and self-regulated, thus being vented with due regard to other people's pride and sense of themselves. If humility is ever felt in those circumstances, it never 'goes beyond the outside' (T 3.3.2.11). Modesty and humility should not be confused with one another: 'Modesty is not humility', Annette Baier acknowledges, 'humility is a painful dwelling on shameful features of oneself, features one would like to hide. But modesty is simply a recognition of the limits of one's grounds for pride' (Baier 1991: 206–207; see also Martin 1992: 387). Unlike shame or humility, modesty is in harmony with the self-awareness acquired through a well-founded pride; and in fact, for Hume very different feelings can all be seen as forms of modesty:

> Modesty may be understood in different senses, even abstracted from chastity, which has been already treated of. It sometimes means that tenderness and nicety of honour, that apprehension of blame, that dread of intrusion or injury towards others, that PUDOR, which is the proper guardian of every kind of virtue, and a sure preservative against vice and corruption. But its most usual meaning is when it is opposed to *impudence* and *arrogance*, and expresses a diffidence of our own judgment, and a due attention and regard for others. In young men chiefly, this quality is a sure sign of good sense; and is also the certain means of augmenting that endowment, by preserving their ears open to instruction, and making them still grasp after new attainments. (EPM 8.8)

The recognition of our limitations that we show when expressing modesty is not a denial of pride, but instead its very confirmation:

> [A] generous spirit and self-value, well founded, decently disguised, and courageously supported under distress and calumny, is a great excellency, and seems to derive its merit from the noble elevation of its sentiment, or its immediate agreeableness to its possessor. In ordinary characters, we approve of a bias towards modesty, which is a quality immediately agreeable to others: The vicious excess of the former virtue, namely, insolence or haughtiness, is immediately disagreeable to others: The excess of the latter is so to the possessor. Thus are the boundaries of these duties adjusted. (EPM 8.10)

One might observe that Hume's use of 'modesty' as a restrained variant of pride is largely stipulative. Why not juxtapose modesty with humility and thus with shame instead? After all, 'pudor' may well be translated as 'modesty', but also as 'sense of honour', 'decency', and indeed 'shame'.[16] And yet, Hume is not the only one who can be blamed for making a discretionary choice. The fact is that a stipulative use of terms such as 'pride', 'humility', 'shame', and 'modesty' is virtually inevitable in any case, and this is due to the fact that they possess an unavoidable evaluative character; in describing certain sentimental qualities of human beings, they present people in a positive or negative light. Hume is advancing an explanatory model of human behaviour in which pleasant and painful passions – pride and humility – are involved in constituting examples of morally praiseworthy or reprehensible personalities, and in doing so he is partially bending the meaning of the terms he is using in his favour. But on the other hand, Taylor does the same when she relies on Aquinas's definition of humility; as do, inevitably, all those who portray human beings in sentimental terms. In support of the Humean account, one can say that, in framing pride and humility the way it does, there is at least an appeal to how human beings present themselves when considered empirically; it is a plain observational fact that we feel pleasure and pain, as that we tend to pursue the former and avoid the latter.

A similar remark can be made regarding the relation between self-respect and self-esteem. Whether a distinction can be made between the two is a matter of debate, and even there, stipulations abound.[17] Taylor herself, though she wants to keep the two separate, acknowledges that 'they are, however, so interrelated with each other that a neat pigeon-holing of the different phenomena is hardly possible' (Taylor 1985: 77). Those who, like Taylor, focus on shame exalt its ability to bring out self-respect. Note instead how Hume never uses the term 'self-respect'; rather, he always refers to 'pride, or self-esteem' (T 2.2.1.9; T 3.3.2.11–14, 16; Abstract 30). Again, one could point out that Hume's choice is arbitrary and fails to capture a fundamental aspect of human nature. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the difficulty of defining terms such as self-respect and self-esteem without presupposing a certain evaluative framework about the role they play in describing human beings, here, too, it can be argued that Hume moves from 'a cautious observation of human life' (T Intro 9). His choice is justified by the fact that, as far as we can see, self-esteem based on pride is essential for self-awareness, which in turn provides a solid foundation to our sense of being agents. If self-esteem is missing, one cannot even begin to speak of self-respect, nor can self-respect be gained by relying on a painful emotion such as shame or humility, which, in the Humean perspective, undermines rather than reinforces self-awareness.

This is why modesty, as Hume understands it, is undeniably a virtue and corresponds to correctly calibrated pride. On the contrary, as clearly put by Marie Martin, according to Hume, 'the *disposition* of humility is a steady and well-established uneasiness towards oneself, a permanent sense or feeling of pain aroused by the belief that one lacks any value or worth. To be a truly humble person is simply to lack any self-esteem or self-respect' (Martin 1992: 387). That is to say, shame or humility for Hume has the opposite effect to the one Gabriele Taylor attributes to them. Even more so, being ashamed or humble is almost certainly a sign of a vicious character in Hume's eyes, as the case of the 'monkish virtues' professed by the Christian religion makes evident. Character traits such as 'celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude' (EPM 9.3), are most of the time only productive of suffering and unhappiness:

> They serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment . . . on the contrary . . . they cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper. (EPM 9.3)

Virtue and vice are dependent for Hume on people feeling pleasure and pain, which is a fact of experience that is derived from an unbiased

observation of how human nature expresses itself. On their part, the monkish virtues artificially force humanity in a direction that is both unnatural and unreasonable. In turn, those who develop such character traits more often than not end up showing personalities in which falsity, self-repression and hypocrisy rule – as is the case for Hume with clergymen (Hume 1985b: 199–200, footnote 3). For this reason, Hume concludes, 'we justly . . . transfer them [the monkish virtues] to the opposite column, and place them in the catalogue of vices. . . . A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast, after his death, may have a place in the calendar: but will scarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself' (EPM 9.3). This highly critical stance towards a religious morality is a possible explanation for Hume's preference for the term 'humility' over 'shame'. We have seen that the mechanisms of shame and humility are quite similar for him, and in so far as they both undermine the steadiness of the self, they must be opposed. From a Christian perspective, it is humility that is referred to as a cardinal virtue and not shame, and it is probably for this reason, to expose the vicious rather than virtuous nature of Christian humility, that Hume focuses on it in his taxonomy.[18] Be that as it may, while shame or humility diminishes and deteriorates people's characters, leading them to develop a fragile and anomalous sense of their practical identities, the 'sinful' pride is instead one of the basic ways human nature unfolds, and a necessary component of a virtuous life.

In this essay, I have attempted a reconstruction of shame in Hume. In doing so, I have referred mainly to the work of Gabriele Taylor, but also Williams and Wollheim. This is because in different ways they all emphasize certain aspects of shame which can also be found in Hume's understanding of it. Shame presupposes the gaze of someone, be it real or imagined, whose judgement is internalized by the person, offering itself as a perspective from which the person can evaluate herself, thus coming to recognize herself as a worthy individual. I then considered the different occasions when Hume explicitly deals with shame. In particular, I have analysed the relationship Hume establishes between shame and chastity and modesty, and then that between shame and humility. When shame is understood in terms of Hume's humility, it may reveal us to ourselves, thereby working like Gabriele Taylor's emotions of self-assessment. However, differently from Gabriele Taylor, this passion for him has little to say about one's self-respect and even less about human dignity. From a Humean perspective, when shame or humility is attributed with the capacity to reveal one's self-respect or human dignity, this is often because shame or humility is considered from a specific perspective that resonates (dangerously, for Hume) with Christian morality. More

crucially though, for Hume the self-consciousness one acquires through shame or humility is precarious, and this is mainly due to its phenomenological feeling of pain. Therefore, shame or humility cannot provide the firmness and durability necessary to have a steady sense of self that allows us to see ourselves as unitary agents in the course of time. Pride, on the contrary, can do this, and this is precisely because of its pleasant nature; its being a positive passion allows it to sustain the sense of self, to give it continuity through a repeated and justified affirmation of oneself. Of course, not any feeling of pride will do; only when pride is well-grounded, as is the case with the due pride we develop when seeing ourselves in the light of ethics, can it work as that architectonic passion in which our practical identity is rooted. On the contrary, forms of proto-pride correspond to forms of vanity and fatuity, or even vice, which, like shame or humility, will produce a very unstable and fleeting self-consciousness, if they ever produce one.

Hume's model of self-consciousness in terms of individual agents grounded in well-founded pride is opposed to one based on shame or humility. Given the acclaim that shame and humility have received and continue to receive (think, for example, of today's interest in humility not only as a moral but also as an intellectual virtue), the Humean alternative certainly deserves further examination.[19]

## NOTES

1. I shall quote Hume's *Treatise* as T followed by numbers referring to book, part, section, and paragraph. I shall quote *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* and *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* as EHU and EPM respectively, followed by the numbers of section and paragraph.

2. On the involvement of the whole self in shame, see also Lynd (1958: 49–56).

3. On the innumerable variety of forms that the marital relation between men and women can take, see Hume (1985a).

4. On chastity and modesty in Hume (see Baier 1979, 1994; Berry 2003; Gardner 2006; Levey 1997; Taylor 2015: chs. 3.6, 6.3; Watkins 2019: ch. 6.3).

5. In the following sections, I return in part to what I wrote in 'On Pride' (*Humana.Mente: Journal of Philosophical Studies* 35, 2019: 101–23). I would like to thank the editors of *Humana.Mente* for allowing me to use the material published in the journal.

6. For a discussion of Hume's explanation of the formation of the common point of view, and for secondary literature, see Greco (2018).

7. Lynd also notes that 'pride is often contrasted with shame. Shame and pride, in this view, are regarded as opposites; shame is the response to scorn or ridicule from an audience; pride is self-aggrandizement in response to acclaim or approval by an audience' (Lynd 1958: 252).

8. For the relation between pride and vanity in Hume (see Galvagni 2020; Reed 2012).

9. The Humean distinction between 'a due degree of pride' and pride as vanity is reminiscent of the distinction made today by various psychologists between 'authentic (beta) pride' and 'hubristic (alpha) pride'. See Michelle Yarwood, 'Two types of Pride', in Yarwood, *Psychology of Human Emotion*: ch. 12.

10. For a discussion of this point and for secondary literature, see Greco (2015).

11. For Tara Smith, too, 'while the feeling of being pleased with oneself may arise for all sorts of reasons, admirable and not so admirable, the virtue of pride occurs only as an outgrowth of authentically moral practice. The feeling of pride must be harnessed to morally right belief and action in order to reflect the virtue of pride'. And then, 'pride is the commitment to achieve one's moral excellence' (Smith 1998: 75, 76).

12. Arnold Isenberg says something similar: 'Pride, from a psychological standpoint, is pleasure taken in the possession of some quality that one deems valuable . . . A *genuine* and *reasonable* pride, from the ethical standpoint, will depend on a comprehensive and just sense of values' (Isenberg 1980: 358).

13. Jennifer Herdt quotes this passage, too, and adds: 'Were we not capable of pride, and through sympathy capable of having our pride damaged or reinforced by the ways others assess us, we would not be able to act in accordance with moral judgments that strain against our own self-interest or limited generosity. We would not, in short, be able to sustain the practice of morality, although we would still display natural virtues in some limited contexts, showing generosity toward friends and care for our dependent children (T 316–24)' (Herdt 2008: 313).

14. This applies to pride understood both as a moral virtue and as an intellectual one. On intellectual virtue in Hume, see O'Brien (2018).

15. Similar tones can be found in the conclusion of Lynd's book, where she declares that 'pride in the sense of self-respect transcends shame, but is fully consonant with humility. Only the man with true pride in his capacities as a human being can have a significant humility; only the truly humble in apprehending the immensity of the universe and the world beyond himself can have a significant pride – a sense of his own identity' (Lynd 1958: 258).

16. I would like to thank Raffaele Rodogno for raising this question.

17. On the distinction between self-respect and self-esteem, see Sachs (1981).

18. For an 'irreligious' reading of Hume's overall philosophical project, see Russell (2008).

19. A version of this chapter was presented at the seminar 'Emotion, Character, and Society', Sapienza University of Rome, 28 April 2022. I would like to thank the participants and especially Alessandra Fussi, Eugenio Lecaldano, Dan O'Brien, and Raffaele Rodogno for their very helpful comments. This chapter was written with the contribution of the Science Foundation of the Czech Republic for the research project 'Virtues, Old and New: Virtue Ethics in Hume and Mandeville' [GAČR 20-02972S] carried out in collaboration with the University of Hradec Králové.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Árdal, Páll S. 1966. *Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Baier, Annette C. 1979. "Good Men's Women: Hume on Chastity and Trust." *Hume Studies* 5.1: 1–19.

Baier, Annette C. 1980. "Master Passions." In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie O. Rorty. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 403–423.

Baier, Annette C. 1991. *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's Treatise*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Baier, Annette C. 1994. "Hume, The Women's Moral Theorist?" In *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics*, edited by Baier. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 51–75.

Berry, Christopher J. 2003. "Lusty Women and Loose Imagination: Hume's Philosophical Anthropology of Chastity." *History of Political Thought* 24.3: 415–433.

Besser, Lorraine L. 2010. "Hume on Pride-in-Virtue: A Reliable Motive?" *Hume Studies* 36.2: 171–192.

Chazan, Pauline. 1992. "Pride, Virtue, and Selfhood: A Reconstruction of Hume." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 22.1: 45–64.

Chazan, Pauline. 1998. *The Moral Self*. London and New York: Routledge.

Galvagni, Enrico. 2020. "Hume on Pride, Vanity, and Society." *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 18.2: 157–173.

Gardner, Caterina Villanueva. 2006. "Chastity and the Practice of the World in Hume's Treatise." *Hume Studies* 32.2: 331–346.

Greco, Lorenzo. 2015. "The Self as Narrative in Hume." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53.4: 699–722.

Greco, Lorenzo. 2018. "Preserving Practicality: In Defense of Hume's Sympathy-Based Ethics." In *Hume's Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Psychology*, edited by Philip A. Reed and Rico Vitz. New York and London: Routledge, 170–190.

Herdt, Jennifer A. 2008. *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Hume, David. 1983. *The History of England From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*. 6 Vols. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Hume, David. 1985a. "Of Polygamy and Divorces." In *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 181–190.

Hume, David. 1985b. "Of National Characters." In *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 197–215.

Hume, David. 1998. *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hume, David. 2000. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hume, David. 2007. *A Treatise of Human Nature: A Critical Edition*. Edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Isenberg, Arnold. 1980. "Natural Pride and Natural Shame." In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie O. Rorty. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 355–383.

Levey, Ann. 1997. "Under Constraint: Chastity and Modesty in Hume." *Hume Studies* 23.2: 213–226.

Lynd, Helen Merrell. 1958. *On Shame and the Search for Identity*. New York: Harvest Books, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

Martin, Marie A. 1992. "Hume on Human Excellence." *Hume Studies* 18.2: 383–400.

McIntyre, Jane L. 1989. "Personal Identity and the Passions." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27.4: 545–557.

O'Brien, Dan. 2018. "Hume, Intellectual Virtue, and Virtue Epistemology." In *The Bright and the Good: The Connection between Intellectual and Moral Virtues*, edited by Audrey L. Anton. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 153–168.

Penelhum, Terence. 2000. "Self-Identity and Self-Regard." In *Themes in Hume: The Self, the Will, Religion*, edited by Penelhum. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 61–87.

Postema, Gerald J. 2005. "'Cemented With Diseased Qualities': Sympathy and Comparison in Hume's Moral Psychology." *Hume Studies* 31.2: 249–298.

Reed, Philip A. 2012. "The Alliance of Virtue and Vanity in Hume's Moral Theory." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 93.4: 595–614.

Rorty, Amélie O. 1990. "'Pride Produces the Idea of Self': Hume on Moral Agency." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 68.3: 255–269.

Russell, Paul. 2008. *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Sachs, David. 1981. "How to Distinguish Self-Respect From Self-Esteem." *Philosophy & Public affairs* 10.4: 346–360.

Smith, Tara. 1998. "The Practice of Pride." In *Virtue and Vice*, edited by Ellen F. Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 71–90.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1980. "Pride." In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie O. Rorty. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 385–402.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Taylor, Gabriele. 2006. *Deadly Vices*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Taylor, Jacqueline A. 2011. "Moral Sentiments and the Source of Moral Identity." In *Morality and the Emotions*, edited by Carla Bagnoli. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, Jacqueline A. 2015. *Reflecting Subjects: Passions, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Watkins, Margaret. 2019. *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, Bernard. 1993. *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Wollheim, Richard. 1984. *The Thread of Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yarwood, Michelle. *Psychology of Human Emotion*. Affordable Course Transformation: Pennsylvania State University. https://psu.pb.unizin.org/psych425/chapter/two-types-of-pride/. Accessed May 9, 2022.

## *Chapter 5*

# The Functions of Shame in Nietzsche

Mark Alfano

### THE FUNCTIONS OF SHAME IN NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche talks about shame (*scham*, schmach*, schand**) in all of his published and authorized works, from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Ecce Homo*. He refers to shame in over one hundred passages – at least five times as often as he refers to resentment/*ressentiment*. Yet the scholarly literature on Nietzsche and shame includes just a handful of publications, while the literature on Nietzsche and resentment includes over a thousand. Arguably, this disproportionate engagement has been driven by the fact that English translations of Nietzsche's writings systematically italicize and transliterate '*ressentiment*' rather than treating it as the normal word it is.[1]

In any case, this chapter aims to fill the gap in the secondary literature by using digital humanities methods to systematically investigate the functions of shame in Nietzsche's writings. These methods were pioneered in Alfano (2018, 2019a, 2019b, forthcoming) and made accessible to scholars with no coding background in Alfano and Cheong (2019). For that reason, I do not explain them at length in this chapter.

Substantively, I argue that Nietzsche is ambivalent about shame, depending on the function that it serves. I identify four main functions in his writings. First, in a society of near-equals, shame regulates interactions and incentives in ways that preserve game-theoretic equilibria, which Nietzsche seems to regard as a positive good.[2] Second and relatedly, Nietzsche associates the capacity to experience nuanced and appropriate feelings of shame – and to anticipate them in others – with the pathos of distance, a virtue that he associates with nobility. Third, when shame is directed towards fixed aspects of human nature or the self, it transforms those aspects into vices; by contrast, when it is directed towards malleable aspects of human nature or the self, it may foster self-improvement and virtue. Nietzsche

frequently laments the way that shame targets immutable aspects of ourselves. Finally and relatedly, Nietzsche casts counter-shame on those who would direct first-order shame on fixed aspects of human nature, as well as a paradoxical form of uplifting shame on their victims. If this is right, then Nietzsche does not offer a univocal verdict on shame. Instead, like many other emotions and emotional capacities, shame is inescapable, complex and function-relative.

## METHODOLOGY

I first use hierarchical clustering to compare the language used in Nietzsche's published and authorized manuscripts, as shown in figure 5.1.

As figure 5.1 shows, starting in 1880, Nietzsche's writings developed a distinctive style, with the free spirit works (HH, D, GS) clustering together while the mature works (BGE, GM) and the late works (EH, TI, though not A or CW) also cluster together. The analysis in this chapter covers Nietzsche's entire philosophical career, but I will primarily concentrate on these works.

Next, figure 5.2 displays the lexical dispersion of the three German word stems that Nietzsche uses to talk about shame (*scham**, *schmach**, *schand**). Each vertical line represents a usage of the relevant term, and the width of the bars represents the total word count of each book. For instance, *Human, All-too-human* is Nietzsche's longest book, which is why the bar representing it is the widest. It also primarily addresses shame under the heading of *scham**, with just a couple passages using *schmach** or *schand**. By contrast, *The*

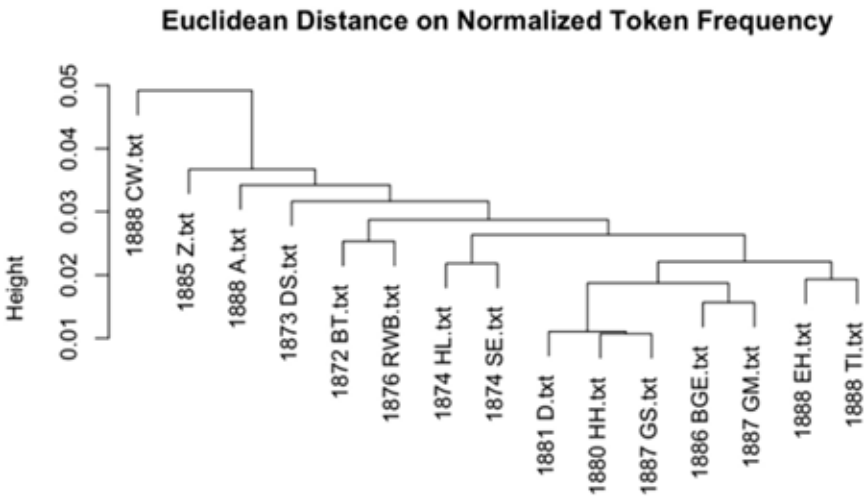


**Figure 5.1 Hierarchical Clustering of Nietzsche's Published and Authorized Manuscripts, based on final publication date in cases where multiple versions exist.**

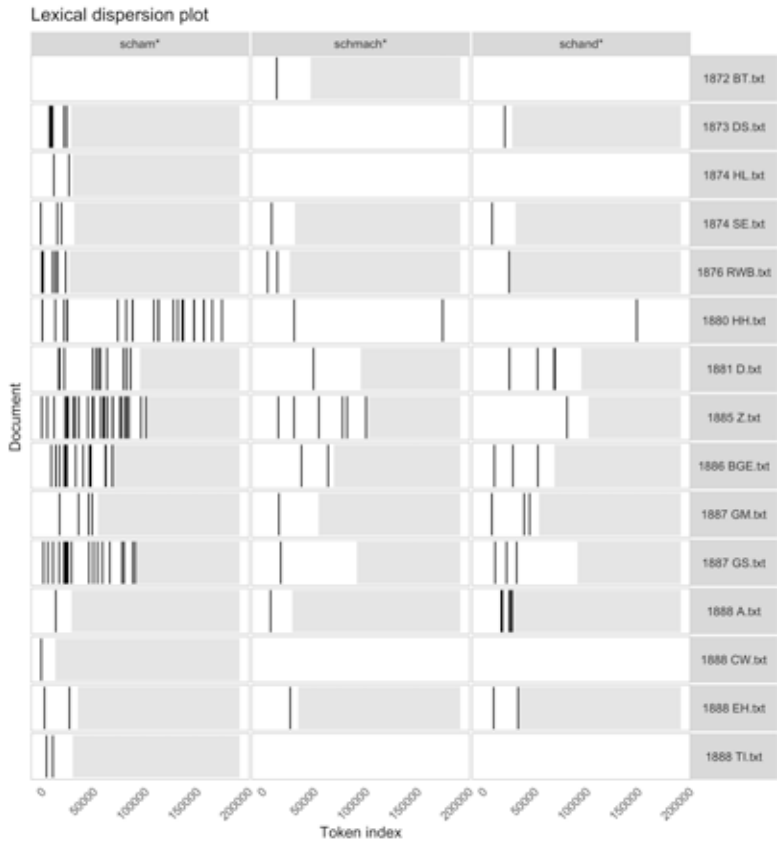


**Figure 5.2 Lexical Dispersion of Shame in Nietzsche's Published and Authorized Manuscripts.**

*Antichrist* has multiple passages in which Nietzsche uses *schand** and just a couple in which he uses *scham** or *schmach**. Manual inspection reveals that these are passages in which he quotes or references the Luther translation of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 1, verses 20–29).

These figures provide some context and demonstrate Nietzsche's ongoing concern with the moral psychology of shame. Delving deeper, I next examine all passages in which the relevant terms occurred and organized them around the functions that Nietzsche assigns to shame.[3]

## SOCIAL REGULATION

The first function that Nietzsche associates with shame is social regulation among (near-)equals, especially elites in societies that may have escaped

only recently from a quasi-Hobbesian state of nature. For instance, in HH WS 22, while discussing the *lex talionis* (eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth), he remarks:

> Within a community in which all regard themselves as equivalent there exist *shame* [Schande] and *punishment* [Strafe] as measures against transgressions, that is to say against disruptions of the principle of equilibrium: shame as a weight placed in the scales against the encroaching individual who has procured advantages for himself through his encroachment and now through the shame he incurs experiences disadvantages which abolish these earlier advantages and *outweigh* them.[4]

In this passage, shame is conceived of not as an occurrent emotional attitude but as a social status of disgrace. Naturally, these two are often connected. People who endure disgrace are likely to feel shame, and people can also feel shame without suffering disgrace, but disgrace characteristically aims to induce feelings shame. The loss of social status or approbation that comes with shame ensures that ill-gotten gains cannot be leveraged to further advantage. Moreover, when all members of such a society are aware that their ill-gotten gains will be met with proportionate shame or punishment, they realize that pursuing such gains is pointless, which in turn reduces the amount of actual conflict in the society and contributes to a stable equilibrium.[5]

Moving to the mature works, Nietzsche says in BGE 265 that this recognition of equality can be so well instilled that people become comfortable with it. The 'noble soul', he says admits that 'there are others with rights equal to its own. As soon as it is clear about this question of rank, it will move among these equals and "equally righted" with an assured shame [*Scham*] and a gentle reverence equal to how it treats itself'. As we will see below, this shame is not actually felt but rather dispositional. The noble soul is not ashamed of her actions or her self. Rather, she knows how to comport herself among equals in such a way that she does not bring shame down upon herself.

In a later passage (GM 2.5), Nietzsche returns to the theme of inflicting shame in order to regulate social interactions among people who see themselves as capable of both inflicting harm on and suffering harm from one another. Again, he seems to be envisioning a society that has only recently escaped from a state of nature, and in which relationships of trust are at best fragile. In this imagined pre-history, he says, 'the creditor could inflict all kinds of shame [*Schmach*] and torture on the body of the debtor' should the debtor fail to repay. While this scenario surely involves plenty of distrust, the key for Nietzsche is that it remains one in which conditionally-trusting contractual relationships such as borrowing and lending are at least possible. If the creditor were not assured that they could extract value from the debtor in

the form of the pleasure of shaming and torturing in the case of non-payment, they would not be willing to enter into the relationship in the first place. And for that to be possible, society must be organized in such a way that the creditor can be reasonably confident that these alternatives to remuneration are guaranteed. In other words, the creditor-to-be must have enough social power that they can't be completely steamrolled by a shameless debtor. And, in all likelihood, the debtor must be aware of this as well, inducing caution in the seeking of loans. In such a society, only those who are very likely able to repay their debts will seek credit in the first place, and creditors will therefore infrequently need to exercise their awful powers of shaming and torturing. In other words, Nietzsche is again describing how shame can contribute to social equilibria.

## PATHOS OF DISTANCE

The dispositions that people end up developing in the sorts of societies described in the previous section often end up coalescing into a nuanced sensitivity to hierarchy and rank – what Nietzsche sometimes calls the pathos of distance – which both informs them about shame-relevant situations and behaviours and motivates them to avoid such situations and behaviours.[6] The pathos of distance is a disposition – indeed, a virtue – that attunes its bearer to status and rank, which one would need to negotiate the fraught social world in which shame is constantly one misstep away. Like contemporary authors such as Adam Morton (2013; see also Alfano 2016), Nietzsche understands shame and contempt correlatively: shame is the emotion one experiences when one imagines and endorses a point of view from which one is the object of contempt. This can occur concurrently (being ashamed) or prospectively. In the latter case, one experiences what Van Fossen (2019) calls protective shame – shame that motivates its bearer to avoid the action or omission that would occasion occurrent shame.[7] The pathos of distance subsequently develops into a fine-tuned sense for the contemptible, and those who lack it are – in Nietzsche's view – bound to end up doing shameful things even if they don't realize it.

For example, in SE 4, he contends that 'Whoever is seeking to answer the question of what the philosopher as educator can mean in our time has to contest this view' – optimism about the German Reich – and 'must declare: it is a downright scandal [*Schande und Schmach*] that such nauseating, idolatrous flattery can be rendered to our time by supposedly thinking and honourable men'. The idea here is that among those allegedly of a high spiritual rank ('thinking and honourable men') the pathos of distance should be sufficiently prevalent to prevent such shameful displays.

Later, in HH 1.100, which is entitled '*Shame* [Scham]', Nietzsche remarks that feelings of shame extend not only to social relations but also to embodied markers of rank and hierarchy, such as religious spaces and kingship. Such spaces are typically forbidden to those of lower rank, and so mystery, as well as intrusions into mysterious spaces, comes to be associated with shame. He goes on to claim that 'The whole world of interior states, the so-called "soul", is likewise still a mystery to all non-philosophers; through endless ages it has been believed that the "soul" was of divine origin and worthy of traffic with the gods: consequently it is an adytum and evokes shame'. He expresses a similar idea in HH 1.461, saying that 'Men traffic with their princes in much the same way as they do with their god'. What he calls an 'almost uncanny mood of reverence and fear and shame [*Scham*]' attaches to anything and anyone of high rank. Thus, for example, 'The cult of the genius is an echo of this reverence for gods and princes'. These passages suggest that the sense of prospective shame can be mis-attuned and hyper-vigilant. This is a theme that crops up in several other passages, including HH WS 69, which is titled '*Habitual shame* [Scham]'. Reiterating the association between shame and mystery, Nietzsche says that 'whenever we feel shame [*Scham*] there exists a mystery which seems to have been desecrated, or to be in danger of desecration, through us'.[8] He then goes on to suggest that 'all *undeserved grace* engenders shame' because it involves the sense that one has received benefits that were reserved for those of higher rank. But, he points out, if we consider that 'we have never "deserved" anything at all, then if one acquiesces to this proposition within the Christian total view of things the feeling of *shame* will become *habitual*'. The sense that one has violated a space that is set aside for those of higher rank engenders shame. When one's pathos of distance is well-tuned, such shame may be appropriate, but when it is hypersensitive, it becomes pathological.

Turning next to the mature works, we see Nietzsche's continued reflections on the nature and functions of a sense of shame. In BGE 40, he addresses the prospective shame of those who would be ashamed to put others to shame, saying 'Everything profound loves masks; the most profound things go so far as to hate images and likenesses. Wouldn't just the *opposite* be a proper disguise for the shame [*Scham*] of a god?' The 'shame of a god' may seem like a very strange phrase. What Nietzsche is talking about here is a powerful being who confers significant benefits on another, and is aware that receiving such benefits may put the beneficiary to shame. The shame of a god is thus prospective *other-oriented* shame: a disposition to be sensitive to the shame one may cause in others through one's actions. Such sensitivity is not possible unless one has a finely-tuned pathos of distance, such that one is keenly aware that another will be put to shame by receiving an unearned or extravagant benefit. Nietzsche goes so far as to suggest that

'there are acts of love and extravagant generosity in whose aftermath nothing is more advisable than to take a stick and give the eye-witnesses a good beating: this will obscure any memory traces'. And the eye-witnesses very much include oneself: 'Many people are excellent at obscuring and abusing their own memory, so they can take revenge on at least this one accessory: – shame [*Scham*] is inventive. It is not the worst things that we are the most ashamed [*schämt*] of'. The emerging picture is one in which shame makes one sensitive to facts and considerations of rank, and thus can be apt or inapt in various ways. When it is apt, it motivates actions that forestall both one's own and others' occurrent shame. When it is inapt, it can lead either to shamelessly ignorant actions and omissions, on one hand, or undue shame, on the other.

These impressions are further borne out by BGE 263, which is another passage about the pathos of distance. Nietzsche first remarks that 'it is a great achievement when the masses (people of all kinds who lack depth or have speedy bowels) have finally had the feeling bred into them that they cannot touch everything, that there are holy experiences which require them to take off their shoes and keep their dirty hands away'. He goes on to make an invidious distinction between the masses and scholars (with whom he of course also identifies): 'What is perhaps the most disgusting thing about so-called scholars, the devout believers in "modern ideas" is their lack of shame [*Scham*], the careless impudence of their eyes and hands that touch, taste, and feel everything'. He ends by suggesting that, in a certain sense, there is more 'nobility of taste and tactfulness of respect within a people these days, within a lower sort of people, namely within the peasantry, than among [. . .] the educated'.[9] This ambivalence towards scholars is echoed in GS 358, in which Nietzsche gives the Lutheran reformation a backhanded compliment, saying that if 'one wanted to give it the credit for having prepared and favoured what we today honour as "modern science", one must surely add that it also shares the blame for the degeneration of the modern scholar, for his lack of reverence, shame [*Scham*], and depth'.

Finally, in EH Wise.4, Nietzsche returns to the topic of shame-sensitivity, saying, 'My problem with people who pity is that they easily lose any sense of shame [*Scham*] or respect, or any sensitivity for distances'.[10] Once again, his criticism is that those who have no pathos of distance or an ill-tuned pathos of distance inevitably bring shame either on themselves or others (in this case, the latter). Those who pity are so intrusive with their attentions and concerns that they are liable to put to shame the very people they allege to help. Perhaps if they had the 'shame of a god' discussed in BGE 40, they would be in a position to help anonymously or without bringing shame down on their beneficiaries. But because they lack this disposition, they compound injury with insult. The same idea also crops up in GS 273-5, in which in

which Nietzsche asks himself three questions and answers each in a single sentence: '*Whom do you call bad?* – He who always wants to put people to shame [*beschämen*]. *What is most human to you?* – To spare someone shame [*Scham*]. *What is the seal of having become free?* – No longer to be ashamed [*schämen*] before oneself'.

## VICIOUS SHAME

Shame becomes especially pathological when it is directed towards a fixed aspect of the self or (perhaps equivalently for Nietzsche) is counter to one's nature. In one of his most extensive discussions of the nature and dynamics of drives, Nietzsche catalogues a range of strategies one may employ to modulate one's own drives. One pathological approach that he explores is described thusly: 'He who can endure it and finds it reasonable to weaken and depress his *entire* bodily and physical organisation will naturally thereby also attain the goal of weakening an individual violent drive'. Doing so weakens all of one's drives en masse. Nietzsche compares the person who employs this strategy to the ascetic, who 'starves his sensuality and thereby also starves and shames [*zu Schanden*] his vigour and not seldom his reason as well'.

While this strategy of self-shaming may be successful in the short term, Nietzsche worries that it risks overall degeneration and frequently cautions against it. For example, in Z 1.Warriors, Zarathustra encourages the warriors to not be ashamed of their hatred because it is a fixed aspect of their character. Likewise, in Z 4.Ugliest, Zarathustra encounters the ugliest man, the murderer of God, who acted out of shame at his fixed traits. Zarathustra overcomes his own revulsion and shame, rather than falling into ineffectual pity (*Mitleid*).[11] Importantly, Zarathustra does not get stuck in shame but rather *overcomes* the temptation to wallow in it. Nietzsche reiterates this point (with an oblique reference to the shamefulness of scholarship mentioned earlier) in BGE 65: 'Knowledge would have little charm if there were not so much shame [*Scham*] to be overcome in order to reach it'. Shame that can be overcome is shame that does not attach to fixed aspects of oneself. Instead, it is shame over malleable aspects of oneself that can then be given up and gotten past.

By contrast, Nietzsche laments it when shame attaches to fixed aspects of oneself or of human nature more broadly. In BGE 195, he says that during the slave revolt in morality the priests 'melted together "rich", "godless", "evil", "sensual" and for the first time coined an insult [*Schandwort*] out of the word "world"'. Nietzsche returns to this theme in GM 2.7, saying that he doesn't want to 'provide our pessimists with new grist for the discordant and creaking mills of disgust with life', and that, on the contrary, 'at the time when mankind felt no shame towards its cruelty, life on earth was more cheerful

than it is today, with its pessimists. The heavens darkened over man in direct proportion to the increase in his feeling shame [*Scham*] *at being man*'. One cannot change one's species. To be ashamed of being human is clearly to be ashamed of fixed aspects of oneself. For Nietzsche, this is the making of vice and degeneration.[12] He goes on in GM 2.7 to decry the 'tired, pessimistic outlook, mistrust of life's riddle, the icy "no" of nausea at life' that arises from 'the mollycoddling and sermonizing, by means of which the animal "man" is finally taught to be ashamed [*schämen*] of all his instincts'. Later, in a discussion of 'men of resentment' (GM 3.14), Nietzsche says that they will only be satisfied when they have 'succeeded in *shoving* their own misery, in fact all misery, *on to the conscience* of the happy: so that the latter eventually start to be ashamed of [*zu schämen begönnen*] their happiness and perhaps say to one another: 'It's a shame [*Schande*] to be happy!'' Once again, Nietzsche laments not shame itself but shame that runs counter to human nature by condemning as shameful something so fundamental to us as the pursuit of happiness, on which even Aristotle, Kant and Mill agree.

Finally, turning to the late works, as mentioned earlier Nietzsche refers multiple times in *The Antichrist* to the Luther translation of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. The key line is one in which Paul says '*God hath chosen* the foolish things of the world to shame [*Schanden*] the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to shame [*Schanden*] the things which are mighty'. Once again, Nietzsche objects because Paul is casting shame precisely on things that humans cannot help but desire: wisdom, knowledge and power. To follow Paul is to guarantee that you end up feeling ashamed of desires and drives that you cannot help but embody. This, for Nietzsche, is vicious and paradoxical. And he goes on to castigate Paul for seeking to induce such shame. For example, in A 59, while discussing the slave revolt in morals and lamenting the loss of ancient culture and science, he exclaims that these were not lost in military conflict or natural disaster but 'instead shamed [*Schanden*] by sly, secretive, invisible, anaemic vampires!' As we will see in the next section, Nietzsche responds to Pauline shaming of human nature with a sort of counter-shame.

## COUNTER-SHAME

One central case in which Nietzsche seems to think it appropriate to cast shame on others is when they are promoting or victims of the sort of vicious shame identified in the previous section. For instance, in RWB 11 (which he also quotes in GS 99), Nietzsche proposes several evaluative contrasts: 'that passion is better than stoicism and hypocrisy, that to be honest, even in evil, is better than to lose oneself in the morality of tradition; that the free man

can be good or evil but the unfree man is a shame [*Schande*] to nature and is excluded from both heavenly and earthly solace'. It's debatable what exactly Nietzsche means by 'the free man' (both when he originally wrote the passage and later when he quoted himself!), but the basic idea seems to be that a certain kind of unfreedom is contrary to human nature and thus a matter of deep shame. The same sentiment crops up in GM 1.11, where Nietzsche says that resentful individuals, 'These bearers of oppressive, vindictive instincts [. . .] represent the *decline* of mankind! These "instruments of culture" are a shame [*Schande*] to man'.

Nietzsche does not use counter-shame indiscriminately only for expressions counter to human nature. He also distinguishes cases in which it is shameful only for certain people to engage in certain actions and expressions. We already saw this above in the passage from SE 4 condemning 'supposedly thinking and honourable men' for their flattery of the German Reich. Others may be ignorant, Nietzsche thinks, but they ought to know better. In particular, he shames them because they are *better* than they've shown themselves to be. This is the opposite of Pauline shaming, which insists that everyone is equally sinful and in the gutter. What Nietzsche castigates is instead the failure to live up to potential that he thinks is still there, if only dispositionally. We see the same sort of counter-shaming in Z 3.Apostates2, where Zarathustra tells those who have gone back to religion that 'it is a shame [*Schmach*] to pray! Not for everyone, but for you and me and whoever still has a conscience in his head. For *you* it is a shame [*Schmach*] to pray!'[13]

Finally, in *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche reaches the apex of his counter-shaming. In A 26, he laments the depths to which, through the slave revolt in morals, Jewish religion was sunk in Pauline Christianity:

> The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified: – the Jewish priesthood did not stop at that. The whole *history* of Israel proved useless: get rid of it! – These priests performed a miracle of falsification and we have large portions of the Bible to prove it: in an unparalleled act of scorn for tradition and historical reality, they translated the history of their own people *into religion*, which is to say they made it into an idiotic salvation mechanism of guilt before Yahweh and punishment, of piety before Yahweh and reward.

Nietzsche then goes on to cast counter-shame on the instigators of the slave revolt in morals, saying, 'This is the most shameful [*schmachvollsten*] act of historical falsification that has ever taken place'. In A 62, his ultimate indictment of Christianity, Nietzsche ups the ante, declaiming, 'I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge that does not consider any method to be poisonous, secret, subterranean, *petty* enough – I call it the one immortal blot [*Schandfleck*] on humanity'.[14]

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have systematically reviewed Nietzsche's discussion of shame in his published and authorized works. I argue that he conceives of shame as the emotion one feels when one is or imagines oneself as the object of contempt. Shame can be felt occurrently, but it can also be encountered prospectively – leading one to avoid the shameful action. This more dispositional understanding of shame also extends to other people and may dispose us to avoid actions or omissions that put others to shame. Nietzsche seems to think that shame is an inevitable emotion in humans, and so our aim should be to regulate it rather than simply promote or eradicate it. In some social conditions, the sense of shame – what Nietzsche sometimes associates with the pathos of distance – helps to regulate incentives and interactions so as to promote game-theoretic equilibria. Because of its value in promoting such equilibria, people tend to develop nuanced senses of shame that help them regulate their behaviour. However, not everyone's sense of shame is well-tuned, and things can go wrong in multiple ways. Being disposed to feel shame when it is inapt is deleterious, but so is being disposed not to feel shame when it is apt. Nietzsche is also keenly aware of the potential to induce shame in others, and he thinks that we are often not cautious enough about doing so.

The sense of shame can easily become pathological in circumstances where it is directed at fixed aspects either of human nature writ large or at fixed aspects of oneself. These represent cases in which the pathos of distance is severely mis-attuned. Nietzsche thinks that such misalignment has been systematically promoted by Christianity (especially Pauline aspects of Christianity). To oppose this hypertrophied shame, Nietzsche sometimes (especially in his mature and late works) casts counter-shame. His counter-shaming takes two forms. First, and more directly, he casts counter-shame on those who would promote first-order shame that targets fixed aspects of human nature or of individual humans. Second, he casts counter-shame on individuals whom he considers *better than* they've shown themselves to be through their acceptance of Pauline Christianity. Thus, paradoxically, Nietzschean counter-shame can be *uplifting* ('You're better than this! You're capable of so much more!'), whereas shame is commonly thought to be *downputting*.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF NIETZSCHE'S WORKS AND TRANSLATIONS

A *The Antichrist*
AOM *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (in part two of HH)
BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*

| | |
|---|---|
| BT | *The Birth of Tragedy* |
| CW | *The Case of Wagner* |
| D | *Daybreak* |
| DS | *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer* |
| EH | *Ecce Homo* |
| GM | *On the Genealogy of Morals* |
| GS | *The Gay Science* |
| HH | *Human, All-too-human* |
| HL | *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* |
| KSA | *Kritische Studienausgabe* |
| NCW | *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* |
| RWB | *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* |
| SE | *Schopenhauer as Educator* |
| TI | *Twilight of the Idols* |
| WS | *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (in part two of HH) |
| Z | *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* |

I have used the following translations of Nietzsche's works:

Nietzsche, F. (1986). *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1997a). *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Edited by M. Clark & B. Leiter. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1997b). *Untimely Meditations*. Edited by D. Breazeale. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1999). *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings.* Edited by R. Geuss & R. Speirs. Translated by R. Speirs. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2001a). *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Edited by R.-P. Horstmann & J. Norman. Translated by J. Norman. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2001b). *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix in Songs*. Edited by B. Williams. Translated by J. Nauckhoff. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2005). *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings.* Edited by A. Ridley & J. Norman. Translated by J. Norman. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2006a). *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited by K. Ansell-Pearson. Translated by C. Diethe. Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (2006b). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Edited by A. del Caro & R. Pippin. Translated by A. del Caro. Cambridge University Press.

## NOTES

1. This is not to claim that the English word 'resentment' perfectly translates the German, which sometimes connotes envy. However, such slight mismatches are common in translation and certainly not unique to *Ressentiment*.

2. In game theory, an equilibrium exists when no one can unilaterally make themselves better off by acting differently.

3. Not all of these passages are explicitly discussed in this chapter. I leave out those passages that don't reveal much about Nietzsche's understanding of shame, those in which he merely vents his misogyny, those in which he uses '*schamhaft*' (typically translated as 'modest' or 'bashful'), and a few in which he simply emphasizes that the phenomenology of shame involves an intense awareness of being *seen*.

4. Details on translations are at the end of the chapter, though in some cases I have made minor modifications for the sake of clarity. For instance, in this passage, *Schande* is translated as 'disgrace', but to preserve continuity I have changed it to 'shame'.

5. Nietzsche's speculative argument here has been borne out by game theoretic work on reputation in iterated games, for example, Kreps et al. (1982).

6. For more on this disposition, see Alfano (2019a, chapter 8). This disposition has also been studied by contemporary social scientists, such as Fessler (1999).

7. For more on the history of prospective shame – and its connection to both conscience and guilt – see Sorabji (2014). Contemporary researchers such Deonna et al. (2012) also theorize what they call the 'sense of shame', which serves a similar purpose.

8. For more on the association between shame and mystery, see GS P4.

9. For more on the relentless and shameless curiosity of scholars in Nietzsche's thinking, see Alfano (2019a, chapter 6).

10. The same criticism also crops up in Z 2.Pity: 'Indeed, I do not like them, the merciful who are blissful in their pitying: they lack too much in shame [*Scham*]'.

11. For more on this particular passage and its relation to shame, see Bamford (2007).

12. For more on this notion of vice in Nietzsche, see Alfano (2019a, chapter 4)

13. See also A 38, in which he exclaims, 'What *miscarriages of duplicity* modern people are, that in spite of all [their clearly non-Christian actions] they are *not ashamed* [schämt] to call themselves Christians!'

14. There is one noteworthy exception to Nietzsche's use of counter-shame, namely HH WS 211:

> *In the ground of shame* [Schmach]. – He who wants to rid men of an idea usually does not halt at refuting it and drawing out the worm of illogicality that resides within it: he then, after the worm is dead, goes on to hurl the entire fruit too into the *mud*, so that men will find it indecent and experience disgust at it. He believes that in this way he has found the means of preventing that 'resurrection on the third day' so common among refuted ideas. – He is in error, for it is precisely in the *ground of shame* [Schmach], among the filth, that the kernel of an idea germinates new seeds most speedily.

Given his pronouncements in *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche seems to have changed his mind on this matter.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alfano, M. (2016). *Moral Psychology: An Introduction*. Polity.

Alfano, M. (2018). Digital humanities for history of philosophy: A case study on Nietzsche. In L. Levenberg, T. Neilson, & D. Rheams (Eds.), *Handbook of Methods in the Digital Humanities*. Palgrave.

Alfano, M. (2019a). *Nietzsche's Moral Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.

Alfano, M. (2019b). Nietzsche's affective perspectivism as a philosophical methodology. In P. Loeb & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Nietzsche's Metaphilosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Alfano, M. (forthcoming). Nietzsche on humility and modesty. In J. Steinberg (Ed.), *Humility: A History*. Oxford University Press.

Alfano, M., & Cheong, M. (2019). Guest editors' introduction: Examining moral emotions in Nietzsche with the 'Semantic Web Exploration Tool: Nietzsche'. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, *50*(1), 1–10.

Bamford, R. (2007). The virtue of shame: Defending Nietzsche's critique of *Mitleid*. In G. von Tevenar (Ed.), *Nietzsche and Ethics*. Peter Lang Verlag.

Deonna, J. A., Deonna, J. A., Rodogno, R., & Teroni, F. (2012). *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. Oxford University Press.

Fessler, D. M. (1999). Toward an understanding of the universality of. *Biocultural Approaches to the Emotions*, *10*, 75.

Kreps, D. M., Milgrom, P., Roberts, J., & Wilson, R. (1982). Rational cooperation in the finitely repeated prisoners' dilemma. *Journal of Economic Theory*, *27*(2), 245–252.

Morton, A. (2013). *Emotion and Imagination*. Polity.

Sorabji, R. (2014). *Moral Conscience Through the Ages: Fifth Century BCE to the Present*. University of Chicago Press.

Van Fossen, J. A. (2019). Nietzsche and shame. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, *50*(2), 233–249.

*Chapter 6*

# Shame as a Self-Conscious Positive Emotion

## *Scheler's Radical Revisionary Approach*

Íngrid Vendrell Ferran

Max Scheler's (1874–1928) essay 'On Shame and Feelings of Modesty' (Über Scham und Schamgefühl) (1913) has been widely quoted among contemporary philosophers working on this emotion. In particular, Scheler has been referenced in two distinct contexts of shame research. On the one hand, Scheler has been a source of inspiration for authors who regard shame as a self-directed emotion or as protective of self-esteem (e.g., Deigh 1996; Deonna et al. 2011; Nussbaum 2004; Steinbock 2014; Taylor 1985). On the other hand, Scheler has been the object of exegetical analysis either to present a global view of his account (e.g., Dahlstrom 2017; Schloßberger 2006) or to compare him with other authors (e.g., for a comparison with Sartre, see Steinbock 2014 and Zahavi 2014, 2020; for a comparison with Confucianism, see Lu 2018). Though these approaches provide insight into aspects of Scheler's work or offer an overview of his main claims, to my knowledge, a reading of Scheler's essay from the perspective of current research on shame is still lacking.[1] Against this backdrop, this chapter explores Scheler's work taking as its point of departure recent debates on the nature, functions, and varieties of shame, and shows how his insights can enrich our understanding of this emotion.

Contemporary research on shame has been marked by two tendencies, which Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni (2011) label as the 'Two Dogmas of Shame'. 'Shame socialism' (an expression they borrow from Mulligan) regards shame as a social emotion that emerges to guarantee compliance with social norms (e.g., Calhoun 2004; Williams 1993; Wollheim 1999; Elster 1999). 'Shame pessimism' considers shame an ugly emotion because of its negative impact on the individual and her interpersonal relations (e.g., Tangney and Dearing

2002). Against these tendencies, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni as well as a series of other philosophers, independently of them, have developed what I call here *revisionary approaches to shame*. Revisionary approaches revise and question the two tendencies that dominate current research by stressing either the self-directed nature of shame (e.g., Deonna et al. 2011; Nussbaum 2004) or its positive nature in protecting the self (e.g., Deigh 1996; Taylor 1985). In this chapter, I will demonstrate that, placed in today's context, Scheler should be regarded as defending a *radical* revisionary approach. First, against today's widespread view that shame is an intrinsically social emotion that requires real or imagined others and presupposes internalized social norms, Scheler argues that shame is a specifically human self-conscious emotion in which the subject becomes aware of the positive values of the self, that is, her self-worth. For him, it is not the case that real or imagined others are constitutive of this emotion (though on certain occasions, shame might be elicited by others, these others are not part of its structure), nor is shame based on social norms.[2] Second, instead of regarding shame as casting a bad light on the self and interfering negatively in interpersonal relations, for Scheler, shame accomplishes the valuable functions of disclosing and protecting positive values of the self. What is more, the self to be protected from shame need not be one's own: we can also be ashamed *of* others and feel shame *for* them.

Before proceeding, some caveats are in order. To begin, Scheler penned his essay more than a hundred years ago. Its reading can be especially challenging when it comes to his examples about women or non-Western cultures. This might explain in part why researchers do not engage much with his work today. Yet, as I will show, Scheler's work contains valuable insights that deserve to be examined.

Moreover, as Frings notes in his introduction to the English translation (1987, xiii), which is today unfortunately out of print and rarely accessible, Scheler's essay on shame, like his accounts on other affective phenomena such as repentance, humility, ressentiment, sympathy or love, is embedded in foundational aspects of his ethics of value and persons. In my view, Scheler's essay on shame can only be understood against the backdrop of his larger ethical project according to which there is an intimate relation between affectivity and value. According to Scheler's value realism, values are objective, organized in a hierarchy and exhibit a polar structure. Crucial for his account of shame is the idea that human beings can grasp values not by means of cognition or will, but by virtue of an intentional feeling to which he refers as a value-feeling or value-ception (Wertnehmen), in analogy to perception (Wahrnehmen) (1973a, 197). This value-feeling responsible for the apprehension of values must be distinguished from the emotions, which for Scheler are responses to values. In this context, Scheler develops a stratified model of affectivity. In particular, he distinguishes four layers in accordance

with the hierarchy of the values: (1) sense-feelings such as pleasure and pain directed towards the pleasant and unpleasant; (2) vital or bodily feelings such as vitality and tiredness directed towards vital values such as the noble and the mean; (3) psychological feelings such as indignation directed towards values such as the unfair, and so on; (4) and personality or spiritual feelings such as bliss or desperation directed towards values such as the sacred and the profane (1973a, 330). As we will see, for Scheler, shame comes in different varieties: bodily shame is rooted in the second layer, while psychological shame occurs in the third one. Accordingly, he will relate shame to different kinds of values as well.

Finally, some terminological issues should be addressed. The German term for shame, 'Scham', refers to the sexual organs as well as to the emotion (as noted by Scheler 1987, 14–15; 1957, 77–78). Moreover, the term does not have the negative connotations of the English 'shame'. In the title of the essay, Frings translates 'Scham' as 'shame' and 'Schamgefühl' as 'feelings of modesty'. However, in the text, he sometimes translates 'Scham' as 'shame' and at other times he uses 'modesty', depending on the context. In order to remain faithful to Scheler's original meaning, in this chapter, I will indicate the pages of the English (1987) and the German (1957) editions of Scheler's essay. Moreover, I will also consult the appendices A, B, and C (Zusätze) which were not translated in the English edition because of their aphoristic nature but which are crucial for understanding certain aspects of Scheler's account.[3]

The chapter will proceed as follows. I start by examining Scheler's view on shame as a specifically human form of self-consciousness. Next, I argue that for Scheler shame targets the positive values of the self which I interpret in the sense of self-worth. I then identify two positive functions of shame in Scheler's work. In a next step, I argue that four typologies of shame can be found in Scheler's account and explore in more detail the type of sexual shame. The conclusion summarizes the main findings.

## SHAME AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

According to Scheler, two conditions are necessary for shame. Shame presupposes first a 'tension' (Spannung), 'conflict' (Widerstreit), 'experience of opposition', (Gegensatzerlebnis), and 'disharmony' (Disharmonie) between what de facto is and what ideally ought to be. More precisely, Scheler describes this tension as a conflict between the sphere of the animal drives and the sphere of the spiritual activities in which the human being feels equally rooted. Second, for shame it is necessary that we become aware of this tension through a 'turning back' (Rückbiegung) to the self. Shame

occurs when, being lost in some spiritual activity, we turn our attention to our spatially and temporally limited, animal-like existence with all its urges and needs (1987, 4; 1957, 68). Both conditions are necessary for shame, because, as noted by Dahlstrom (2020) and Steinbock (2014), not all forms of turning back to the self are instances of shame.

Insofar as shame entails an awareness of a conflict between the sphere of the spiritual and the sphere of our needs, it can be regarded as a form of self-consciousness. For Scheler, this form of self-consciousness arises when a need or a drive makes the human being aware that she is not only anchored in the sphere of the spiritual but that she also pertains to a lower sphere shared with the animals. As such, the human being has an intermediary character that Scheler describes in terms of a 'transition' and 'bridge'. As he puts it:

> One feels in one's depths and knows oneself to be a 'bridge', a 'transition' between two orders of being and essence in which one has such equally strong roots that one cannot sever them without losing one's very humanity. No creature, therefore, which is beyond this bridge and transition on either of its sides can have a feeling of shame: no god and no animal. (1987, 6; 1957, 69)

To be precise, for Scheler, human beings feel shame before the spiritual in them. As he maintains:

> man must feel shame – not because of this or that 'reason' and not because we can be ashamed 'of' this or that – we must feel shame because of our being a continuous movement and a *transition itself*. Ultimately, man feels ashamed of himself and feels shame 'before' God in him. (1987, 6; 1957, 69)

In brief, for Scheler, shame is a specifically human form of self-consciousness. No animal and no God is able to feel ashamed.[4]

For Scheler, the form of self-consciousness involved in shame does not require others in order to take place. First of all, shame can be experienced in isolation. It does not entail the idea of the other's gaze or a real or an internalized audience. Indeed, though others might be triggers of shame, they are not part of the structure of shame. Therefore, there is not only a shame before others but also a genuine shame before oneself (1987, 15; 1957, 78).[5]

Moreover, for Scheler, shame does not emerge to guarantee compliance with social norms. Shame is already at work before the subject has learned about social norms. In fact, Scheler argues for the anthropological claim that shame belongs to the basic structure of the human condition given in all people, in all cultures and across time. For him, shame is universal, that is, it is inherent to our human nature. For Scheler, there are some types of shame which are already given at birth (1987, 45; 1957, 107). As I mentioned, for Scheler, shame can take place at the level of the vital feelings, that is, feelings

which involve the consciousness of our lived body such as feeling tired or fresh, and at the level of the psychological feelings such as envy or indignation. Given that shame can be a kind of vital feeling, it is given to us by the mere fact of being a lived body.

In Scheler's view, what depends on sociocultural contexts is not the emotion of shame but only its expression. In this respect, he criticizes those authors who argue that some people whom he refers to as 'primitive people' do not feel shame because they do not dress and refuse to cover certain parts of their bodies. For Scheler, these authors conflate the *expression* of shame, which is indeed culturally relative, with shame itself. The fact that some groups of people do not wear clothes does not mean that they have no shame, but only that they express shame differently. For shame, it is not necessary that one covers oneself, but that attention is drawn to a certain area of the body. As he argues, with those 'primitive' peoples, it may be the case that the very fact that one covers a certain part of the body draws attention to that part of the body, giving rise to shame. Thus, though for him the emotion of shame is intrinsically human, expressions of shame can be socially shaped and culturally moulded.

Scheler's idea of a tension between two different aspects of the human being has also been developed by Nussbaum with explicit reference to him, though she develops her account via Greek mythology, recent psychoanalytical developments and empirical research. Like Scheler, Nussbaum regards shame as a way in which human beings 'negotiate some tensions inherent in their humanness – in, that is, their awareness of themselves as beings both finite and marked by exorbitant demands and expectations' (2004, 174). As in Scheler, Nussbaum's thought here is that in shame, the individual becomes aware that she is closer to the sphere of the urges and needs shared with other non-human animals and from which she wants to distance herself than to the sphere of the spiritual to which her aspirations belong. In addition, like Scheler, Nussbaum acknowledges a 'primitive shame' which is at work before any particular learning of social norms and which exists without necessarily having any consideration of a general audience (2004, 177, 185, and 195). Thus, for her, shame can also be seen as an emotion belonging to human nature.

Despite these significant points of convergence, Scheler's view of shame as self-conscious emotion is more radical than Nussbaum's view in at least two respects. First, Nussbaum explains shame as linked to narcissism and as involving the thought of returning to a stage where all our needs are met by others. In so doing, she provides a psychological explanation of shame as self-conscious emotion. By contrast, Scheler explains shame as intrinsically human in an anthropological sense. Shame is given to us by the fact of being able to become aware that we are embodied individuals. It is for this reason

that shame is for Scheler already given at birth, while for Nussbaum shame appears at an early stage of our psychological development.

Second, Scheler defends the radical view that the self targeted in shame need not be one's own. Put otherwise, shame is self-directed but it is not an emotion that is experienced as related to an 'I'.[6] In this respect, shame is distinct from other emotions such as sorrow or sadness. While shame is not attached to an 'I', these other emotions are. A consequence of this view is that being ashamed does not necessarily involve feeling shame about one's own self. In brief, we can feel shame *of* another and *for* another self (1987, 18; 1957, 81).

## SHAME AND SELF-WORTH

Scheler's claim that shame is a specifically human self-conscious emotion raises the question of what exactly we become conscious of in shame. In what follows, I will offer a reading of Scheler according to which in shame we become aware of the individual's positive values, that is, one's self-worth. I will develop my argument by exploring Scheler's distinctions between shame and similar self-directed emotions.[7]

Scheler considers shame as akin to other self-feelings such as pride (Stolz) and humility (Demut), but he identifies intriguing differences between the three affective states. Pride always targets the value of one's own self,[8] while shame might be directed towards other selves, that is, as mentioned earlier, shame does not always target one's own self. Moreover, while pride might target specific features such as possessions, status, and so on, shame targets the individual as such: 'Shame is a feeling, therefore, of guilt for a *self in general* (für das *individuelle Selbst überhaupt*)' (Scheler 1987, 18; 1957, 81). Finally, to feel pride involves knowing one's own value, while in shame we anticipate the value of the self.

For Scheler, both humility and shame presuppose love. Though no argument is provided for this claim, it can be understood in light of his view of love as a movement towards higher values (Scheler 1973a, 260). Yet, while in humility the self is presented as unworthy and subordinated to a higher value, shame is aimed at protecting the higher value of the self from a devaluation. In my view, this protective function in Scheler also concerns cases of shame triggered by past events. Here, too, we experience the tendency to protect the self, even if we cannot undo what has happened.

Shame is distinguished also from disgust (Ekel), fear (Furcht), anxiety (Angst), and reverence (Ehrfurcht). Like shame, these feelings have an anticipatory function: they indicate a threat and seek to protect the individual who experiences these states. However, there are differences between shame and each of these states. In disgust, we resist with repugnance the disgusting

object while simultaneously experiencing the object as harmful, whereas shame for Scheler always presupposes an attraction to the object that we try to resist.[9] In fear (Furcht) and anxiety (Angst), we anticipate a danger, though in anxiety, we do not have a representation of the damaging thing(s). Reverence (Ehrfurcht), which is akin to spiritual shame, is considered a kind of fear whose object enjoys respect, love, and adoration, independently of its dangerous side. But while these emotions can target different objects, only shame is primordially directed towards the self.

For my reading of Scheler, a look into the three untranslated appendices is necessary. In appendix A (Zusatz A), Scheler focuses on the feeling of honour, repentance and image-consciousness; appendix B (Zusatz B) is devoted to pride, self-consciousness, modesty, humility, and vanity; and appendix C (Zusatz C) contains thoughts on honour and the feeling of honour. Though the distinctions between shame and these other states are very schematic, unfinished and require strong interpretative work, they nevertheless contain key insights to understand the self-directed nature of shame.

For Scheler, repentance (Reue) and feelings of honour (Ehrgefühl) involve a consciousness of the image (Bildbewusstsein) of the value of the self. By comparing these with shame, he suggests that this consciousness is also present in shame. However, while repentance is always directed towards something negative, shame always targets the subject's positive values, that is, her self-worth. Thus, shame can be felt regarding a morally positive quality of the person. Moreover, shame involves a moment of love towards oneself (Selbstliebe) which, as mentioned earlier, should be interpreted in terms of a tendency towards the self's higher values.

Scheler describes honour (Ehre) as a natural and objective value of the social individual. The feeling of honour (Ehrgefühl) is a feeling of this value. He regards the feeling of honour as an anticipatory feeling (Vorgefühl) which can be experienced independently of what others think of us. This requires that we are conscious of the image that others might have of us and that they might regard us as deserving of less consideration or love. Yet, while in the feeling of honour what is a stake is a possible negative value of the self, shame always targets positive self-values.

Shame is also distinguished from states in which attention, esteem and love are involved such as ambition, vanity and sexual exhibitionism. Yet, while these states do not bear on the intimate self, shame always defends the being and existence of the intimate self independently of how others might evaluate us.

In my view, the main thought to be extracted from the appendices is that like the other feelings mentioned, shame entails a consciousness of the image of one's own value. However, unlike these feelings, shame targets the positive values of the self, involves love and presupposes an intimate self.

As we have seen, the list of emotions used by Scheler in the essay and in the appendices as a foil for shame comprises mainly pride, humility, disgust, fear, anxiety, reverence, repentance, feeling of honour and ambition. All these are self-directed emotions akin to shame in some respects. To develop my argument, namely that shame targets self-worth, let us take a closer look at the list of emotions Scheler uses and group them into three main types.

To begin, by comparing shame with pride and humility, Scheler is establishing a comparison between feelings in which the subject directly experiences her own value. He refers to these feelings explicitly as 'feelings of self-worth' (Selbstwertgefühl) (1987, 19; 1957, 82). Though he does not explicate this concept, it is used as a technical term to refer to a specific class of feelings. As such, it was introduced by Lipps (1903) and further explored by Voigtländer in *Vom Selbstgefühl* (1910) where she defines 'feelings of self-worth' as an apprehension of one's own value and its fluctuations. Particularly interesting is Voigtländer's subclass of the 'conscious feelings of self-worth' which presuppose that the subject takes a stance towards herself, her achievements and failures, and to which phenomena such as pride and shame belong.

The affective states of disgust, fear, anxiety and reverence, which Scheler also employs to examine the self-directed nature of shame, in my view share something in common. These feelings make us aware of a potential threat so that we can protect ourselves. Though these feelings are not feelings of self-worth in the technical sense exposed above, they involve an awareness of one's own worth being endangered, that is, they anticipate a potential threat.

What about the feelings analysed in the appendices? Some of them, like pride and humility, have already been mentioned in the main body of the essay. As I argued earlier, they are feelings in which we directly experience our own value. Yet, repentance, feelings of honour and ambition seem to be of a different kind. Though in these feelings we also experience our own value, this experience is mediated by the image that others and ourselves might have of us (1987, 149). As we have seen, Scheler speaks of this image in terms of a consciousness of the image of one's own value. He refers to this image as 'Wertbild', which means literally 'image of value'. This image can be our own image or the image that others have of us.[10] It is interesting to note that Voigtländer coins the phrase 'mirror feelings of self-worth' (Spiegelselbstgefühle) to describe such feelings (Voigtländer 1910).

My thought here is that the fact that Scheler compares shame with other self-directed emotions in which we become conscious of our own value through different means – directly, via a threat or via an image of our value – indicates that for him shame, like these other emotions, is directed towards self-worth (it shares with the emotions belonging to the three classes some

traits, while exhibiting its own specificities). Therefore, Scheler's claim that genuine shame is built upon 'a feeling of a *positive value of the self*' (1987, 37; 1987, 100) and targets the individual's 'higher values' (Ibid.) has to be interpreted in the sense that shame targets the individual's self-worth.

In this respect, Scheler's position about how shame relates to the individual's values differs from the account developed by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni. While in my reading, for Scheler, shame targets the positive values of the self, that is, its self-worth, these authors connect shame with the values that a person holds such as sincerity, honesty, generosity, and so on, and which shape the expectations that one has towards others and oneself. In their view, shame threatens the identity of the person because it puts into question commitments that the subject sees in connection with given self-relevant values. In fact, shame questions the subject's ability to be committed to one's own values (Deonna et al. 2011, 102).

Scheler's strong focus on self-worth explains why the list of emotions he employs as a foil to shame is substantially different from the list of emotions used by today's researchers. Though contemporary researchers have distinguished shame from pride (e.g., Taylor 1985), they have focused mainly on the triad of embarrassment, guilt and humiliation. In this context, embarrassment has been related to the breaking of a social norm (Taylor 1985, 69; Zahavi 2020), considered as momentary and inconsequential (Nussbaum 2004, 204), and regarded as not deliberately inflicted (Nussbaum 2004, 205; Steinbock 2014, 72). It has been argued that while shame targets the very person who experiences it, guilt targets actions and is oriented towards repairing a mistake (Deonna et al. 2011; Elster 1999; Nussbaum 2004, 207; Rawls 1971; Zahavi 2020). As Deigh has put it, current research has argued that shame is felt over our shortcomings, guilt over our wrongdoings (1996, 226). Finally, humiliation has been described as involving a degrading treatment on the part of others (Zahavi 2020) and as doing something to the person who experiences it (Nussbaum 2004, 203). Though the differences between Scheler's list of emotions and that of today's researchers can be explained by taking into account historical considerations,[11] in my view, contemporary approaches are mainly concerned with defending or rejecting the claim that shame is an intrinsically social emotion and, accordingly, have focused on emotions which have a clear social nature, while Scheler – for whom shame neither requires others to arise nor emerges to guarantee compliance with social norms – is more concerned with distinguishing shame from affective states in which the subject experiences her self-worth. In short, as demonstrated in this and the previous section, against today's widespread 'shame socialism', for Scheler shame is an emotion about the self and its values.

## FUNCTIONS OF SHAME

Scheler also challenges 'shame pessimism' by attributing a positive function to shame. To be precise, two positive achievements of this emotion can be identified in his account: self-disclosure and self-protection. Though for analytical purposes, I separate both functions, they are intimately connected: 'As a protective feeling, shame can only be related to positive self-values. Only positive self-values require protection' (1987, 37; 1957, 100).

Insofar as in shame the subject realizes that her own value is higher than the values that the situation that triggers this emotion entail, shame not only targets the positive values of the self, but also discloses them to the experiencing subject.[12] Note that though other authors have argued that shame is related to the individual's self-worth, Scheler argues for the stronger claim according to which shame not only targets but also reveals the positive values of the self. Interestingly, drawing on Scheler, Steinbock has argued that shame is a 'personal mode of self-revelation' (2014, 72). However, while for Steinbock the individual is revealed to herself as exposed before another, for Scheler, the self-disclosive function of shame does not require the existence of others. Indeed, there are types of shame before oneself and there are types of shame which are already present at birth (see below for these typologies), which as such do not involve others in their structure.

Shame also fulfils a self-protective function in defending the individual from being degraded. For Scheler, shame is a 'feeling of individual self-protection' (individuelles Selbstschutzgefühl) (1987, 18; 1957, 81). Two thought experiments can be illustrative of this function.

In the first, Scheler calls on us to think of a modest woman who does not feel shame as a model before the eyes of a painter, as a patient before a doctor, or as a bather before the servant as long as she is given to them as a valuable visual object, as a case, and as a lady respectively (1987, 16; 1957, 79). If we detach the painter, physician, and servant from their original intentions so that the woman stops experiencing herself as 'painting', 'case', and 'lady', and becomes aware that she is regarded as an individual, then she will experience shame. Here shame emerges when the woman is the object of an individualizing tendency while she wants to remain at the level of a general case.

In the second thought experiment, a modest woman who does not feel shame before her lover can experience shame if she thinks that her lover compares her with other women. This might happen, for instance, if he looks at her as a 'beautiful woman'. Here shame emerges as a result of a generalizing tendency where one's self-values are only protected when one remains an individual case.

At first sight, the two thought experiments seem to go in opposite directions. In the first case, the individual wants to remain a general case and

shame emerges when she is individualized. In the second case, the individual's self-worth is threatened precisely because of the opposite: her individuality appears threatened by converting her self-worth into a general case. On closer inspection, however, no contradiction is involved. Scheler writes:

> the 'turning to' one's self in whose dynamics shame has its beginnings does not occur if one is 'given' to oneself as something general or as individual. It occurs when the feelable intention of the other oscillates between an individualizing and generalizing attitude and when one's own intention and the experienced counterintention have not the same but an opposite direction. (1987, 16; 1957, 79)

His thought is that shame emerges where the individual realizes that her self-worth is threatened. This might happen either because the other's intention alternates between seeing us as an individual and seeing us as a general case, or because the other's intention and one's own intention are opposed. The latter is what occurs in the thought experiments: the first woman wants to remain a general case but the other individualizes her; the second woman wants to be seen as an individual but the other generalizes her.

In protecting the value of the self, for Scheler, shame preserves the individual's identity and prevents it from dissolving. According to Scheler, 'strict proof of this is the fact that in cases of mental illness, in fifty percent of all cases, shame, more than any other of the higher feelings, suffers a severe loss' (1987, 51; 1957, 113). The decay of the spiritual life expresses itself in a lack of shame. Accordingly, shame is considered by Scheler to be the feeling of unity of the individual and, thus, it is the pathfinder (Wegbahnerin) to ourselves (1987, 53; 1957, 115).

Some contemporary researchers have also identified in shame a self-protective function. This view has been defended with explicit reference to Scheler by Deigh (1996, 226), Nussbaum (2004, 184), Steinbock (2014, 176), and Taylor (1986, 81), among others. Williams (1993, 102, 220–221), too, identifies a self-protective function in shame (he acknowledges that he takes it from Taylor and attributes it to Scheler). However, none of these authors defends the claim via Scheler's radicality. The comparison between Scheler's and Taylor's classical account based on him is illustrative of this issue.

Like Scheler, Taylor argues that shame has the function of protecting the self and supporting identity. She writes: 'It may prevent the person concerned from putting himself into a certain position, or make him aware that he ought not to be in the position in which he finds himself' (1985, 81). When a person feels shame, that person has a sense of her own value, and this sense aims at protecting the self. But, unlike Scheler, Taylor argues that shame is connected with 'the thought that eyes are upon one' (1985, 53). For her, shame requires an audience. Though this audience need not be a real one nor must

it necessarily assess the subject critically, shame is nevertheless connected with the idea of 'being seen'. Drawing on Scheler's first thought experiment, Taylor explains the case of the model in front of the painter in terms of a second, higher-order point of view from which the model is seen not as an object of sexual interest but 'is seen as *being seen* as such an object' (1985, 61). The fact that one becomes aware of oneself because one knows oneself to be 'seen' is what leads to shame, in Taylor's view. What is crucial for Taylor is the shift in the agent's point of view towards herself and the notion of an 'other' from whose perspective we see ourselves. By contrast, as we have seen, for Scheler shame does not require others or a real or imagined audience.[13]

Scheler's account on the positive functions of shame is radically revisionary in two respects. First, against the view that shame is a feeling of worthlessness and inadequacy which casts a bad light on the self, he argues not only that shame targets the positive values of the self, but that it is also responsible for their disclosure. Second, against the view that shame is associated with a diminution in self-esteem and involves a negative evaluation of the self, Scheler maintains that shame emerges to protect one's self-worth, independently of real or internalized audiences. What is more, the self to be protected does not have to be one's own (see below).

## VARIETIES OF SHAME

Scheler establishes a typology of shame by distinguishing between its bodily and psychological varieties. Though this typology constitutes a central aspect of his essay, a series of subtle distinctions suggest the existence of further typologies in his work. In what follows, I will identify four typologies in his work, with each of them being based on a different criterion. In each typology, shame has a positive function.

### Bodily Shame and Psychological Shame

Depending on where to place the tension or conflict between what de facto is and what ought to be, shame can be bodily or psychological.

*Bodily shame* (Leibescham) or *the vital feeling of shame* (vitale Schamgefühl) results from the tension between the value-selecting functions of vital love and the sensory and vital drives and feelings. Bodily shame pertains to the stratum of the vital feelings to which freshness and weariness, health and illness, and so on also belong. As such, bodily shame is for Scheler already 'present at the time of birth and grows with the wellings belonging to various forms of feelings of tickling' (1987, 45; 1957, 107). Already at the moment

of birth, then, bodily shame grows as the independence of the feeling of life gradually rises above sensory feeling states. A particular type of bodily shame is the *sexual feeling of shame* (geschlechtlichen Schamgefühl).

By contrast, *psychological shame* (Seelenscham) or *the spiritual feeling of shame* (geistiges Schamgefühl) results from the tension between the value-selecting function of spiritual or psychic love and the vital basic drive of enhancing life. This shame presupposes a spiritual person.

Two aspects of this typology deserve attention. First, Scheler's claim that bodily shame is already present at birth might seem controversial. Yet, here Scheler is making an anthropological rather than an empirical claim. Bodily shame belongs for him to the stratum of the vital feelings. As he argues in other works (Scheler 1973a), vital feelings are a kind of consciousness of the living body, that is, a consciousness of how we experience ourselves as lived bodies. Insofar as vital feelings are made possible by the fact of being lived bodies, the possibility of experiencing bodily shame is given to us by the fact of being lived bodies as well. As such, it is universal, that is, it belongs to the human structure.

Second, as Dahlstrom has noted (2017), this typology seems to entail an inconsistency. As I mentioned in the Introduction, Scheler distinguishes four strata of the affective life: sensory feelings; vital feelings; psychological feelings; and spiritual feelings. While vital shame belongs to the second stratum, psychological shame belongs to the strata of the psychological and spiritual alike. From a contemporary point of view, it is puzzling how an emotion can be placed at levels that differ from each other in substantial respects. For my reading of Scheler, what is crucial for this typology is that each variety presupposes two different functions of consciousness: (a) a lower and value-indifferent function; and (b) a higher and value-selecting and value-discovering function.

Regarding its function, in both types, shame discloses the positive values of the self, and it protects the 'individual self-value from general exposure' (1987, 27; 1957, 90). The protective function is present in bodily shame, for instance, by protecting the advantages and beauty of the body, and in psychological shame when, for example, we feel that confessing valuable affective states such as love, benevolence or a good character would take something away from them.

## Shame Before Others and Shame Before Myself

A more subtle typology implicit in Scheler's work can be established according to the subject in front of whom shame is experienced. Indeed, it is possible that we feel shame before others as well as feeling shame before ourselves (1987, 15; 1957, 78).

*Shame before others* comprises typical cases of shame. This shame targets the self with others functioning as the audience. For instance, I am ashamed

– because of my nakedness – in front of others. Though these typical cases of shame involve the other's gaze, we should not assume that all forms of shame require an audience (real or imagined).

*Shame before myself* is a shame in front of myself. By identifying this type, Scheler not only argues for the existence of private or solitary shame. In fact, he argues for a stronger claim: shame does not even require the idea of the other's gaze to take place, that is, no audience is necessary for shame. This is an important specification because while some authors are ready to accept the possibility that shame can be private, the idea that shame does not require the other's gaze is less widespread in the current research (for a similar diagnosis, see Deonna et al. 2011, 25).

## Shame of Myself, Shame of Another Self and Shame for Another Self

A nuanced typology is elaborated which takes as a criterion the self for which one feels shame. Throughout the chapter, I have mentioned that for Scheler, though shame is a self-directed emotion, the targeted self need not necessarily be one's own. One can feel shame not only *of* one's own self but also *of* another self and *for* another self.

*Shame of myself* involves cases in which the subject targets their own self and feels ashamed of it. This kind of shame should not be conflated with shame before ourselves, though both types can coincide. Scheler distinguishes cases in which the self is the target of shame (shame of myself) from cases in which one's own self functions as the audience of shame (shame before myself).

We can also be *ashamed of another self*. In this case, I feel shame in the place of the other because the other ought to feel shame but does not. This kind of shame presupposes some kind of group identification with the other. Moreover, here I am ashamed in the place of another. This shame takes place for instance when I feel shame that a loved one is behaving badly. (For an analysis of this kind of shame in current research, see: Helm 2010; Montes Sánchez 2020; and Montes Sánchez and Salice in this volume. While Montes Sánchez and Salice preserve the target on oneself by arguing that one group identifies and is ashamed of one's own social self, Helm argues that we feel genuinely ashamed of another.)

Cases of being ashamed of another self should be distinguished from a third case, namely *shame for someone else* (Sich-für-einen-anderen-Schämen) (1987, 18; 1957, 81). This kind of shame has not been studied in current research (for an exception, see Helm 2010). Scheler resorts to an example from his own life to explain this type of shame: 'When someone tells an off-color story among *men* only, and when the story is told with a woman

present. In the former case shame does not occur, in the latter case it does. Even if the woman would herself not be ashamed of what has been told, and if no fellow feeling (Mitgefühl) or emotional contagion (ansteckendes Gefühl) would play a role, her very presence would be enough for strong shame and a blushing face to occur' (1987, 18; I have added the German terms; 1957, 81).

As Scheler indicates, this type of shame cannot be explained in terms of fellow feeling or emotional contagion. In order to feel shame for another, it is not necessary that the other feels shame. Since shame for another is also to be distinguished from shame of others, in my view, no group identification is needed for this kind of shame. Rather, shame for another targets the self of another, irrespective of whether the other feels shame or is aware of being ashamed by a third person. Shame for another aims at protecting the other's self from devaluation. However, this type of shame, unlike being ashamed of another, does not presuppose that I think that the other should feel ashamed, that is, it does not imply that we take a normative perspective.

If, according to my interpretation, shame for another is not based on fellow feeling, emotional contagion and group identification, how are we to explain it? I suggest that shame for another presupposes putting ourselves in the other's shoes. This interpretation is controversial since Montes Sánchez has argued precisely against this view (for her, this kind of shame presupposes group identification). For Montes Sánchez, unlike what happens in putting ourselves in the other's shoes, in shame for another we do not feel as if we were the other (2020, 457). However, in my view, we should distinguish between two forms of perspective-taking: a 'self-oriented perspective-taking' in which we put ourselves in the other shoes and contemplate how it would be 'for us' to be in the other's place; and an 'other-oriented perspective-taking' in which we adopt the other's point of view and imagine how it is 'for the other' (and not for us) to be in that situation (for this distinction, see Coplan 2011). Insofar as, in my view, shame for another presupposes self-oriented perspective-taking but does not entail other-oriented perspective-taking, I agree with Montes Sánchez that we do not feel as if we were the other. However, I think that this kind of shame requires that we imagine how it would be 'for us' to be in the other's place.[14] In brief, according to my proposed interpretation, in this self-oriented perspective-taking, we experience a conflict between two values which can threaten the value of the self – a self which in this case belongs to another – and we experience the need to protect it from such devaluation.

## Genuine Shame and Non-genuine Shame

A further distinction can be established between genuine shame and states which resemble shame in their expression but are not cases of genuine shame.

According to Scheler, *prudishness* (Prüderie) maintains the symbolic expression of shame without really being encompassed by shame. *Cynicism* (Kynismus) is the negative side of prudishness. The cynic reacts with a hypersensitive feeling of shame against expressions of shame which she regards as not being accompanied by this emotion (1957, 94; 1987, 32).

In contrast to cynicism, *obscenity* does not emerge from shame. The aim of the obscene is to hurt one's own feelings and the feelings of others. Given that the obscene experiences this violation as pleasant, obscenity is linked to cruelty.

*Coquetry* (Koketterie) resembles shame in its expression. But, unlike shame, it is a form of play and arbitrary comportment which in Scheler's view also appears in animals, and which has no psychological and moral significance. Moreover, coquetry does not aim at protecting the individual, but rather can harm one. Coquetry is morally blameworthy when used to create the impression of genuine shame.

In brief, while genuine shame protects self-worth, these other states are non-genuine because they do not aim at protecting the individual's value.

How can these four typologies of shame enrich current research? Contemporary philosophers have paid a considerable amount of attention to elaborate typologies of shame. For instance, Rawls distinguishes between natural and moral shame (Rawls 1971). Nussbaum distinguishes between forms of shame which are pernicious in human life from those which are connected to valuable forms of aspiration (2004, 176). Helm establishes a difference between personal and social shame (Helm 2010, 153–154). Zahavi discusses prospective and retrospective shame (2020, 353). Each typology employs different criteria such as objects, effects, focus of concern and temporal direction.

Yet none of these criteria plays a role in Scheler. The criteria of Scheler's typologies are, respectively: (1) the layers of the emotional life (bodily and psychological shame); (2) the subject in front of whom shame is experienced (shame before myself and shame before others); (3) the targeted self (shame of myself, shame of another self and shame for another self); and (4) the genuineness of its expression (genuine shame and non-genuine shame). Each of these criteria sheds light on an aspect of shame which in the current research has received scant attention. (1) In indicating the possibility of a genuinely bodily shame that is already present at the moment of birth and of a psychological shame that emerges in the course of our individual development, Scheler's first criterion contrasts with today's understanding of this emotion, which is centred only on its psychological variety and does not regard the possibility of a bodily form of shame. (2) The second criterion not only focuses on the possibility of private shame but also defends the view that shame does not require a real or imagined audience to take place. (3) The acknowledgement of the possibility of being ashamed of and for another self

underscores the relevance of cases of shame which are difficult to explain if shame were always directed towards one's own self. (4) Finally, the criterion of genuineness reminds us that there are phenomena that resemble shame in their expression without being shame properly speaking.

## SHAME AND SEXUALITY

Though for Scheler shame is not an exclusively erotic phenomenon, nor does all shame have a sexual origin, it is remarkable that a significant part of his essay is devoted to clarifying the link between shame and sexuality. Sexual shame is interpreted as a particular case of bodily shame and, as such, it is a feeling belonging to the stratum of vital feelings. In this sense, it is already given at birth, and it is the condition for the development of sexual drive and sexual love.

As I mentioned earlier, vital feelings are a specific form of consciousness of our lived body (that is, how our body is experienced and felt). To understand sexual shame and its positive functions, a look into other works where Scheler explicitly deals with the phenomenon of vital feeling is necessary here. Vital feelings have a particular intentional structure. They indicate values related to life in our body or in our environment. As paradigmatic vital values, he takes the noble and the mean. As he puts it, in vital feelings, 'we feel our *life itself*, its "growth", its "decline", its "illness", its "health", and its "future"; that is, something is given to us *in* this feeling' (1973a, 340). They can 'evidentially *indicate* the vital *meaning of the value* of events and processes within and outside my body; they can indicate, as it were, their vital "sense"' (1973a, 341).

Vital feelings accomplish the specific function of indicating the increments and decrements of life. They can reveal dangers and advantages directly and before we intellectually understand the meaning of such dangers and advantages. In fact, these feelings can arise temporally prior to the factual disadvantages or advantages that help us to determine actions, avoid danger and make the best of advantages. They have the capacity to anticipate: 'They point to the value of what is coming, not to the value of what is present' (1973a, 342).

With this view on vital feelings in mind, let us turn to the three functions of shame that Scheler identifies for the sexual sphere. According to Scheler, the primary achievement of shame consists in freeing us from autoeroticism and in contributing to the formation of libidinous wellings of the sexual drive towards objects. In a radical vein, Scheler argues that shame is crucial for the formation of the sexual drive and the relation to the opposite sex. For Scheler, those theories that suppose sexual drive to explain shame are wrong. The primary function of shame is to divert attention from the drive impulses and to

inhibit their expression. Moreover, it plays a role in the reproductive process by conditioning the temporal beginnings and rhythms of the sexual acts and by influencing the selection of sexual partners so that not every sexual choice is accepted as valid for reproduction.

The secondary achievement of shame consists in the deferment of the first gratification of the already formed sexual drive to an age of sufficient sexual maturity and it regulates temporally and numerically the sexual acts. Shame has the effect of being enticing and is overcome only through increasing love. Shame is the 'conscience of love' (1987, 62; 1957, 124). In fact, he regards shame as the condition for the development of sexual love: it is, according to Scheler, like a 'doll's shell' in which sexual love matures until it is capable of breaking through this shame. In this respect, shame performs a meliorative function of the species: through the choice of love is not arbitrary.

The tertiary achievement of shame takes place within sexual intercourse once the sexual drive is aroused (primary function) and the choice of partner has taken place (secondary function). This function is performed by shame before, during and after sexual intercourse itself. This implies that even within a sexual relationship, that is, when the love choice has already been made, shame continues to be operative.

In my view, in Scheler's model, sexual shame can accomplish these three functions only by virtue of being a specific case of vital feeling, that is, a feeling of our lived body. This is what makes his account unique. Indeed, outside Scheler's context, sexual shame has been interpreted exclusively as a psychological phenomenon. Let me underscore this point by comparing Scheler with Nussbaum on this issue. While for Scheler bodily shame as a vital feeling is already given at birth and sexual shame develops progressively with the wellings of different feelings of tickling, Nussbaum connects shame with 'pervasive themes about narcissism and abandonment, of which the sexual is just one manifestation' (2004, 186). Thus, while Nussbaum is interested in shame as a psychological state and it is this state which she links with sexuality, Scheler is concerned in explaining sexual shame as a kind of consciousness of the lived body which makes us able to regulate our bodily functions. Furthermore, while Scheler connects sexual shame with protective and meliorative functions and regards shame as what makes us sexual beings able to be oriented towards others in relationships imbued by sexual love, Nussbaum connects shame with a primitive longing for wholeness, that is, in the sense that one ought to be whole, and has a much more negative view of this emotion.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I have argued that, in the context of current research, Scheler should be regarded as defending a radical revisionary approach to shame.

First, against today's widespread view that shame is an intrinsically social emotion that emerges to guarantee compliance with social norms and requires real or imagined audiences, I demonstrated that for Scheler shame is a universally human self-conscious emotion in which we become aware of the self and its positive values. As such, shame neither presupposes a relation with others nor requires internalized social norms. Second, rather than regarding shame as having a negative impact on the individual and her interpersonal relations, I argued that for Scheler, shame accomplishes the valuable function of disclosing and protecting the positive value of the self, even if this self is not one's own. With both claims, Scheler challenges what Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni. (2011) have labelled 'shame socialism' and 'shame pessimism', and offers an alternative radical revisionary approach to understand the nature, functions and varieties of shame, which remains as innovative today as it was in his own time.[15]

## NOTES

1. This lack of interest is astonishing compared to the wide attention devoted to Sartre's phenomenological account of shame in *Being and Nothingness* (2020, first published in 1943). Another phenomenological account on shame which has received scant attention is Erwin Strauss's 'Die Scham als historiologisches Problem' ('Shame as a Historiological Problem') (1966, first published in 1933).

2. Though shame can also be a social emotion in other respects, here I focus on those which Scheler most prominently rejects in his work.

3. In contrast to the English translation, in my Spanish translation of Scheler's essay (which includes the three appendices), following a suggestion by Christoph Johanssen, I translated 'Scham' as 'pudor' which, in my view, better reflects Scheler's positive view of this emotion than the concept 'vergüenza' (the meaning of 'pudor' is close to what Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni call 'sense of shame', 2011). For 'Schamgefühl', I employed the expression 'sentimiento de vergüenza' (see Scheler 2003).

4. As Zahavi has put it (2014, 215), Scheler links shame to the 'emergence of consciousness'. It is not by chance that in the book of Genesis, shame is linked to the knowledge of good and evil. For Scheler, shame is one of the roots of morality (1987, 28; 1957, 82). For a recent account of shame as a moral emotion, see Steinbock (2014). For a discussion of shame in the book of Genesis which, unlike Scheler, interprets shame as social emotion, see Velleman (2001).

5. In this respect, there is a crucial difference between Scheler's view and that of Sartre (2020). Like Scheler, Sartre argues that shame is a self-conscious emotion and that it can be experienced in isolation. However, unlike Scheler, Sartre understands shame as a form of relation to oneself mediated by the existence of others: shame always has the other's gaze implicit in its structure.

6. Scheler distinguishes the self from the 'ego' or 'I' on which the self is founded. Though he does not understand the self as a substance, he claims that the self can be the object of inner perception in analogy to how the objects of the world can

be objects of outer perception (1987, 150–151). This view is known as 'immanent psychic realism' and was also defended by other phenomenologists such as Moritz Geiger. Like outer perception, inner perception is not infallible, meaning that illusions and deceptions are possible (on deceptions of the inner perception, see Scheler 1973b).

7. For these distinctions, Scheler employs the phenomenological method of the 'eidetic variation' which consists of generating variations in the imagination of a specific phenomenon and identifying its essential traits.

8. Scheler acknowledges here the possibility of being proud of someone else. However, he does not specify whether one can be proud for another self or if pride must be related to one's own self. Some insights on this issue can be found in his essay on the rehabilitation of virtue (Scheler 2005, 25). There he argues that there is a kind of pride founded on love in which we participate in the other's self. If this is possible, then one can also be proud for another self. From this type of pride, Scheler distinguishes a demonic pride whereby one takes only one's own values and their superiority into account, which isolates the self from others. Scheler's demonic pride resembles what Kolnai (2007, first published in 1931) would describe as 'haughty pride' (Hochmut), which for him was also isolating.

9. Scheler's idea that shame, in contrast to disgust, entails an attraction to the object we try to resist contrasts with Kolnai's phenomenological description of disgust. For Kolnai (2004), who on this point was influenced by psychoanalytical views, disgust always entails a fascination with its objects.

10. Scheler mentions without further specification that the latter case is genetically more originary than the former. He defends the claim that the individual lives first immersed in an intersubjective shared world in *The Nature of Sympathy* (2008, first published in 1913 and 1923).

11. Since Benedict (1946) introduced the difference between shame and guilt cultures, philosophers have been strongly focused on guilt as a counterpart to shame.

12. Insofar as shame is linked to the positive values of the self, the experience of shame entails 'a promise of beauty'. As Scheler puts it: 'Seeing a person feel shame or modesty is seeing something "beautiful"' (1987, 36–37; 1957, 100–101).

13. For a more detailed comparison between Scheler and Taylor, see Vendrell Ferran (2008).

14. Since perspective-taking is a form of imagining, and there are experiential imaginings, the kind of perspective-taking involved here is experiential rather than propositional. Thus, unlike Montes Sánchez, I do not consider perspective-taking to be necessarily a doxastic state. Moreover, in my view, the emotions generated via perspective-taking are emotions based on a particular kind of imaginings, but this does not threaten their status as real emotions.

15. I am indebted to Alessandra Fussi and Raffaele Rodogno for insights on an early draft of this chapter and to Alba Montes Sánchez and Alessandro Salice for their valuable suggestions, which led to substantial improvements. I am also grateful to Simon Mussell for proofreading the chapter.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benedict, Ruth. 1946. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. London: Secker and Warburg.

Calhoun, Cheshire. 2004. "An Apology for Moral Shame." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (2): 127–146.

Coplan, Amy. 2011. "Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects." In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, 3–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dahlstrom, Daniel. 2017. "Scheler on Shame: A Critical Review." *Metodo* 5 (1): 239–262.

Deigh, John. 1996. *The Sources of Moral Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deonna, Julien, Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni. 2011. *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Elster, Jon. 1999. *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frings, Manfred S. 1987. "Introduction to Three Essays by Max Scheler." In *Person and Self-Value*, edited by Max Scheler and translated by Manfred Frings, xi–xxix. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Helm, Benet. 2010. *Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Social Nature of Persons.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kolnai, Aurel. 2004. *On Disgust*. Edited by Barry Smith and Carolyn Korsmeyer. Chicago and La Salle: Open Court.

Kolnai, Aurel. 2007. *Ekel, Hochmut, Hass: Zur Phänomenologie feindlicher Gefühle*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

Lipps, Theodor. 1903. *Fühlen, Wollen und Denken. Eine psychologische Skizze*. Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth.

Lu, Yinhua. 2018. "The Phenomenology of Shame: A Clarification in Light of Max Scheler and Confucianism." *Continental Philosophy Review* 51 (4): 507–525.

Montes Sanchez, Alba. 2020. "Hetero-Induced Shame and Survivor Shame." In *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotion*, edited by Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer, 455–465. Oxon: Routledge.

Montes Sanchez, Alba, and Alessandro Salice. Forthcoming. "Self-Understanding and Moral Self-Improvement in Individual Shame and Shame Based on Group Identification." In this volume.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2004. *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. 2020. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. Oxon: Routledge.

Scheler, Max. 1957. "Über Scham und Schamgefühl." In *Gesammelte Werke*, Volume 10. Edited and Translated by Manfred Frings, 65–154. Bern: Francke Verlag.

Scheler, Max. 1973a. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy.

Scheler, Max. 1973b. "The Idols of Self-Knowledge." In *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 3–97. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy.

Scheler, Max. 1987. "Shame and Feelings of Modesty." In *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays*, edited by Max Scheler and translated by Manfred Frings, 1–85. Dordrecht: Nijhoff.

Scheler, Max. 2003. *Sobre el pudor y el sentimiento de vergüenza*. Translated by Íngrid Vendrell Ferran. Salamanca: Sígueme.

Scheler, Max. 2005. "On the Rehabilitation of Virtue." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (1): 21–37.

Scheler, Max. 2008. *The Nature of Sympathy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Schloßberger, M. 2006. "Die Ordnung des menschlichen Gefühlslebens." In *Philosophische Anthropologie im 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Hans Peter Krüger and Gesa Lindeman, 254–273. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Steinbock, Anthony. 2014. *Moral Emotions: Reclaiming the Evidence of the Heart*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Strauss, Erwin. 1966. "Shame as a Historiological Problem." In *Phenomenological Psychology: The Selected Papers of Erwin W. Strauss*. New York. Basic Books.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2002. *Shame and Guilt*. New York: Guilford Press.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Velleman, David. 2001. "The Genesis of Shame." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 30 (1): 27–52.

Vendrell Ferran, Íngrid. 2008. *Die Emotionen. Gefühle in der realistischen Phänomenologie*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Voigtländer, Else. 1910. *Vom Selbstgefühl*. Leipzig: Robert Voigtländer Verlag.

Williams, Bernard. 1993. *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wollheim, Richard. 1999. *On the Emotions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Zahavi, Dan. 2014. *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zahavi, Dan. 2020. "Shame." In *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotion*, edited by Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer, 349–357. Oxon: Routledge.

*Chapter 7*

# Self-Understanding and Moral Self-Improvement in Shame and Shame Based on Group Identification

Alba Montes Sánchez and Alessandro Salice

## THE DILEMMA: IS SHAME GOOD OR BAD?[1]

A survey of accounts of the moral psychology of shame and its significance in our moral lives confronts us with a dilemma. On the one hand, a venerable view that can already be found in ancient sources in different cultures (e.g., Aristotle 2014; Seok 2015; Berkson 2021) and traced all the way to the present (e.g. Deonna et al. 2011) considers shame a morally productive emotion, that allows us to protect our sense of decency and learn from our mistakes. For example, former US President Donald Trump and his supporters were often criticized in the American press for their shamelessness, implying that, if they had any shame, they wouldn't speak or behave in such outrageous and even immoral ways (see Lerner 2016; Locke 2019). In this and other similar cases, shame is given a clear moral significance as the guardian of decency or virtue. However, many psychologists, notably Tangney and Dearing (2004), have claimed that shame is a morally counterproductive emotion, because it makes us react in damagingly antisocial ways: it makes us deny and cover up our failings, shun contact with others or even lash out in anger against them. Indeed, Salmela and von Scheve (2017) have recently argued that the rise of right-wing populism in many Western nations is fuelled by the psychological mechanism of transforming shame into rage (Scheff 1994; Gilligan 2003): when one's identity traits connected to job and social status are perceived as vulnerable and constantly under threat, this causes shame anxiety, which can be transmuted into anger and aggression directed at others (Salice and Salmela 2021).[2] This looks like a clear example of shame backfiring to cause antisocial behaviour.

This chapter aims at shedding light on this dilemma by looking beyond the usual examples of individual shame and dwelling on the realm of hetero-induced and group-based shame (varieties of shame that rest on group identification, as we describe them below). It seeks to highlight self-understanding as a key factor in making shame morally constructive. The chapter is organized as follows. In the first section, we start by giving an account of individual or personal shame. Shame, in our view, is an emotion of *social* self-consciousness, where one's own self-assessment is fundamentally mediated by others. We argue that shame is a part of our moral sensibilities and that *morally appropriate* shame (ideally accompanied by a degree of self-understanding) is likely to lead to virtuous outcomes – although morally neutral shame can have positive consequences too. Shame's conditions of moral appropriateness are explored in the second section. The central examples of the present chapter, however, are not cases of individual shame, but of hetero-induced and group-based shame. This is the subject of the third section, where we present our account of the three varieties of shame that rest on group identification: shame of you (singular), shame of you (plural) and shame of us. In the fourth and final section, we ask whether shame is equally appropriate, and has the same significance, when it is individual and when it is based on group identification. We argue that some conditions of moral appropriateness change, but the intentional structure of the emotion and its general ethical significance remain unchanged. Here again, self-understanding, in the form of acknowledging and sharing shame, will prove important to make shame a productive, rather than a destructive, force.

## INDIVIDUAL SHAME AND ITS MORAL SIGNIFICANCE

Shame is typically described as a self-conscious emotion or an emotion of (negative) self-assessment (Tangney 2005; Taylor 1985), meaning that in an experience of shame, the very subject undergoing the emotion evaluates him or herself as degraded, faulty or inadequate in some respect, although some authors disagree and point out that self-criticism is not a necessary ingredient of shame, and what is a stake is rather the feeling of being burdened with an unwanted identity (Olthof 2002 and this volume, Crozier 1998). In any case, the intentional object of the emotion (what it is of or about) is the self or some aspect of it. Now, shame can be triggered by a wide range of things and situations – one can feel ashamed of giving a poor lecture, of being unattractive, of being seen naked by unwelcome witnesses, and so on – but, as Hume (1978, 286 ff.) remarked, what he calls the 'cause' of shame is always something closely connected to oneself.[3] Since the cause deserves a negative evaluation, this evaluation is transferred to the self by virtue of their close connection.

Thus, in Hume's example, if I'm ashamed of my house, I perceive its derelict state to reflect negatively on me, on my identity.

There is also a rather widespread consensus that shame necessarily involves a reference to others: it is a social emotion (but cf. Scheler 1987; Deonna et al. 2011; Helm 2017 for notable exceptions). According to this view, we feel ashamed in the eyes of others, and it is their perceived disapproval that makes us feel diminished or inferior. There has been an intense debate on whether this feature means that in shame we are always the slaves of someone else's opinions or whether, in fact, the emoter has to personally endorse these opinions on some level. In other words, is shame always perniciously heteronomous or can its autonomy be preserved? One of us has already addressed this issue in previous publications (Montes Sánchez 2015, 2013) and other chapters in this volume analyse it too, so we will not go in-depth into those arguments. Suffice it here to say that we concur with authors like Thomason (2018) and FitzGerald (2015) that a verdict on whether shame is autonomous or heteronomous cannot be given for all instances of shame. Shame makes us vulnerable to heteronomy, but it can easily be an expression of our autonomy too. FitzGerald (2015, 221) gives an illustrative example: in a conversation with her colleagues, shame makes her pretend that she shops at a mainstream instead of a discount supermarket (as if she were ashamed of not being rich). This she interprets as a case of heteronomous shame, which makes her betray her deeper values. Later on, however, recounting the incident to her partner, she feels ashamed of her shame, and she argues that this meta-shame does express her autonomy: she believes that people should not be judged by the size of their pockets, and betraying this value and lying due to vague social pressure is a shameful thing.

Now, if the social character of shame does not necessarily make it heteronomous, then how should we interpret it? Several options have been put forward (Deonna et al. 2011, 21–34), but let us briefly summarize our own take on the issue. In our view, shame is an emotion of *social* self-consciousness, which foregrounds the exposability and social vulnerability of the self (Montes Sánchez 2015; see also Sartre 1969; Zahavi 2014). Drawing on the phenomenological tradition, we can distinguish between two fundamentally different forms of self-experience. According to Zahavi (2005), all experiences involve an implicit reference to their subject: they are given *for me*. In this sense, they are minimally self-conscious. But emotions like shame include a fundamentally different form of self-consciousness: *social* self-consciousness.[4] In feeling them, I experience myself as the object of someone else's perception. I experience that other subjects have the power to perceive, weigh and describe me from the outside, and I have no control over those descriptions. In spite of that lack of control, that dimension of myself is also

a part of me, because it is what others see and it shapes my interactions with them (Sartre 1969, 259–260). Exposure to others thus gives rise to the *social* self-consciousness which characterizes shame. Feeling vulnerable in this way does not necessarily entail the identification of a specific, real or imagined, audience for every instance of shame, but it entails a relation to oneself from the perspective of intersubjective engagement (focusing on one's own exposable self).

In our view, the significance of shame in our moral lives has to do with the fact that it is an emotion of social self-consciousness and, as such, it prevents us from falling all too easily into moral solipsism (Williams 2008; Thomason 2018). As Thomason (2014, 21–22) puts it, 'What makes shame valuable is that having a liability to it means that we do not take our own points of view as the only important ones. . . . Shame is an emotion that prevents self-inflation, not because it is morally good to judge ourselves lowly or poorly, but because liability to it requires that we recognize that we are not always the people we take ourselves to be'. Being liable to shame means, on one hand, that one acknowledges one is fallible and susceptible of being corrected and, on the other hand, that one cares about others to some extent (Calhoun 2004). This is not the same as being virtuous, but it is better than being shameless.[5] In fact, empirical studies (de Hooge et al. 2010) show that we recognize this readily when we see shame in others: if somebody does something shameful in front of us, and we see this person react with shame, our opinion of the offender is likely to be much less negative that if this person acts shamelessly. This is so because, from a second-person perspective, shame reveals a concern for other people's opinions, as well as for shared norms and standards, which can counter the effects of a previous failing and partially restore other people's trust in the offending individual.

Admittedly, this defence of the moral significance of shame is rather minimal and it is compatible with shame episodes having negative consequences sometimes. A liability to shame is an important ingredient in our moral sensibilities, but it doesn't make us moral all on its own, and it can backfire. A wealth of psychological and sociological literature shows that, being such a painful emotion, which entails an acknowledgement of inferiority or failure, it often motivates people to lie and hide, and it can easily transform itself into anger and violence directed at others (Scheff 1994; Gilligan 2003; Tangney and Dearing 2004; Salmela and von Scheve 2017; Thomason 2018). If this is so, how can shame ever be virtuous? How can it contribute to moral learning and self-improvement, as some defend? (See, e.g., Aristotle 2014; Burnyeat 1980; Berkson 2021). It is to this question that we turn to in the next section.

## INDIVIDUAL SHAME: FITTINGNESS, MORAL APPROPRIATENESS AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING

What does it take for shame episodes to have a constructive impact in our moral lives, then? There are more factors than we can address here, but we want to highlight two of the main contributing ones: shame can be virtuous when morally appropriate and when accompanied by self-understanding. Let us look at these two ideas in turn.

First, in addressing moral appropriateness, we rely on a distinction introduced by D'Arms and Jacobson (2000) between the fittingness and moral appropriateness of emotions. In their view, an emotion is fitting when it represents its object correctly. In their example, if I envy my colleague for having obtained the promotion I desired, then my envy correctly represents her as possessing something I covet and cannot have. Moral appropriateness, however, refers to whether an emotion is morally good or bad to feel. In this respect, my fitting envy might be morally inappropriate, for example, if it leads me to behave rudely to her or to spread gossip to damage her reputation. In fact, a venerable tradition regards envy as an immoral emotion, one that is *never* good to feel, but it doesn't follow from this that envy must be systematically unfitting or irrational in this narrower sense.

Now, there is a further element of fittingness that is also important to understand specific emotional episodes: they are subjective, meaning relative to a subject (*not* arbitrary). Let us exemplify: if you coveted the promotion your colleague received, it might be morally reprehensible for you to envy this colleague, but there is nothing irrational or unfitting in your emotion; you care about this promotion and you emote accordingly. However, if a different colleague who didn't desire the promotion and doesn't generally care about being promoted felt envious of her, their emotion does not only seem morally reprehensible, but also incoherent with their cares and concerns or irrational, that is, unfitting. The subject's cares and concerns therefore also play a certain role in fittingness (see Helm 2001, where he articulates this idea by introducing the notion of a 'focus' of concern).

Fitting shame, in our view, is a shame that targets our identities or some aspect of them that we care about. For example, an ageing womanizer, like David Lurie in the novel *Disgrace* by Coetzee (1999), might feel ashamed of his inability to keep seducing as he did before, and his shame might be seen as fitting in attaching to an aspect of his identity that matters to him and that is now degraded or faulty: the women he wants to entice do find him unattractive, he is in fact deficient as a seducer (Montes Sánchez 2019). However, his shame is morally inappropriate, among other reasons, because it is based on a disvalue: excelling at beguiling others exclusively for his own

pleasure. Because of that, his shame leads him to all manner of deceptive, self-deceptive, degrading, and abusive acts towards others (especially young women of colour) and himself. For shame to be virtuous, it has to be informed by moral concerns and a proper form of caring about others that recognizes them as independent subjects worthy of respect, not a mere means to one's own ends (Gómez Ramos 2005). When this is the case, shame, we submit, is morally appropriate. For example, the look of a homeless beggar or the testimonies of racism and social injustice can sometimes make people feel ashamed of their privilege. Less dramatically, the meta-shame that FitzGerald (2015) describes in the example we glossed earlier – the shame of having betrayed her moral values due to social pressure – is also, in our view, morally appropriate shame.

These examples take us naturally to the second factor we mentioned: self-understanding. Recall that a wealth of literature links shame with aggression. This is overwhelmingly so, however, when shame is bypassed or repressed, or when subjects try to mask it and resist acknowledging it to themselves and others (Lewis 1971; Scheff 1994; Gilligan 2003; Salice and Salmela 2021). Acknowledging shame, by contrast, opens the door to moral learning. To begin with, it can lead to apologies and reparative behaviours (de Hooge et al. 2010). Furthermore, especially in the meta-shame cases, this emotion can be a source of self-insight and provide a motivation for a deeper self-transformation, an endeavour to modify some of one's dispositions. Some authors have argued that shame is actually superior to guilt in this regard, precisely because it targets traits and dispositions instead of isolated actions (Williams 2008, chap. 3). Seeing some transgression as an isolated action might move us to apologize or try to repair the damage, but it doesn't directly invite doing any work on oneself – work that might sometimes be essential to moral self-improvement. Seeing something as a trait or a disposition, when one is hopeful of repairing or re-establishing connection with others, provides a basis from which to work on oneself to modify those tendencies.[6] And as we will see in section 4, it can also provide the basis from which to oppose and criticize the norms and groups that shame us.

So far, we have dealt with individual shame and presented our view that a liability to shame is a basic part of our moral sensibilities because it guards us against moral solipsism (Thomason 2018). This, however, is compatible with it sometimes having morally pernicious outcomes. In our view, moral appropriateness and self-understanding are important ingredients to make shame episodes morally productive.[7] Not all shame is individual, though: sometimes we feel ashamed of others. It is to these forms of shame and their moral significance that we turn to in the following two sections.

## SHAME BASED ON GROUP IDENTIFICATION

You might agree that feeling ashamed of oneself can help one change for the better. But what about feeling ashamed of others, how does that help? To start answering this question, the present section deals with what in previous work we have labelled 'hetero-induced shame' (Montes Sánchez and Salice 2017; Salice and Montes Sánchez 2016), or what social psychologists call 'group-based shame' (Lickel et al. 2011).[8] These varieties of shame are not connected to an individual action or trait, but to something someone else does. Many of us are familiar with such cases: it is not rare to experience the actions or traits of our family members, our friends or our fellow nationals as occasions for our own shame. Does the story we have told so far apply to these forms of shame? In our view, they are similar enough to deserve the label 'shame', but they have some interesting specificities that we now turn to analyse. This section describes the peculiar intentional structure of shame based on group identification and distinguishes three forms of it, while section 4 looks at the moral significance and constructive potential of these varieties of shame.

Now, the phenomenon of feeling ashamed of someone else would seem to put pressure on the idea that shame targets the *self*. In our view, however, it just shows that some dimensions of our selves go beyond the narrow confines of the individual. To be precise: this kind of shame targets what social psychologists call our *social* self, that is, the identity traits or aspects that come from identifying as member of a group (Brewer 1991; Brewer and Gardner 1996). Group identification is a psychological process whereby the individual *experiences herself* as a member of a group, which is not necessarily the same as *being* a member of an existing group (Montes Sánchez and Salice 2017). For instance, one can hold a specific passport or work for a company without group-identifying with the relevant national or corporate group: one can be aware of belonging to these categories without them impacting on the way one feels or behaves. By contrast, in group-identifying, one starts framing situations from a we-perspective and becomes predisposed, for example, to behave more altruistically towards in-group members, to emotional sharing, to sympathy, to collective actions, to *we*-talk, and so on (Turner 1987, 50). In group-identifying, the individual *self* becomes sublated under a *we*, which includes others, and to which the self feels attached (see Salice and Miyazono 2020 for an account of group identification).

In previous work we discussed all forms of shame based on group identification under the same category, using the terms 'hetero-induced' and 'group-based' interchangeably, as seen in the current literature on this topic. But in order to do justice to the phenomena at stake, further refinements are

needed. Indeed, one can productively distinguish three different varieties of shame based on group identification: shame of you (singular), which from here onwards we call 'hetero-induced shame', and two forms of 'group-based shame', namely shame of you (plural) and shame of us. In the 'singular you' case, one is ashamed of a singular individual within the group, for example, a son might feel ashamed of his father's homophobic attitudes. In the 'plural you' case, one feels ashamed of several other group members, for example, a coach might feel ashamed of the football team players, who lost what should have been an easy match due to the players' lazy and nonchalant attitude. Finally, one can feel ashamed of us, of the group as a whole, as in the political examples that opened this chapter, especially if one sees the shameful policies as a product of democratic processes to which one indirectly contributed through one's elected representatives.

Although all these three forms of shame are based on a subjective sense of group membership (group identification), they are psychologically different. In hetero-induced shame, the second-personal other (you) is in the target position of the emotion (this individual attracts the subject's conscious attention). This is not an unqualified 'you', though. It is not the other merely understood as a minded creature capable of being addressed by and to respond to my second-personal acts (e.g., speech acts like questioning, ordering, communicating or reactive attitudes like resentment or gratitude). It rather is *you qua* member of us: it is an 'actual or potential member of collaborative activity' (Searle 1990), to which the subject is pro-socially predisposed insofar as it is framed as a group member. So, the group does figure in the intentional structure of the emotion, but in a non-thematic way: when I feel ashamed of you, the intentional object of the emotion is my social self, but I also consciously target you (*qua* group member), whereas the group as such figures only non-thematically or in the background of that intentional structure.

Group-based shame works differently: it aligns with hetero-induced shame insofar as they both have the social self as their intentional object. However, group-based shame attends to the group (not to the group members) thematically. On the one hand, the subject of this emotion must have available a notion of the group as an entity partly identical with, but also partly different from, the mere aggregate of the group members (this is a notion developmentally acquired by means of a process social psychologists call 'group entitativity', Lickel et al. 2000). This is different in hetero-induced shame, which does not require the subject to activate an explicit notion of the group that they and the other belong to, as we have just seen. On the other hand, there are two possible stances the subject can adopt vis-à-vis their group, once they can activate the notion of the group. First, the subject can adopt a spectatorial stance: the subject conceives of themselves as a group member, but they do not take themselves to actively participate in the group's activity, they rather

observe it (although they observe it from an insider perspective – from the perspective of a member, that is). Second, the subject can adopt a participatory stance: the subject conceives of themselves as being an active participant in whatever form of activity the group is engaging in. Two different forms of shame relate to these two different stances. In the first case, the subject will feel ashamed of you (plural), whereas they will feel ashamed of us in the second. Two comments are in order.

The first is that what we here mean by 'agency', 'activity', or 'contribution', in shame of us, has a very broad scope. To begin with, the contribution can be direct or indirect. The republican voter, who shamefully observes Trump supporters storming the Capitol (in the 'ashamed of us' sense), has not contributed to the group action directly, but only indirectly (say, by voting for Trump). Also, the direct/indirect distinction intersects (and is orthogonal to) another distinction: the kind of agency relevant here is not restricted to mere physical agency, but also encompasses emotional (and perhaps cognitive) agency. For instance, the England football team fan, who shamefully observes English fans rioting in London after the team lost the final (again, in the 'ashamed of us' sense), has not contributed directly to the rioting. Even though they did not contribute to the riot with any *physical* action (in neither direct nor indirect sense), they feel they have indirectly contributed to the rioting by virtue of the *emotional investment* they have made in supporting the football team. In fact, in our view, emotional investment in a shared group identity is what underlies instances of shame about actions that happened in the long-gone past of a group, when current members weren't born or were too young to have had any part in the events, for example when present-day Europeans learn about the colonial atrocities of their ancestors and feel ashamed of them (this can be observed for instance in The Netherlands or Denmark, two countries which have only recently started to examine their history through a postcolonial lens). (Note that, whether or not all these are *actual* contributions has to do with the conditions of correctness or fittingness of the emotion, not with the way in which the emotion represents its subject's involvement in the group activity.)

The second comment concerns the fact that the distinction we are drawing here is of a conceptual nature: it might well be that speakers associate different meanings to expressions like 'I am ashamed of you [plural]' or '. . . of us', but this does not hinge on the fact that two different forms of group-based shame can be distinguished based on the perspective (spectatorial or participatory) adopted by the subject. In fact, the phrase 'I'm ashamed of you' is often used as an expression of disapproval or reproach towards others, as an accusation of shamelessness, not as report of the shame one is feeling. But the phenomenon of shame based on group identification is a real one, and that – the phenomenon and its varieties – is what we are trying to elucidate here, not language use.

As we will see in the next section, these fine-grained distinctions are relevant when it comes to the fittingness and moral significance of these forms of shame.

## HETERO-INDUCED AND GROUP-BASED SHAME: FITTINGNESS AND MORAL SIGNIFICANCE

Having analysed the three varieties of shame based on group identification, we now turn to their moral significance. How similar or how different are they from individual shame in this regard? In tackling this question, a pressing worry is that there might be something inherently suspect in this kind of shame, that it might be incorrect in principle to morally evaluate *oneself* on the basis of *someone else's* actions or traits. Such an evaluation – the worry would go – risks being always unfitting, since it would always focus on the wrong target: I should be evaluating *the other*, not myself. I should be feeling contempt or indignation towards the other, because that is what the situation warrants – not shame. If hetero-induced and group-based shame were always in principle unfitting in this way, then it would be difficult to see how it can ever be morally good to feel such emotions. This worry can become even more pressing if one suspects or fears that sharing a social identity in virtue of group identification can lead one to emotionally share in the blame deserved by others (be it individuals or groups), thus making shame morally inappropriate too. Let us take these two issues in turn.

First, can shame based on group identification ever represent a situation correctly? Can it even be fitting? Recall that we have argued that fitting individual shame is shame that targets dimensions or aspects of our identities, which we care about. For hetero-induced and group-based shame, these are the social or affiliative aspects. As social creatures, how we fare in the world, our everyday possibilities for action and interaction partially depend on how we are seen and treated by others (Williams 2008, 84; Calhoun 2004, 138, 140). These perceptions are often mediated by the social categorizations others make of us or by the group memberships we display. In this way, social identities have a real impact on who we are in the world, and hetero-induced and group-based shame about them might be fitting. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, we often participate, directly or indirectly, in group endeavours in ways that can make hetero-induced and group-based shame fitting.

Let us see how this works for the three different forms of shame based on group identification. Start with hetero-induced shame. If one of your group members individually performs a shameful deed or displays a shameful trait, which is expected to degrade (in some salient interpretation of 'degrade') your group, then feeling ashamed of him or her reveals that your social identity

is at stake in the situation as well (given that you are a group member). For example, when in Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth feels ashamed of her youngest sister, she does so because, as she later tells her father, 'our [family's] importance, our respectability in the world, must be affected by the wild volatility, the assurance and disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia's character' (Austen 2006, chap. 41). In this example, Elizabeth correctly assesses that, given the society where they live, Lydia's behaviour affects the whole family's social identity (including Elizabeth's). This, in our view, amounts to fitting hetero-induced shame. The specific occasion of Elizabeth's shame would nowadays count as unfitting (at least in a Western context) not because her shame is hetero-induced, but because the codes of family respectability and female behaviour in public have (fortunately!) radically changed since Austen's times. Analogously, if your group (but not you directly) collectively displays shameful behaviour or a shameful trait, as the lazy football players did in our initial example of shame of a plural you, then feeling ashamed of them (i.e., of you [plural], from your perspective) reveals that they are degrading or disgraceful for the group's identity and, thus, for yours too. Finally, if you have engaged in your group's collective behaviour (or if you have contributed to the collective shameful trait), then feeling ashamed of us can again be said to correctly represent that that shameful element is degrading for the group *and* for you *as* a group member.

In claiming that shame based on group identification can be fitting, we side with those who, against a received view (Lewis 1971; Tangney and Dearing 2004) argue that shame is *not* a globalizing emotion (Deonna et al. 2011, 84–85; Helm 2017, 190–197; Fussi 2018, 75–84). Against the idea that shame involves a negative evaluation of the 'whole self' (whereas guilt is conceived as targeting a specific action), these authors highlight the exaggeration of claiming that shame always involves a sense of global degradation. This might be true of very extreme and dramatic cases, but not of our everyday experiences of shame. Think again about Elizabeth: she feels ashamed of her sister before their larger social group, that is, neighbours and friends who see them as members of the same family, but within the family group she retains her own individual identity, she doesn't feel ashamed of her sister before their father (and neither would she before herself).[9] This seems to indicate that Elizabeth's 'whole self' is not tainted by her shame. We don't have space here to go into the details of this debate (but see Montes Sánchez 2014, 32–40), but a couple of remarks are in order.

First, we agree with the criticism that, both in the individual and group-based cases, the negative self-evaluation in shame is not all-encompassing: if I lied to my friend and I'm ashamed of it, I might feel that I'm a bad friend, but I don't feel by extension that I'm a bad philosopher or a bad parent (see Deonna et al. 2011, 84–85). Shame, therefore, is not *evaluatively* globalizing.

Shame, however (and this is our second remark), often feels *phenomenologically* globalizing: when in the grip of shame, one feels put on the spot and defined in terms of a narrow feature that overshadows everything else, like a flashlight pointing at a single spot in a room and leaving the rest in darkness (see León 2013; Thomason 2018). In this specific situation, before this specific audience, one has been exposed and individuated as 'this liar' or, in the group-based case, as 'one of them (the indecent ones, the lazy ones, and so on)'. This, in our view, is one of the reasons why so many authors in the past endorsed the idea that shame is about the 'whole self'. Barring extreme cases, however, shame does not involve a feeling of global degradation, but a feeling that in a certain situation one has been narrowly defined in terms of a flaw. In a different situation, other non-tainted perspectives on oneself will come to the fore, the shame-inducing feature will become less visible or irrelevant, one will cease to be individuated by it, and shame will loosen its grip or disappear. Furthermore, these different perspectives can coexist: In her conversation with her father, Elizabeth feels simultaneously ashamed of her sister before their neighbours and unashamed before her father. She can keep both perspectives on her identity in view, since her shame is not evaluatively all-encompassing, it doesn't affect all possible senses of who she is. Thus, there is no obstacle here to the possible fittingness of shame based on group identification. One can keep different individual and social aspects of one's identity separate and still come to feel shame.

But if that is on the right track, that is, if shame based on group identification can be fitting, then the only remaining problem in these cases must be moral appropriateness. In this respect, Salmela and Sullivan (2016) have proposed the example of a child who was deeply ashamed of his parents being alcoholics. Even if one agrees that there is nothing in principle unfitting in one's parents impacting one's social identity through group identification, a worry remains here. This might have to do in part with the general question whether alcoholism and other forms of addiction deserve to be socially condemned as moral vices or character flaws in the way they still are to some extent, at least in the Western cultures that the authors of this chapter are familiar with. But this is a complex separate matter that has nothing to do with the worry about the moral inappropriateness of being ashamed of others, so let us tweak the example and imagine instead that the parents were justly convicted criminals. In other words, let us assume that their actions are indubitably shameful. Over and above the concerns with fittingness addressed earlier, the remaining worry here seems to be that any shame their child might feel of them still constitutes a form of underserved self-criticism, perhaps even of moral self-blame, for something that the child is not responsible for.

To answer this worry, it is important to stress the idea that, while shame and self-blame often co-occur empirically (Roseman et al. 1994; Smith

et al. 2002; Tangney et al. 1996), this emotion does not necessarily imply self-blame. Like Cyrano de Bergerac, one can feel ashamed of one's big nose without blaming oneself for its size in any way.[10] Shame, however, is very often intermingled with guilt: as research shows, both emotions often arise simultaneously in the same situations and there is some evidence that people have a hard time distinguishing them clearly (Tangney 2005). Guilt is typically described as a self-conscious emotion that targets our actions and tracks responsibility much more closely than shame (e.g. Tangney and Dearing 2004; Strawson 1974). Therefore, a possible interpretation of the earlier example would be that any self-blame that the child might experience about his parents being criminals is attributable to the guilt (not the shame) component of his affective response to the situation. Since guilt targets our actions, guilt would be inappropriate (unless the child had actively encouraged or helped the parents to commit their crimes).

Now, even if shame doesn't necessarily track responsibility or entail moral self-blame, one might still be worried that the negative self-valuation is undeserved in some sense. Why should the child feel bad about himself if he is not a criminal? However, this problem is perhaps less pressing than it seems. First, if one takes shame to be a globalizing emotion that indicts the whole self, then the shame of the child definitely seems inappropriate. But we have already argued that this is not the case: shame is *not* evaluatively globalizing, one can feel ashamed of one's social self without feeling globally degraded, as Elizabeth did in the conversation with her father. Secondly, one might come to think that the child's shame is strongly inappropriate if one conceives of the situation in individualistic terms, that is, if one interprets that hetero-induced shame amounts to transferring the fault of *one individual* onto *another individual* in virtue of their belonging to the same group: the parents' individual fault would be experienced as revealing the child's individual fault, which is clearly incorrect when the child's only 'fault' is belonging to the same group as the parents. But hetero-induced shame isn't necessarily experienced in this way: one can keep different aspects of oneself separate in experiences of shame.

In fact, none of the varieties of shame based on group identification necessarily entail undeserved self-criticism or an incorrect self-attribution of blame. Think again about our Austenian example: when Elizabeth feels ashamed of her younger sister, she does not blame herself at all and neither does she self-attribute her sister's flaws. Elizabeth assigns the blame where it belongs (to her sister Lydia and perhaps to their father for not educating Lydia appropriately), while correctly assessing that the entire family's reputation is at stake. Thus, Elizabeth's hetero-induced shame is fitting for the society where she lives, without it implying an incorrect assignation of blame or a self-attribution of her sister's volatility or immodesty. It doesn't

lead her to self-flagellation and depression, but instead it prompts her to act within her means to remedy the damage to a social identity she feels deeply attached to. In her case, this takes the form of appealing to the relevant authority (her father). Accordingly, we would argue that her shame of her sister prompts her to take upon herself the appropriate degree of responsibility for the maintenance of her group's social identity, but she does so without individually blaming herself for her sister's behaviour or self-attributing her sister's flaw. In other words: it is one thing to feel a degree of responsibility for the maintenance of a group's identity or reputation, and another thing to self-attribute the failings of other group members or to blame oneself for them. Feelings of responsibility of the former type often arise as a result of shame based on group identification without shame implying any individual self-blame or self-criticism.

At this point, a debate would arise on how to conceive the kind of responsibility for the group identity that is warranted here. We would lean towards arguing that Elizabeth is correctly framing her responsibility as collective, which is a further reason why it comes apart from individual blame. Not everyone agrees that genuinely collective moral responsibility exists, though (see e.g., French 1984; Miller 2006), and we don't want to enter this debate, since nothing hinges on it here: you can conceive this as individual responsibility for doing her own part in a collective enterprise. The crucial point is that one can feel attached to an identity so as to feel its degradation through shame without inappropriately sharing in the blame for this degradation.

Once this point is established, that is, once it is established that an individual accrues a specific form of responsibility in being member of a group, which however differs from individual responsibility in terms of blame apportioning and moral predicability, it can be applied to the two forms of group-based shame too. When it comes to being ashamed of you [plural] (as exemplified by the coach who was ashamed of the lazy players) the situation parallels the hetero-induced form almost verbatim: the individual takes upon herself the appropriate degree of responsibility if, as a result of a shame episode, she feels she has to do her part to protect the social identity of the whole group, but she does so without individually blaming herself for the group behaviour or self-attributing the group's flaw. Her group-based shame does not imply self-blame or self-criticism. And if she is justified in allocating blame to herself, then she can only be blamed for not having done enough to prevent the group's behaviour. When it comes to being ashamed of us (citizens ashamed of their government's policies), the only notable element of difference, when comparing this form of shame with being ashamed of you [plural], is that here the individual does perceive herself as contributing, qua member, to the shameful trait or action of her group. When those actions or

traits are morally censurable, shame may be accompanied by self-blame, and that blame can be justified. It exceeds the purposes of this chapter to pinpoint what makes it justified, but we just want to mention that, here, not one, but many explanations offer themselves: as we have suggested earlier, the individual might actually have taken part (directly or indirectly) in the group's behaviour; or they have fostered a particularly close relationship with their group, thereby emotionally investing in the group and, for example, profiting (emotionally) from the group's achievements (which rationally demands emotional participation in case of failure); and so on.

The above shows that hetero-induced and group-based shame do not necessarily entail incorrect attributions of responsibility and blame, and therefore are compatible with moral appropriateness. But in addressing individual shame, we argued that its moral significance comes from its potential to guard us against moral solipsism and to motivate moral self-improvement when accompanied by self-understanding. A parallel case can be made for shame based on group identification, which can guard us against moral solipsism in the same basic way that individual shame does: a liability to it means that we do not take ourselves or our in-group as the sole authorities on our social identities, that we take outsiders' opinions seriously and we care about them. Just like for individual shame, the consequences of this liability to hetero-induced and group-based shame are not always morally constructive, and self-understanding plays an important role in making them so. Let us see how.

In his illuminating work on conflict and war, Scheff (1994) has shown that shame at the collective level often leads to cycles of intergroup rage and aggression. Once again, though, this is mostly the case when shame is bypassed or when it is resisted or rejected by the group, leading to vicious cycles that arise from and intensify the group's 'engulfment' within itself (i.e., its lack of tolerance for in-group difference and dissent) and isolation from other groups. According to Scheff (1994, chap. 3), it is the resistance to acknowledging shame, the impulse to escape from it, that turns conflicts about issues that can be settled by negotiation into intractable conflicts about identity. But shame can also be acknowledged, shared, and transcended productively (Scheff 1994, 61; Salmela and Scheve 2018). Then hetero-induced and group-based shame can generate solidarity and be a motor for positive change: the Gay Pride and Black Pride movements are good examples here. A constructive reaction to these varieties of acknowledged shame would take the form of initiatives to change the evaluative priorities and attitudes of the group, as Elizabeth did in our example above or as can be seen in many cases of activism or political engagement. Alternatively, it might lead the individual to disengage from the group and reject the relevant social identity where possible (which would not lead to the group's moral self-improvement, but it might do so for the individual who disengages).[11]

How does that look like, more concretely? In the case of the Trump Administration's family separation policies of 2018, there was a public outcry and a heated debate in the media ('Trump Administration Family Separation Policy' 2021). Echoing some of the criticism at the time, in announcing his reversal of those policies, Biden called them a 'moral and national shame' (Shear and Kanno-Youngs 2021). Aside from the public debate, congressional and legal actions were initiated by those who opposed the policies and many individual citizens volunteered to support the victims through NGOs. Such actions are not exclusively the result of group-based shame (other emotions, like indignation and compassion, not necessarily related to social identity, also play a role), but as Biden's words show, the motivation to repair the 'national shame', to re-signify what it means to be American, has been an important part of the response to such policies. Jacquet (2015) gives many other examples of environmental and human rights activism working in this way. This is group-based shame in action at its best: one experiences a damage to one's social identity (shame) without inappropriately blaming oneself, and as a result one feels motivated to take responsibility for repairing it.

Having said this, a word of caution is in order. For theorists interested in the socio-political domain where these examples belong, shaming, humiliation and the public policing of decency and respectability become pressing issues with ramifications far beyond moral psychology. We haven't attempted to address those issues here and doing so would take us too far from the purposes of this chapter. Let us just note that we agree that public shaming is a dangerous weapon that should be handled with the utmost care (see e.g., Nussbaum 2006; Locke 2016; Salmela and von Scheve 2017). One of its main problems is that acts of shaming often just are or tend to turn into acts of humiliation, which establish an us-them divide (with the 'decent' pointing accusing fingers at the 'indecent') and leave little room for reintegration into society. For obvious reasons, this is more likely to happen when discourse is framed in terms of being ashamed of a plural you, rather than being ashamed of us. Shame is then at its most counterproductive: it can psychologically damage the humiliated and lead to a cycle of violence.

However, the process we have pinpointed here, that is, morally appropriate shame based on group identification, is not a process of shaming. It is not externally directed: this kind of shame is shame of *one's own* social identity, it doesn't sever, but rather it reaffirms the tie to the shameful identity one cares about. When shame is thus openly acknowledged and shared, it can connect individuals rather than isolating them, and this shared shame retains a hope to rehabilitate the degraded identity (Salmela and Scheve 2018; Tarnopolsky 2010): this is why Biden could appeal to it in his discourse. The caring about the degraded identity and the hope to repair it explain why public debate and activism make sense as responses to shame. By contrast, if shame

is denied by some, or hope is lost, deep rifts might develop, and what started as a process of internal self-criticism might turn into an us-them confrontation (Lerner 2016; Salmela and Scheve 2018). But shame based on group identification doesn't necessarily take that road. In many cases, shame remains a motivator for constructive collective self-criticism and self-improvement and does not become a weapon to humiliate the deviant.

In this chapter, we have investigated shame's moral significance and highlighted the role of self-understanding in making it morally productive, both in the cases of individual shame, as well as the three varieties of this emotion based on group identification. We have suggested that self-understanding is paramount in this respect: resisted, unacknowledged and bypassed shame tend to lead to rage and aggression, at both the individual and at the group levels. Acknowledged shame, by contrast, can motivate self-improvement. Admittedly, more than self-understanding might be needed, for what enables it in the first place? And once it is in place, how does it lead to moral learning and moral self-improvement instead of self-loathing and depression? These are questions for further research, but a first step has been to emphasize something many critics of shame overlook: acknowledged and resisted shame are not the same, and the most pernicious consequences of shame are associated with the latter, not the former.[12]

## NOTES

1. This chapter partially draws on the frameworks developed in Montes Sánchez (2018) and Montes Sánchez and Salice (2017).

2. To be clear, Salmela, von Scheve and Salice do not claim that shame universally has such consequences: only under certain conditions. Tangney and Dearing, however, do not make such precisions and condemn shame in a wholesale manner.

3. Taylor (1985, 28–32) analyses in detail what Hume means by 'closely' and convincingly argues that this indicates a relationship of belonging.

4. 'Social self-consciousness' refers to what Sartre (1969) also calls 'being-for-Others' and, as he argues, this dimension of selfhood is often experienced pre-reflectively. It is not necessary to reflect on oneself and one's experience in order to feel exposed to the other's gaze or judgement. To put this differently, social self-consciousness (shame, embarrassment, pride, etc.) does not require self-reflection. This also indicates why the distinction between social and non-social self-consciousness is intersected by (but does not correspond to) the distinction between pre-reflective and reflective self-consciousness.

5. In a study of incarcerated offenders, Tangney and Stuewig (2004, 327) found that the only participants who seemed to have no capacity for shame were psychopaths.

6. The focus on identity has often been portrayed as pernicious to morality and mental health by a wide array of authors (e.g., Tangney and Dearing 2004; Nussbaum

2006). We agree that this is often the case, but we want here to highlight that the focus on identity is not necessarily destructive per se: this idea is too narrow and does not do justice to the complexity of the link between autonomy and interdependence.

7. Moral appropriateness and self-understanding are not necessary in this respect. There is research showing that non-moral shame can promote pro-social behaviour (see de Hooge et al. 2010, Olthof this volume). But those are two salient ingredients that are present in many instances of morally virtuous shame.

8. In Salice and Montes Sánchez (2016), we introduced the term 'hetero-induced' in an attempt to highlight the seemingly contradictory fact that one can perform an emotional self-assessment based on someone else's features or actions. We often used 'hetero-induced' as synonymous of 'group-based', but we now realize the need of drawing a conceptual distinction between the two. The terminology is clarified below, where we use the phrase 'hetero-induced shame' (or: 'hetero-induced self-conscious emotion', more in general) to refer to cases where the other involved in the emotion is an individual: 'I am ashamed of you [singular]'. By contrast, we call 'group-based shame' (or: 'group-based self-conscious emotion', more in general) episodes of emotion where the other involved is a group: either 'I am ashamed of us' or 'I am ashamed of you [plural]'. Both forms of self-conscious emotions (hetero-induced and group-based) rely on group identification.

9. We thank the editors for pressing us to clarify this point.

10. We thank the editors for pushing us to clarify this point.

11. Admittedly, this is always a difficult and, sometimes, impossible task.

12. We would like to thank Tjeert Olthof and Íngrid Vendrell Ferrán, as well as the editors, for their insightful comments on earlier versions of this chapter. Alba Montes Sánchez wishes to acknowledge that the research leading to this piece has been funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 890316.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aristotle. 2014. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Edited by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

Austen, Jane. 2006. *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by Pat Rogers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkson, Mark. 2021. "A Confucian Defense of Shame: Morality, Self-Cultivation, and the Dangers of Shamelessness." *Religions* 12(1): 32. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010032.

Brewer, Marilynn B. 1991. "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17(5): 475–482. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167291175001.

Brewer, Marilynn B., and Wendi Gardner. 1996. "Who Is This 'We'? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71(1): 83–93. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.1.83.

Burnyeat, Myles. 1980. "Aristotle on Learning to Be Good." In *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by Amélie Rorty, 69–92. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Calhoun, Cheshire. 2004. "An Apology for Moral Shame." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12(2): 127–146. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2004.00194.x.

Coetzee, J. M. 1999. *Disgrace*. London: Vintage.

Crozier, W. R. 1998. "Self-Consciousness in Shame: The Role of the 'Other'". *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 28: 273–286.

D'Arms, Justin, and Daniel Jacobson. 2000. "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61(1): 65–90. https://doi.org/10.2307/2653403.

de Hooge, Ilona E., Marcel Zeelenberg, and Seger M. Breugelmans. 2010. "Restore and Protect Motivations Following Shame." *Cognition & Emotion* 24(1): 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930802584466.

Deonna, Julien, Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni. 2011. *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

FitzGerald, Chloë. 2015. "Defending Shame." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 12(2): 221–234. https://doi.org/10.1163/17455243-01202001.

French, Peter A. 1984. *Collective and Corporate Responsibility*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fussi, Alessandra. 2018. *Per una teoria della vergogna*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS.

Gilligan, James. 2003. "Shame, Guilt, and Violence." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 70(4): 1149–1180.

Gómez Ramos, Antonio. 2005. "Cuerpo, dolor y verdad. A propósito de un relato de J. M. Coetzee." In *Nadie sabe lo que puede un cuerpo: variaciones sobre el cuerpo y sus destinos*, edited by Natividad Corral, 13–28. Madrid: Talasa Ediciones.

Helm, Bennett W. 2001. *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. /ebook.jsf?bid =CBO9780511520044.

———. 2017. *Communities of Respect: Grounding Responsibility, Authority, and Dignity*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Hume, David. 1978. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. Oxford: Claredon Press.

Jacquet, Jennifer. 2015. *Is Shame Necessary?: New Uses for an Old Tool*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Lerner, Michael. 2016. "Stop Shaming Trump Supporters." *The New York Times*, November 9, 2016. stop-shaming-trump-supporters.

Lewis, Helen B. 1971. *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press Inc.

Lickel, Brian, D. L. Hamilton, G. Wieczorkowska, A. Lewis, S. J. Sherman, and A. N. Uhles. 2000. "Varieties of Groups and the Perception of Group Entitativity." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78(2): 223–246. https://doi.org/10 .1037//0022-3514.78.2.223.

Lickel, Brian, Rachel R. Steele, and Toni Schmader. 2011. "Group-Based Shame and Guilt: Emerging Directions in Research." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 5(3): 153–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00340.x.

Locke, Jill. 2016. *Democracy and the Death of Shame: Political Equality and Social Disturbance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2019. "Donald Trump is Not a Shameless Toddler: The Problems With Psychological Analyses of the 45th US President." *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* 1. https://krisis.eu/donald-trump-is-not-a-shameless-toddler-the-problems-with-psychological-analyses-of-the-45th-us-president/.

Miller, Seumas. 2006. "Collective Moral Responsibility: An Individualist Account." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXX: 176–193.

Montes Sánchez, Alba. 2013. "Social Shame Vs. Private Shame: A Real Dichotomy?" *PhaenEx* 8(1): 28–58.

———. 2014. *Self-Consciousness, Caring, Relationality: An Investigation into the Experience of Shame and Its Ethical Role*. Getafe, Madrid: Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. http://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/19454.

———. 2015. "Shame and the Internalized Other." *Etica & Politica/Ethics & Politics* XVII(2): 180–199.

———. 2018. "Er Skam En Moralsk Følelse? En Sammenligning Af Individuel Og Gruppebaseret Skam." *K&K - Kultur Og Klasse* 46(125): 49–70.

———. 2019. "Shame and Moral Learning From Coetzee's Disgrace." In *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Shame: Methods, Theories, Norms, Cultures, and Politics*, edited by Cecilea Mun. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Montes Sánchez, Alba, and Alessandro Salice. 2017. "Feeling Ashamed of Myself Because of You." In *Embodiment, Enaction, and Culture—Investigating the Constitution of the Shared World*, edited by Christoph Durt, Thomas Fuchs, and Christian Tewes, 229–244. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2006. *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*. New Ed. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Olthof, T. 2002. "Shame, Guilt, Antisocial Behavior, and Juvenile Justice: A Psychological Perspective." In *Punishing Juveniles*, edited by A. R. Duff and I. Weijers, 193–205. Oxford, UK: Hart Publishing.

Roseman, Ira J., Cynthia Wiest, and Tamara S. Swartz. 1994. "Phenomenology, Behaviors, and Goals Differentiate Discrete Emotions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(2): 206–221. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.2.206.

Salice, Alessandro, and Alba Montes Sánchez. 2016. "Pride, Shame, and Group Identification." *Frontiers in Psychology* 7: 557. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00557.

Salice, Alessandro, and Kengo Miyazono. 2020. "Being One of Us: Group Identification, Joint Actions, and Collective Intentionality." *Philosophical Psychology* 33(1): 42–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2019.1682132.

Salice, Alessandro, and Mikko Salmela. 2021. "What Are Emotional Mechanisms?" *Emotions and Society* 4:1, 49–68.

Salmela, Mikko, and Christian von Scheve. 2017. "Emotional Roots of Right-Wing Political Populism." *Social Science Information* 56(4): 567–595. https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018417734419.

———. 2018. "Emotional Dynamics of Right- and Left-Wing Political Populism." *Humanity & Society*, September. https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597618802521.

Salmela, Mikko, and Gavin Brent Sullivan. 2016. "Commentary: Pride, Shame, and Group Identification." *Frontiers in Psychology* 7: 1946. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01946.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1969. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel Barnes. London: Methuen.

Scheff, Thomas. 1994. *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism and War*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Scheler, Max. 1987. "Shame and Feelings of Modesty." In *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays*, edited by M. S. Frings, 1–85. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Searle, John. 1990. "Collective Intentions and Actions." In *Intentions in Communication*, edited by Philip R. Cohen Jerry Morgan and Martha Pollack, 401–415. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Seok, Bongrae. 2015. "Moral Psychology of Shame in Early Confucian Philosophy." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 10(1): 21–57.

Shear, Michael D., and Zolan Kanno-Youngs. 2021. "Biden Issues Orders to Dismantle Trump's 'America First' Immigration Agenda." *The New York Times*, February 2, 2021, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/02/us/politics/biden-immigration-executive-orders-trump.html.

Smith, Richard H., J. Matthew, W. Gerrod, and Heidi L. Eyre. 2002. "The Role of Public Exposure in Moral and Nonmoral Shame and Guilt." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83(1): 138–159. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.1.138.

Strawson, P. F. 1974. *Freedom and Resentment, and Other Essays*. London: Methuen.

Tangney, June Price. 2005. "The Self-Conscious Emotions: Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment and Pride." In *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, edited by Tim Dagleish and Mick J. Power, 541–568. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/0470013494.ch26/summary.

Tangney, June Price, and Jeff Stuewig. 2004. "A Moral-Emotional Perspective on Evil Persons and Evil Deeds." In *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil*, edited by Arthur G. Miller, 327–355. New York: Guilford Press.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2004. *Shame and Guilt*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tangney, June Price, Rowland S. Miller, Laura Flicker, and Deborah Hill Barlow. 1996. "Are Shame, Guilt, and Embarrassment Distinct Emotions?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70(6): 1256–1269. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.6.1256.

Tarnopolsky, Christina H. 2010. *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants: Plato's Gorgias and the Politics of Shame*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Thomason, Krista K. 2014. "Shame, Violence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 91(1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12110.

———. 2018. *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

"Trump Administration Family Separation Policy." 2021. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Trump_administration_family_separation_policy&oldid=1030337970.

Turner, John C. 1987. "A Self-Categorization Theory." In *Rediscovering the Social Group, a Self-Categorization Theory*, edited by John C. Turner, 42–67. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Velleman, J. David. 2001. "The Genesis of Shame." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 30(1): 27–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2001.00027.x.

Williams, Bernard. 2008. *Shame and Necessity*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zahavi, Dan. 2005. *Subjectivity and Selfhood, Investigating the First-Person Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

———. 2014. *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Chapter 8*

# The Situatedness of Shame and Shaming

## *'Little Worlds' and Social Transformations*

Imke von Maur

Denouncing shame and calling for a society without any shaming seems to be an emancipatory move in many regards. 'Shame on you!' is not seldomly intended as a threat, functioning as an expression of intimidation and indicating punishment and oppression. Calling someone out to be ashamed aims at aligning the shamed subject to given norms. Unsurprisingly, shame is experienced negatively and painfully – it 'makes us feel small and somehow undone' (Probyn 2005: 2). A community without the need to be shamed by others thus seems liberating. Yet, I share Elsbeth Probyn's hunch that 'something about shame is terribly important' (2005: 3). The fact that shame is deeply social and inherently structured by relations of power (Landweer 1999) makes shame relevant not only in a negative, but also in a decidedly positive way, for instance as 'a non-violent form of resistance that can be used to challenge institutions, organizations, and even governments in order to bring about large-scale change' (Jacquet 2015a).[1] Jacquet's analysis focuses on public shaming, for instance by politicians or companies for their environmentally disastrous behaviour. But the *ethico-epistemic relevance*[2] of shame for societal change can also be seen in cases where the (mis-)behaviour was not deliberate: if the majority of one's peers uses reusable bottles filled with tap water instead of plastic bottles, using plastic bottles becomes shame-worthy and will, in the best case, be avoided – because of the anticipated shame that would come with the deprecating stare of the crowd. Crucially, it is not only the expectation of shame and thus the avoidance of potentially shame-worthy behaviour that is important, the very *experience of shame* with its decidedly painful character discloses a *content* that opens up the opportunity for the subject to revise unjustified beliefs and change problematic behaviour.

Whether shame can unfold this ethico-epistemic potential for societal change (small and large), whether one and the same object leads to shame or pride (or else), is highly dependent on *situational factors*, in both a synchronic and a diachronic way. The aim of the present chapter is to illustrate the possible insights of a 'situated account of shame' and its consequences for a normative assessment of the ethico-epistemic relevance of shame.

I argue that whether something is experienced as shame-worthy depends upon shared spaces of meaning that are intelligible only against the background of concrete practices and forms of living. These 'little worlds', as I call them, are historically and spatially contingent and thus in need of justification and potential subjects of critique. By applying the 'multidimensional situatedness framework' I developed elsewhere (von Maur 2018, 2021a), I will discuss how shame contributes to the epistemic position of individuals and communities, thereby yielding the power to (re)shape whole spaces of meaning and the practices associated with them. Shamelessness, in turn, comes with a very different disclosure and thus sometimes indicates not only the absence of a potential emotion but also a stance towards the object in question as well. Shamelessness leads to completely different 'little worlds' and thus practices. Exactly such shamelessness might be the ethico-epistemically more appropriate disclosure of the situation and *can* unlock – in the same manner as shame – a *positively* transformative potential. Yet, both shame and shamelessness can be dangerous, personally and societally. So-called 'shame cultures' or the habitualization of 'shame objects' such as the 'wrong body' (according to an often racist and ableist worldview and 'beauty' standards which are unhealthy, to say the least) as well as the shamelessness of perpetrators or shameless ecologically harmful behaviour can also be accounted for and evaluated according to the multidimensional situated perspective; both on an explanatory dimension (considering the affective biography) and delivering a framework for a normative assessment (by showing the impact on 'little worlds').

The chapter is structured as follows: In the *second section,* I introduce the multidimensional framework of situated affectivity by sketching the crucial concepts of 'habitual affective intentionality', 'little worlds' and 'emotion repertoires'. In the *third section,* I apply that framework to both episodic shame and dispositional shame. I consider how, in a concrete situation, situational factors influence whether shame occurs and how it is experienced and interpreted (*episodic shame*). Since not only the concrete situation but also the concrete individual shapes whether and how shame is experienced, I will furthermore consider *dispositional shame* from the perspective of a person's emotion repertoire. Shame is not only a matter of situational factors and an individuals' emotion repertoires but is often intentionally brought into existence by others. Therefore, in the *final section*, I will discuss (public) *shaming*

as a paradigm case for the importance of normatively assessing the question whether we should or should not be ashamed and for what reasons.

## SITUATEDNESS: HABITUAL AFFECTIVE INTENTIONALITY, 'LITTLE WORLDS' AND EMOTION REPERTOIRES

Rather than taking emotions to be mainly private and intraindividual or even intrapsychic affairs, so-called 'situated approaches' to affectivity consider the impact of the body and the environment for the characteristics and content of emotions (e.g., Griffiths & Scarantino 2009; Stephan et al. 2014; Slaby 2014; Colombetti & Roberts 2015 among others). The label 'situatedness' covers the so-called 4E approaches to cognition and affectivity as well as what is called *environmental scaffolding*. While debates about whether emotions are embodied, embedded, extended and/or enacted (4E) are often concerned with ontological questions regarding the location emotions, accounts drawing on the concept of scaffolding 'characterize those cases in which we use or structure the environment in order to enable, support, enhance, or regulate specific affective experiences of ourselves or to shape the affective experiences of others' (Coninx & Stephan 2021: 2; e.g., Colombetti & Krueger 2015; Saarinen 2020; Stephan 2018; Stephan & Walter 2020). As Coninx and Stephan (2021) point out, the environment *scaffolds* emotional experiences in various different ways, resulting in affective changes that can be intended by the feeling subject itself, e.g., for means of emotion regulation (Slaby 2016 terms this the 'user-resource model') or be triggered by 'the outside' through 'mind shaping' (Zawidzki 2013) or 'mind invasion' (Slaby 2016). That is, sometimes an individual actively uses environmental resources or other people to regulate their emotions, whereas sometimes the environment structures an individual's affective life without their explicit intention (or even awareness).[3]

Most of the pioneering work in the literature on 'situatedness' focuses on the socio-material impact on affective engagements in concrete encounters – that is, they adopt a *synchronic* perspective. In contrast, the 'multidimensional' approach I favour acknowledges that the way in which concrete factors impact affectivity in a concrete situation is itself a product of a history of relationality (von Maur 2018, 2021a). This *diachronic dimension* is not an additional perspective one *can* optionally consider, but must be *integrated* into the synchronic one. That means: How people or objects affect an individual is structured by that individual's emotional repertoire as developed at a socioculturally specific time and place. 'Taking situatedness seriously', as I ask for, further requires acknowledging that the concrete situational

context is always intelligible only against the background of the norms and values of specific practices, which, in turn, refer to specific forms of living. I use the concept of *habitual affective intentionality* (ibid.) to integrate these dimensions. This concept combines three central dimensions for investigating emotions – their intentionality (world-disclosive dimension), their situatedness (sociocultural embeddedness in a concrete context), and their habituality (belonging to a diachronically developed emotion repertoire). Taking affective intentionality – that is, the embodied and experienced way in which emotions disclose meaningfulness – to be habitual in this sense allows us to investigate concrete emotions as being both the products and the producers of specific socioculturally shared practices and forms of living (ibid.). In this section, I will build upon this general take on affectivity, developed in my previous work. In the following sections, I will then apply it to shame.

I take emotions to be of *ethico-epistemic* relevance in the sense that they are phenomenally experienced and embodied ways of disclosing meaningfulness. When individuals experience an emotion, they do so by means of their lived body (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2005). This lived body, however, is already pre-shaped by its history – we can speak of the *habitual* lived body to emphasize the specificity of the mode of becoming. Relating this to Pierre Bourdieu's ([1979] 1987) concept of the habitus allows us to integrate the deeply social and practice-relative nature of the habitual lived body. During an individual's lifetime, interaction routines and normatively structured practices sediment into such habitual lived bodies and leave traces in forms of schemata through which they perceive the world as being meaningful in some ways rather than others – relative to socially shared norms, values and forms of living. Combining these two approaches yields the following picture of affectivity: When a person experiences an emotion, their habitual lived body delivers a complex meaningful Gestalt based on previous experiences and expectations they have *as* a member of concrete social practices. Emotions are thus not only phenomenally experienced but also intentional phenomena. They disclose content about us and the world. Importantly, though, emotional content is not reducible to single evaluative properties like 'dangerous', 'joyful', or 'shame-worthy' but includes the individual's concerns against the background of their specific sociocultural situatedness. Although some rather basic and universally shared emotions are not that specific (like fear when facing a dangerous animal), emotions in real-world scenarios most often *are* specific to the individual as a member of a shared practice: Joy experienced in light of 'likes' for a photo posted in social networks draws on individual concerns relating to a form of living in the same manner as does the fear of blundering an academic talk at a conference, or the indignation felt in light of the inaction of politicians regarding the ecological crisis. Importantly, the *lack* of these emotions also reveals

something about an individual's concerns against the background of their emotion repertoire: If someone fails to be joyful about social media reactions because they do not inhabit that form of living or fails to be indignant in light of the conservation of the status quo regarding the ecological crisis, this tells us something about their concerns as well.

The disclosive dimension of emotions should not be understood as a merely receptive one. By feeling an emotion, the individual *receives* certain information while at the same time *construing* its meaning (Roberts 2003).[4] 'Disclosure' is thus performative: The feeling person brings into existence a complex meaningful Gestalt not only for themselves but also for the other people present. The academic who blunders their talk at a conference does not experience their shame only privately, but brings into existence a specific reality manifested in the audience as well. This meaningful space is what I call a 'little world'. The 'little world' that the academic brings into existence by feeling and expressing shame is rather different from the one that would emerge if they would feel and react with amusement about their own mistake. Both 'little worlds' in turn offer different affective possibilities for both the feeling person and the audience. I adopt the notion of 'little worlds' from María Lugones (1987) who introduced the term 'worlds' in order to investigate the phenomenological dimension of how specifically situated individuals navigate multiple different ways of being. Crucially, inhabiting a 'little world' is characterized by a very specific experience and affective comportment. This concept emphasizes that differently situated individuals experience situations as being differently *normatively structured*. The situations demand and allow, prevent and forbid different ways of affecting and being affected. For instance, a person might inhabit the 'world' of being an 'influencer' on YouTube, the particular idiosyncratic world of their family, of being a woman in a male-dominated workplace or that of being a climate activist. Importantly, different people can inhabit different 'worlds' while being in the same space: 'Both you and I might be in the same room of the same building in the same city, but if you are a white United States-born citizen and I am a Latin American born in Nicaragua, we will probably have different takes on what we experience in this room, and we will have different takes on our experiences depending on the dominant norms and practices of the particular situation and how we relate to these practices given the contexts which dominate our particular interpretations' (Ortega 2001: 11). A 'little world' thus refers to the concrete moment in which a person discloses meaningful Gestalts (with others). It is a practice-specific reality (at a concrete time and place) that is related to a form of living.

From the perspective of the feeling subject, inhabiting a 'little world' and construing meaningful Gestalts allows them to navigate through their

everyday practices through 'unreflective yet skillful coping' (Rietveld 2008). Importantly, this 'affective alignment' to practice-specific norms is experienced harmoniously, as being in flow, not being prevented or disrupted. The world reacts in an expected way, it becomes predictable and manageable. This embodiment of affectively experienced practice-specific normativity can nicely be illustrated by Merleau-Ponty's ([1942] 1976: 193–194) description of soccer: a soccer player moves through the soccer field in an unreflective yet skillful manner responding adequately to the field-specific norms. Importantly, the player has embodied a 'sense for the field' as a concrete space but also for the 'game' (as Bourdieu ([1972] 1976) calls this), that is, for the movements of the other players and their meanings and for which actions they require. Adapting this to the social sphere means to consider individuals as navigating through social spheres and as responding skillfully to 'field specific norms'. Through time they internalize and embody the norms, which become second nature and the habitual schemata *through which* they make sense of their worlds. Something similar applies to habitualization during the affective biography. A child learns the meaning of an emotion – for instance that a specific feeling is called 'shame' – in a 'paradigm scenario' (de Sousa 1987). During their ongoing affective biography, an individual enacts further meaningful Gestalts in relational processes with their sociocultural environment. The subject reacts affectively in given situations and thus has at hand specific emotional dispositions and by this certain meaningful Gestalts rather than others. I call this a person's *emotion repertoire* and highlight with this concept that a person has certain tools at hand for affectively making sense of the situation depending on their biography. This biography in turn is permeated by socioculturally specific and contingent norms. Importantly, referring to a person's emotion repertoire not only explains the emotions which are more or less likely to occur but also their (in)capacity to interpret their own feelings. Along these lines Ditte Marie Munch-Jurisic (2021) speaks of the 'hermeneutical equipment' of a person, pointing out that it is by no means a coincidence whether a person has the (conceptual) interpretative capacities to make sense of their affective engagement. Rather, the equipment is highly dependent on social situatedness and the broader societal context.

I will now briefly sketch characteristic features of shame in terms of its phenomenology and intentionality before situating shame multidimensionally. The focal issue of this exploration is the ethico-epistemic relevance of situated shame – it manifests norms within the body of the feeling person, and it is often only by experiencing shame that the person becomes aware of these norms. Shame thus has at the same time great destructive and emancipatory potential for a more just and sustainable world by manifesting or transforming specific meaningful Gestalts and bringing into existence or preventing specific 'little worlds'.

## SITUATING EPISODIC AND DISPOSITIONAL SHAME(LESSNESS)

Shame is a bodily experienced self-evaluation. More specifically: a negative and painful self-evaluation in front of others.[5] 'In front of others' does not imply that there must be a concrete audience *present* in the moment of shame, nor a concrete imagined one, but that there is a basis for evaluation that is dependent on shared norms. When I evaluate myself or some behaviour as shame-worthy, I do so against the background of failing to be in line with a certain ideal or not being in accord with norms others deem to be important. This is also reflected in the *phenomenology of shame* as 'an intense and painful sensation that is bound up with how the self feels about itself, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body', where 'shame impresses upon the skin, as an intense feeling of the subject "being against itself"' (Ahmed 2004: 103). Characteristic of feeling shame is the bodily experienced urgent need to disappear and to avoid the gaze of others. That wish to vanish is combined with a feeling of being paralysed even if the subject successfully manages to get out of the situation. Shame normally does not develop gradually, but comes abruptly, without warning, and can be felt as a disaster which interrupts one's action possibilities (Demmerling & Landweer 2007: 220). Thus, it is plausible to assume that many subjects tend not only to overcome shame immediately, but that they shun situations which would lead to shame in the first place. Accordingly, shame avoidance directs behaviour into certain directions and not others, guided, inter alia, by the expectations of what others would (not) deem to be shame-worthy. This raises the question of possible *objects of shame*.

Although, at first glance, it does not seem to make sense (semantically) to be ashamed of certain objects – think of shame for one's own achievements – there does not seem to be a limit to the objects people can be ashamed about. As shame is highly contextual, it could even make sense to be ashamed about achieving something one takes to be valuable or to be applauded for having done something others deem to be great (see Taylor 1985). Yet, there are more obvious and prototypical candidates – like failing to accomplish a goal, a misfortune in the presence of others, being observed while doing something private and the like. Interestingly, while shame is usually associated with one's faults or misbehaviours, it can also involve aspects that lie beyond the control of the ashamed and do not reflect badly on their character or strengths, like having a certain name or a gap between one's teeth (Demmerling & Landweer 2007: 219). What the objects of shame have in common is that they are indicative of the subject feeling inadequate and most often evaluated by others as such.[6] Thus, the ethico-epistemic dimension of shame specifically concerns the disclosure of a (supposed) norm-deviation. The person feeling

shame is aware of this norm violation via their habitually lived body. They construe a meaningful Gestalt for themselves (and others) depending on the incorporated 'sense for the game' (see above). One must 'know' the norms in a given situation (at least tacitly) in order to experience their violation by feeling shame: In certain contexts, we fail to be ashamed (for instance in a culture foreign to us) because we lack the knowledge that there is something we would be ashamed about if we inhabited the 'little world' of the other(s). Yet, it is important to distinguish between shame and humiliation. A person might not only fail to be ashamed because of their ignorance of certain values of other 'little worlds', but they might just not share these values. In such cases, the person might rather feel humiliated and this generates feelings of anger, rather than shame, towards the 'shamer' (see Deonna et al. 2012: 156ff.).

The concept of 'habitual affective intentionality' allows us to see that this construal of a meaningful Gestalt has a specific sociocultural history. Thus, any *episodic* instantiation of shame depends not only on the concrete situation with its decidedly socioculturally specific factors but also on the emotion repertoire of the person. The latter not only makes shame more or less probable (e.g., if the person has a disposition to feel shame, see below) but also has an impact on which concepts they have available for interpreting and acting upon this instance of shame. This perspective suggests that a subject experiences certain objects as shame-worthy in relation to a concrete practice which relates to a form of living the subject endorses: In different forms of living, different objects are shame-worthy. Take climate activists versus SUV drivers. While possessing or driving an SUV is shame-worthy for the former, the latter are proud of it. And more so: While the SUV lover fails to understand how one can be ashamed about driving this car, the climate activist is at a loss to understand how one can be proud of it. This lack of mutual understanding of the other's affectivity cannot be explained by only considering the object, person and emotion. It requires including the situatedness of this instance of shame within the emotion repertoire of the persons and the 'little worlds' they inhabit.

The climate activist might feel deep shame when their peers see that they are picked up by their mother in an SUV. Yet, reflectively identifying oneself with a group's shared values, as in this case, is not necessary for shame. As mentioned earlier, shame can also occur in circumstances where the given norm (the reason for being ashamed) is not one that the shamed subject reflectively endorses. Hilge Landweer (1999: 72–73) gives the example of an unathletic academic who does not care about sports but who still feels shame when being surrounded by colleagues who go for a run together and are all in a better condition than them. What is important about the content of this shame is that one 'stands out', becomes visible in a negative way, does not fit in, is not adjusted, and does not conform to the majority or (supposed)

expectation. The norm violation that makes the shame of the unathletic academic intelligible does not concern the wish to be a concrete other type of person (being an athlete). Rather, the social dimension in this case concerns the need for belonging *as such*. This raises the question of the relation of shame to power, as shame might have the force to let people wish for and ultimately do things they do not reflectively endorse but rather do for the sake of conforming. Thus, it seems that a person can feel shame even when they do not endorse the values of those who blame them.[7]

How do situational factors contribute to shame and how is shame experienced in cases such as the SUV and unathletic academic discussed earlier? In these cases, it may be illuminating to consider the non-alignment with what is expected in the respective 'little world' to uphold the necessary practices and games. In the SUV example, the identity construction in relation to a specific form of living is in the foreground, whereas in the sports case it rather seems to be a matter of a situationally specific desire to conform. Both are violations of norms that are crucial for upholding concrete 'little worlds'. The 'little world' of the activist becomes fragile if not destructed by a situation that is experienced as going against their very aim as an activist. The unathletic academic's reaction might rather be driven by the concrete situatively manifested normative demands they experience from the group. The group might be defined in this very concrete situation not as 'researchers and colleagues' but as more or less sporty people who are running together. While the unathletic academic navigates smoothly in the former 'world', they do not fit into the latter. The academic might have a self-conception that is somehow rebellious, reflectively they might say 'I don't care what others say' and they might also take sport to be a 'culturally disastrous institution' (Landweer 1999: 72), but, if they feel shame, there is a tension between this conception and their need for recognition; this tension is disclosed by feeling shame. It is the situationally manifested social dynamics which make the subject aware, via their shame, of a norm they seem to value although they might hitherto not have known that they do. If we focus on situational contexts we see that the normative power of making something shame-worthy stems from the pressure to uphold the 'little world' that constitutes the situation in question. Yet, it is not the preservation of the 'little world' *as such* that is crucial for explaining shame as a situated phenomenon, but that *I am the reason* for the disruption. We might also react with negative feelings and unease when someone else destroys a 'little world', but we feel shame when we ourselves are the ones destroying the game, violating the norms, and not living up to the (tacitly) governing standards.[8] A reason for feeling shame in this line can also be not to hold a shared opinion. We might even feel shame for uttering our conviction although we are really convinced of its correctness and importance. Think of the climate activist again who might be confronted with their

convictions about the shame-worthiness of SUVs at a family gathering where everyone else is a wholehearted SUV lover. The activist might feel ashamed when someone makes a remark about their fight for climate justice, when the tone of voice is making fun of them and the gesture is degrading their opinion and activism as childish. Although deeply convinced, the activist might feel shame in this situation for the very 'little world' shared by the others materializes the pressure to conform or at least not to stand up.[9]

What I have sketched so far is *episodic shame*, concrete instantiations of shame as a bodily felt negatively experienced self-evaluation as failing to be in line with a given norm or expectation. A relevant phenomenon for understanding the ethico-epistemic relevance of shame as a situated phenomenon is the *absence of shame*, that is, cases in which a subject does not feel shame although it would seem to be apt from another perspective – that is: *episodic shamelessness*. Both, shame and shamelessness cannot only occur as episodic phenomena but also as dispositions, namely as what is called a 'sense of shame': 'Someone who is disposed to feel shame has what we will call a "sense of shame". If fear is a sensitivity to danger, perhaps shame is a sensitivity to one's unworthiness' (Deonna et al. 2012: 11). This highlights the self-evaluative side of shame that I suggest to modify by combining it with the social dimension of shame highlighted earlier. Rather than taking the subject to believe in their unworthiness, I think a subject with a 'sense of shame' is sensitive to the danger of not being accepted or acknowledged, of not fitting in. This can explain why people are not only ashamed of their failures but also of the violation of norms they do not even held to be valuable. If the 'sense of shame' is perceived through the lens of situatedness, the emotion repertoire of a person comes into view. The emotion repertoire, the set of meaningful Gestalts a person has at hand to make sense of their situation affectively, is not something they made up individually, but something that is structured by the relational processes that shaped the affective biography. The crucial aspect of this phenomenon is that besides acute instances of shame(lessness), what determines whether a subject feels shame is inter alia dependent on whether they have habituated a 'sense of shame' or not. And the reasons why a subject has such a sense of shame or is a shameless person are situated in a concrete affective biography that takes place in an epoch and space that is itself structured by contingent values and norms. To see how meaningful Gestalts and 'little worlds' reveal an ethico-epistemic dimension related to forms of living which are potentially subject to criticism, consider again the climate activists and SUV drivers. For a person raised in a generation, time and place of 'automobile supremacy' (see Jörg 2020; Schuetze et al. 2022), shamelessness about driving SUVs is completely normal. The whole form of living is built around driving a car and nothing about it elicits the slightest feeling of shame in the driver and SUV owner. Yet, the greater the awareness

of the ecological crisis in the public is, the greater the number of people will be who choose forms of living in which driving an SUV becomes an object of shame. Thus, the question seems to be whether shame towards one and the same object is apt or not. Assessing this question requires acknowledging the meaningful Gestalts, the 'little worlds' and ultimately the forms of living which underlie and are perpetuated by these different ways of habitual affective intentionality – namely the acute shame versus shamelessness and the corresponding emotion repertoires in which shame is or is not at hand concerning a life guided by the 'automobile supremacy'.

The perspective offered considers shame as a socioculturally situated phenomenon. I have remained silent so far about the normative assessment of the ethico-epistemic relevance of shame. This raises the question *which* meaningful Gestalts we *should* disclose for what reasons and which 'little worlds' we want to inhabit and which not. Should we be ashamed about owning SUVs? Why (not)? The justificatory ground concerns not only the mere fact that a norm is violated, but the question of whether the norm is itself justifiable with respect to a form of living we should (not) endorse. The situated perspective proposed in this chapter eventually suggests that in order to normatively assess the ethico-epistemic value of shame, it is not sufficient to merely consider shame and its object(s). One must also consider the forms of living which are allowed or prevented by concrete instantiations of shame(lessness). Violating a norm and standing out as one who destroys a 'little world' is not a bad thing per se. On the contrary, there are many cases in which this is what is needed (see the person who complains about a sexist joke and thereby destroys the little world, a situation that might elicit shame in the 'killjoy' (Ahmed 2010)). I will present a paradigm case for the relevance of normatively assessing the question whether we should or should not be ashamed and for what reasons by considering (public) *shaming*.

## SITUATING (PUBLIC) SHAMING: THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Humans are ashamed about a multitude of objects. Although known for decades now, the increased public awareness about the environmental crisis – especially since the Fridays For Future protests – has multiplied the number of shame-worthy objects, such as driving SUVs, travelling by plane, using plastic bottles for beverages, buying fast fashion or eating meat. Considering the general practice-relative contingency of shame objects, two questions arise here: (1) How to assess whether shame(lessness) is an (in)appropriate affective disclosure of such an object? (2) How to change the affective disclosure of humans – when assessed as not being appropriate – who are situated

in 'little worlds' *from within* which they make sense of these objects? In this section, I will discuss instances of (public) shaming in order to provide *one possible* framework for assessing whether shame is conducive to a more just, equal and sustainable world or whether it backlashes and makes things worse. Considering the practice of shaming allows us to see the complexity of a normative assessment of shame(lessness) that results from adopting the situated perspective presented in this chapter.

One caveat needs to be made before turning to shaming in the context of the ecological crisis. It should be clear that the following considerations about the ethico-epistemic relevance of (public) shaming will not address obviously contemptible cases such as discrimination or vigilantism. Any instance of (public) shaming that is driven by racist, sexist, ableist or other discriminatory motives is clearly to be objected. Also, I will not be concerned with the often-discussed cases of online shaming of people who are victims of photomontages, rumours, bullying and defamation.[10] In such cases, cultivating a 'sense of shamelessness' is rather emancipatory (see also Deonna et al. 2012: 253 ff. for a similar discussion). In too many cases victims get shamed in order to be silenced, and it is especially important in such cases to reject shame and shaming, as it leads to unjust and harmful meaningful Gestalts and 'little worlds'. Social awareness in this regard can be brought about inter alia by shaming the shamer instead of the shamed – as happened in cases such as the #metoo movement.[11] This movement led to various cultural changes, for instance, it is much more difficult now to get away with a supposedly 'funny remark' that in fact is pure sexism. The awareness that is reached by this helps to reveal patterns of shaming that need to be turned around.

This remark about shamelessness as the possibly more apt disclosure of a situation with regard to its meaningfulness hints at the fact that shaming can be used as a tool of sanctioning norm-violating behaviours. Regarding the example of ecologically harmful behaviour (at least) two different targets can be distinguished. On the one hand, individuals get shamed by others for their consumer behaviour, like eating meat or buying fast fashion, and for ecologically harmful behaviour like driving an SUV or travelling around the world by plane. On the other hand, corporations, groups, or entire governments are also the target of (public) shaming, as in the case of 'singling out big banks for environmental destruction, exposing countries for refusing to end forced labour or calling out denialists who undermine action on climate change' (Jacquet 2015b). In both cases, we can further differentiate between (at least) two different goals of the shamers: first, shaming might aim at changing the ethico-epistemic stance of an individual by actually making the subject experience shame, along with the disclosure of a specific meaningful Gestalt. Second, *public* shaming in particular might serve the goal of bringing about a broader (societal) awareness about a certain ethico-epistemic stance – for

this nobody necessarily needs to actually feel shame. I will now consider exemplary cases that illustrate the difficulty of normatively assessing shame and shaming.

As an actual example consider the case of a recent pandemic shaming in the context of the spreading Coronavirus targeted at an individual, namely a man who hoarded thousands of hand sanitizers to make a profit. After the *New York Times*[12] published an article about that, a public shaming by Twitter users was set off and the man donated the hand sanitizers to a church for people in need. In this case, shaming did the service of making the man aware of norm violations, going along with a change in behaviour.[13] One could argue that in such a case shame is a useful tool to change the ethico-epistemic perspective of individuals and with that the meaningful Gestalt construed and the 'little world' enacted. Yet, this should not appear to be naïve. For sure it can also be that the man only wanted to recover his reputation, that he still finds what he did acceptable and that nothing in his perspective has changed. What is important though is that with shaming like that and the publicly visible consequences the baselines for what is deemed to be shame-worthy and what not shift. To illustrate this, let me turn to the ecological crisis.

While it sometimes *might* be effective to shame individuals for their ecologically harmful behaviour, in general, it seems that it is unlikely that shame for owning an SUV or using the plane as an everyday transportation means can be elicited in those who inhabit the corresponding 'little worlds'. For how can shame pull a person out of their little world, if shame for the kind of object at hand is not in question in that very world? If the SUV owner is shameless about their SUV due to the specific world they inhabit, how can shame emerge within this very world in order to then transform it?[14] Apart from this structural problem on the individual level, there is a structural problem on the broader social level: even if the shame *did occur*, it would need to be supported and guided constructively by corresponding 'little worlds' – but these are not established sufficiently. One could argue that hoarding tons of hand sanitizers that others need is not more shame-worthy than it is to drive an SUV or commit other ecological sins and by that doing harm to much more people (now and in the future). But driving SUVs or committing other obvious ecological sins does not elicit the same rage in the public as the hoarding of hand sanitizer does. An important explanation for why that is so, is that on a broader level, the 'little worlds' in which driving SUVs and other ecologically harmful behaviour is experienced as shame-worthy are not inhabited widely enough. If it were normal for the majority of people to disclose the meaningful Gestalt a climate activist discloses and to enact the corresponding 'little worlds', the majority of people would have shame for other objects in their repertoires than they actually have. It just does not elicit shame to use a plane or drive an SUV because it is not only a *normal*

practice, but one that is *necessary* for a more encompassing form of living to be upheld. The interesting thing that can be made especially vivid when considering the SUV is that this very item belongs to the identity of people which cannot easily be changed.[15] Feeling shame for ecologically disastrous behaviour and the according ethico-epistemic consequences would come with a demand to change not only the usage of a specific car but the change of a net of practices, concerns and everyday routines – all accompanied by habituated emotions within the specific repertoire. A person who owns an SUV not only owns a mobility vehicle – they own an object that is crucial for bringing into existence and for manifesting a very specific way of living (see Jörg (2020) for a detailed analysis of the affectivity within the automobile supremacy). That is why others who inhabit a different 'little world', such as climate activists, are so frustrated. Take Greta Thunberg's speech at the UN climate summit in New York 2019: 'People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?'[16] 'How dare you?' Greta Thunberg famously asked. She could also have asked: 'Have you no shame?' Both are not so much questions but rather accusations, assertions of the conviction that the recipient of the speech act did a mistake. It becomes especially clear here that Greta Thunberg is at a loss to understand the shameless inaction of the world's leading politicians. She does not have access to the 'little worlds' of the politicians, from within which they disclose very different meaningful Gestalts than she does from within her 'little world'. Interestingly, often the situationally manifest affective dynamics are such that even the ones who shame ecologically harmful behaviour are not only unsuccessful but rather get blamed for this very shaming. In some cases, to shame the shamer is necessary (see racism, etc. above) but in the case of climate activism the very act of shaming the shamer functions in turn as a defamation of their legitimate criticism. To declare Greta Thunberg a 'little teenager' who is not a professional politician and who should not use emotions but rather arguments is not to take seriously her accusation of wrongdoing but to declare herself problematic. This perfidious strategy needs to be brought to light and criticized.

When it comes to the normative assessment of shame and shaming in the context of the ecological crisis, that is, the question when it is appropriate, if not outright required, to feel shame and when to (try to) elicit shame in others, reveals the complexity of that issue. It slides right into the conflict between individual responsibility and system change. Simply shaming people for their individual behaviour will not suffice if at the same time the overall structure is not changed. Therefore, calling up an individual's responsibility must always be accompanied by a critique of the system. Simply shaming individuals falls short in this regard, although there might be a great potential

in the experience of shame as the painful insight of one's own actual failure and thus a chance to readjust. Also publicly shaming global players and policymakers – by political activism for instance – helps drawing attention to dangerous norm violations and increasing the pressure to act (otherwise).

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I applied my framework of situatedness of affective intentionality to shame by introducing the concepts of habitual affective intentionality as a specific way of disclosure with a decisive ethico-epistemic relevance. In order to understand whether shame is (a) occurring in the first place (or not) and (b) whether occurring or not would be good/bad, one needs to understand the way shame is multidimensionally situated within emotion repertoires and forms of living. It is not independent values as such that are either endorsed or not in episodes of shame(lessness), but whole structures, the stability of the lives of individuals which are at stake. The case of shaming shows that it is not easy to determine whether shame is appropriate and if so effective. The attempt to control others and to sanction norm violations through shaming is very dangerous in its core. We should all be afraid of living in societies where anyone blames another for non-conformism. Yet, as the climate crisis suggests, the severity of the problems might sometimes be so hard that other means than the best argument are necessary. To transform defective societal structures and the forms of living upholding them, being ashamed of one's own misbehaviour might function as a fruitful source of insight with great transformative ethico-epistemic potential.[17] Always with the risk of a backlash, for sure. Because if a person gets shamed, this can elicit a strong desire for self-defence against the shamer. In such a self-defending attitude, the person might not attribute the negative valence of this shaming on themselves but rather projects it onto the topic the shaming is about (e.g., the climate catastrophe) – with the result that previously held convicitions (e.g. 'climate activists exaggerate') do not vanish, but are even reinforced (see Munch-Jurisic 2020 for an illuminating approach to the pros and cons of evading discomfort for political reasons). Yet, it is not only the potential of shaming with the aim of changing the ethico-epistemic outlook of the one who gets shamed that is relevant. Also important is the fact that public instances of shaming raise the awareness regarding the significance of the issue – and this can contribute to a societal shift regarded what is deemed to be a shame-worthy object. As objects either appear or do not appear shame-worthy all the time, depending on the prevalent forms of living – take for instance the stance towards smoking in public buildings – what we deem to be objects of shame needs deliberate evaluation, critique and if necessary, tools for transformation.

## NOTES

1. This is a quote from the blurb of the book 'Is shame necessary? New uses for an old tool'. For a rich discussion of shame and shaming and a nuanced appoach of 'inviting shame', shaming and stigmatization, see Krista Thomason's book *Naked* (2018).

2. I use this term to clarify that I take the epistemic to be bound up with the ethical and political and that drawing a sharp line between those is difficult if not impossible in concrete life-world scenarios (see José Medina (2013) for considerations along these lines and Karen Barad (2007) who established the concept of 'ethico-onto-epistem-ology', thereby also highlighting the materialization of ethico-epistemic practices).

3. Coninx and Stephan (2021) provide a much more detailed taxonomy of the environmental scaffolding of affectivity which considers various temporal scales (microgenetic, ontogenetic, sociogenetic and phylogenetic) and dimensions (such as trustworthiness, robustness, individualization and else). For a recent discussion of the 'user-resource-model' and the 'mind-invasion-model' in the face of literature from social psychology, see Walter and Stephan (2022).

4. See Müller (2021) for a recent challenge to the passive view of emotions, although he does not argue that emotions are disclosive as I do here but thinks of emotions as a form of *spontaneity*. See also Slaby (2021) for a defence of the claim that emotional episodes are *active engagements*. Historically, Jean-Paul Sartre and, building upon his work, Robert Solomon count as key proponents of an active rather than passive view of emotions.

5. Shame thus counts as both, a self-evaluative emotion (see Salice & Montes-Sanchez 2016) that is inherently social and related to power (Landweer 1999), or, as Salmela (2019) phrases it, to social identity.

6. One might also be ashamed of things only vis-à-vis oneself – for instance for not being able to stick to the diet one ascribed oneself to or for not fulfilling other self-ascribed goals and ideals – but most often these reflect on things relevant others deem to be important. This is especially vivid in the case of body shame – where subjects might feel ashamed for being too fat, thin, or else also when looking into the mirror alone – but against the background of societally present beauty ideals which are not met (see Dolezal (2017) for a comprehensive study of the phenomenology of body shame). Additionally, it is important to differentiate between something being the *trigger* of shame and the *reason* for shame. The presence of a public can trigger shame without being its reason. Thus, what shame *is about* is not necessarily the same as what caused it (see Deonna et al. 2012: 138, 144).

7. See Calhoun (2004) and Thomason (2018) for detailed discussions of this complex issue.

8. Although one could also argue that there might be cases in which a subject not only feels unease when someone else destroys a 'little world' but that they feel *fremdscham* for the other.

9. A similar phenomenon is that of the 'killjoy' by Sara Ahmed (2010). It becomes clear here how powerful shame is to keep people in line with expected

convictions and to silence other possible ones. The figure of the one who 'kills the joy' illustrates the great effort it can require not to conform and that shamelessness in this regard has emancipatory potential. In her recent book *Complaint!* (2021) Ahmed studies the complex issue of power and complaints about its abuse – I take a study of educating shamelessness for those who are justified yet silenced in their complaint to be an important topic for another paper.

10. See also Jennifer Jacquet (2015b) who calls this stereotyped version of the shamed person that is used by sceptics about shame as a useful tool the 'mistreated tweeter' and comes to the conclusion that 'the discussion about 21st-century shaming usually turns to cases in which an otherwise well-behaved person posts a tweet or photograph that results in excessive punishment by an anonymous and bloodthirsty online crowd which ruins that person's life for a while. Many people, myself included, object to this form of vigilantism'. I would even argue that in acts of shaming driven by discriminatory, vigilantist, bullying, or other morally contemptible motives it is rather the shamer who needs to be ashamed. It is shame-worthy to shame another one as part of discriminatory acts.

11. This should not entail the conviction that 'shaming the shamer' suffices. The #metoo movement was and still is a long struggle of making victims heard, and only slowly people's views on these subjects change. I am aware that this is a very complex social development in which shame and shaming might play *one*, but certainly not the only or even most important part.

12. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/14/technology/coronavirus-purell-wipes-amazon-sellers.html [retrieved: 21–10–17].

13. This is trickier in the case of shaming corporations or governments. Take for instance, pandemic shaming of whole governments for their wrong or missing action. Neither Boris Johnson, nor Jair Bolsonaro or Donald Trump seemed to have been ashamed about their disastrous handlings of the pandemic.

14. This points to a greater problem regarding the relationship between 'little worlds' and (ethical) values: If the values a person endorses and lives by make sense only within their little worlds, how can they justify value judgements that seem to derive from a perspective that transcends those worlds? This shows that the way in which little worlds structure our capacities for sense-making and judgements cannot be rigid. It must be possible, for instance, to experience a tension between demands from within and without our little worlds. The justificatory question though goes beyond the experiential one. Even if I experience things through the values making up my little worlds, I am able to assess the imagined perspectives of others. To be concrete: Even if I do not inhabit the little worlds of my SUV driving neighbours, I can imagine their perspective and enter a discourse about justifying their and my way of living, as I can do with little worlds I do not condemn but just not chose, like the little world of a musician. I can deem this to be a valuable little world and form of living without being able to experience it from within and without making the values constituting it my own.

15. See Schuetze et al. (2022) for an account of the affective underpinnings of 'the car', also drawing upon the notions of 'affective arrangements' (Slaby, Mühlhoff & Wüschner 2019) and 'affective milieus' (Schuetze 2021) which I cannot explore in detail here.

16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok [retrieved 2021–10–22].

17. In another paper, I work out in detail the epistemic value of what I call 'affective disruptability' (von Maur, 2021b).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Sara (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, Sara (2010) Happy Objects. In: Melissa Gregg & Gregory Seigworth (Eds.) *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 29–51.

Ahmed, Sara (2021) *Complaint!* Durham/London: Duke University Press.

Barad, Karen (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre ([1972] 1976) *Entwurf einer Theorie der Praxis auf der ethnologischen Grundlage der kabylischen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.

Bourdieu, Pierre ([1979] 1987) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. New York: Routledge.

Calohun, Cheshire (2004) An Apology for Moral Shame. *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 12(2), 127–146.

Colombetti, Giovanna & Krueger, Joel (2015) Scaffoldings of the Affective Mind. *Philosophical Psychology* 28(8), 1157–1176.

Colombetti, Giovanna & Roberts, Tom (2015) Extending the Extended Mind: The Case for Extended Affectivity. *Philosophical Studies* 172(5), 1243–1263.

Coninx, Sabrina & Stephan, Achim (2021) *A Taxonomy of Environmentally Scaffolded Affectivity*. Danish Yearbook of Philosophy, 1–27.

de Sousa, Ronald (1987) *The Rationality of Emotions*. London: MIT Press.

Demmerling, Christoph & Landweer, Hilge (2007) *Philosophie der Gefühle. Von Achtung bis Zorn.* Stuttgart: Metzler.

Deonna, Julien; Rodogno, Raffaele & Teroni, Fabrice (2012) *In Defense of Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dolezal, Luna (2017) Shame, Vulnerability and Belonging: Reconsidering Sartre's Account of Shame. *Human Studies* 40, 421–438. DOI: 10.1007/s10746-017-9427-7.

Griffiths, Paul & Scarantino, Andrea (2009) Emotions in the Wild: The Situated Perspective on Emotion. In: P. Robbins & M. Aydede (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 437–453.

Jacquet, Jennifer (2015a) *Is Shame Necessary? New Uses for an Old Tool.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Jacquet, Jennifer (2015b) Public Shaming Makes the World a Better Place. *Wired*. Retrieved 2012-10-17 [https://www.wired.co.uk/article/public-shaming].

Jörg, Kilian (2020). Autoregime. In: K. Jörg, Backlash (Ed.) *Essays zur Resilienz der Moderne*. Hamburg: Textem Verlag, 75–103.

Landweer, Hilge (1999) *Scham und Macht. Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Sozialität eines Gefühls*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Loidolt, Sophie (2018) Experience and Normativity: The Phenomenological Approach. In: Antonio Cimino & Cees Leijenhorst (Eds.) *Phenomenology and Experience*. Leiden: Brill, 150–165.

Lugones, María (1987) Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception. *Hypatia* 2, 3–19. DOI: 10.1111/j.1527-2001.1987.tb01062.x.

Medina, José (2013) *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice ([1942] 1976) *Die Struktur des Verhaltens*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice ([1945] 2005) *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Müller, Jean Moritz (2021) The Spontaneity of Emotion. *European Journal of Philosophy*. DOI: 10.1111/ejop.12625.

Munch-Jurisic, D. M. (2020). The Right to Feel Comfortable: Implicit Bias and the Moral Potential of Discomfort. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 23(8). DOI: 10.1007/s10677-020-10064-5.

Munch-Jurisic, Ditte (2021) Lost For Words: Anxiety, Well-Being, and the Costs of Conceptual Deprivation. *Synthese* 199, 13583–13600. DOI: 10.1007/s11229-02103390-3.

Ortega, Marianna (2001) "New Mestizas," "'World'-Travelers," and "Dasein": Phenomenology and the Multi-Voiced, Multi-Cultural Self. Hypatia 16(3), 1–29.

Probyn, Elsbeth (2005) *Blush Faces of Shame*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Rietveld, Erik (2008) Situated Normativity: The Normative Aspect of Embodied Cognition in Unreflective Action. *Mind* 117, 973–1001. DOI: 10.1093/mind/fzn050.

Roberts, Robert (2003) *Emotions. An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saarinen, Jussi (2020) What Can the Concept of Affective Scaffolding Do for Us? *Philosophical Psychology* 33(6), 820–839.

Salice, Alessandro & Montes Sánchez, Alba (2016) Pride, Shame, and Group Identification. *Frontiers in Psychology* 7, 557. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00557.

Salmela, Mikko (2019) Shame and Its Political Consequences in the Age of Neoliberalism. In: Cecilea Mun (Ed.) *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Shame Methods, Theories, Norms, Cultures, and Politics*. London: Lexington Books, 177–196.

Schuetze, Paul (2021) From Affective Arrangements to Affective Milieus. *Frontiers in Psychology* 11. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.611827.

Schütze, Paul, Jörg, Kilian, von Maur, Imke, & Slaby, Jan (2022) Affectas Disruption: Affective Experimentation, Automobility and the Ecological Crisis. In B. Timm Knudsen, M. Krogh & C. Stage (Eds.) *Methodologies of Affective Experimentation.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 27–45.

Slaby, Jan (2014) Emotions and the Extended Mind. In: C. von Scheve & M. Salmela (Eds.) *Collective Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 32–46.

Slaby, Jan (2016) Mind Invasion. *Frontiers in Psychology*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00266

Slaby, Jan (2021) Expanding the Active Mind. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*. DOI: 10.1080/00071773.2021.1905487.

Slaby, Jan; Mühlhoff, Rainer; & Wüschner, Philipp (2019) Affective Arrangements. *Emotion Review* 11(1), 2–12.

Stephan, Achim (2018) Critical Note: 3E's Are Sufficient, But Don't Forget the D. In: Albert Newen, Leon De Bruin & Shaun Gallagher (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of 4E Cognition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 607–619.

Stephan, Achim & Walter, Sven (2020) Situated Affectivity. In: Thomas Szanto & Hilge Landweer (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions*. Abingdon: Routledge, 299–311.

Stephan, Achim; Walter, Sven & Wilutzky, Wendy (2014) Emotions Beyond Brain and Body. *Philosophical Psychology* 27(1), 65–81.

Taylor, Gabriele (1985) *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomason, Krista (2018) *Naked. The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

von Maur, Imke (2018) *Die epistemische Relevanz des Fühlens – habitualisierte affektive Intentionalität im Verstehensprozess*. Osnabrück: Universität Osnabrück.

von Maur, Imke (2021a) Taking Situatedness Seriously: Embedding Affective Intentionality in Forms of Living. *Frontiers in Psychology*. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.599939.

von Maur, Imke (2021b) The Epistemic Value of Affective Disruptability. *Topoi.* DOI: 10.1007/s11245-021-09788-5.

Walter, Sven & Stephan, Achim (2022) Situated Affectivity and Mind Shaping: Lessons From Social Psychology. *Emotion Review*. DOI: 10.1177/17540739221112419.

Zawidzki, Tadeusz (2013) *Mindshaping: A New Framework for Understanding Human Social Cognition*. Bradford: MIT Press.

*Chapter 9*

# Shame and Trauma

Heidi L. Maibom

Shame is an intensely painful emotion that makes us think less of ourselves, typically as a result of failing to live up to a norm, ideal or standard. Our connection with such a norm might be intimate, so that our identity depends on living up to it, but it need not be. In fact, some philosophers have argued that we don't even have to accept the norms that we are ashamed of not living up to. Instead, all that is required is that people, who we respect and who are significant to us, accept such norms (Williams 1993; Calhoun 2004; Maibom 2010). Being ashamed affects how we feel about ourselves more so than does guilt, which is more associated with our actions than our persons. It makes us feel small. Shame is commonly thought to lead to retreat, by contrast to guilt, which seems to motivate approach and repair (Tangney & Fischer 1992), but this may be an artefact of a certain particularly negative conceptualization of shame (Cibich et al. 2016; de Hoooge et al. 2010). Another group of theories about shame focuses less on norms or ideals, but instead argues that shame is connected with failure to be seen, or to present ourselves, as we would like. Jean-Paul Sartre (1943/1992) famously complained that the look of others freezes us in 'facticity', thereby limiting our capacity to define ourselves (for a related view, see Velleman 2006).

The problem with providing a comprehensive account of shame is that it is a remarkably diverse phenomenon. This means that accounts that do an excellent job in explaining some forms of shame often fail miserably at explaining others. Accounts of shame that focus on living up to norms, ideals, or standards have no neat explanations of why some people feel ashamed when others praise them or when they are seen naked by a voyeur. These instances are well accounted for by theories that focus on self-presentation. Such theories, however, have a harder time explaining why a person can be ashamed of living up to a self-imposed standard that other people are unaware

of. Where almost all accounts of shame fall short is in explaining why victims of trauma experience shame (Bennett et al. 2010; Dutra Ross et al. 2019; Sekowski et al. 2020; van der Kolk 2015). The anecdotal evidence for this phenomenon is strong, and the American Psychiatric Association (APA) now includes persistent feelings of shame under its criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Trauma constitutes a puzzle because it is typically *victims* who feel ashamed of what happened to them. But on most accounts of shame, it ought to be the perpetrators who experience shame. Victims, for instance, have not failed to live up to a relevant standards or norms, but the perpetrator has. Any moral wrongdoing is on the part of the perpetrator. Yet, perpetrators are often proud of their misdeeds, posting videos of rape or animal torture on social media, whereas victims are left devastated and ashamed. They are ashamed of what happened to them, ashamed of their failure to prevent it, and, as time passes, feel shame more often and in a wider range of circumstances. Any account of shame must explain why victims of trauma experience it.

What seems to be going on is that victims are ashamed of *being* victims or of having let themselves become victims. This lends credence to self-presentation views – Sartre's, for instance – because there is no requirement that the person who is ashamed has failed to live up to a standard. All that is needed is that their ability to present themselves so that they are seen the way they want to is impeded. Self-presentation views, though, have other problems, such as explaining why norms and standards are so central, even when they are not one's own, but those of respected others. The solution to traumatic shame lies elsewhere, then. I suggest it lies in a modification of the norms and standards view. Shame descended from submission in nonhuman animals (Keltner et al. 1997; Maibom 2010), which means that it is intimately connected to power. The shamed are overpowered. They cannot protect themselves; they are at the mercy of others. Expressing their helplessness through shame might save them. Later in human psychological and cultural evolution, shame became closely associated with social and moral norms. But its connection to power and submission remains strong, as can be seen from the psychological evidence. An investigation of traumatic shame brings out some of the unsettling aspects of shame, which are the result of the subsequently forged connection between subjugation and as system of moral.

I first present evidence that traumatic experiences cause shame. Such shame may be caused by the difficulty of figuring out whether one is actually to blame for what happened to one or not. Nonetheless, it is puzzling how victims feel ashamed about having been exposed to something that *they* did not do. To explore further why, I turn to the role shame plays in socializing children. Here we see that the experience of being punished becomes associated with shame and with being bad, often even before the child understands

that what they do is wrong. In other words, what is understood to be wrong may first be what gives rise to negative affect as a result of the consequences of that action. But whereas this may account for why abused children are ashamed, it cannot explain why *neglected* children are as ashamed, if not more ashamed than those who are abused. To explore this issue, I turn to evidence about the need for attachment and recognition. Recognition is a deeply felt human need and a powerful social act. Withholding it is a way of wielding social power. We are now getting to the root of the problem. Being exposed to a higher power, particularly when violently exercised, causes shame. However, It is only when we consider the fact that shame evolved from submission that we see why there is this strong connection between shame and power. I present reasons for accepting that shame is an emotion the function of which is to protect us from social threats by teaching us to act in accordance with certain norms and ideals. The *way* it does so, however, is through a show of power, by those who raise us and by our peers. Power, in one form or other, underwrites norms. This connection to power explains why the ones without social standing or power, and those who are abused by others, feel shame despite the fact that they have not failed to live up to relevant norms or stands.

## SHAME AND TRAUMA

The APA defines trauma as 'an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster', such as horror, fright, anger and utter weakness and vulnerability.[1] It arises from having an unbearable or intolerable experience, usually one that strikes at the very heart of the individual's integrity, such as 'actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence' (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 271). The focus here is on the *physical* or tangible side of trauma, presumably as an attempt to sound as objective as possible. We should not, however, ignore the many cases in which people are traumatized by actions or circumstances that threaten their identity or worth as persons.

Some people recover fairly rapidly from a traumatic event, but many do not. Instead, they experience long-term sequelae as a result of it, such as: dissociation, selective amnesia (usually for the event or aspects of the event), chronic vigilance for threat, fear, anger, guilt, shame, depersonalization, intrusive memories of the event or vivid dreams reliving the event, persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs about the self, negative expectations of others and the world in general, self-blame, depression, detachment, inability to experience positive emotions, problems concentrating, aggression, self-destructive behaviours, and sleep problems (American Psychiatric

Association 2013, 271–272). In the United States, PTSD is often discussed in connection with war trauma. It seems to have been an especially severe problem for veterans of the Vietnam War. According to the National Center for PTSD, an arm of the US Department of Veteran Affairs, *half* of Vietnam vets had PTSD at some point.[2]

War is just one cause of PTSD, but it is often seen as the most legitimate and non-stigmatizing form in a culture where psychiatric illness is generally thought to be avoidable by toughening up. Unfortunately, violence, whether physical or mental, form part of many people's everyday life, often with devastating consequences. In the words of Bessel van der Kolk, 'trauma remains [. . .] the greatest threat to our national well-being. Since 2001 far more Americans have died at the hands of their partners or other family members than in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. American women are twice as likely to suffer domestic violence as breast cancer' (2015, 348).[3]

Shame isn't just another emotion experienced by people who suffer from PTSD. It plays a central role. People who experience more shame have more severe PTSD, and those who continue to feel shame about the traumatizing event experience persistent posttraumatic distress (Leskela et al. 2002). In a longitudinal study on the effects of shame on PTSD symptoms, Øktendalen et al. (2015) found that the more shame or guilt a person feels at time 1, the more severe their symptoms are at time 2, three days later. So, although shame results from trauma, it later undergirds posttraumatic stress. So does guilt, but I want to focus on shame here.

Trauma comes in many forms. It is therefore not surprising that people experience shame for a great variety of reasons as a result. It is not uncommon for soldiers to be traumatized by what they have done to others, such as helpless civilians. For instance, in an interview with captured police personnel sent to aid the Russian troops in their invasion of Ukraine, Lieutenant-Colonel Astakhov Dmitriy Mikailovich expressed shame at being part of an invading force. He particularly notes his shame at being faced with crying women.[4] This is the most easily understandable form of traumatic shame because it is the perpetrators who experience it.

Sometimes traumatic shame can be understood as a reaction to a system that shames victims for what happened to them, which is typical in cases of rape, where it is commonplace to tell victims they were at a place they shouldn't have been at the wrong time wearing the wrong clothes (Kennedy & Prock 2017). Reports indicate police often laugh at, ridicule, or threaten victims (particularly if the perpetrator is of a certain social standing). The juridical system is not much better, trawling through the private life of the victim looking for any evidence they might have invited the assault, while deeming inadmissible evidence about the perpetrator(s).[5] Adding to these humiliations, victims are often blamed by friends or family for having

allowed themselves to get into the situation where they were assaulted in the first place (Ahrens 2006; Bhuptani & Messman 2021). In her moving book about her own sexual assault, Susan Brison (2002) describes how she learnt to be grateful for having nearly been killed by her assailant since that meant nobody blamed her for being raped, which was what most women in her support group experienced. Victim blaming might be an offshoot of the widely studied tendency of people to believe the world is just and therefore that victims get what they deserve (Lerner 1980).

But traumatic shame is not limited to cases where victims are blamed, directly or indirectly, for their own misfortune. Victims of rape are often profoundly ashamed, particularly if the assault took place when they were children. These survivors feel disgusting and cannot stand to be seen by others (van der Kolk 2015, 102). The profundity of their shame, and the fact that it seems to have become chronic, is manifested in the fact that they find it difficult to meet other people's gaze. Victims of genocide, such as the Rwandan genocide or the Holocaust, are often ashamed and *remain* ashamed, even after their oppressors have been vanquished (Levi 1988; Hatzfeld 2005). Soldiers, too, are often ashamed that they survived, while their comrades died. This kind of survivor shame is obviously much harder to explain.

In general, people who suffer trauma in childhood have worse outcomes than people who suffer trauma as adults. Traumatized children are also more likely to be re-traumatized as adults and to experience profound shame (Babcock & DePrince 2012). It is not only abuse that has this effect. Neglect does too. This is perhaps the most puzzling form of shame. Not only does neglect have serious negative consequences for a child's development, but even children who are well cared for *physically,* experience profound trauma and shame as a result of *psychological* neglect.

Parental neglect is often caused by maternal depression. Children whose main caregivers are depressed, grow up without parental warmth, engagement or support. As a result, they often suffer from a deep and lasting sense of shame and worthlessness. Bureau et al. (2010) call such neglect 'hidden trauma'. It is hidden because we tend to think of trauma as involving violence or severe deprivation (starvation, for instance), but not emotional neglect. However, the more we learn about infant development, the more we realize how profound is the need for 'a responsive attachment figure to comfort and regulate the stress of the fear-evoking events that are part of the infant's experience' (Bureau et al. 2010, 48). In the absence of such a figure, the child must rely on its own feeble capacity to regulate stress and negative emotions, must self-generate positive emotions, and form its own healthy attachments. The usual result of such an unreasonable challenge is that the child fails to develop the same level of psychological stability as its cared-for peers, which

puts it at heightened risk for developing borderline personality disorder, depression, PTSD and other psychopathologies. Children whose parents are invalidating, or express little warmth towards them, are in a similar boat. They feel inadequate and have problems self-soothing (Naismith et al. 2019). They are also more prone to feel ashamed and to feel it more profoundly, and to become depressed as adults (Bennett et al. 2010; Dutra Ross et al. 2019; Sekowski et al. 2020). It seems that the more shame such a person feels, the more depressed they feel.

These, then, are the facts about the relationships between shame and trauma. But how do we explain such facts? Why are victims of misfortune or violence so prone to shame, given that according to most accounts of shame it is the *perpetrator*, not the victim, who ought to experience it?

## BEING THE VICTIM

As I mentioned in the Introduction, one of the most common views of shame says that people are ashamed when they have failed to live up to some ideal, norm, or standard (Rawls 1973; Taylor 1985; Teroni & Deonna 2008; Keltner & Buswell 1996; Tangney & Fischer 1992). I might be ashamed of failing an exam, of being too busy with my own problems to be there for a friend, or of my book having received a scathing review. I can also feel ashamed for being fat, ugly or old, as our social ideal is to be young, beautiful, powerful and fit. But despite the remarkable range of circumstances where one can see oneself as having failed to live up to norms or standards, it is hard to see how being abused or neglected fits into this schema. Although victims may *feel* inadequate because of some characteristic inherent to them, the trauma that resulted in shame was due, not to a shortcoming on their side, but to *the perpetrator* failing to act according to moral, social or humanitarian norms. And yet, although *some* perpetrators are ashamed of their actions, the many videos uploaded on social media bragging about raping women, beating other people or torturing helpless animals, make it evident that many perpetrators are quite satisfied with themselves. Why is it the victims, and not the perpetrators, who are ashamed?

One reason may be traced back to a tendency for people to believe that the world is just. More than half a decade ago, social psychologist Melvin Lerner found evidence for the fact that people tend to believe that people who are fortunate *deserve* good fortune (Lerner 1965, 1980). Inversely, people to whom bad things happen are often thought to have done something to deserve it. As a result, victims are predisposed to thinking they have done something to deserve what happened to them. But although this certainly sets up a connection between a sense of blameworthiness and victimization, it is still a bit

obscure why the victims should feel ashamed. This is particularly true if it is not clear *what* standard or norm they are supposed to have flouted.[6]

Instead of going the above route, it may be a better idea to look closer at the very notions of victim and perpetrator. We talk about victims and perpetrators effortlessly as if the referents of these terms were clear. After all, these are not difficult concepts. According to theories of right, a victim is a person whose rights have been violated and who deserves compensation (Meyers 2011). Conversely, a perpetrator is someone who has violated the rights of others and who ought to compensate either the victim or, in a criminal case, the state, understood as the guardian of rights. But in real life, things are more complex. There are well-known victim-perpetrator asymmetries in how people regard wrongs (see, e.g., Baumeister et al. 1990), which means that a victim's claims are often contested. He must therefore rely on his own sense of what happened or the support of those he can rally to his cause. This is not an easy task, argues Diana Tietjens Meyers (2011), because our common sense view of victims is exacting. We tend to think, she writes, that to count as a victim 'nothing you could have done could reasonably be construed to imply consent to the harsh treatment you have endured' (2011, 260). In effect, we work with two paradigms of victimhood, the 'pathetic victim' and the 'heroic victim'. The prototype of the latter are people like Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King, who rebel nonviolently against an unjust social order, and are punished for it. The pathetic victim, on the other hand, is exemplified by concentration camp survivors or abused children. Heroic victims rarely feel ashamed, but pathetic victims do.

Meyers argues that pathetic victims are seen to be (1) innocent of any wrongdoing relevant to how they have been treated, (2) completely helpless in the face of overwhelming force, and (3) exposed to incredible suffering. Put differently, 'real' victims are entirely stripped of their agency. Against the background of such a view of victims, people who have been wronged, but who are not utterly passive and innocent often struggle to secure the same treatment as the perfectly innocent victim. This is obvious when people are raped. People are blamed for being drunk, for wearing the wrong clothes, talking to the wrong people, walking home alone in the dark, and so on, and are therefore seen as at least partly responsible for what happened to them. In jury trials, the presumed innocence of the victim is often discussed at length. When the victim is seen as not innocent, sometimes for reasons that seem to bear scant relation to the assault, sentencing recommendations are affected (Sundby 2003).

This exaggerated notion of what it takes to be a victim contrasts with conditions laid down in law, which limits the kinds of precautions people are obliged to take, and the risks they can run, while still qualifying as a victim when their rights have been violated, Meyers points out. Leaving a

rear window open in your house, does not mean you cannot be burgled, for instance. In practice, however, people tend to adopt the more exacting view of the innocent victim, and it leads them to being less sympathetic towards those whose rights have been violated, but who aren't completely helpless or innocent. Think, for instance, of women in abusive marriages. Why don't they just leave? people ask. The larger issue here is that few victims of violence are picked off the street in broad daylight while they are going about their business. Women are overwhelmingly more likely to be raped, beaten or killed by someone they know, often their fathers or husbands. Children are typically abused by their caregivers, extended family members, or other trusted person (such as priests). When the two parties have an intimate relationship, it is much harder to ensure that the victim is either completely innocent or completely overpowered.

If *other* people pay so much attention to the victim's possible involvement in what happened to them, it is only natural that the victim should too. And this turns out to be the case. Victims of abuse often blame themselves (Babcock & DePrince 2012; Rosenthal 1987). As van der Kolk writes, incest survivors 'are ashamed of what happened to them, and they blame themselves – on some level they firmly believe that these terrible things were done to them because they are terrible people' (van der Kolk 2015, 131). In other words, they feel they deserved what they were exposed to because of things they said, did or simply *were.* Many trauma survivors are *most* ashamed of their *own* actions, or inactions, and less so about what happened to them, says van der Kolk (2015). It is alarmingly common for people who were abused as children to be ashamed of not resisting sufficiently, loving the perpetrator or acting lovingly towards him (because it is their father, say), or being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Take this example of one of van der Kolk's patients who was regularly beaten by his father as a child. He thinks of his child self as stupid for having *provoked* his father. When van der Kolk (van der Kolk 2015, 294)

> asked him how he felt about the boy who was getting hurt, he told me that he despised him. He was a weakling and a whiner; after showing even the least bit of defiance to his dad's high-handed ways, he inevitably capitulated and whimpered that he would be a good little boy. He has no guts, no fire in his belly.

But many trauma survivors know they are not to blame, yet continue to *feel* blameworthy and haunted by shame: (2015, 128)

> I brought it on myself: I was seven years old and I loved my daddy. I wanted him to love me, and I did what he wanted me to do. It was my own fault.

This woman was sexually abused by her father for years as a child. As an adult undergoing therapy, she doesn't *believe* she was to blame. Nonetheless, she says (van der Kolk 2015, 128),

> I instinctively blame myself for everything bad that happens to the people around me. I know that isn't rational and I feel really dumb for feeling that way, but I do.

She cannot reconcile what she believes to be the case on reflection and her intuitive or immediate tendency to experience herself as blameworthy.

The fact that people *believe* or *feel* blameworthy implies that they do not see themselves as victims. Or at least not entirely so. This seems surprising at first, but we must recall that the abusive parent or person is likely to insist that the child is to blame, and children often fail to find support in other family members. Whether or not one is the victim, that is, whether one's rights are violated, is not an easy thing to determine. After all, a punishment is often just like a violation of someone's rights. People's rights to decent treatment are semi-suspended when they are deemed to have transgressed themselves. Our system of punishment, even just at an interpersonal level, is mired in ambiguity. Apply the right pressure, and some victims will accept a narrative in which they received what they deserved.

Nevertheless, there is something distinctly odd about this pattern of thinking. *If* shame really has to do with living up to norms and standards *and* the behaviours that victims are exposed to are actually proscribed, *then* why is the tendency for victims to take on blame? One explanation is that people tend to *identify* with the person who aggresses against them as a form of self-protection.

## IDENTIFICATION WITH THE AGGRESSOR

Sándor Ferenczi notes how often abused children, instead of protesting, internalize the adult's guilt (Ferenczi 1949, 227):

> These children feel physically and morally helpless, their personalities are not sufficiently consolidated in order to be able to protest, even if only in thought, for the overpowering force and authority of the adult makes them dumb [...] The same anxiety, however, if it reaches a certain maximum, compels them to subordinate themselves like automata to the will of the aggressor, to divine each one of his desires and to gratify these; completely oblivious of themselves they identify themselves with the aggressor. Through the identification [...] he disappears as part of the external reality, and becomes intra- instead of extra-psychic…

Ferenczi's thought is that children identify with the caregiver who acts aggressively towards them as a form of self-defence. The idea is by conforming its behaviour to the caregiver's will, the child can avoid future harm. By anticipating aggression, the child protects itself against it. Such self-protection comes at a cost, however. The child must internalize attitudes towards itself that are constricting and psychologically damaging.

Jay Frankel, however, thinks that it is not only people that have experienced severe trauma who habitually 'identify with the aggressor'. Instead, such identification operates invisibly, but pervasively in most people's everyday lives (Frankel 2002, 122):

> We efface our own particularity all the time in our social interactions with symbolically powerful figures in whose presence we become awed, meek, dumbstruck, or gullible; doctors, bosses, celebrities, experts, people who wear uniforms or suits.

Frankel sees this type of identification as a way of internalizing the norms and standards of the society we grow up in. The link to identification goes through power. The more powerful individual forces the other to identify with him. As a result, the latter internalizes an attitude to himself, and his own attitudes and desires, that reflect that of the aggressor. Seeing oneself through the eyes of an aggressor causes shame and the disowning of desires deemed problematic by the aggressor. This need not be unhealthy, of course. Eating poop, hitting people randomly, or stealing toys are not the sorts of things that will lead to a long healthy life and good social relationships. So, identification with the aggressor can describe a perfectly normal process of socialization, although one might want to replace 'aggressor' with a more neutral term, such as 'a higher power'.[7] This is a more beneficent way of thinking about socialization, surely. The point remains, however, that social adjustment is often achieved by some form of coercive action leading to shame (Loader 1998).

However, when the shaming is random, overly abusive or constant, it has negative effects on the child's sense of self. Since it is hard to discern norms in the pattern of abuse and, hence, to learn to protect against it, what might be learnt is that one's mere presence evokes such abusive reactions. Moreover, abusive parents are often themselves incapable of distinguishing between appropriate reactions to problematic behaviours and straight abuse, as a consequence of which they relate to the child *as if* he deserved the abuse. No doubt he is also *told* he is. The child is therefore led to 'the erroneous assumption that he was abused because of his own actions', to use the words of Kenneth Rosenthal (1987, 82). This accords with the observation of many researchers, that abused children often equate being punished with being bad (Rosenthal 1987; Loader 1998). The child 'senses himself

as implicated in his own abuse, simply because he was *there*' (Rosenthal 1987, 80).

The idea that very abusive experiences cause the sort of identification with the aggressor that Ferenczi and Frankel talk about is supported by the data. It turns out that the more severe the abuse a woman exposed to intimate partner violence experiences, the more she blames herself for it (Babcock & DePrince 2012). In effect, there is a *negative* correlation between victims' ability to avoid getting hurt and the degree to which they blame themselves. This tendency towards self-blame is even greater in women who were also abused as children (Babcock & DePrince 2012). Children, too, exhibit a heightened tendency to self-blame the more severe and long-lasting the abuse – in this case, sexual abuse – was and the closer their relationship to the abuser. There is something about being powerless in the face of an abusive individual that turns the person against themselves, it seems.

As far as I can tell, identification with a higher power is essentially what developmental psychologists call 'internalization'. The difference is that on the psychoanalytic account what is internalized is the socializer or, even better, the socializer's *reactions* to the child, whereas social psychologists typically focus on *norms* or *ideals.* The two are not opposed, of course. One can plausibly claim that the child internalizes norms and ideals *by means of* internalizing parental reactions. This is, in fact, quite plausible. Many shame researchers believe that when we feel ashamed, we do so, in part, because of an internalized audience that sees and condemns our acts (Tangney & Dearing 2002; Williams 1993). This audience, we might suppose, is the vestige of the greater powers that have helped regulate our behaviour during our formative years.

Returning to the delicate issue of whether the way one is treated is justified or not, it would seem that children are often punished or corrected for behaviours that they are not fully able to control. One might suppose that this would be enough to make them recognize the injustice of the punishment. But children *also* overestimate their own abilities for control, and so may be unaware of the discrepancy between what is required of them and their capabilities (Schwebel & Bounds 2003). This suggests, then, that children take responsibility for things they have little control over. It is quite likely, in fact, that children tend to assume that when their parents act aggressively towards them, it is because they have done something they ought not to have done and they are to blame.

Psychotherapists are known for arguing that our self-concept arises in interaction with others. But they are not alone. Dan Zahavi (2014), for instance, has argued so too. However, in contradistinction to those who hold that infants are largely unable to differentiate themselves from their caregivers early on in development (e.g. Nathanson 1994), Zahavi argues that infants are

capable of self-conscious experiences, but only of a very rudimentary kind.[8] A more robust self-concept is the *result of*, not the prerequisite for, relating to others. Here he follows child psychologists, such as Andrew Meltzoff and Keith Moore (1995). Instead, then, of thinking of shame as a self-conscious emotion, we ought to think of it more as a 'self-in-relation-to-others' emotion, he says. If this view is right, then early shaming is particularly liable to shape a person's sense of self. Understanding what one is to blame for or not does, in the end, require a somewhat sophisticated notion of one's own capacities, which is linked to one's sense of self. If that sense of self is heavily formed by what *others* think one is capable of and responsible for, it is easy to see how one might grow up feeling oneself responsible for the abuse that one was subjected to.

Because shame is painful, we want to avoid experiencing it, wherefore we internalize the corresponding norms and standards, so we can avoid *being* shamed. Shame is a way of protecting the self by appearing unthreatening and yielding when one experiences it and, when one has learnt what kinds of actions or situations give rise to it, avoiding them (cf. Stark et al. 1996). As Peter Loader (1998) points out, shame plays an important role in development. Ideally, shame protects an individual from narcissism, fosters modesty, respect for the thoughts and feelings of others, and a more realistic self-understanding, even when it is negative. Supportive parents help children accept their own failures and shortcomings, and thereby contribute to their children's shame being manageable. But shame can also be used as a way to control others or to bolster the shamer's self-esteem. Under such circumstances, shame is an unhelpful companion.

The above account of the role of shame in child development helps explain why people who have been abused feel shame. But it does not explain a very common form of PTSD arising from childhood *neglect.* In fact, some studies indicate that emotional neglect is more damaging to a person's sense of self, and causes him to be more prone to shame and depression than is violence or aggression (Lyons-Ruth & Block 1996; Bennett et al. 2010). The previous account, however, seems to rely on aggression as the primary cause of shame. So, is the above account sufficient to explain shame and trauma arising from childhood neglect, or do we need a different one?

## NEGLECT AND RECOGNITION

Childhood neglect is a somewhat diffuse phenomenon in which the child is not given the attention or resources required to develop well. It ranges from failure (on the part of caregivers) to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or instruction, to lack of praise, attention or love. Neglect is invariably

experienced as a form of rejection, which is gauged 'from explicit indications of rejection, such as a romantic breakup or expulsion from a group, to subtle expressions of disinterest, disapproval, or dislike, such as low responsiveness, distant body language, and avoidance' (Leary 2015).

Infants' sensitivity to maternal rejection became famous in the context of the Still-Face Paradigm, pioneered by Tronick et al. (1978). In this paradigm, a mother and her infant are brought to the laboratory. Initially, the mother plays with and responds positively to the infant. Then she turns away and when she faces the infant again, her face is blank and unresponsive. After about two minutes, she resumes her engagement with the infant. What is extraordinary is the effect this period of maternal unresponsiveness has. At first, the infant tries to capture the mother's attention by smiling, waving or pointing, after which it becomes increasingly distressed, screeching, crying, and eventually turning away from the mother's unresponsive face (and body). A meta-analysis has confirmed that these reactions to the paradigm are typical, and that they are evident already from the age of 1 month. The meta-analysis also found that the infant remains distressed *after* it has reconnected with the mother (Mesman et al. 2009).

The reaction in the Still-Face Paradigm has been interpreted to show that infants are highly sensitive to its caregiver's availability and emotional expressions, and have a great need for attuned engagement. Tronick used to think that being in tune is central to good caregiver-child interaction, but he and Gianino later argued that mismatches and imperfect interaction is the rule rather than the exception. What is important is that caregivers are sensitive to when the infant signals such mismatch, and that they change their behaviour accordingly (Gianino & Tronick 1988; Tronick & Gianino 1986). This change on the part of the caregiver is a first indication to the infant of its own efficacy. It is easy to see how the sense of helplessness neglected children experience might flow from such early lack of responsiveness. More recently, Tronick has suggested that caregiver-child reciprocal interactions also help the child learn what it is feeling, characteristics of the other person, and the quality of their relationship. Smiling interactions, for instance, suggest to the child that it is happy, that the mother is friendly and happy, and that their relationship is positive, safe, and warm (Tronick 2005). It also helps the child regulate its own affect (see also Eisenberg et al. 2010; Armstrong-Carter et al. 2021). Mirroring, for instance, helps the child understand *what* it is experiencing, and discordant responses to its emotions appear to be interpreted as encouragements – it's okay that you are feeling what you are feeling – or discouragements – don't feel that way, it's wrong.

We can now ask ourselves what the distressed reaction to disengagement has to do with shame. One answer is that neglect or rejection simply *is* a form of aggression. In fact, it could be argued that, in humans, it is used as

often as aggression to signal disapproval or disdain, but with the same end as aggression. Giving people the cold shoulder, for instance, is an active, highly involved and common strategy for showing aggression. In its more extreme form of ostracism, it is an age-old strategy of punishing people for perceived transgressions (recall the ancient Greek and Roman practice of exiling people or the Catholic Church's excommunications). This may explain being ignored, but it is not the right kind of explanation in the many cases of neglect due to depression in the caregiver(s). These caregivers are *not* punishing the child by ignoring them, but simply lack the energy and the attentiveness that is required for being tuned in to their children's needs.

Ignoring others goes beyond aggression. Historically, dominant individuals have expressed social superiority to others by ignoring their existence. The nobility, Axel Honneth (2001) notes, would undress in front of their servants because the servants 'weren't there', meaning they had no standing recognized by the nobility. Being willfully ignored, therefore, is not simply a punishment, it is a form of social invisibility. Examining this idea, Honneth argues that the default reaction to an interpersonal encounter is to acknowledge the other, not simply as a perceptual and passive act, but as an active noticing involving small expressive gestures, such as a certain look, a smile, a move of the head in ways that are calibrated to the relationship. It is more than noticing the person as an individual; it is a sign of social validity. I acknowledge you as someone who is *worthy* of my attention. Acting as if you were not there – in particular, ignoring your attempts to connect or to be seen – invalidates your existence as a social being, as someone *who matters.* Honneth adds that failure to be recognized signals that one cannot rely on the other person to accord one the sort of treatment that is the norm. One stands outside the moral community of that person. Failure of recognition, then, doesn't just demonstrate to the other that they have no worth, but also constitutes a significant threat because of the consequences this has for future interactions. '[A] welcoming gesture among adults expresses the fact that one can subsequently reckon upon benevolent actions' (Honneth 2001, 121). Being ignored does not bode well.

Neglect, then, signals worthlessness and lack of social standing. This fact can be entirely removed from any action that an individual performs. Since such a subtle gesture voids any expectation to be treated *as a person,* it is naturally perceived as a threat. Honneth connects his idea of the basic importance of expressive recognition to a parent's ability to signal with expressions of enthusiasm and joy that the child is valuable and lovable. We have seen what the opposite suggests to the child and how undermining it is to its sense of self.

It is something of a puzzle, though, how young children can be so sensitive to lack of recognition. Is being recognized *as a person* really something they

are capable of? Might it instead be, as Honneth sometimes suggests, that lack of recognition has its roots in the child's strong need for attachment? There are other questions too. If, as we have said, shame is about failing to live up to norms and standards, how can *neglect* cause it? What does social *standing* and *worth* have to do with living up to norms and standards? Another closely related question is what does social standing have to do with moral worth? To answer these questions, we must dig deeper. Only when we get to the bottom of where shame come from, namely submission, can we see why these different ideas come together in shame.

## SHAME AND SUBMISSION

In an earlier paper, I argued that only by considering *the descent* of shame can we make sense of persecution shame, a form of traumatic shame (Maibom 2010). Following Dacher Keltner and colleagues, I argued that shame evolved from submission or appeasement in our primate ancestors (Keltner et al. 1997; Keltner & Harker 1998). Group living animals frequently experience conflicts over resources, such as food, mates or shelter. These conflicts can be settled by fighting, but this is costly for both parties. If, instead, individuals can size each other up beforehand and avoid fighting in the first place, it is to be preferred. Relative strength or rank is signalled by patterns of aggression or domination and submission. When fights actually do break out, submission signals defeat. Animals rarely fight to the death. Instead, the losing one submits, which incentivizes the other to stop its attack. By submitting, then, the animal signals that it will not challenge the other individual over food, mating or dominance. If this is right, it means that shame is essentially indexed to power, social standing and agency. What an individual can do within a social hierarchy, what resources it can command, is a function of its relative position, and therefore power, within that system. Norms of behaviour are established and sanctioned by domination and underwritten by aggression. Obviously, this is a highly simplified and abstract picture (for more detail, see Maibom 2010), but it is all we need to understand one of the core features of shame.

The primary reason to accept the idea that shame descended from submission is that submission displays in many nonhuman animals are strikingly similar to human shame displays. A person who is ashamed *looks* smaller because the body contracts, and she tends to lower her head and look down and to the side (Keltner et al. 1997). She is motivated to escape the situation in which she is ashamed. Avoiding someone's gaze, looking down, and shrinking so that one appears smaller are very common submission displays across a number of species, and are typically followed

by retreat. Moreover, such displays seem to function in similar ways: reaffirming dominance structures and serving to diffuse an attack. It is not too farfetched to suppose that the reason that submission and shame displays are so similar is because they have evolved from the same emotion in our common ancestors. Another reason in favour of this suggestion is that once we consider the probable function of shame in humans, it looks remarkably similar to submission in nonhuman animals. In nonhuman animals, an animal submits to signal its position within a social hierarchy, which determines access to coveted resources. Put more abstractly, what an animal can do without negative repercussions – such as aggressive attacks by conspecifics (especially animals of higher rank) – is a function of its position in the social network. It is a normative, or proto-normative, network regulated by rank. Shame in humans seems to be similar. It is typically a reaction to disapproval in real, or imagined, others, in reaction to violation of the prevailing norms of action. In many human societies today, rank plays a lesser role in shame than in nonhuman animals, but it nonetheless appears to be significant. In both human and nonhuman animals, the display of submission/shame serves to mollify relevant social others.

The aforementioned similarities notwithstanding, human shame is distinctive in a number of ways. It has evolved along more egalitarian lines, presumably because we are a more cooperative species. What that means in practice, I have argued, is that shame isn't simply experienced relative to powerful individuals within a hierarchy, but also in response to disapproving peers and the group as a whole. Moreover, the power-submission nexus is as strongly associated with interpersonal and moral norms as it is with the relative power of individuals within the group. It doesn't take much reading of history to realize that morals replicate power structures. Women's subjugation, for instance, has been, and still is, an institutionalized feature of many moralities the world over. However, more egalitarian societies at last claim to cleave to moralities where the individual has inalienable rights. Be that as it may, as humans we are disposed to feel ashamed not only in the face of people who have power over us (particularly people we affiliate with), but also when we have violated, or seem to have violated, norms that are generally accepted by our group.

Ultimately speaking, this is the classical view plus. The plus lies in adding an evolutionary account, which explains a number of features of shame as vestiges of where the emotion came from. This creates a more complex view of shame; it is an emotion that at one and the same time plays a central role in our moral system and which has a long evolutionary history of regulating the behaviours of individuals living in a group along lines of power. This makes sense of why the powerful have a greater ability to shame those they have power over. On the one hand, responding to aggression by more powerful

others with shame is in line with submitting to them to avoid further injury. On the other hand, being subjugated is being put in a submissive position, again something that is strongly associated with shame.

Shame, of course, is often felt when we are alone with our thoughts. This is because we *internalize* the types of actions or situations where shame is an adaptive response, given our experiences. In a good environment, adaptive responses are appropriate to the situation and aligned with the commonly accepted moral system. But what is interesting is that even when we are alone shaming ourselves, as it were, there is a sense of being seen, of an audience or inner critic. We feel watched or observed in shame in a way that is deeply troubling. This fits very well with the view I have just presented. We have internalized dominant others, or peers, who continue to mould our behaviour as tangible presences in our inner life. In fact, norms may be internalized *via* the imagined responses of powerful or significant others, such as parents, peers or superiors.

To summarize, then, once we consider the descent of shame it is easier to make sense of traumatic shame because of the strong connection between power, aggression, violence and shame. We are naturally disposed to experience shame in response to attack by more powerful others. Because shame has the social function it does, we are liable to assume that when we feel ashamed, we have done wrong. It is, in fact, quite likely that we feel shame before we are clear on *what* it is we've done wrong. That is not to say that we continue to feel ashamed *after* we reflect, of course. We sometimes 'correct' our shame responses through emotion regulation. But emotion regulation usually works better with emotions that are not overpowering. People who are traumatized, however, are flooded with very powerful emotions. This explains how someone like van der Bessel's patient can insist that she *feels* ashamed even though she knows she ought not to.

## SHAME, POWER AND COMMUNITY

This is where we are, then. Our problem was this. People who have been the victims of others' wrongdoing are often ashamed. They are ashamed of what was done to them. On a view where shame involves our failing to do what it takes to live up to certain norms or standards, this is surprising. It is the perpetrators, not the victims, who ought to be ashamed. Once we look closer at the extraordinarily high standards common sense has for being a victim, that is, complete innocence, it would appear that victims often are not regarded *as* victims. Not even by themselves. This explains part of the data, but it still leaves us with the problem that although victims might not feel completely innocent, it is often not clear *what* standard or norm they failed

to live up to. It therefore remains a mystery why exactly these victims should feel *ashamed.* To look for the roots of such shame, we turned to childhood development. Children's behaviour is moulded, in part, by their caregivers through acts that are experienced as punishing, and which cause shame. It is important to note that sadness or disapproval in significant others is typically experienced as aversive, and consequently might be regarded as punishing. A connection is set up between being punished, or being met with attitudes that are experienced as aversive, and being bad or wrong. Children often have little knowledge of norms or standards outside the sphere of their immediate environment, and are therefore liable to accept the norms that they are socialized according to even if, later, they may reject such norms.

This account, probably largely correct, faces the problem that it is not just aggression, which causes shame, but neglect does so too. Why should children, and adults, become ashamed of being neglected? Here we move on to the work of Tronick and Honneth on the importance of attachment and recognition to human well-being. It seems that children experience neglect as a form of punishment; as something intentional in their caregivers, which they try to work around as best they can. Honneth draws our attention to the fact that being ignored has long been associated with having low, or no, social standing, sometimes merely as a result of the family one was born into. Being ignored by a potential social partner shows a lack of recognition, which implies that one cannot rely on being treated in ways that are sensitive to one's wants or needs. It is, in other words, a powerful social threat. Exposed to such a threat, people are ashamed. But now the question arises, why is that? Recall that the most common view of shame is that it is a response to failure to live up to social norms and standards.

Here we come to my proposed solution. We need to consider where shame came from. As I have argued before (Maibom 2010), shame has descended from submission in our ancestors. We can observe the form and function of submission in many nonhuman animals. Assuming that we inherited some of our emotions from common ancestors, emotions that are behaviourally similar likely have similar functions. Shame, then, is closely related to power and domination (cf. also Wurmser 1981). Feeling ashamed *is* feeling powerless or weak, which is why its most prominent motivational features are appeasement and retreat. The physical expression of shame is itself a shrinking, where the individual slumps, lowers her head, covers her face, or looks away (Keltner et al. 1997; Keltner & Harker 1998). When experiencing shame, our whole agency feels constricted and limited. That shame is intimately connected with a sense of agency is further supported by the fact that female rape survivors who continued to plan how they might resist, fight, or escape while they were being raped experienced less severe shame and less severe PTSD than women who felt completely defeated. This was true even though none of the women

in the study were able to prevent the rape and almost all of them (80 per cent) were convinced they would be killed. 'All patients described feeling helpless, hopeless and humiliated. The difference seemed to be that those with good outcomes continued to retain a sense of autonomy'. (Ehlers et al. 1998)

An overarching theme to this treatment of shame, then, is that shame is closely associated with power and blame. To some extent shame *is* about power, although that power need not belong to *one* person, but is often distributed over many people. The people we are intimately connected with have power over us, as do our fellow citizens, and we over them. But shame is also linked to norms, whether moral, social or those pertaining to certain activities. We could say that power and morals are linked to shame. But it is an uneasy alliance. And we see how uneasy it is in traumatic shame. Victims of attack, abuse and neglect are often ashamed. Being helpless in the face of an attack or in the face of people who do not recognize you as a social other seems to be enough, as a matter of empirical fact, to cause profound shame. And although some victims believe that they were wrongly treated and not to blame, they often continue to *experience* shame and *feel* blameworthy.

Is it *appropriate* for victims of violence to feel ashamed? Doing justice to this question requires more space than I have here. I will therefore be brief. The view I have defended takes failure to live up to social norms and standards as being the core of shame. However, because shame descended from submission, it is uniquely sensitive to power relations. This is a vestigial feature, even if it is central. If we think of shame as a moral emotion, and we use something like our own morality as a model, then the answer to the question is no. Unless we have failed to live up to relevant norms or standards, we ought not to be ashamed of being attacked, humiliated or ignored. At the same time, it behoves us to recall that for many, morality is a law laid down by a godhead, and thereby sanctioned by the ultimate power. In our own system, we might say that the inviolable rights of others exert power over us. Recall Zahavi's suggestion that we call shame, not a self-conscious emotion, which can make it seem almost solipsistic, but a 'self-in-relation-to-others' emotion. This power of individual human beings to have a say in how we act towards them can form the basis of a philosophical defence of shame as a moral emotion. Because power isn't always brute, physical and violent. It is also social and interpersonal. We saw how powerful neglect is. People need a sense of *belonging* (Baumeister & Leary 1995). But to belong, you have to get along. And shame sensitizes us to the needs and feelings of others and shows our respect for them. With luck, and some human ingenuity, we can get into a situation where *everybody* accords others such respect.

I have explored the dark side of shame here. But shame has a bright side also. Shame teaches us what behaviour is acceptable. It helps protect us from the wrath or scorn of others. It makes us sensitive to others' opinions. Shame

is self-protective (Deigh 1996; Taylor 1985). It is worth keeping in mind that, as offensive as it is, shame helps even children with abusive parents stay safer, as it motivates submission to this higher power and indicates what they ought to avoid.

## NOTES

1. https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma
2. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp
3. Many trauma theorists believe these numbers to be unrealistically low and largely the result of the particular criteria adopted in the DSM-5 (e.g., van der Kolk 2015). It should be noted that PTSD appears to be a much bigger problem in the United States than in Europe (8.7% vs. 0.5–1% prevalence, American Psychiatric Association 2013, 276).
4. https://www.reddit.com/r/ukraine/comments/t7cbkj/another_interview_with_captured_russians_if_this/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=mweb3x (watched 31 March, 2022).
5. As, for instance, in the famous wolf-pack case, where five men gangraped an eighteen-year-old woman at the San Fermín festival in Pamplona. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/23/wolf-pack-case-spain-feminism-far-right-vox
6. Empathy and negative affect may also be significant. Ash and Yoon (2020), for instance, found no connection between victim derogation and belief in a just world, but one between negative affect, intolerance for negative affect, and victim derogation.
7. Frankel (2002) uses the phrase 'being subject to a greater power', to describe the relation I discuss here.
8. I should note that a number of people maintain that substantial cognitive evaluations are necessary prerequisites for shame. Michael Lewis (2007), for instance, argues that the child must be conscious of itself, have a self-concept, be able to recognize and internalize standards, rules, and goals, and be able to measure herself against these. Such a view makes it harder, though not impossible, to explain the type of shame under investigation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahrens, C. E. 2006. Being silenced: The impact on negative social reactions on the disclosure of rape. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 38*, 263–274.

American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

Armstrong-Carter, E., Sulik, M. J., & Obradovic, J. 2021. Self-regulated behavior and parent-child co-regulation are associated with young children's physiological responses to critical adult feedback. *Social Development, 30*, 730–747.

Babcock, R. L., & DePrince, A. P. 2012. Childhood betrayal trauma and self-blame appraisals among survivors of intimate partner abuse. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, *13*, 526–538.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. 1995. The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 497–529.

Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A., & Wotman, S. R. 1990. Victim and perpetrator accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives of anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*, 994–1005.

Bennett, D. S., Sullivan, M. W., & Lewis, M. 2010. Neglected children, shame-proneness, and depressive symptoms. *Child Maltreatment, 15*, 305–314.

Bhuptani, P. H., & Messman, T. L. 2021. Role of blame and rape-related shame in distress among rape victims. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy,* Online First, September 2013, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0001132.

Brison, S. 2002. *Aftermath.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bureau, J.-F., Martin, J., & Lyons-Ruth, K. 2010. Attachment dysregulation as hidden trauma in infancy: Early stress, maternal buffering and psychiatric morbidity in young adults. In R. A. Lanius, E. Vermetten, & C. Pain (Eds.), *The Impact of Early Life Trauma on Health and Disease: The Hidden Epidemic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 48–56.

Cibich, M., Woodyatt, L., & Wezel, M. 2016. Moving beyond "same is bad": How a functional emotion can become problematic. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 10*(9), 471–483.

Dahl, S. 1989. Acute response to rape—A PTSD variant. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 80*, 56–62.

de Hooge, I. E., Zeelenberg, M., & Breugelmans, S. M. 2010. Resore and protection motivations following shame. *Cognition and Emotion, 24*, 111–127.

Deigh, J. 1996. Shame and self-esteem. In *The Sources of Moral Agency: Essays in Moral Psychology and Freudian Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dutra Ross, N., Kaminski, P. L., & Herrington, R. 2019. From childhood emotional maltreatment to depressive symptoms in adulthood: The roles of self-compassion and shame. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *92*, 32–42.

Ehlers, A., Clar, D. M., Dunmore, E., Jaycox, L., Meadows, E., & Foa, E. B. 1998. Predicting response to exposure treatment in PTSD: The role of mental defeat and alienation. *Journal of Traumatic Stress,* 457–471.

Eisenberg, N., Spinrad, T. L., & Eggum, N. D. 2010. Emotion-related self-regulation and its relation to children's maladjustment. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 6*, 495–525.

Ferenczi, S. 1949. Confusions of the tongues between adults and the child—(The language of tenderness and of passion), *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 30, 225–30.

Frankel, J. 2002. Exploring Ferenczi's concept of identification with the aggressor: Its role in trauma, everyday life, and therapeutic relationships. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 12, 101–39.

Gianino, A., & Tronick, E. 1988. The mutual regulation model: The infant's self and interactive regulation, coping, and defensive capacities. In T. Field, P. McCabe, & N. Schneiderman (Eds.), *Stress and Coping Through Development.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 47–68.

Gordon, A. K., & Miller, A. G. 2000. Perspective differences in the construal of lies: Is the deception in the eye of the beholder? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 46–55.

Hatzfeld, J. 2005. *Into the Quick of Life*. London: Serpent's Tail.

Honneth, A. 2001. Invisibility: On the epistemology of "recognition." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 75*, 111–126.

Kearns, J. N., & Fincham, F. D. 2005. Victim and perpetrator accounts of interpersonal transgressions: Self-serving or relationship-serving biases? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *31*, 321–333.

Keltner, D., & Buswell, B. 1996. Evidence for the distinctness of embarrassment, shame, and guilt: A study of recalled antecedents and facial expressions of emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, *10*, 155–171.

Keltner, D., & Harker, A. 1998. The forms and functions of the nonverbal signal of shame. In P. Gilbert & B. Andrews (Eds.), *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 78–98.

Keltner, D., Young, R., & Buswell, B. 1997. Appeasement in human emotion, social practice, and personality. *Aggressive Behavior*, *23*, 359–374.

Kennedy, A. C., & Prock, K. A. 2018. "I still feel like I'm not normal": A review of the role of stigma and stigmatization among female survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 19*, 512–527.

Leary, M. R. 2015. Emotional responses to interpersonal rejection. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience, 17*, 435–441.

Lerner, M. J. 1980. *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion.* New York: Plenum Press.

Leskela, J., Dieperink, M., & Thuras, P. 2002. Shame and posttraumatic stress disorders. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 15*, 223–226.

Levi, P. 1988. *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Vintage Books.

Lewis, M. 2007. The development of self-consciousness. In J. Roessler & N. Eilan (Eds.), *Agency and Self-Awareness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 275–295.

Loader, P. 1998. Such a shame—A consideration of shame and shaming mechanisms in families. *Child Abuse Review, 7*, 44–57.

Lyons-Ruth, K., & Block, D. 1996. The disturbed caregiving system: Relations among childhood trauma, maternal caregiving, and infant affect and attachment. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *17*, 257–275.

Maibom, H. L. 2010. The descent of shame. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, LXXX*, 566–594.

Meltzoff, A., & Keith Moore, K. 1995. Infant's understanding of people and things: From bodily imitation to folk psychology. In J. L. Bermudéz, N. Eilan, & A. Marcel (Eds.), *The Body and the Self.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 43–70.

Mesman, J., van Ijzendoorn, M. N., & Bakersman-Kranenburg, M. J. 2009. The many faces of the still-face paradigm: A review and a meta-analysis. *Developmental Review, 29*, 120–162.

Meyers, D. T. 2011. Two victim paradigms and the problem of "impure" victims. *Humanity, 2,* 255–275.

Naismith, I., Zarate Guerrero, S., & Feigenbaum, J. 2019. Abuse, invalidation, and lack of early warmth show distinct relationships with self-criticism, self-compassion, and fear of self-compassion in personality disorder. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, 26*, 350–361.

Nathanson, D. L. 1994. *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Øktendalen, T., Hoffart, A., & Langkaas, T. F. 2015. Trauma-related shame and guilt as time-varying predictors of posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms during imagery exposure and imagery rescripting—A randomized controlled trial. *Psychotherapy Research, 25*, 518–532.

Rawls, J. 1973. *A Theory of Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosenthal, K. 1987. Rituals of undoing in abused and neglected children. *Child and Adolescent Social Work, 4*, 78–88.

Sartre, J.-P. 1943/1992. *Being and Nothingness.* Translated by H. E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press.

Schimmenti, A. 2012. Unveiling the hidden self: Developmental trauma and pathological shame. *Psychodynamic Practice, 18*, 195–211.

Schwebel, D. C., & Bounds, M. L. 2003. The role of parents and temperament on children's estimation of physical abilities: Links to unintentional injury prevention. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 28*, 505–516.

Sekowski, M., Gambin, M., Cudo, A., Wozniak-Prus, M., Penner, F., Fonagy, P., & Sharp, C. 2020. The relations between childhood maltreatment, shame, guilt, depression, and suicidal ideation in inpatient adolescents. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 276*, 667–677.

Stark, K. D., Schmidt, K. L., & Joiner, T. E. 1996. Cognitive triad: Relationship to depressive symptoms, parents' cognitive triad, and perceived parental messages. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 24*, 615–631.

Strömwall, L. A., Alfredsson, H., & Landström, S. 2013. Rape victim and perpetrator blame and the Just World hypothesis: The influence of gender and age. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 19*, 207–217.

Sundby, S. E. 2003. The capital jury and empathy: The problem or worthy and unworthy victims. *Cornell Law Review*, *88*, 343–381.

Tangney, J., & Dearing, R. 2002. *Shame and Guilt*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Taylor, G. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Terroni, F., & Deonna, J. A. 2008. Differentiating shame from guilt. *Consciousness and Cognition,* 725–740.

Tronick, E., Als, H., Adamson, L., Wise, S., & Brazelton, T. B. 1978. Infant response to entrapment between contradictory messages in face-to-face interaction. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 17*, 1–13.

Tronick, E., & Gianino, A. 1986. Interactive mismatch and repair: Challenges to the coping infant. *Zero-to-Three, 6*, 1–6.
van der Kolk, B. 2015. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma.* New York: Penguin.
Velleman, D. 2006. The Genesis of Shame. In *Self to Self*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 45–69.
Wesselman, E. D., Hales, A. H., Ren, D., & Kipling, D. 2015. Ostracism threatens personal security: A temporal need threat network. In P. J. Carroll, R. M. Arkin, & A. L. Wichman (Eds.), *Handbook of Personal Security.* New York: Psychology Press, 191–206.
Williams, B. 1993. *Shame and Necessity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Wollheim, R. 1999. *On Emotions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Wurmser, L. 1981. *The Mask of Shame.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
Zahavi, D. 2014. *Self and Other.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Chapter 10*

# Shame, Gender and Self-Making

Krista K. Thomason

Although moral philosophers have argued that shame is a valuable moral emotion, feminist philosophers are often sceptical. They have pointed out that women are far more likely to feel shame than men, and that feelings of shame are often marshalled to reinforce women's subordinate position in a patriarchal world.[1] As pervasive as this claim is, it is also more mysterious than it appears. A survey of empirical work in psychology calls this conclusion into question: it is not in fact clear that women do feel more shame or feel shame more often than men (Ferguson and Eyre 2000; Rodogno 2013). At the same time, feminists also insist that shame on which moral philosophers focus is not the kind of shame that they care about. The shame found in psychological studies and in most moral philosophy is what we might call *episodic shame*. This sort of shame is usually identified as a brief and intense emotional experience that arises because of some specific incident. Lehtinen, for example, argues that the kind of shame found in moral philosophy is usually theorized from the perspective of 'privileged, white, European or North American, middle-class academically trained men' (1998, 62–63). Likewise, Bartky describes the shame of the moral philosopher as the shame of someone who 'has escaped the characteristic sorts of oppression on which modern hierarchies of class, race, and gender rely so heavily' (1990, 97). Feminist philosophers identify a different kind of shame that would not be so easily captured by empirical data, what we might call *shame-attunement*. How, if at all, is shame-attunement related to the episodic shame of moral philosophy? If it has no relation to the episodic emotion, then what precisely makes it shameful?

In this chapter, my aim is to try to make some headway into these questions. I begin with a sketch of the shame-attunement that feminist philosophers identify. I then try to determine how this shame might be related to the

episodic emotion of shame. Drawing on the work of Frantz Fanon, I argue that shame-attunement and episodic shame have one commonality: they both involve a vulnerable sense of self. I sketch an account that might help explain why shame-attunement feels shameful.

## WOMEN'S SHAME AS SHAME-ATTUNEMENT

Feminist literature on women's shame identifies what Bartky calls 'a pervasive affective attunement' (1990, 85). According to these arguments, shame is not to be understood solely as individual episodes of the emotion, but instead a shameful way of being in the world.

Lewis' work on shame and neurosis is one of the seminal articulations of women's shame. She begins with a discussion of studies on field dependence (1971, 127). Field dependence studies involve perception and orienting oneself in space. The famous study by Witkin involved two perceptual tests (Witkin 1949, 22–24; Lewis 1971, 128–129). First, subjects in a dark room were asked to place a luminous rod in a vertical position. The rod was suspended in a tilted frame. Second, subjects were led into a small room with a chair. Either the chair or the room (or both) were tilted, and the subjects were asked to adjust themselves upright in the chair. The results of both tests showed that some subjects depended on the 'field' (either the tilt of the frame or the tilt of the room) to determine what counted as vertical. Those subjects were considered field-dependent, and Witkin observed that women in the studies tended to be more field-dependent than men (Witkin 1949, 24–25; Lewis 1971, 130). Lewis extends that work to argue that there is a correlation between field dependence and shame-proneness. Shame-proneness is the disposition to feel episodes of shame either (a) more frequently than average or (b) more intensely than average (Rodogno 2013, 156).[2] For example, subjects who are field-dependent are more likely to see an interconnectedness between the self and others, which is also a characteristic of shame-proneness (Lewis 1971, 139). Lewis then uses this connection to support sex differences in shame-proneness. Since women are in a subordinate social position, Lewis suggests that their self-organization is dependent on their cultural contexts and relations with others (1971, 145–147). They are, in other words, field-dependent not just in perception, but in self-formation as well. As Lewis puts it, 'The "self" in women is more vulnerable than in men' (1971, 148).[3]

The basic structure of Lewis' argument is echoed in Bartky's explanation of shame as a 'pervasive affective attunement' (1990, 85). Bartky accepts the definition of shame as 'the distressed apprehension of the self as inadequate or diminished' (1990, 86). She then provides detailed observations of her experience teaching an extension course to suburban high school teachers (1990,

88). Bartky notes how the women in class tended to be quieter and more self-denigrating than their male counterparts (1990, 88–89). She characterizes their behaviour as a kind of shame, but not the same kind as an episodic experience. According to Bartky, the kind of shame her students exhibit stems in part from negative classroom experiences in general: studies show that teachers (both male and female) are more likely to pay more attention to male students and interrupt female students more often (1990, 90–93). As Bartky puts it, 'Women, more often than men, are made to feel shame in major sites of social life' (1990, 93). The kind of shaming that happens in the classroom is subtle, and women often cannot explicitly articulate their feelings of shame in these contexts. Bartky argues that what women experience is 'not so much a belief as a *feeling* of inferiority or *sense* of inadequacy' (1990, 94, emphasis original). Women do not, according to Barkty, consciously believe that they are lesser than or inferior. Instead, what they grasp is 'nothing less than women's subordination in the hierarchy of gender, their situation not in ideology, but in the social formation as it is actually constituted' (Bartky 1990, 95). The shame that women exhibit is a nascent feeling of their subordinated status in the world.

More recently, Harris-Perry explicitly draws on field dependence to discuss Black women's shame. She begins her chapter 'The Crooked Room' with a description of the field-dependence studies (2011, 29). Harris-Perry explains that field dependence can act as a metaphor for confronting stereotypes. As she puts it, 'black women are standing in a crooked room, and they have to figure out which way is up' (ibid). Harris-Perrys arguments parallel Lewis' points about self-formation. Since Black women are confronted with distorting stereotypes about who they are and who they can be, they are forced to build an identity within the distortions. Understanding these stereotypes is important because, according to Harris-Perry, identity formation takes place within the political structure of recognition (2011, 35). Drawing on Hegel, Harris-Perry argues that recognition of one's humanity is a key feature of political life, and fair political systems are those that afford citizens proper recognition in the public sphere (2011, 36–37). Yet marginalized groups in society 'face fundamental and continuing threats to their opportunity for accurate recognition' (38). These threats – negative stereotypes among them – partially comprise the 'crooked room' in which Black women must learn how to stay straight. When someone is constantly confronted with distorted images of who she is, she feels shame about her inability to meet desired ideals. As Harris-Perry puts it, 'When we feel ashamed, we assume the room is straight and the self is off-kilter. Shame urges us to internalize the crooked room' (2011, 105).

To summarize, women's shame-attunement is the persistent and pervasive feeling of one's vulnerability or diminished status. Since women are in a subordinated position in social and political life, they are routinely forced to

contend with misrecognition, negative stereotypes and the interfering judgements of others. This steady feature of women's lives leads to the shameful way of being in the world that feminist philosophers identify.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES, SHAME-ATTUNEMENT AND SHAME

Now that we have a better sense of shame-attunement, we are in a better position to examine its relationship to episodes of shame. There are several possibilities. First, perhaps shame-attunement makes women more disposed to experience episodes of shame. In this way, shame-attunement may function the same way as shame-proneness. If shame-attunement functions this way, we would expect that women will feel more episodes of shame or feel shame more intensely than men do.

If we think that shame-attunement leads to more episodes of shame, this is an empirical question that can be tested. The results of such studies are mixed. On one hand, studies that use the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) found a higher degree of shame-proneness in women (Rodogno 2013, 158–159). TOSCA presents subjects with scenarios and then asks how they might feel if they were in such a scenario.[4] For example, one of the scenarios is the following: 'You make a big mistake on an important project at work. People were depending on you, and your boss criticizes you' (Tangney and Dearing 2002, 211). One of the options for an answer is 'You would feel like you wanted to hide', which would indicate a shame response. Subjects who choose answers like this will have a higher shame-proneness score, and according to studies that use the TOSCA, women tend to score higher. As Tangney and Dearing write, 'Whether we considered elementary school-aged children, lower middle-class adolescents, college students, parents and grandparents of fifth grade students, or adult travelers passing through an airport, female participants consistently report *greater* shame and guilt than their male counterparts' (2002, 154, emphasis original). Yet, studies that used a variety of methods beyond self-attribution did not find a higher degree of shame-proneness in women, and some of them found a higher degree of shame-proneness in men (Rodogno 2013, 158; Ferguson and Eyre 2000, 266–269). Empirical work does not unequivocally support the conclusion that women's shame-attunement leads to more frequent or intense episodes of shame.

Alternatively, the relationship between shame-attunement and episodes shame might flow in the opposite direction. That is, rather than shame-attunement leading to more episodes of shame, perhaps experiencing repeated episodes of shame leads to shame-attunement. Harris-Perry, for example,

suggests that shame is what causes Black women to 'internalize' the standards of the 'crooked room' (2011, 105). Bartky provides the literature on gender dynamics in the classroom as a way to illustrate how shame inculcation might happen: women received less praise and more criticism from teachers, and they are more likely to be interrupted (1990, 90–92). If we think of these incidents as moments of shame, then women might begin to internalize the idea that they are not capable students. Additionally, Ferguson and Eyre review psychological studies showing that parents tend to provide more negative feedback to girls and also tend to praise them less (2000, 257). Women are also more likely to assume that any of their failures are due to pervasive or global features of themselves – they fail because they are simply worse overall (ibid). If women, from a young age, tend to be dismissed, ignored, criticized and not praised as much as men, they are socialized to both expect harsh judgements from others and to assume they are at fault for those harsh judgements. As Ferguson and Eyre put it, women may experience 'societally inculcated feelings of passivity, helplessness, and reliance on others for their own self-definition' (2000, 256). Rather than thinking that shame-attunement leads to more episodes of shame, perhaps the direction is reversed: repeated episodes of shame would lead women to develop shame-attunement.

If this explanation is to be plausible, we need to know whether women do in fact feel shame when they are confronted with messages of subordination. There seems to be plenty of evidence to suggest that women are socialized to internalize the feelings and judgements of others, to assume that they are less capable or less intelligent than men, and to see themselves as passive or helpless. But do they become socialized this way because others repeatedly make them feel shame? Not every harsh judgement or experience of failure gives rise to feelings of shame. Young women who are interrupted by their teachers could feel angry or indignant about such treatment. Feminists have sometimes responded to suggestions like these by saying that members of subordinate groups lack a strong sense of self that would be required to respond with anger (Lehtinen 1998, 59). The trouble is that the origin of this weak sense of self is precisely what is at issue. If the weak sense of self is caused by repeated feelings of shame, we still need to understand why those feelings of shame arise in the first place.

It is simply not clear how episodes of shame are related to shame-attunement. If there seems to be no relationship between feelings of shame and shame-attunement, then why is shame-attunement shameful? If some empirical research does not support the claim that women feel more shame than men, how do we square this fact with feminist arguments and with the self-attribution that we see in TOSCA studies? My aim in what follows is to offer an account that might help us understand why shame-attunement is shameful.

## SHAME-ATTUNEMENT AND SENSE OF SELF

I want to suggest there is at least one aspect that episodes of shame and shame-attunement share: both involve our sense of self. In most feminist work on shame, explanations of shame-attunement appear in the context of women's self-formation. This link is most explicit in the work of Beauvoir where we see shame interwoven through the early experiences of women in childhood and adolescence (1948/2009, 283–382). Mann makes similar claims about the way gendered expectations arise in adolescence (2018, 403–404). Harris-Perry uses the metaphor of learning to stand up straight in the crooked room to illustrate the challenges of self-formation in the face of negative stereotypes (2011, 29–35). As moral philosophers and psychologists have long argued, the sense of self is also present in episodes of shame. Different scholars account for this in different ways, but we can say without much controversy that episodes of shame take some aspect of the self as their object. Some philosophers, for example, have argued that we feel shame when we fail to live up to our values or ideals.[5] On accounts like these, the object of shame is the failed self. Alternatively, some philosophers argue that episodes of shame occur when we violate important social norms.[6] On views like these, the object of shame is the socially unacceptable self. If shame-attunement has something to do with women's self-formation and episodes of shame take the self as their object, perhaps this similarity can help explain how shame-attunement might be shameful.

There are at least two ways to understand the relationship between shame-attunement and women's sense of self: what I will call the *abject interpretation* and the *vulnerable interpretation*. These two possibilities are often not separated in feminist writing on shame-attunement, but I think it is important to distinguish them. First, I will explain the differences between them. I will then argue that the vulnerable interpretation fairs better in explaining how shame-attunement could be shameful.

The abject interpretation invokes an account of shame as the emotional experience of one's unwanted self. That is, in experiences of shame, we perceive ourselves (or some part of ourselves) as abject – lesser, lower, diminished, worthless or bad in some overarching way. The idea of the unwanted self is a staple in the psychological literature on shame.[7] As Ferguson and Eyre describe it, 'Shame involves a focus on one's global self – who I am and who I do not want to be' (2002, 254). Some feminist accounts of shame-attunement seem to draw on this same understanding of shame. Bartky argues that shame-attunement is 'a *feeling* of inferiority or *sense* of inadequacy' (1990, 94, emphasis original). They are grasping (perhaps not fully consciously) their 'subordination in the hierarchy of gender' (Bartky 1990, 95). Likewise, Mann links women's shame to the 'embodied awareness of [their] prescribed

social deficiency' (2018, 404).[8] Finally, Purvis reminds us that what is considered disgusting is often also considered shameful (2019, 50–51). Women and women's bodies are seen as more disgusting or threatening – for example, menstrual blood is generally considered more abject than semen (2019, 53–54). Feminine embodiment, therefore, becomes a kind of unwanted self, which would cause the shame-attunement that women experience. In sum, on the abject interpretation, shame-attunement is shameful because it is a pervasive perception or feeling of femininity as the unwanted self.

There are some aspects of this account that seem plausible, but it also raises several questions. First, it requires us to accept the claim that women – as a class or group – must have internalized the perception that some part of themselves is lesser or diminished (Thomason 2018, 36–38). That is, they must to some extent accept or agree with the judgement that they are abject in some way. To see why this might be unsatisfying compare it to a similar case. Feelings of shame about physical disability or deformity are common. One tempting way to explain those feelings is to assume that the people who have this kind of shame must believe that they are in some way defective. Yet this conclusion forces us to attribute persistent inner self-loathing to disabled people, and there are reasons to be sceptical of this conclusion. Put broadly, there is a specious tendency for a dominant social group to pathologize a marginalized social group. If the account of shame-attunement we give requires us to assume that anyone who has shame-attunement is self-loathing, it is possible we are falling into this pathologizing trap. In the case of disabled people, we see this reflected in what is sometimes called the 'disability paradox'.[9] The disability paradox occurs when people who are not physically disabled assume that people who are disabled must be unhappy, even though people with disabilities report otherwise.

Similar problems arise in shame-attunement for marginalized racial groups. For example, there is controversy over (what is called) Black self-hatred: the persistent assumption that Black people are psychologically damaged and harbour feelings of inferiority toward their racial identity.[10] If it is true that marginalized groups have shame-attunement, must we explain that shame-attunement in terms of self-loathing? Surely it is true that living under conditions of oppression can do psychological harm, but this plausible conclusion does not then licence the stronger conclusion that such harm takes the form of constant self-loathing.

Additionally, the abjection interpretation also makes pride movements somewhat mysterious. As Purvis correctly argues, most pride movements do not undo painful feelings by changing them into positive feelings. Instead, they function by allowing marginalized people to 'locate resources for political action' (2019, 62). She provides examples of art and activist work, such as the women who published and distributed *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and

Judy Chicago's 'The Dinner Party' (2019, 54). According to Purvis, 'Rather than accepting the terms of pollution and defilement, abjected bodies protest their status as "other". . . and depict and expose objectifying and abjecting logics' (2019, 55). Yet, undertaking these sorts of protests would require some sort of psychological resources that would resist the self-loathing of shame-attunement. Shame-attunement, according to at least some feminist arguments, is a deep feature of feminine subjecthood: to perceive myself as feminine is to perceive that aspect of myself as abject. If that perception is pervasive and arises early in a woman's life, it is unclear how it occurs to women to protest their abjection. It seems that there would have to be some part of their subjecthood that resists the idea that being a woman is abject. What then becomes of the self-loathing that explains shame-attunement? At the very least, that self-loathing cannot be so total or so pervasive that it crowds out psychological resistance.

The questions raised by the abject interpretation allow us to introduce an alternative understanding of shame-attunement, namely the vulnerable interpretation.[11] According to this interpretation, marginalized people have a self-conception that is vulnerable to powerful influences in social life. Shame-attunement is the feeling or sense of this vulnerability. Both Lewis and Harris-Perry can, I suggest, be read as offering a version of the vulnerability interpretation. Both of them rely on studies about field dependence to explain the challenges that women face in the process of self-formation. Recall that field dependence studies purport to show that women (more so than men) rely on their perceptual surroundings to orient themselves and objects in space. Researchers posited that field dependence would correlate to personality traits (Lewis, 129–134; Haaken 1988, 314–315). Lewis argues that one of these traits is a sense of self that is more dependent on social relations. Harris-Perry's reliance on field dependence is more metaphorical. She uses the construct of the 'crooked room' to describe the way that Black women must confront negative stereotypes as they try to form a sense of self (2011, 29). This metaphorical use of the field dependence studies helps illustrate the vulnerable interpretation of shame-attunement.

Making a self is a task that all agents undertake. As I will explain shortly, there are several types of raw materials, so-to-speak, that we use to make a self. People in subordinated social positions have a set of raw materials that those in dominant social positions do not have, namely the distorted images of their group. For example, as women try to engage in self-formation, they must contend with the proscriptions of patriarchy in that process. Regardless of how they might feel about themselves, they face strong social pressure to build themselves according to the dictates of these distorted images. As Harris-Perry puts it, women (and Black women in particular) 'face fundamental and continuing threats to their opportunity for accurate recognition' (2011, 38).[12]

Now that we have a sense of what the vulnerable interpretation means for shame-attunement, we need an account of episodes of shame that might dovetail with it. Elsewhere I have argued that shame is a felt tension between one's self-conception and one's identity (Thomason 2018, 87). To get a sense of what this means, suppose that there are two ways of answering the question: What makes up a self? One way to answer is to focus on the aspects of ourselves that are up to us. I choose a career, I take up taekwondo or I like Marx Brothers movies. I think of myself as stubborn, loyal, soft-hearted or quirky. On my view, all these things would fall under what I call a self-conception: the way I see myself and the choices that I make to be one sort of person rather than another (Thomason 2018, 88–89). A different way to understand what makes up a self is to focus on all the things that are part of who we are, but that we do not necessarily choose. As Williams would put it, our agency is 'surrounded by and held up and partly formed by' things that are not up to us (1981, 29). I was raised in California, I am the daughter of Irish immigrants, or I have to wear glasses. In spite of what I might tell myself, I am selfish, impatient, sentimental or fearful. I classify all these sorts of aspects of a self as part of our identities: those features of ourselves that we do not choose, yet we also recognize as possibly saying something about who we are (Thomason 2018, 89–91). Making a self is in part a process of negotiating the balance between our self-conceptions and our identities. I might think that being raised in California says a lot about who I am or I might think it says very little. I might change my view about that over time. I might also be wrong about the conclusion that I draw: I might think that being raised in California is a deep feature of myself, but others might be able to see that this is just a fantasy I have created (Thomason 2018, 92–98). Who we are is not always transparent to us. Sometimes we think things about ourselves that are not true, and sometimes we are confused about who we are. We often make self-discoveries only after much reflection, learning from others, and finding ourselves in situations that reveal something to us that we did not see before. In the messy and complicated process of making a self, there will be times when our self-conceptions and our identities do not align.

Feelings of shame arise in these times of misalignment. As I have argued, in episodes of shame, we feel as though some part of our identity overshadows or looms large over our self-conception (Thomason 2018, 101–103). We need not, on my account, assume that the feature of our identity is one that we reject or view negatively. I might be perfectly indifferent to the fact that I was raised in California, or I might even be proud of it. Suppose, however, someone finds out I was raised in California, and for whatever reason, has a very exaggerated reaction to this fact. It might be an overtly negative reaction: 'Ugh! Everyone from California is a smug vegetarian, I bet you eat your weight in tofu'. It could also be an overtly positive reaction: 'Oh, I love

California! It's so progressive and there is vegetarian food everywhere'. Both of these sorts of reactions could cause me to feel shame (albeit probably a mild form) if I suddenly come to feel that being raised in California now looms too large in my sense of self (Thomason 2018, 103–105). It is tempting to think that we must judge some aspect of ourselves as bad, lesser or unworthy in order for us to feel shame. I have argued, however, that there are cases when people are made to feel shame about an identity they once took pride in and even when they are the object of positive attention from others (Thomason 2018, 105–106). In order to feel shame about something, all that is required is that we are made to feel as though it is the defining thing about us and the first or only thing that others notice about us. Shame, on my view, involves a sort of mini-identity crisis. In moments of shame, parts of our identity are thrown into the spotlight – either because someone else calls attention to them or because something causes us to see them in ways that we had not seen them before (ibid).

If shame-attunement means we have a self-conception that is vulnerable, then people with shame-attunement will be more prone to the moments of tension I describe in shame episodes. To better illustrate what this shame-attunement might be like, I want to turn to a detailed narrative account that supports the view I have constructed. We find that account in the work of Frantz Fanon. Fanon's account helps to show how the shame-attunement might feel shameful.

## THE SHAMEFULNESS OF SHAME-ATTUNEMENT: FANON

In the famous fifth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, entitled 'The Lived Experience of the Black', I suggest that Fanon is performatively playing out the challenge of self-making from the perspective of the marginalized subject.[13] He shows the reader the different movements in the process of trying to form a sense of self when faced with the images constructed for him by the white world. There are numerous moments that Fanon details, but I will focus on just a few to illustrate.

When Fanon joins the Free French Army, although he thinks of himself as French, French soldiers and the French people see him primarily as Black (Nielsen 2011, 364). Fanon describes his disorientation upon realizing that this is how people saw him by giving examples of snippets of conversation. He hears comments like 'But do come in, old chap, you'll find no color prejudice here' while at the same time hearing, 'Martinican, a native from one of our "old" colonies' and 'Look a Negro!' (1952/2008, 93). He feels surrounded by the white world, and so unable to think about himself apart

from his race. The fact of his race is presented to him in white hostility as well as white hospitality: 'When they like me, they tell me color has nothing to do with it. When they hate me, they add that it's not because of my color' (1952/2008, 96). In response to the hostility and assumptions of incompetence, Fanon's decides to mount a defence: 'I felt the knife blades sharpening within me. I made up my mind to defend myself. Like all good tacticians, I wanted to rationalize the world and show the white man he was mistaken' (1952/2008, 98). He appeals to human dignity, which 'had gutted prejudice' and to science, which had shown that 'the Negro was identical to the white man: same history, same morphology' (1952/2008, 99). In spite of these rational arguments, Fanon finds no acceptance. Even though the white world might recognize that Black and white people were the same, nevertheless the white man does not 'want any intimacy between the races' (ibid).

When his reasoned defence of Blackness fails, Fanon describes the temptation to embrace rather than reject the mythos of the Black man as 'primitive' or 'in touch' with the Earth. 'As a magician, I stole from the white man "a certain world", lost to him and his kind' (1952/2008, 107). Rather than disavow the so-called primitive nature of the Black man, Fanon embraces it. He accepts the claims that the Black man is more emotionally sensitive and in communion with the 'magic' of the world while the white man 'enslaves' and 'appropriates' it (1952/2008, 106–107). Yet, as Fanon realizes, this too is an image: 'I was soon to be disillusioned' (1952/2008, 108). He imagines the white world saying back to him in reply, 'We have had our back-to-nature mystics as you will never have' (ibid). That is, the image of the Black man as unique and special is not unique and special after all, so Fanon can take no refuge in the image of primitiveness.

Fanon ends the chapter clearly exhausted from the endeavours of self-making, and yet he is also steadfast in how he experiences himself. He has no doubts about his own subjectivity: 'I am not a potentiality of something; I am fully what I am' (1952/2008, 114). At the same time, he recognizes how difficult it is to grasp your sense of self when the world either refuses to let you use its tools in order to do so and also refuses to allow you to craft your own tools. As Fanon puts it, 'From time to time you feel like giving up. Expressing the real is an arduous job' (1952/2008, 116). Faced with refusals, hostility, twists of logic and distorted images from friends and foes alike, he feels as though he can barely move in the world. In spite of this minefield, his sense of his own self is never fully snuffed out nor is it damaged beyond repair. In the final paragraph of the chapter, Fanon writes, 'Yet with all my being, I refuse to accept this amputation. I feel my soul as vast as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest rivers' (1952/2008, 119).

Fanon illustrates in depth the dramatic interplay between the marginalized person's self-conception and identity. On one hand, he experiences himself

as fully a subject, 'as deep as rivers', and trying to live as a self in the world. On the other hand, he is bombarded with images of himself that he both does and does not recognize. When he tries to make some sort of meaning of his own identity as a Black man, that meaning is often twisted or taken from him by the white world. His racialized identity is presented to him over and over again as the first or primary thing people notice about him. White people mention it constantly and yet at the same time deny that they judge him by it. Yet Fanon's lived experience only makes sense if we accept that he feels himself to be a subject prior to his encounter with the white gaze. As Nielsen puts it, 'the very ability to resist presupposes an agent with volitional and rational capacities' (2011, 370). Although his sense of his own agency and self are troubled and shaken by his encounters with the white world, they remain nonetheless intact.

I think Fanon's account gives us the resources to better understand shame-attunement from feminist literature. There is a similar dynamic occurring in shame-attunement and in episodes of shame. As I have argued, when we feel shame, we experience a tension between our self-conception and identity. Some aspect of our identities suddenly looms large or feels as though it is under a spotlight. It causes us, however briefly, to feel our sense of self shaken – we do not quite know who we are in these moments. Someone with shame-attunement has a protracted or repeated experience of this same tension. In Fanon's own retelling, his shame arose from the way his race suddenly took on a new meaning or significance in his sense of himself. For Fanon, that change in meaning was precipitated by reactions from others. Notice that not all of the judgements that others made about his race were overtly hostile. Some people assured him that they harboured no prejudice (1952/2008, 93). They might be self-deceived about this claim, but at least they exhibited no outright hatred or contempt. I suggest that it is not hostility that causes Fanon's shame, but rather the constant feeling of his race as the defining feature of every interaction he has.

There are two ways that the tension between self-conception and identity manifest in shame-attunement, and Fanon helps illustrate both of them. First, in social life he must contend regularly and repeatedly with distorted images of himself. Others interact with him in awkward or hostile ways because of his race. He is also confronted with distorted images of people who look like him in numerous and sometimes surprising moments. Fanon gives the example of going to see a film and being plagued by the thought that 'a black bellhop is going to appear' on screen (1952/2008, 119). He is confronted by racialized stereotypes in advertising (1952/2008, 92) and in children's books (1952/2008, 124–125).[14] In the process of making a self, we are all faced with the socially-mediated parts of our identity. I may think of myself one way, but I may come across to others in a different way: I see myself as

career-focused, yet others see me as selfish. As much as I may disagree with such assessments, making a self is not the sort of activity that I can do in perfect isolation. I cannot, perhaps as much as I would like to, simply ignore the conclusions that others draw about me in social life, in part because they will interact with me in ways that are informed by those conclusions (Thomason 2018, 97–99). Marginalized people navigate the socially-mediated parts of their identities differently than members of the dominant group. The stereotypes they confront are often more clearly defined, are more rigidly enforced and more likely to mark their possessor as subordinate.[15] They must negotiate both how those stereotypes make them feel about themselves and also the fact that others will read those stereotypes into their identities. Additionally, they face sometimes serious social costs for failing to adhere to those stereotypes (e.g., women are punished professionally for being 'too assertive'). For members of marginalized groups, the part of their identities that indicates their marginalization is thrust regularly into the spotlight. As such, it frequently feels as though it overshadows the rest of them or that it is the first or only thing that people notice about them.

Second, the distorted images that confront marginalized people in the social world make their sense of self unstable. When people have to constantly confront stereotypes about themselves, it is understandable that their sense of themselves is disrupted by self-doubt (Thomason 2018, 98–99). For example, it is frequently assumed that adult women either have children or want children. People will ask 'How many kids do you have?' or 'Do your children go to school around here?' Advertising directed at women pictures them as mothers. Women in film and on television are depicted as mothers. Further, women who do not have children are often presumed to be defective, selfish or sad. If young women claim not to want children, they are told that they will change their minds when they get older. It would be unsurprising if a woman who does not want children begins to wonder whether her desires are normal when faced with this persistent assumption. It is not merely the frequency and the persistence with which marginalized people are confronted with distorted images of themselves, though that certainly plays a role. We do not build a self *ex nihilo*. We must rely on the materials that we have. Our own proclivities and desires are some of that material. The features of our social and political existence, our friends and loved ones, and art or literature also help us (or hinder us) in our process of self-making. As Fanon shows clearly, the raw material he encounters to help construct a self is sometimes wildly at odds with his own sense of who he is. It is difficult for him to find material out in the world that supports the image that he wants to create.[16] Faced with distorted images and awkward interactions with others, it is understandable that marginalized people might wonder 'Is this who I really am, since everything around me seems to say so?'

On the account I offer here, shame-attunement might be shameful in the following sense: In episodes of shame, we feel a mismatch between our identities and our self-conceptions. When we feel shame, we feel our sense of ourselves shaken or called into question. Marginalized people face obstacles in the process of self-formation that can lead them to feel their sense of themselves shaken. Episodes of shame and shame-attunement have in common a troubled sense of self. I suggest that this is how shame-attunement might feel shameful. Notice that the account I offer here does not licence the claim that women feel more shame or feel shame more intensely. It may, however, explain why women *report* more feelings of shame. From the first-person perspective, marginalized people constantly confront the same dynamic that is present in episodes of shame. They experience a long-standing tension between who they think they are and who the world tells them they are. I think this is why people are tempted to describe shame-attunement as shameful. Shame-attunement is the prolonged or repeated feeling of a mismatch between one's sense of self and one's identity.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Lewis 1971, Bartky 1990, Lehtinen 1998, Manion 2003, Harris-Perry 2011, Mann 2018, and Purvis 2019.

2. For an extensive discussion of shame proneness and the empirical psychological literature surrounding it, see Ferguson and Eyre 2000, Deonna et al. 2011, and Rodogno 2013.

3. One might wonder whether this vulnerability is always negative. For instance, perhaps people who are more field-dependent are more sensitive to the concerns of those around them or more open to change.

4. Studies that use TOSCA and support gender differences in shame appear in Tangney and Dearing 2002. There is a broader question about precisely what TOSCA measures, which is discussed in Maibom (2019).

5. For an explanation and survey of these views, see Thomason (2018, 19–22).

6. For an explanation and survey of these views, see Thomason (2018, 40–42).

7. See Markus and Nurius 1986, Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995, Crozier 1998, Ferguson et al. 2000, and Olthof's chapter in this volume.

8. Mann distinguishes between two types of shame: ubiquitous shame and unbounded shame (2018, 403). The first is the kind of gendered shame-attunement I have been discussing here while the latter is a more protracted shame episode (e.g., when one suffers serious and prolonged social humiliation).

9. This term comes from Albrecht and Devlieger 1999.

10. The term is most clearly outlined in Baldwin 1979. For an extended historical discussion, see Scott 1997. For a helpful survey of the literature in psychology and sociology, see Pyke 2010.

11. I take this term from Lewis: 'The "self" in women is more vulnerable than in men' (1971, 148).

12. Later, Harris-Perry's argument sounds slightly closer to the abject interpretation; she suggests that feelings of shame occur when 'we assume the room is straight and the self is off-kilter' (2011, 105). Nevertheless, we need not follow her to this conclusion to accept that self-formation is particularly difficult for members of marginalized groups.

13. For further explorations of this theme, see Nielsen 2011, Drabinski 2012, and Gordon 2015.

14. Fanon writes of the 'grinning *Y'a bon Banania*' (1958/2008, 92). Gordon points out that this is a reference to a popular French cereal, which had a smiling Senegalese soldier on the box (2015, 50).

15. Certainly, there are strong stereotypes that face members of dominant groups: for example, men must contend with the 'bread winner' stereotype. Dominant group stereotypes are, I suspect, fewer in number. As a result, they are less likely to severely truncate the possibilities for self-building. Thanks to Alessandra Fussi and Raffaele Rodogno for pressing me to clarify this point.

16. This is one of the reasons that the literature from the Négritude movement ends up being important to him (Gordon 2015, 52–56).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albrecht, Gary L., and Patrick J. Devlieger. 1999. "The Disability Paradox: High Quality of Life Against All Odds." *Social Science & Medicine* 48: 977–988.

Baldwin, Joseph A. 1979. "Theory and Research Concerning the Notion of Black Self-Hatred: A Review and Reinterpretation." *The Journal of Black Psychology* 5(2): 51–77.

Bartky, Sandra. 1990. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.

Beauvoir, Simone de. 1949/2009. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage Books.

Crozier, Ray W. 1998. "Self-Consciousness in Shame: The Role of the 'Other.'" *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 28: 273–286.

Deonna, Julien, Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni. 2011. *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion*. New York: Oxford.

Drabinski, John. 2012. "Affect and Revolution: On Baldwin and Fanon." *PhaenEx* 7(2): 124–158.

Fanon, Frantz. 1952/2008. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.

Ferguson, Tamara J., and Heidi Eyre. 2000. "Engendering Gender Differences in Shame and Guilt: Stereotypes, Socialization, and Situational Pressures." In *Gender and Emotion: Social Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Agneta H. Fischer, 254–276. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ferguson, Tamara, Heidi Eyre, and Michael Ashbaker. 2000 "Unwanted Identities: A Key Variable in Shame-Anger Links and Gender Differences in Shame." *Sex Roles* 42: 133–157.

Gordon, Lewis R. 2015. *What Fanon Said: An Introduction to His Life and Thought*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Haaken, Janice. 1988. "Field Dependence Research: A Historical Analysis of a Psychological Construct." *Signs* 13(2): 311–330.

Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in American*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lehtinen, Ullaliina. 1998. "How Does One Know What Shame Is? Epistemology, Emotions, and Forms of Life in Juxtaposition." *Hypatia* 13(1): 56–77.

Lewis, Helen Block. 1971. *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press.

Lindsay-Hartz, Janice, Joseph de Rivera, and Michael F. Mascolo. 1995. "Differentiating Guilt and Shame and Their Effects on Motivation." In *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride*, edited by June Price Tangney and Kurt W. Fischer, 274–300. New York: The Guilford Press.

Maibom, Heidi. 2019. "On the Distinction Between Shame and Guilt." In *The Moral Psychology of Guilt*, edited by Bradford Cokelet and Corey J. Maley, 37–51. New York: Roman & Littlefield.

Manion, Jennifer. 2003. "Girls Blush Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame." *Hypatia* 18(3): 21–41.

Mann, Bonnie. 2018. "Femininity, Shame, and Redemption." *Hypatia* 33(3): 402–417.

Markus, Hazel, and Paula Nurius. 1986. "Possible Selves." *American Psychologist* 41(9): 954–969.

Nielsen, Cynthia. 2011. "Resistance Through Re-Narration: Fanon and De-Constructing Racialized Subjectivities." *African Identities* 9(4): 363–385.

Purvis, Jennifer. 2019. "Confronting the Power of Abjection: Toward a Politics of Shame." *Philosophia* 9(2): 45–67.

Pyke, Karen D. 2010. "What is Internalized Oppression and Why Don't We Study It?" *Sociological Perspectives* 53(4): 551–572.

Rodogno, Raffaele. 2013. "Gender and Shame: A Philosophical Perspective." In *Gender and Emotion: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Ioana Latu, Marianne Schmid Mast, and Susanne Kaiser, 155–168. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG.

Scott, Daryl Michael. 1997. *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche 1880–1996*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2002. *Shame and Guilt*. New York: Guilford Press.

Thomason, Krista K. 2018. *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Bernard. 1981. "Moral Luck." In *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers From 1979–1980*, 20–39. New York: Cambridge University Press.

*Chapter 11*

# Shame on Wrong Planet

Katrine Krause-Jensen and Raffaele Rodogno

## AUTISM AND SHAME: STATE OF THE ART

Autism and Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) such as Asperger Syndrome (AS) are neurodevelopmental conditions diagnosed on the basis of (1) differences in social communication and social interaction and (2) restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities (American Psychiatric Association 2013).[1] These manifest themselves, respectively, in (1) differences at the level of social-emotional reciprocity, non-verbal communicative behaviours and the developing, maintaining, and understanding of relationships; and (2) the insistence of sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, highly restricted, fixated interests and hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory inputs.

In more practical terms, individuals on the autism spectrum[2] have often difficulty developing language and even when no difficulties are apparent at this level, they have a harder time figuring out the more subtle aspects of neurotypical social communication. Innuendos, sarcasm, chitchat, and body language (going from eye contact to flirting) are difficult to understand or find meaningful, as may be the intentions and emotions of others as well as one's own. Failure to notice basic conversational conventions (e.g., cues signalling the end of a conversation), difficulty interpreting facial expressions made by others, and failure to notice the emotional valence of messages are quite typical. In some cases, the very nature of human relations and practices may be understood differently, as Calder et al. (2013) have observed in the case of friendship. Neurosensory inputs also contribute to make autistic life more arduous. Oversensitivity to olfactory, visual, auditory, and tactile inputs is very common as it is also often difficult to background some of these inputs in order to focus on others (think about talking on your mobile phone in a

busy train station without the capacity to set all the ambient noise in the background so as to focus on your interlocutor's voice).

These differences translate into a difficulty to grasp or appreciate entire aspects of neurotypical culture: Why gather many people in one room, as in schools, restaurants and public transport, when it is *so* overbearing? Why shake hands and touch someone else's hand (when that typically feels disturbing)? Why use roundabout and hard-to-decipher ways of saying things when one can say them straight out? Why do people react as they do when you (don't) do the things you (don't) do? And so on. To all this (and this is only a tiny part of the picture), we should of course add the constant critical, adverse, mocking or bullying reactions of others that are not so tolerant of people that do not fit in. It is not surprising, then, that for many individuals on the spectrum, living in a neurotypical society may feel like living on the wrong planet. Karli Slomka unpacks this analogy quite nicely:

> Imagine you are a member of a lost race whose spaceship somehow managed to crashland on a foreign planet. You find a strange, unseen beauty in your surroundings but are taken by surprise by the people you encounter. They look just like your people, only they act differently. Their language is the same as yours, but they speak it in a way that is nearly incoherent to you. They expect you to understand, cherish and honour their customs and traditions, but you simply do not understand the purpose. They often demand things from you, but you are unsure of how such demands are to be satisfied, as you cannot comprehend their words. This so-called 'defiance' is not taken well by these aliens. They wish for you to blend in with them, to use the odd word combinations they use, to move the way they do and they even try to make you wear the tight, scratchy and impractical garments with which they adorn themselves.
>
> You want to go home. Living in this world takes far too much effort, and their attempts at assimilation are unsuccessful. The people believe you to be unintelligent, but you know that this is not the case. You are intelligent and sane, just not by their illogical standards (Slomka 2017).

With this initial sketch of life on the spectrum in hand, the main question that this chapter poses is this: What do we know about shame on wrong planet? This question came to us somewhat unsolicited. During the last couple of years, we have been involved in a project aimed at collecting and thematizing qualitative data on well-being and ill-being for adults on the spectrum. We wished to understand what our informants found detrimental and what parts of their lives (activities, relations, people, etc.) they found rewarding or making life worth living. What motivated our research was not only a theoretical interest in the dynamics of autistic well-being and ill-being but also a practical interest in passing on (largely in the form of podcasts) the

wisdom so collected to the newer generations. As we thematized the data, we realized that shame and, to a minor extent, guilt were significant themes. We found this result surprising, for we asked no questions, directly or indirectly, about shame and related emotions, and had no expectation that shame would arise as a theme or sub-theme in our analysis (Krause-Jensen & Rodogno, in preparation).[3]

We set out therefore to gather more information on shame and autism, to have some background against which to interpret our findings. To our surprise, when considering the purely academic literature, we found that not much had been published. The most prominent body of work bears on the connection in children on the spectrum between deficits in the Theory of Mind, on one hand, and the capacity to understand and experience self-conscious emotions such as shame, on the other (Heerey et al. 2003). The available studies present mixed results: while some studies find that children on the spectrum report less experiences of self-conscious emotions, others show that they are as accurate as their neurotypical peers at identifying these emotions (see Davidson et al. 2017).[4]

Similar mixed results also apply to the adult population, for which academic research is even scanter. One of the most quoted recent studies shows that adults on the spectrum are significantly more prone to shame and externalization (a tendency to blame others and not admit one's contribution to an unwanted event) than their neurotypical peers (Davidson et al. 2017). Given that in shame the self is the focus of negative attention, externalizing may be understood as a mechanism for protecting the self against the experience of shame. We find these results questionable, however, as shame is operationalized by way of the Shame and Guilt Scales of the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA), the appropriateness of which Rodogno (2008) and others (Olthof, this volume) have had a chance to question. Davidson et al. (2017), however, found a result that resonates with our qualitative study: compared to neurotypicals, individuals on the spectrum seem to have diminished proneness to beta, or authentic, pride – pride that one feels about one's actions/achievements, as opposed to the hubristic pride one feels for one's self-aggrandized self. This is relevant, for beta pride is positively related to self-esteem (Tracy et al. 2009), which is also known to be lower in individuals on the spectrum (Williamson et al. 2008). As we will see, lack of pride (as a trait) and low levels of self-esteem, do seem to characterize the lives of our informants. In the penultimate section of this chapter, we sketch, among others, the social and affective dynamics that could generate lower levels of self-esteem and connect it to the experience of shame.

Our search for relevant academic literature did not return much other than this. The field is pretty much open. Our current contribution to it will consist

in an exploration of the nature of shame among individuals on the spectrum based directly on their experiences. This was the natural choice given the nature of the data in our hands, which, however, we have complemented with data collected from specialized internet forums and blogs. We take our task here to parallel that of feminist philosophers working on the moral psychology of shame as experienced by women and by members of other marginalized groups (Bartky 1990; Lehtinen 1998; Woodward 2000; Locke 2007; Rodogno 2015; Thomason this volume), with the difference that our approach relies more explicitly on ethnographic sources and methods as well as philosophical ones. Towards the end of the chapter, we will in fact show how our forays into the nature of autistic shame (if we may call it that) may shed light onto some of the questions discussed by feminist philosophers writing on shame.

## SHAME, AUTISM AND AUTISTIC IDENTITY

What exactly do we mean by the nature of shame as it is experienced by people on the spectrum? Why think that there'd be anything special or peculiar about it? After all, if we can identify an emotional episode as one of shame, then, as such it will be the same whether it is experienced by a woman, someone on the autism spectrum, a person belonging to an oppressed ethnic minority, or anybody else. According to this challenge, there is no such thing as autistic shame, just as there is no such thing as, say, feminist or marginalized shame; there is only shame. This challenge seems to assume that shame can be grasped, conceptualized, and experienced from a standpoint that abstracts from the social circumstances of those who experience it, and some will simply reject this assumption. This is an important methodological discussion. In this section, we will address the nature of shame in autism without entering this debate. In the next section, however, we will consider the sense in which social context, and in particular the context in which people on the spectrum often find themselves, may indeed change their experience of shame.

Part of the nature of autistic shame may very simply come to the fore by studying what triggers shame in autistic individuals. It would seem particularly relevant to find out whether aspects of one's autism or indeed whether one's identity as autistic tend to trigger shame. The ensuing shame would be peculiarly autistic in the sense that individuals who are not on the spectrum (or who don't identify themselves with their autism) would not experience it in the same circumstances or for the same reasons.

Let us begin by saying something about shame and identity. The idea that there is a strong connection between the two is a feature of many different

theories of shame. Some of these theories do indeed make identity the most prominent feature of their theories. Hence, for example, Tjeert Olthof and colleagues used the notion of an *unwanted identity* as one's realization that when seen from the perspective of important others, one seems to be what one does not want to be (Ferguson et al. 2000; Olthof et al. 2000, 2002, 2004, this volume). Olthof further argues that an unwanted identity 'might not so much concern one or the other unfavourable characteristic that people might have, but rather their fear that, when seen from the perspective of a relevant audience, their behavioral or appearance-related manifestations to the outside world give the impression of not being authored by a coherent and consistent self. Such an impression might in turn lead audiences to discredit the individual as an interaction partner' (this volume, chapter 1; Olthof 2002; Olthof et al. 2004).

Questions of identity are similarly prominent in Krista Thomason's (2018, 87) theory of shame. On this view, shame arises when a feature of a person's identity overshadows or defines their self-conception. 'Identity' and 'self-conception' are semi-technical terms here. The latter is understood as 'the way that we represent ourselves to ourselves either on the whole or in particular moments', while 'identities' 'include but also extend beyond our self-conceptions . . . [as they are] comprised of contingent features of our individual histories as well as the way we come across to others . . . our non-voluntary identities' (Thomason 2018, 93).

Other theories make a less direct and yet essential reference to one's identity. Hence, in Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni's view (2012), shame arises when individuals perceive themselves as incapable to fulfil a *self-defining* value or attachment. A person who is attached to a certain idea of themselves as compassionate, for example, may feel shame at the realization of their incapacity to show any care towards a homeless person. On one interpretation of this view, attachments are self-defining whether we actively endorse them or not, whether they are part of our 'self-conception' or only part of our 'identity'.

No matter one's theory of choice, then, we can expect significant connections between shame and identity. It would then be relevant to ask whether shame is triggered in connection to one's autistic identity. Our analysis reveals that it is thus triggered in three distinct kinds of ways: (1) shame about being autistic per se, as in 'I am ashamed that the label "autism" (with its negative associations) applies to me'; (2) shame triggered by features that one perceives as being connected to one's autism, as in 'I am ashamed of my social awkwardness'; (3) shame triggered by features that are in fact connected to one's autism but that the individual fails to perceive in these terms, as when one feels shame for one's awkwardness even before receiving an autism diagnosis.

In what remains of this section, we will look at these three classes of trigger in turn. Beside the qualitative data collected in our interviews, we will use data retrieved from a search in dedicated internet fora. The place that delivered the greatest amount of data was *wrongplanet.net*, an internationally recognized online community for individuals with Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, PDDs and other neurological differences. As we searched 'shame' in its database, we found numerous entries dating all the way back to 2005, divided into two groups: a smaller one collecting entries on *feeling shame or embarrassment about meltdowns* and a larger one with entries about *feeling shame about having autism or being autistic*. The latter question appeared in at least two more internet fora, namely, the *UK National Autistic Society* and *Reddit*. Note that, not only is it the case that the answers to these questions are provided by people on the spectrum; the questions are themselves being asked by members of the community who, in light of their experience, likely expected other members to have felt shame in connection to (some aspect of) autism. We take this as confirming once again that the topic of shame and autism is of some significance from the perspective of members of this community, and not only from the perspective of academics pursuing their own research agenda.

To start with cases squarely in the first class, consider this quote by LivAgain:

> I've been having a rough time lately and feel very ashamed of a lot of things. One thing I'm certainly ashamed of is being autistic. Everything about it feels like a threat – a threat to my femininity, to my appearance, to how others will perceive me. It's hard to put into words but it's almost as though the symptoms don't worry me (I don't actually have a great deal of symptoms, really; not nowadays anyway) but the label itself is damaging me more and more every day. I feel so guilty for feeling like this but I don't want to wonder anymore. Does anyone else feel like this? (National Autistic Society UK)

What LivAgain is saying here could easily be interpreted by way of Olthof's unwanted identity view or Thomason's self-conception-vs-identity view. The label autistic casts an unwanted identity on LivAgain, or again, an identity that eclipses her own conception of herself as, for example, a feminine individual. But why would anyone feel ashamed of their autistic identity, of the 'label itself'? That wouldn't make much sense unless one could show that the label stands for things that involve stigma or, at any rate, negative associations. That these are common associations, however, is an unfortunate but well-documented fact, tellingly described by IdahoRose:

> I wanted to die a few times when my mom told people I had AS [Asperger Syndrome]. She made it sound like I was really disabled, a poor pathetic victim but it's no one's fault but my head's . . . oh, God. And the books about it that describe us that way too. They make us sound like we'll forever be pathetic and abnormal and an inconvenience and a burden, and always need help, and need to be taught stuff, as opposed to simply given an opportunity to explain why, being respected as a human being who had a right to speak for himself rather than an inferior that needs to be taught. . . . I can't explain it. It's part of my resentment, part of the reason for my deep depression. (Wrongplanet)

Most people would not want to be identified with someone really disabled, pathetic, abnormal, an inferior who needs to be taught, a burden, and generally with someone who lacks so much dignity that they do not deserve the opportunity to speak for themselves (the terms 'freak' and 'weirdo' are also typically used derogatorily to refer to individuals on the spectrum, just as 'autistic' is used derogatorily on a par with 'retard' or 'spaz'). In a more roundabout way, a view such as Deonna et al.'s (2012), could also explain how such a negative autistic identity could trigger shame. Consider someone who is attached to a view of themselves as a normal, capable person, equal in worth to everybody else. Now they learn that they are on the autism spectrum and, as they do, they become the object of diminishing attitudes as expressed by society at large, including people whom they esteemed (e.g., the language of the scientific community writing on autism) and cared about (e.g., their parents). As a result, they feel shame, as they now (wrongly) perceive themselves as incapable of minimally fulfilling their self-defining standards. In time, just being reminded of their autistic label may elicit shame.

While being outright ashamed of one's identity as autistic is clearly something reported with some frequency, our impression is that most individuals on the spectrum have a more nuanced relation to their autistic identity. To start with, there are those, like Raindrops, who may seem to be ashamed of their autism but are rather only trying to avoid the negative reactions that accompany revealing that part of their identity:

> I'm not embarrassed or ashamed, but I don't like people I meet knowing I have Aspergers, as in the past people have treated me like a freak. I'd rather people not know because then I'd get treated like everyone else. People mostly can't tell I'm Autistic anyway, apart from when I'm extremely shy. (Wrongplanet)

More squarely in the second class, we find cases such as Oneironaut's (male, age 38), in which one is ashamed about aspects perceived to be connected to their autism, rather than the stigmatized autistic label as such:

> Yeah, at times I am [ashamed about being autistic] but there's nothing I can do about it. I really am when I am having a meltdown or shutdown and people don't

> understand why also when I unintentionally annoy people with my repetition. (Wrongplanet)

The same idea is neatly expressed by Nessa238 (female, age 53):

> Though I am chronically embarrassed and sometimes ashamed of my behavior, this is a result of my difficulty with social interactions and such due to Asperger's. As for having Asperger's per se, I am absolutely not embarrassed or ashamed. I hope that makes sense. (wrongplanet.net)

Note that while meltdowns are things that may or may not be associated with autism, Oneironaut does connect them and repetitive behaviours to his autism. Similarly, Nessa238 attributes those behaviours that make her social interactions difficult to her AS and is ashamed of them as opposed to her AS identity. Hence, if their shame is triggered by having a public meltdown or committing a faux pas, their shame is ultimately not about appearing as autistic but about other kinds of unwanted identities or other eclipsed parts of their self-conception. Or again, they will ultimately see these behaviours rather than their autism as such as involving incapacity to fulfil self-defining values or attachments.

Finally, the third and most intriguing class of cases: 'Hidden Autism'. Many informants from our own Danish interviews and from the internet report experiencing shame even before receiving their autism diagnosis. This, however, does not mean that autism is out of the picture, that their shame is like everybody else's, as the fact that they actually are on the spectrum influences the pattern of their shame episodes. Here are some telling quotes from, respectively, Skybird and ShadesOfMe:

> I have always been ashamed to be me and although my diagnosis last year helped me answer the questions about why I am like I am, I've still not got there with accepting it yet. People tell me that accepting it will come in time. (National Autistic Society UK)

> Before I was diagnosed and had even heard of AS, I did feel ashamed of the things I struggled with as I thought it was just my fault for being stupid – a view that my parents, teachers and peers only reinforced! (Wrongplanet)

Not many individuals will simply admit that they have always been ashamed of themselves. Both individuals (and they are by no means alone in sharing this experience) felt shame for things that turned out to be connected to their autism before even knowing anything about their autism. This type of case shows that the nature of autistic shame cannot simply be accounted for by trying to connect shame episodes to perceived autistic identity or to

specific aspects of autism *as perceived by the individual*. Aspects of autism are likely to elicit shame even when individuals do not grasp them under that heading because, for example, they do not suspect being on the spectrum. To account for such cases, we need to broaden our analysis and consider a more complex set of affective dynamics and the social mechanisms that produce them. This is where our study of autistic shame has clear points of contact with the study of shame pioneered by feminist philosophers.

## AFFECTIVE DYNAMICS: SHAME AND THE EXISTENTIAL FEELING OF WRONGNESS IN AUTISM

As feminist philosophers have argued, one must consider the possibility that being in a dominant as opposed to a subordinated social position differentially affects the way individuals experience and conceptualize – understand, know about and react to – emotions, including shame. Hence, we should expect women and men to have different experiences and conceptions because they tend respectively to occupy subordinated and dominating positions in society.

According to some feminist philosophers, dominant theories of shame have been devised by individuals whose identity was not formed by 'the characteristic sorts of psychological oppression on which modern hierarchies of class, race, and gender rely so heavily' (Bartky 1990, 97; Lehtinen 1998, 62). Such individuals will at best experience shame as an episodic adverse assessment of self, a sudden 'blip across the face of an otherwise undisturbed consciousness' (Bartky 1990, 96). Although painful and unpleasant, for such individuals shame can form an occasion for moral reaffirmation; it can be salutary. For the socially subordinate individual, however, who has partly internalized the low evaluation of herself or himself, of 'people of her or his kind', 'shame is not so much a particular feeling or emotion . . . as a pervasive affective atonement to the social environment' (Bartky 1990, 85). 'The episodic experiences, the particular feelings of shame of the subordinate are more seldom salutary than they are for the privileged individual. . . . They are unconstructive and self-destructive; and they function as *confirmations* of what the agent knew all along – that she or he was a person of lesser worth' (Lethinen 1998, 62).

While we disagree that all 'dominant' theories of shame depict it *merely* as a 'salutary' 'blip across the face of an otherwise undisturbed consciousness', we certainly go along with the claim that one's social environment and one's position in it are likely to shape the individual's affective life and thereby the (experienced) significance of shame for the individual. Remember the claim by ShadesOfMe in the previous section: she felt ashamed of the things she struggled with, as she thought it was her 'fault for being stupid', a view that

her parents, teachers and peers only reinforced. She then goes on to make the following claim:

> Once I found out about AS and got diagnosed, I stopped feeling ashamed right away because I realized that there was nothing 'wrong' with me – I had just been struggling to make my way in a world that I didn't understand with no help whatsoever. (wrongplanet)

Compare this with a much longer quote by June (age 27), an informant from our set of interviews:

> I was first diagnosed with autism when I was 21, and until that point, and in fact for a good while after that, and at times still now, I have really had to struggle with the feeling of being different and wrong ['forkert' in the Danish original]. For as long as I can remember, I have felt as if I have been going around with a secret. When I was in school, I got praised a lot because I was so good at reading and was so nice, and behaved myself, and was good at writing. But as I got home, I was completely exhausted, I couldn't do anything, I couldn't eat, or take a bath, or tidy up in my room. It simply didn't square with the idea that other people had of me. That's why I felt as I went around with the dark secret that, in truth, I was not good enough, that I was hiding who I really was. And it also became a secret that I wasn't doing well. After I was diagnosed, I began to see and understand why I had that feeling of being wrong. Concretely, the feeling of exhaustion that I have had for the greatest part of my life, which is probably what best characterizes my autism, originates in the fact that I received way too much input and way too little time to process it and fall into place. I was continuously overworking to decode the social context, to try to fit in, and the like. So, this feeling of exhaustion springs from my autism and my feeling of being wrong springs from my exhaustion and being continuously overloaded. . . . I think that for many, feeling shame ends up being a kind of strategy, because it is easier to understand and manage it [one's inappropriateness] when one finds an explanation for it, even if the explanation is 'because I have done something wrong'. It can actually be easier to say: 'it is my own fault that I have trouble doing things'. That's why it can be scary to let loose of this strategy and accept that [life] is simply bloody unfair sometimes, and it is bloody hard to be an autist. But if one dares to let loose of that shame, I think it is in fact better in the end . . . one can give more space to one's self, dare to stick out, stop masking oneself so much, and use those survival strategies that actually help you spare your resources, for example, going out in public as visibly autistic, with headphones or earplugs, sunglasses, weighted vest and whatever else.

The narrative that the lives of ShadesOfMe and June seem to share progresses along these lines: as they move about in a neuronormative world, a world regulated by norms tailored to those with a standard neurological profile, there are many expectations they cannot fulfil, or can only fulfil at a

very high personal cost. Existence in this type of (social) reality is exhausting and becomes a burden. They begin to feel that they are inappropriate, stupid, unfitting, or insufficient, or that there is something wrong with them.[5] They see those around them succeed at 'normal' or unexceptional tasks, like going through with their school day or 'just' socializing with others without systematically saying or doing something perceived to be wrong. To be a successful agent in this world, they must work hard (much harder than everybody else) and often fail anyway and can't understand why they cannot do and cannot be like everybody else. Those around them too often fail to understand that and instead of providing support, act in ways that contribute to their feeling wrong.

Our main claim in this section is that we need to understand and take into account this feeling of wrongness to understand the nature of shame in people on the spectrum. As the claims of our informants show, this feeling is often in place even before they know that they are on the spectrum. We wish to argue that this feeling of wrongness amounts to an existential feeling that is intimately connected to feelings of shame. The affective dynamics between this existential feeling and shame that we are about to describe may potentially explain not only the shame of people on the spectrum but also the pervasive shame of other marginalized individuals discussed by feminist philosophers.

To understand the feeling of wrongness, we lean on Ratcliffe's idea of existential feelings or feelings of being (2005, 2008). Ratcliffe (2008) uses this notion among others to show how psychiatric conditions such as Capgras delusion, Cotard delusion and schizophrenia can be reinterpreted in terms of changes at the level of existential feeling. We will *not* similarly be using the feeling of wrongness to explain autism as a psychiatric condition. Our aim is rather to show how this type of feeling explains why some people on the spectrum feel the shame that they feel. While we establish no connections between existential feelings and autism as such, we do believe that members of marginalized groups other than individuals on the spectrum are also likely to develop this feeling, given the 'right' social dynamics. Hence the link with work on shame and feminism. In short, while we borrow the notion of existential feeling from Ratcliffe, we do not use it for the same purpose and, in fact, we do extend his analysis in two ways: by discussing a yet unexplored feeling of being, that is, the feeling of wrongness, and by shedding light on the social dynamics that are likely to generate it.

Ratcliffe homes in on the phenomenon he has in mind by listing some examples:

> The feeling of being: 'complete', 'flawed and diminished', 'unworthy', 'humble', 'separate and in limitation', 'at home', 'a fraud', 'slightly lost, 'overwhelmed', 'abandoned', 'stared at', 'torn', 'disconnected from the world',

> 'invulnerable', 'unloved', 'watched', 'empty', 'in control', 'powerful', 'completely helpless', 'part of the real world again', 'trapped and weighed down', 'part of a larger machine', 'at one with life', 'at one with nature', 'there', 'familiar', 'real'. (2005, 47)

Against the grain of received conceptualizations of feelings in general, Ratcliffe claims that existential feelings such as the one listed above contribute to how one's body or aspects of the world are experienced. The feelings need not themselves be an object of consciousness, but rather 'that *through* which one is conscious of something else' (2005, 46). Importantly, they are best seen not as descriptions of one's inner states or of features of the world

> but of one's relationship with the world. . . . This relationship does not simply consist in an experience of being an entity that occupies a spatial and temporal location, alongside a host of other entities. Ways of finding oneself in a world are presupposed spaces of experiential possibility, which shape the various ways in which things can be experienced. For example, if one's sense of the world is tainted by a 'feeling of unreality', this will affect how all object of perception appear. They are distant, removed, not quite 'there'. (2005, 47)

The dynamics around the feeling of wrongness are quite intuitive. Imagine that you find overwhelming tasks that seem very ordinary to your peers and that unlike them you often fail in these tasks. Suppose also that individuals in your environment underline your perceived failings by remarking on it critically or, in fact, make you see your doings as failings by critically calling them to your attention. Repeat this exercise often enough during your formative years and, soon enough, you might develop the feeling that the fault rests with you and not with your environment, and hence that you are faulty, less capable, insufficient, unfitting less worthy, in short, 'wrong'. As these feelings settle in, they determine your 'presupposed spaces of experiential possibility'; they will shape the way you experience the world.

The cases of ShadesOfMe and June are not isolated examples of the feeling of wrongness. This was one of the most significant themes from our interviews. Hence, for example, when asked whether the self-understanding gained by receiving her autism diagnosis gave her some relief, Judith (age 37) replied that:

> Both yes and no. It is with very mixed feelings that one receives such a diagnosis. But I believe anyway that the dominant feeling is a feeling of relief. You can say that the challenges are there no matter what, but what's different is to KNOW that it's not just because I don't try hard enough. It is not because I DO something WRONG, it is just the way I am . . . Because I have been blaming myself – 'why am I not ABLE to?' The others are able to so it must be because I do not try hard enough.

Similarly, Jeremy (23) says:

> . . . to feel wrong or to feel like a loser . . . has been the biggest thing in my life. The greatest challenge was definitively how bad I felt because nothing worked out and to wish all the time that things did work out. I would have liked to have a life.

Finally, when asked for tips autistic youth could use to do well in life, Joan (age 49) recommended, among others, that they

> . . . find a network with other autists so they can find out that they have something in common, so they don't walk through life feeling awkward or wrong or different. So . . . one does not have to live a normal life. You can choose to do exactly what YOU want to because it concerns the quality of your life and not what the rest of the world expects you to do.

If this is where an individual is affectively coming from, it is no surprise that the next critical remark or bad look they receive will elicit shame. In fact, they may well feel shame all on their own, without anyone else's remark or (imagined) gaze. Due to their existential feeling of wrongness, these individuals will tend to experience their relation to the world in a relevant negative way even when alone. The history of their interactions with their social environment has shaped them affectively so that shame becomes the most obvious response for them to have. This is nicely, though sadly, illustrated by Jake (age 40), whom, unlike the other informants quoted so far, was asked questions bearing directly on shame in a later round of interviews:

> You feel shame in the explicit demands from others but also in what becomes an internalized ableism and the experience of not being good enough. This also results in what I term as shameful pleasures – which is when we feel victorious in connection to overcoming a challenge, no matter whether it is completing a special mission in *World of Warcraft* or finally paying a long overdue bill or finally doing the dishes. Then this can be a super cool moment, or it can be a really disappointing moment – because even though we succeeded, we might not allow ourselves to feel happiness or feel success because we succeeded in something that is so easy for others or which we believe is so easy for others. So, we think that it is embarrassing that we are happy that we succeeded and that we are miserable or useless or the thought that we are handicapped can appear or the thought that we are not good enough in comparison with other people. And it is not something that we feel like telling others, we are not sharing these pleasures of victory . . . it is not an Instagram moment. It becomes something that we bury inside ourselves, and we only share the moments of success, where we act in ways that are admirable for neurotypical people with neurotypical prerequisites.

Before concluding, let us tie some loose ends. Some may ask why the feeling of wrongness would flow more naturally into shame rather than, say, guilt? As a matter of fact, our informants mention guilt alongside shame (though not as frequently), which is not surprising given that the two emotions are known to co-occur (Tangney and Dearing 2002). Yet these feelings share an increased affinity with shame for at least two reasons. In line with shame, these feelings are not only about what one's conduct, but about the self, whether the latter is understood globally or more restrictedly, in connection with some of its aspects.[6] Also, the phenomenology of shame is known to involve feelings of incapacity, which is precisely what many informants would experience in their daily engagements with a reality that is fitted to others but unfitted to them.

Note also that the affective dynamics just described may move in a loop or vicious circle. Hence, the experience of shame, originally felt against the background of the existential feeling of wrongness, may in turn reinforce that feeling, adding an emotional confirmation to its affective base. As argued by Lethinen earlier, in this sense, shame episodes are unconstructive and self-destructive *confirmations* of what the agent knew all along – that they were a person of lesser worth.

We are not claiming here that these feelings are enough to be themselves considered episodes of shame. In this, we beg to disagree with June, who seems to take the two to be the same. Each one of the theories of shame presented above may be taken to represent what is missing to go from the feelings to the emotional episodes. While you may feel as a misfit as you engage in this or that activity, you may still fail to have the necessary perception of an unwanted identity, an eclipsed self-conception or being incapable in upholding a relevant self-defining value. In that case, your feelings will not generate an emotional episode of shame, though they may generate another kind of emotion. Consider, for example, what SoftKitty (female, 54) writes in this connection:

> I'm not embarrassed by the Asperger's label itself but I am embarrassed by the aspects of the Asperger's that make people treat me differently – they can often make me feel ashamed/not as good as others. Then at other times I get angry about being made to feel bad by other people and myself taking their judgements seriously. So I go backward and forward between feeling ashamed and angry. (Wrongplanet)

SoftKitty's way of being in the world, we surmise, is characterized, among others, by the feeling of wrongness. A life of exposure to difficulties, failure and criticism has created this background feeling. Against this affective background, she often responds with shame to the remarks of others. Yet sometimes her anger also surfaces.

In short, the material provided by our informants invites us to focus on the relevant social context and the processes of exclusion and marginalization that operate within it. The latter generate existential feelings of wrongness in marginalized individuals, which in turn feed and are fed by episodes of shame. While the episodes of shame are what they are, the idea is that they would have not been there if the wider affective dynamics and the social context that produced them had been different. What is more, there is nothing remotely positive or reformative in shame episodes that arise from such a background. They are not salutary blips across the face of an otherwise undisturbed consciousness, but emotive punctuations of one's existential feeling of wrongness.

With this view in hand, we can return to the claim that for the socially subordinate individuals who have partly internalized the low evaluation of themselves 'shame is not so much a particular feeling or emotion . . . as a pervasive affective atonement to the social environment' (Bartky 1990, 85). What we propose is simply that Bartky's 'pervasive affective atonement' be understood as nothing other than the feeling of wrongness: a sense of incapacity, inferiority and wrongness that structures experience, feeding and being fed by episodic shame. As argued earlier, this solution would preserve a conceptual and psychologically real distinction between feelings of wrongness, on the one hand, and shame episodes on the other. The (episodic) shame of marginalized individuals is like the shame of everyone else but, as we widen the scope of our analysis to consider the affective dynamics produced by the social context, we can point to clear differences between marginalized and non-marginalized shame regarding the social mechanisms that generate the feeling of wrongness and its impact on shame.

Thomason (2018, 36–38; this volume) argues that accounts such as Bartky's (or for that matter also Taylor 1985; Nussbaum 2004; Deonna et al. 2012) require us to accept the claim that marginalized individuals – as a class or group – 'must have internalized the perception that some part of themselves is lesser or diminished. That is, they must in some sense accept or agree with the judgment that they are abject in some way' (this volume, p. 211). The problem with this, she goes on to argue, is that we are then forced to attribute persistent self-loathing to members of these marginalized groups, as they must believe that they are in some sense defective. This line of thinking, she concludes, should be rejected as it betrays 'a specious tendency for a dominant social group to pathologize a marginalized social group' (this volume, p. 211).

In the context of autism, the idea of neurodiversity is grounded precisely in the belief that a dominant social group unjustly pathologizes a marginalized social group. As a movement, the *raison d'être* of neurodiversity is precisely to counter this type of tendency. It is clearly *not* our intention here to question the existence of such specious tendencies. We will nonetheless draw attention

to three points, one driven by data, the other by theory, and the last by the first two. First, our interviews with autistic informants do bring up evidence of self-loathing. To introduce this evidence, we should explain that a lot of our informants received their autism diagnosis as adults, some time as late as in their fifties. For many, this was a watershed moment, as it brought about a reinterpretation of many aspects of their past lives, including many of their attitudes towards themselves and others. As they received their diagnosis, many informants realized that they had been blaming themselves for being defective, incapable, wrong, and so on. This showed up in their apologetic attitude towards others (for things they were not responsible for). Most interestingly, they came to the realization that there was nothing wrong with them; the problem was rather with their social environment. Finally, to use their own powerful words, they started 'forgiving themselves' and accepting themselves for what they were.

The second point has to do with the idea that if you feel shame in connection with aspects of your autism, your gender, your skin colour or ethnicity, and so on, then you must have 'internalized' the relevant standards, and must 'accept', 'believe', 'agree with the judgement' that you are defective in the relevant sense. The view is often accused of involving patronizing and pathologizing attitudes towards those whose shame is being explained, as it involves the claim that these individuals must believe that they are inferior, which it would be irrational for them to believe. To avoid ending up with these attitudes, one may try to show that these marginalized individuals have not internalized the relevant (bad) norms and standards. This, we believe, is the strategy chosen by Thomason (this volume): the self-conception of marginalized individuals, she claims, is not something they accept, endorse, or believe to be true of them but is continuously challenged by the (marginalized) aspects of their identity (race for racial minorities, gender for women, etc.) imposed from the outside.

Another option would be to refrain from describing the process of internalization in strong cognitivist and voluntarist terms. We don't always know what standards or norms we have internalized, and *a fortiori* we have no beliefs and make no judgements about them and have no endorsing attitudes. In fact, we can often figure out what norms we have internalized by observing and interpreting our emotional reactions. Explicitly endorsing certain norms (whatever that may amount to) is neither necessary nor sufficient to show that we have internalized them. The process of internalization is for the most part involuntary; not the linear and immediate product of willing and choice, but the result of forces that are for the most part outside our control. As a member of a marginalized group, you are confronted from very early on with *only one* normative reality that does not fit you. You don't have much of a choice but to accept it, even if it will mean misery for you; everybody around you

pressures you into conformity. That reality will prove difficult if not impossible to live by; and yet you witness many of your peers sailing through it. You will likely develop feelings of inadequacy, incapacity, lesser worth and wrongness. These feelings, as such, do not involve explicit judgements of any kind. They are the result of the protracted clash between the person that you are, on one hand, and the unfitting normative reality in which you have evolved, on the other. As Bartky would put it, they are your *affective* atonement to your social environment.

In conclusion, if we ask whether individuals on the spectrum are likely to internalize neuronormative norms that cause them to adopt negative existential feelings and ultimately shame, our answer is that many of them in fact do and will continue to do so for as long as their social environment remains the same. If we ask whether they are irrational or defective in any way for doing so, the answer is 'Surely not!'. Neuronormativity is the dominant game in town; they simply do not have much of a choice and, until the recent birth of neurodiversity, it would have been hard for anybody to imagine an alternative normative order. The stories we have collected show that, when real choice is available, individuals on the spectrum, like any other intelligent individual, will tend to move away from any attempt to live by norms that are not suited to them. Once again, however, internalizing a new set of norms may take time and emotional adjustment. Many informants remember how they had to rethink many parts of their lives and dreams. In some cases, receiving the diagnosis spurred the realization that some of their important projects and dreams were best dropped. One informant, for example, claimed that her autism, in connection with other conditions, meant that she would never be able to start her own family, as she had hitherto been dreaming of.

## MAKE ROOM ON THE PLANET

Shame is sufficiently significant to emerge unsolicited as a theme in conversations that were ultimately about something else, that is, well-being and ill-being for adults on the spectrum. Similarly, shame is considered enough of a topic as to prompt searching queries on relevant internet forums. When asking in what sense, if any, this shame is autistic the answer is split in two. First, autism triggers shame insofar as one perceives one's autism label negatively or, again, insofar as one perceives aspects of one's autism in negative terms. The work that society must do here is to remove these negative associations. There is, however, another, more sinister form of autistic shame, one that arises even in the absence of any perceived or explicit connection with autism. To understand these episodes of shame we need to broaden the scope of our analysis and understand the social circumstances and wider

affective dynamics that affect people on the spectrum. The key notion here is the existential feeling of wrongness, which, we argued, may well amount to Bartky's 'pervasive affective atonement' and ultimately generate Lethinen's unconstructive and self-destructive shame episodes. Here people on the spectrum feel shame in the absence of any overt connection to autism. Yet it is their autism that makes them vulnerable, along with other marginalized individuals, to the social circumstances that lead to feelings of wrongness and to self-destructive shame.

If the analysis in this chapter is along the right lines, we should avoid social circumstances that generate the types of negative existential feelings identified earlier. When meeting individuals who do not quite fit the mould and may even react negatively to our injunctions, we should not always take it personally, and not attempt to make them fit it anyway. Criticism, mockery and bullying won't work either. We should ask ourselves whether the individual doesn't fit the mould because they come from a different mould, even if they look very much like us. Nor is tolerance worth much unless it is matched by the construction from the bottom up of alternative normative orders, ones which would give people on the spectrum the possibility of creating forms of life that would be fitting for them. When confronted with people on the spectrum, we need first and foremost understanding, *as do they*. This can only be gained through epistemic humility: we need constantly to remind ourselves that the lived experience of the other (whether you are the other or not) may be very different from ours, perhaps different in ways that are beyond our grasp. As we learn to understand how the other inhabitants of the planet are different, and make room for them, we may begin to see fewer and less crippling feelings of wrongness and shame.[7]

## NOTES

1. The original quote from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) uses 'deficits' in lieu of 'differences'. Members of the autistic community may find the original language 'pathologizing', an attitude which we will discuss below. Also note that with the publication of the DSM-5 in 2013, Asperger Syndrome (AS) no longer appears as a separate autism condition. For the sake of clarity, however, we did explicitly refer to it because some of the qualitative data used in this study predates 2013 and because many today still refer to Asperger's Syndrome and to those affected by it informally as Aspies.

2. We tend to use the expression 'individuals on the autism spectrum' to avoid taking a stance on whether the expression 'autistic individuals' is preferable to 'individuals with autism' or vice versa. We do, however, at times use these expressions as well as the expression 'autistic shame'.

3. Given the predominantly inductive and experiential approach adopted in our study, unexpected results such as these should not be seen as poor theorizing. The approach is an instance of the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) (Willig 2013; but also Giorgi and Giorgi 2003), the aim of which is precisely to generate understanding of the world as much as possible as the participants experience it. Our coding procedure was descriptive and, beyond that, a form of empathic interpretation. We have strived to understand the data by extrapolating the meaning implicit in it rather than by applying external, pre-determined well-being dimensions or other theoretical concepts. To this end, we have discussed the plausibility of our analysis with members of the autistic community.

4. While mixed, these findings are not contrary. Someone could indeed be aware of having only few emotions and be very accurate in identifying which emotions they are experiencing, while someone else might have lots of emotions and not have a clue about how to name them. Alexithymia is a subclinical condition characterized by difficulties in identifying and describing one's own emotional state. Its incidence in the typical population is about 10 per cent. Among people on the autism spectrum its incidence is estimated to be between 40 and 65 per cent (Bird and Cook 2013, 1). This may partly explain why the results gathered so far are mixed.

5. In our interviews, the term 'lazy' often appears at this junction. The idea here is that the systematic perception of failure in achieving certain tasks, accompanied by the usual dose of reproach and self-reproach, generates the idea that, if not inadequate, one is at least a lazy individual.

6. See Lewis (1971, 30) and Niedenthal et al. (1994) for the claim that guilt focusses on action while shame focusses on the self. See Deonna et al. (2012, 104–107) for a defence of the claim that the focus of shame is not necessarily the self as a whole, the global self, but rather aspects of the self, the localized self.

7. We are grateful to the Velux Foundation for believing in the importance of our project ('Autistic Role Models: Positive Pedagogy for Youth on the Autism Spectrum'), for their generous financial help, and for their unflinching support throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We would also like to thank Alessandra Fussi, Ken Richman, and Krista Thomason for their invaluable comments, and the participants to our study who have kindly let us in on their planet and without which none of this would have been possible.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fifth Edition: DSM-5*. American Psychiatric Pub. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. 1990. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression.* New York and London: Routledge.

Bird, Geoff, and Richard Cook. 2013. "Mixed emotions: The contribution of alexithymia to the emotional symptoms of autism." *Translational Psychiatry* 3, no. 7: 285–e285. https://doi.org/10.1038/tp.2013.61.

Calder, Lynsey, Vivian Hill, and Elizabeth Pellicano. 2012. "'Sometimes I want to play by myself': Understanding what friendship means to children with autism in mainstream primary schools." *Autism* 17, no. 3: 296–316. https://doi:10.1177/1362361312467866.

Davidson, Denise, Elizabeth Hilvert, Ieva Misiunaite, and Michael Giordano. 2018. "Proneness to guilt, shame, and pride in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and neurotypical children." *Autism Research* 11, no. 6 (June): 883–892. https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.1937.

Davidson, Denise, Sandra B. Vanegas, and Elizabeth Hilvert. 2017. "Proneness to self-conscious emotions in adults with and without autism traits." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 47, no. 11 (Nov): 3392–3404. https://doi:10.1007/s10803-017-3260-8.

Deonna, Julien A., Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni. 2012. *In Defense of Shame*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ferguson, Tamara J., Heidi L. Eyre, and Michael Ashbaker. 2000. "Unwanted identities: A key variable in shame-anger links and gender differences in shame." *Sex Roles* 42(3/4): 133–157. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1007061505251.

Giorgi, Amedeo, and Barbro Giorgi. 2003. "Phenomenology." In *Qualitative Psychology*, edited by Jonathan A. Smith, 25–50. London: Sage.

Heerey, Erin A., Dacher Keltner, and Lisa M. Capps. 2003. "Making sense of self-conscious emotion: Linking theory of mind and emotion in children with autism." *Emotion* 3, no. 4: 394–400.

Krause-Jensen, Katrine, and Raffaele Rodogno. In preparation. Neuronormativity and self-understanding: A thematic analysis of autism and the good life.

Lehtinen, Ullaliina. 1998. "How does one know what shame is? Epistemology, emotions, and forms of life in juxtaposition." *Hypatia* 13, no. 1: 56–77. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01352.x.

Lewis, Hellen B. 1971. *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*. New York: International Universities Press.

Locke, Jill. 2007. "Shame and the future of feminism." *Hypatia* 22, no. 4: 146–162. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2007.tb01325.x.

National Autistic Society UK. https://community.autism.org.uk/f/adults-on-the-autistic-spectrum/4780/do-you-ever-feel-ashamed-of-being-autistic.

Niedenthal, Paula, June Price Tangney, and Igor Gavanski. 1994. ""If only I weren't" versus "If only I hadn't": Distinguishing shame and guilt in counterfactual thinking." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67, no. 4: 585–595.

Nussbaum, Martha. 2004. *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Olthof, Tjeert. 2002. "Shame, guilt, antisocial behavior, and juvenile justice: A psychological perspective." In *Punishing Juveniles*, edited by Anthony R. Duff and Ido Weijers, 193–205. Oxford, UK: Hart Publishing.

Olthof, Tjeert. 2023. "Themes in Current Psychological Research on Shame." (this volume).

Olthof, Tjeert, Anneke Schouten, Hilde Kuipers, Hedy Stegge, and Aagje Jennekens-Schinkel. 2000. "Shame and guilt in children: Differential situational antecedents

and experiential correlates." *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 18, no. 1: 51–64. https://doi.org/10.1348/026151000165562.

Olthof, Tjeert, Tamara Ferguson, Eva Bloemers, and Marinda Deij. 2004. "Morality- and identity-related antecedents of children's guilt and shame attributions in events involving physical illness." *Cognition and Emotion* 18, no. 3: 383–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930341000077.

Ratcliffe, Matthew. 2005. "The feeling of being." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 12, no. 8–10: 45–63.

Ratcliffe, Matthew. 2008. *Feelings of Being, Phenomenology, Psychiatry, and the Sense of Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reddit. https://www.reddit.com/r/autism/comments/djow9v/anyone_else_ashamedembarrassed_of_being_autistic/. Accessed on 30 March 2022.

Rodogno, Raffaele. 2008. "Shame and guilt in restorative justice." *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 14, no. 2: 142–176. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013474.

Rodogno, Raffaele. 2013. "Gender and shame: A philosophical perspective." In *Gender and Emotion: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Ioana Latu, Marianne Schmid Mast, and Susanne Kaiser, 155–169. Bern: Peter Lang.

Slomka, K. 2017. When autism feels like living on the wrong planet. https://themighty.com/2017/10/autism-feels-like-being-born-on-the-wrong-planet/. Accessed on 30 March 2022.

Tangney, June Price, and Ronda L. Dearing. 2002. *Shame and Guilt*. New York: Guilford.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomason, Krista. 2018. *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Thomason, Krista. 2023. "Shame, gender, and self-making." (this volume)

Tracy, Jessica L., Joey T. Cheng, Richard W. Robins, and Kali H. Trzesniewski. 2009. "Authentic and hubristic pride: The affective core of self-esteem and narcissism." *Self and Identity* 8(2–3): 196–213. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860802505053.

Williamson, Sara, Jamie Craig, and Richard Slinger. 2008. "Exploring the relationship between measures of self-esteem and psychological adjustment among adolescents with Asperger Syndrome." *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice* 12, no. 4: 391–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361308091652.

Willig, Carla. 2013. *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (3rd ed.). Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Wrongplanet.net. https://wrongplanet.net/forums/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=140790. Accessed on 3 March 2022.

# Index

# About the Contributors

**Mark Alfano** does work in philosophy (epistemology, moral psychology, philosophy of science), social science (personality psychology, social psychology) and computer science. He also brings digital humanities methods to bear on both contemporary problems and the history of philosophy (especially Nietzsche).

**Alessandra Fussi** is an associate professor of moral philosophy at the University of Pisa. Her research areas include the philosophy of emotions, ancient Greek moral psychology and contemporary interpretations of Plato's and Aristotle's ethical and political theories. Among her recent publications are a book in Italian on shame (Per una teoria della vergogna, ETS 2018) and several articles in English on Plato's conception of the soul, on Aristotle's understanding of emotions such as shame and anger, on Leo Strauss's interpretation of Plato, and on Bernard Williams' theory of shame in light of his interpretation of ancient Greek culture.

**Lorenzo Greco** is a lecturer in political philosophy at the University of L'Aquila and associate member of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Oxford. His areas of interest include ethics, moral psychology, political philosophy and the philosophy of David Hume. He is author of *L'io morale. David Hume e l'etica contemporanea* (2008). His work has appeared in journals such as the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, *Utilitas*, and in various collections.

**Katrine Krause-Jensen** is an assistant professor in philosophy at Aarhus University, Denmark. She has published in the areas of ethics, legal and political philosophy and currently focusses on philosophy of medicine, bioethics,

and autism and well-being. She is a member of the Danish National Medical Scientific Ethics Committee.

**JeeLoo Liu,** PhD, University of Rochester, is a professor of philosophy at California State University, Fullerton. She was named 2019 Carnegie Fellow for her research project: Confucian Robotic Ethics. She has authored *Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality* (2017), *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: from Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (2006). She also co-edited *Consciousness and the Self* (2012), and *Nothingness in Asian Philosophy* (2014). Her primary research interest is to reconstruct analytic Chinese philosophy, in topics such as Chinese metaphysics, Confucian moral psychology and Neo-Confucian virtue ethics. In recent years, she has been exploring practical issues about robotic ethics, the prevention of social evils and the construction of a moral programme based on Confucian moral sentimentalism. She has published numerous philosophical papers on wide-ranging topics in philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of time, Chinese metaphysics and Confucian moral philosophy. She is also active in the profession of philosophy and has continuously held leadership positions. She was the president of the Creighton Club (Upstate New York Philosophical Association), the president of the Association of Chinese Philosophers in America (ACPA), and the executive director of the International Society for Chinese Philosophy (ISCP). She has also served on the Board of Advisors for the John Templeton Foundation, Center for East Asian and Comparative Philosophy (CEACOP), and the International Oversight Committee for Seoul National University's *Science and Religion in East Asia* Project.

**Heidi L. Maibom** (cand.phil. Copenhagen, PhD London) is Distinguished Professor at the University of the Basque Country and professor at University of Cincinnati. She has published widely on the topics of empathy, shame and psychopathy. She is the author of *Empathy* (2020) and, most recently, *The Space Between: How Empathy Really Works* (2022), and the editor of *Neurofeminsim: Issues at the Intersection of Feminist Theory and Cognitive Science* (2012), *Empathy and Morality* (2014), and *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Empathy* (2017).

**Imke von Maur** works as a postdoctoral researcher in philosophy at the Institute for Cognitive Science, Osnabrück, Germany. Her research areas are philosophy of mind and emotions, (social) epistemology and (critical) phenomenology. She further works on the ethics of AI and education. Her main interest lies in the societal and political relevance of understanding processes, for example, in the context of the ecological crisis.

**Alba Montes Sánchez** is a philosopher of emotion, specializing in the phenomenology and moral psychology of self-conscious emotions like shame, pride and envy. Most recently, she was employed as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Philosophy Department of University College Cork. Her research has been published in journals like the *European Journal of Philosophy* or *Frontiers in Psychology* and collective volumes in Cambridge University Press or Routledge.

**Tjeert Olthof** recently retired as an assistant professor from the Department of Clinical, Neuro- & Developmental Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His teaching concerned the cognitive, emotional, moral, and (anti-)social development of children and adolescents. His publications include studies on aspects of children's and adolescents' emotional and moral development as well as their relations with peers. He currently works on preparing publications on adolescents' bullying behaviour and on their efforts to defend victims of bullying.

**Raffaele Rodogno** is an associate professor at the Department of Philosophy and History of Ideas at Aarhus University, Denmark. He is the co-author with Julien Deonna and Fabrice Teroni of *In Defense of Shame* and has published on topics such as well-being and the good life, the role of shame, guilt, and anger in punishment, and the philosophy of technology.

**Alessandro Salice** is a lecturer at the Philosophy Department of University College Cork and research associate at the Center for Subjectivity Research in Copenhagen. He has extensively published on a variety of topics related to philosophy of mind and action, moral psychology and social philosophy. His contribution to these disciplines is informed by the insights of realist phenomenology, which he continues to unearth and assess in his work.

**Krista K. Thomason** is an associate professor of philosophy at Swarthmore College. Her areas of expertise include philosophy of emotion, moral philosophy and history of philosophy. She is the author of the book *Naked: The Dark Side of Shame and Moral Life*, which was published in 2018.

**Íngrid Vendrell Ferran** is a professor of philosophy at the University of Marburg. Her research is in the areas of phenomenology, philosophy of mind, epistemology and aesthetics. She is the author of two books, Die Emotionen. Gefühle in der realistischen Phänomenologie (2008) and Die Vielfalt der Erkenntnis (2018). Her academic papers have been published in *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, and Human Studies.*