

Shame and Guilt: a compilation of (soc)psy definitions

Contents: Notes — Mainstream definition — Self-conscious emotions — Freud — Helen Lewis — Silvan Tomkins — Gershen Kaufman — Tangney et Co — TOSCA/critique of — Michael Lewis — Cultural models of shame and guilt

Notes

1. These lecture notes are part of a documentation the compiler – a social scientist – builds for her research on attribution of responsibility and guilt to collectives/groups. The compilation will be updated every now and then.
2. With rare exceptions, psychologists seem indifferent to what other disciplines have to say about shame and guilt (history, social sciences, philosophy, law -although many of their definitions are quasi-legalistic). To this indifference, add the strange ideas psychologists seem to have about theory building and scientific debate to understand why these theories utterly failed to convince the compiler.
3. Do not expect appreciation, please, for: a) speculations about ‘cultures of shame’ and ‘cultures of guilt’. Such presumptions of uniformity of large populations are what sociologists call ‘lifeless abstractions’ (Linda Fuller); b) evolutionary psychology: shame is the descendant of an emotion of rank negotiation - social anxiety + competition - that operated in environments where anger and aggression proved adaptive; c) the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) of Tangney et Co.

Types of Approaches

Paul Gilbert summarizes the psychological perspectives on shame as follows: **a)** psychoanalytical; **b)** affect theory; **c)** affect-cognitive; **d)** affect-behavioural; **e)** cognitive-behavioural; **f)** developmental (1998: What is Shame? Some Core Issues and Controversies. In Gilbert, Paul, and Andrews, Bernice (eds.), *Shame. Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture*, Oxford University Press). There is a great deal of overlap between them, however; I will signal only: psychoanalytical, affect, cognitive, developmental.

‘Survival guilt’ of those who escaped the Nazi horror, post-traumatic disorders of war criminals and their victims, ordeals of ‘non-lawful combatants’ fallen in the ‘war on terror’, etc., shape our perception and understanding of shame and guilt.

Shaming and humiliating are powerful weapons in (world) politics (Paul Saurette, 2005: *The Kantian Imperative. Humiliation, common sense, politics*; 2006: You dissin me? Humiliation and post 9/11 global politics.”*Review of International Studies* 32: 495-522). In Nazi camps, Gulags, Guantanamo or Abu-Ghraib, etc., it was ‘normal’ to shame and humiliate the prisoners to death.

In a ‘milder’ form, **shaming** is an essential political technology in: **state formation** (Derek Sayer and Philip Corrigan, 1985: *The Great Arch. English state formation as cultural revolution*; Alan Hunt, 1999: *Governing Morals. A Social History of Moral Regulation*); **modernization** (Marshall Sahlins, 1992: The economics of Develop-man in the Pacific, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 21: 12-25; Joel Robbins and H. Wardlow (ed.) 2005: *The Making of Global and Local Modernities in Melanesia: Humiliation, Transformation and the Nature of Cultural Change*; James Wilce, 2005: *Crying Shame. Metaculture, modernity and the exaggerated death of lament*); and in my humble opinion in **Europeanisation** (Arfire, *The Moral Regulation of the Second Europe*, forthcoming: *Critical Sociology*).

Mainstream definition of shame and guilt

Contemporary mainstream says: There are four self-conscious emotions: shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride. Owing to their complexity, they are called also 'social', 'higher-order', or 'moral' emotions, etc. They are called 'self-conscious' because they require a concept of the self, or an ability to see the self as a subject of evaluation. The object of guilt is something local, something I did; the object of shame is something global, who I am. It seems that in American psychology, shame is the villain, and guilt the good cop.

“On a theoretical level there is general consensus concerning the description of these two self-conscious emotions (...). **Guilt is generally described as resulting from the feeling that one is responsible for harming others, either by omission or by commission.** This feeling of responsibility, often intensified by feelings of empathy with the victim of one's act, is hypothesized to be associated with a desire or tendency to atone and/or to repair. **Shame, on the other hand, is assumed to be triggered by situations in which one has the feeling of being negatively evaluated by others or by the self. In shame, the negative evaluation would generalize to the whole self.** Thus, in a typical shame situation, one feels small, deficient, and worthless. Hence, not surprisingly, shame is described as being associated with a tendency to disappear or escape from the situation. In sum, shame and guilt would be mainly differentiated by the fact that guilt implies a (perceived) sense of control and agency, while shame is associated with feelings of powerlessness and passivity.” (Fontaine, J.R.J., Luyten, P., Estas, C., Corveleyn, J., 2004, Scenario-Based and Frequency-Based Approaches towards the Measurement of Guilt and Shame: Empirical Evidence for Unique Contributions. In Shohov, S.P. (ed.) *Advances in Psychology Research*, Band 30, 141-154: 142.)

Despite the fact psychology has its “mainstream” theory of shame of Tangney et Co., there is open controversy about what shame and guilt might be; the ‘instrument designs’ themselves are highly debatable. *“Currently there are NO methods of measuring shame and guilt that are free from serious methodological flaws: low validity and reliability, high intercorrelations between supposedly different subscales, measuring constructs that are not represented in reality, and so on (...). Most of those problems can be ultimately traced to differences in definitions, misconceptions, and reliance on previous biased studies and their conclusions.”* (Blum, A., 2008: Shame and Guilt, Misconceptions and Controversies: A Critical Review of the Literature. *Traumatology*, 14(3), 91-102: 91.)

“Self-conscious emotions”

The so-called *basic emotions* are elicited by instincts or basic propensities; they are genetically/biologically determined. Their lists vary; however, they are considered universal emotions. Fear and anger, for example, are such basic emotions. Some enumerate shame as well as basic, although usually is listed among the higher-order emotions.

Even basic emotions can involve cognition; cognition is however the characteristic of self-conscious emotions: “the elicitation of self-conscious emotions involves elaborate cognitive processes that have, at their heart, the notion of self (...) Cognitive processes must be the elicitors of these complex emotions. It is the way we think or what we think about that becomes the elicitor of pride, shame, guilt, or embarrassment.” (Lewis, M. 2008: Self-

Conscious Emotions: Embarrassment, Pride, Shame and Guilt. In Lewis, M.; Haviland-Jones, J. M.; Feldman Barrett, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Emotions*, The Guilford Press, 742-57: 742-3) Michael Lewis proposes a "*cognitive-attribitional mode*" of the way self-conscious emotions occur (743-4). Such emotions imply self-evaluations and involve first a set of standards, goals, and rules, which "are inventions of the culture" which are transmitted through socialization in the family. The result of the self-evaluation is one holding oneself for being *responsible* or not being responsible for an *action*. If we consider ourselves not responsible, the self-evaluation process stops. If we find ourselves responsible, the self-evaluation enters a new stage: we evaluate ourselves as successful or unsuccessful by the yardstick of the mentioned standards, goals and rules.

As I understand it, the uncertain status of shame (basic or higher-order) has something to do with the fact that "**shame is an unwanted and difficult to control experience**" (Gilbert, 1998: 4). Another reason is the interposition of 'affects' between stimulus and emotion in some theories: according to Blum's synthesis, shame and guilt are "initially simply affects, a psychological response to an event that does not involve any cognition." As layperson, I wonder if affects superpose basic emotions.

Psychoanalysis: FREUD

Blum makes the very strange claim that "until the 20th century, it was shame that was in focus. The word *guilt*, for example, does not appear in the *New Testament* (Drumbl, 2000). The same is true in other classical works which deal with self-conscious emotions but focus exclusively on shame— such as the works of Shakespeare and Tolstoy. Shame, and not guilt, was also in the core of old days' criminal law." (2008: 93). Even if for all wrong reasons, famous psychologists make the opposite claim as well: guilt was over-discussed and reified, while shame obscured and neglected (for example Kaufman).

Any cursory check on semantics of the Bible and history of Christianity tells a completely different story. Related to the history of the idea of guilt, a good lecture is, for example, Peter D. Clarke, 2007: *The Interdict in the Thirteenth Century: A Question of Collective Guilt*. Oxford University Press. Here one can find how Roman law prescriptions and Roman jurists' discussions of guilt have been reinterpreted for the needs of the Canon Law.

However, Blum makes this contention to introduce the fundamental role **Freud** played in the conceptualization of guilt in psychology, and this is the scope of these notes. For Freud guilt, shame and morality are restricting the sexual instinct; anxiety and fear can be translated into guilt.

Shame

Freud links shame with 'genital visibility' (of man), in a quasi-biblical manner, although the visibility of the genitals is the result of the vertical posture and not of the fall from grace. For the woman, is the lack of visibility?

"Shame, which is considered to be a feminine characteristic *par excellence* but is far more a matter of convention than might be supposed, has as its purpose, we believe, concealment of genital deficiency. We are not forgetting that at a later time shame takes on other functions."

(Freud, S. (1961/1933). New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis. In Strachey, J., (ed.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. New York: Norton. vol. 22, 5-182: 132).

“Since I was **obliged to regard the shame as something obsessional**, I concluded, in accordance with the mechanism of defence, that an experience must have been repressed here about which she had *not* felt ashamed. So I requested her to let the memories emerge which belonged to the theme of feeling ashamed. She promptly reproduced a series of scenes going back from her seventeenth to her eighth year, in which she had felt ashamed of being naked in her bath in front of her mother, her sister and the doctor; but the series ended in a scene at the age of six, in which she was undressing in the nursery before going to bed, without feeling any shame in front of her brother who was there. On my questioning her, it transpired that scenes like this had occurred often and that the brother and sister had for years been in the habit of showing themselves to one another naked before going to bed. I now understood the meaning of her sudden idea that *she was being watched* as she was going to bed. It was an unaltered piece of the old memory which involved self-reproach, and she was now making up for the shame which she had omitted to feel as a child.” (Further remarks on the neuro-psychosis of defence. Analysis of a case of chronic Paranoia. In Strachey, J., (ed. and transl.) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 1962/1896).

“Dreams of being naked or insufficiently dressed in the presence of strangers sometimes occur with the additional feature of there being a complete absence of any such feeling as shame on the dreamer’s part. We are only concerned here, however, with **those dreams of being naked in which one does feel shame and embarrassment and tries to escape or hide**, and is then overcome by a strange inhibition which prevents one from moving and makes one feel incapable of altering one’s distressing situation. It is only with this accompaniment that the dream is typical; without it, the gist of its subject-matter may be included in every variety of context or may be ornamented with individual trimmings. **Its essence lies in a distressing feeling in the nature of shame and in the fact that one wishes to hide one’s nakedness, as a rule by locomotion, but finds one is unable to do so**. I believe the great majority of my readers will have found themselves in this situation in dreams.” (The Interpretation of dreams. Embarrassing dreams of being naked. In Idem, 721. I am not sure about the legal status of this online version: <http://www.freud-sigmund.com/the-interpretation-of-dreams>).

Guilt

In the economy of Freud’s theories, guilt plays a much more important role. It is well known that Freud considered that guilt is related to actions, not to the whole self, and that there are two stages in the development of guilt: 1. the fear of authority, and 2. the fear of the super-ego itself. Guilt is a response to transgression, and can be rectified by “abstinence” and “penance”.

“The super-ego applies the strictest moral standard to the helpless ego which is at its mercy; in general it represents the claims of morality, and we realize all at once that **our moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the super-ego**. It is a most remarkable experience to see morality, which is supposed to have been given us by God and thus

deeply implanted in us, functioning as a periodic phenomenon. For after a certain number of months the whole moral fuss is over, the criticism of the super-ego is silent, the ego is rehabilitated and again enjoys all the rights of man till the next attack." (Lecture XXXI, The Dissection of the psychical personality. Idem, vol. 22, p. 4679).

... "The sense of guilt it is an expression of the tension between them" [the ego and the super-ego] (idem, p. 4674). (The famous Freudian discussion on the 'unconscious need for punishment' and the 'unconscious sense of guilt' is not followed here.)

In a constructivist manner, Gershen Kaufman considered that "Freud's blindness to shame is partially the result of his drive theory, and partially the result of the general failure of language to partition affect. Any psychological theory is limited by the contemporary language of the day, and by the particular conception of the universe existing at the time" (1996: 8)

Followers of Freud had serious problems in defining shame. **Erik Erikson**, for example, retorted in his developmental theory to Darwin's ideas, and defined shame as elicited by audience: feeling exposed and aware of being looked at. Erikson considered shame occupying the second of eight stages of identity crisis he identified in a life cycle. The origins and subsequent development of shame are related directly with "toilet training". The outcome of this toilet training stage is either autonomy or shame and doubt. In Kaufman's opinion, however, Erikson's theory is deficient: every subsequent stage in the life cycle appears to be nothing more than a linguistic transformation of shame.

Much disagreement relates to **the specific triggers (elicitors)** of shame respectively guilt. As Michael Lewis observes: "No particular stimulus event has been identified as the trigger for shame and guilt. **It would be easier to understand these self-conscious emotions if we could specify the class of external events likely to elicit them.** If it were true that shame and guilt are similar to anxiety and that they reflect the subject's fear of uncontrollable impulses, then we could consider the causes of shame to be sexual or aggressive impulses. Alternatively, if we could prove that situations having to do with toilet or genital functions are likely to elicit shame, or if we could prove that the way we appear physically or how we behave in front of others may automatically elicit embarrassment, we could then specify situations that would help us to define these self-conscious emotions and increase our understanding of what causes them. *There is no such clear cause-and-effect pattern...*" (Lewis, 2008, idem, 745).

Psychoanalysis: Helen B. Lewis (1914-1987)

Since Helen Block Lewis (1971: Shame and Guilt in Neurosis), shame and guilt are emotions whose content is to be negatively evaluated - either by the self, or by the others - because one has failed to meet standards and norms regarding what is good, right, appropriate.

Lewis, a psychoanalyst who took the path of ego psychology, considered the characteristic difference between shame and guilt is given by the focus of experience: the self for shame, the wrong in/action for guilt (self vs. behaviour).

Shame and guilt are different, but equally powerful, super-ego functions; they are different in their phenomenology but have a common origin in "internalized aggression". Identification with the menacing parent is the source of guilt; identification with the idealized ego is

the source of pride; shame would be the opposite of pride, having its source in the “failure to live up with this internalized admired imago” (1971: 23).

As Tangney reminds us, Lewis spoke about a split “in self-functioning in which the self is both agent and object of observation and disapproval.”(I find this curious, as this would mean that the self-functioning is quite often ‘split’, for example it is split every time a person deliberates about a course of action. ‘Split’ seems to me, then, a rather normal attribute of the functioning self.)

While shame is a devastating experience, guilt is less painful, as the focus falls here on a determined behaviour and does not affect “one’s core identity”.

Silvan Tomkins (1911-1991): Affect and script theories

(Tomkins, Silvan S. (2008) *Affect Imagery Consciousness. The complete edition*. New York: Springer)

Ruth Leys (2007: *From Guilt to Shame. Auschwitz and After*) and Paul Gilbert (intro to 1998: *Shame*) consider that affect theorists (Tomkins, Nathanson) played a major role in focusing the attention of the scientific community on shame. Silvan Tomkins, who was more than instrumental in changing our perception of survival guilt and trauma, considered himself a neo-Kantian who made use of Darwin intuitions (it is well known that Darwin rather fabricated the evidence for his theory of shame).

He proposed a non-intentional affect theory centred on shame. “Affect” refers here to the non-cognitive, biological component of emotions. Affects are coordinated by a specialized neuromuscular system, the ‘affect system”. Tomkins points out that many, including Freud, work with a rather simple idea of causation and confuse affects and drives (p. 104 et passim): affects and drives are ‘motives’, affects freer, drives less free ‘motives’. The affect system tells us that something needs our attention; other systems are ‘deciding’ what the concrete response is. The human face is the display board of affects; or as Tomkins said, affect is facial behaviour. Affects are inborn protocols, primary motivating mechanisms for reacting to information, i.e. for acting: “The human being is equipped with innate affective responses which bias him to want to remain alive and to resist death, to want to experience novelty and to resist boredom, to want to communicate, to be close to and in contact with others of his species, to experience sexual excitement and to resist the experience of head and face lowered in shame.” (p. 93). As motivating mechanisms, affects are more important than pleasure, deprivation and pain.

Tomkins believed that the open expression of affects is contagious; all societies therefore developed mechanisms of affect control. As “each affect has as part of its innate program a specific cry of vocalization, subserved by specific patterns of breathing” (p. 624), the most controlled is the free vocalization of affects:

“Very early on, strict control over affect expression is instituted, and such control is exerted particularly over the voice in general, whether used in speech or in direct affect expression. Although there are large variations between societies, and between different classes within societies, complete unconditional freedom of affect vocalization is quite exceptional (...)**If all societies, in varying degrees, suppress the free vocalization of affect, what is it which is being experienced as affect? It is what I have called pseudo-, or backed-up, affect.**” (p. 624)

Psychosomatic illness could be the result of societal systematic suppression of innate affects.

As for shame ((Chapter 16, Shame-Humiliation vs. Contempt-Disgust: The Nature of the Response) :

- **Shame is an affect auxiliary, is not a primary affect, but “the affect of indignity, of defeat, or transgression and alienation”** (351);
- **The innate trigger of shame are situations which interrupt pleasure, the “incomplete reduction of interest or joy”;**
- “the failure to grasp the underlying biological identity of the various phenotypes of shame has retarded our understanding of these consequences as well as of the magnitude and nature of the general role of shame in human functioning” (351);
- Shame is an act which reduces facial communication: “By dropping his eyes, his eyelids, his head and sometimes the whole upper part of his body, the individual calls a halt to looking at another person, particularly the other person’s face, and to the other person’s looking at him, particularly at his face”. Paradoxically, the blushing “auxiliary” to the shame complex increases facial communication (352)
- To show that shame is innate and not a learned response, Tomkins points that **dogs** seem able to respond with shame in a similar manner (the evidence is rather silly, based on ‘resemblance’: dogs lower their heads and reduce facial expression); but by evidence Tomkins understood such “The exact nature of the innate shame response is still to be determined. With high-speed moving picture cameras it should be possible to delineate the precise nature of the response as it first appears upon the recognition of the unfamiliar face.”
- Shame **“is an innate auxiliary affect and a specific inhibitor of continuing interest and enjoyment. Like disgust, it operates ordinarily only after interest or enjoyment has been activated, and inhibits one or the other or both. The innate activator of shame is the incomplete reduction of interest or joy”** (353)
- **“In contrast to all other affects, shame is an experience of the self by the self.”** (359)

The affect of shame can be used as mechanism of social control: a range of positive and negative affects can be inhibited by ‘controllers’ (other people).

Critique The idea that shame is elicited by and for any interruption of positive affect has been under critique since the 70’s (see Gilbert, 1998). It is indeed common sense that interruption of positive affect triggers whole variety of reactions; anger, fear, sadness are only some possible answers. From the range of possible answers, what differentiates and characterizes shame is accompanying devaluation of the self. Gilbert argues from an evolutionary standpoint that, in many cases, the interruption of positive affect – as when predators approach, etc – has nothing to do with shame. No emotion can be defined in the absence of a meaning given to the situation in which the emotion occurs (Gilbert, in Gilbert and Andrews: 6).

GUILT: is not a different innate affect: “Thus, if one hangs one’s head in shame, the total experience of this response is different if one has failed – in which case one speaks of “feelings of inferiority” – compared with the same response if one has violated a moral norm – in which case one speaks either of “feelings of guilt” if this is a response of the self to the self’s immorality or, less commonly, that one is “ashamed of oneself.” Contrary to some theoretical distinctions between shame and guilt as based on internalization versus externalization, the same affect may be internalized or externalized independent of whether the content concerns morality or inferiority.”

The source of guilt is moral transgression: “Shyness, shame, and guilt are identical as affects, though not so experienced because of differential coassembly of perceived

causes and consequences. Shyness is about strangeness of the other; guilt is about moral transgression; shame is about inferiority; discouragement is about temporary defeat; but the core affect in all four is identical" (p. 630).

Followers of Tomkins: Kaufman, Sedgwick, Nathanson

Gershen Kaufman (1996/1989) *The Psychology of Shame. Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*. New York: Springer

Kaufman follows Tomkins in embedding affects in scripts. As Tomkins says in the foreword to Kaufman, "In script theory the basic unit of analysis is the scene. The scripts are sets of rules for the governance of scenes. Such scripts include the classical family romance, the object relations of Fairbairn, and the narcissistic self of Kohut, but also include affect management and affect control scripts, ideological as well as affluence, limitation, remediation, contamination, and antitoxic scripts."

With Kaufman, common and critical senses seem to find a place in the debate: Kaufman starts his observations by placing shame back into the cultural context and re-links it with social control:

"Just as shame is a societal dynamic, impacting the lives of various minority groups that inhabit a given society, shame is equally a force in culture generally. Every culture experiences shame, but differently. Cultures utilize shame as a means of furthering social control, as an important socializing tool; cultures also pattern shame quite distinctively.

Not only are identity and culture held captive by shame, so is ideology. Ideology is rooted in affect."

Characteristics of shame in Kaufman:

- 28: "Shame is **primarily** facial behavior, manifesting on three dimensions: facial, phenomenological, and visceral. The facial signs of shame are demonstrable: the head hangs, the eyes are lowered or averted, or the face blushes. **Phenomenologically**, to feel shame is to feel *seen*, acutely diminished. Exposure is an inherent feature of the inner experience of shame. This affect of shame, thus, is **multidimensional**."

- 29: "Shame is a life cycle phenomenon, confined neither to childhood nor to the family, nor is it exclusive to mother-infant interactions. "

- Phenomenology: p. 17: Shame is the affect of inferiority, a "wound made from the inside"; p. 18 et passim: shame is felt as an interruption and functions as to impede communication; shame turns the attention to the face; it lowers facial communication but increases awareness of it; if in the childhood shame is wordless, with the age it becomes a (partially) cognitive, self-evaluative experience; shame paralyzes the self, which feels exposed. The facial signs of shame are the same as in Tomkins.

- 5: "Because **shame is central to conscience**, indignity, identity, and disturbances in self-functioning, this affect is the source of low self-esteem, poor self-concept or body image, self-doubt and insecurity, and diminished self-confidence. Shame is the affect that is the source of feelings of inferiority. The inner experience of shame is like a sickness within the self, a **sickness of the soul**. If we are to understand and eventually heal what ails the self, then we must begin with shame";

- Kaufman **challenges the and disagrees with** the common views that: 1) shame needs audience, while guilt is private; 2) shame is about the self and guilt about the deeds (challenges Tangney et co) and that therefore shame is inherently more pathogenic than guilt; 3) shame is more primitive than guilt

- 7: "Shame is the principal impediment in all relationships, whether parent-child, teacher-student, or therapist-client. It violates both inner security and interpersonal trust. Shame wounds not only the self, but also a family, an ethnic or minority group within a dominant culture, or even an entire nation. Any disenfranchised, discriminated-against, or persecuted minority group will experience the shame of inferiority, the humiliation of being outcast. Racial, ethnic, and religious group tensions are inevitable consequences of that shame. Just as personal identity becomes molded by shame, ethnic-religious identity and national character are similarly shaped. Shame is also an impediment in international relations, where the dynamics of diplomacy invariably are the dynamics of shame and honour. Shame is a universal dynamic in child rearing, education, interpersonal relations, psychotherapy, ethnic group relations, national culture and politics, and international relations."

- 20: the most common affects which follow shame are fear, distress (sadness) and rage (anger).

Guilt: as for Tomkins, guilt is immorality shame (have to read further)

June Price Tangney et Co.

(Tangney, June Price and Dearing, Ronda, 2002, *Shame and Guilt*. New York and London: The Guilford Press) (unvollständig)

Tangney is one follower of Helen Lewis (others are Michael Lewis, etc).

I consider Tangney's theories a good example of bad science. Although she claims solid research evidence, she is fooling her readers with assertions such as: "we have included tables summarizing a variety of studies on shame and guilt to give readers an opportunity to evaluate the level of support for our assertions and to draw their own conclusions accordingly"(8). This says nothing about the qualities of the studies themselves, or about how the hypotheses of these studies were constructed, to what the 'mechanics of statistics' are applied (how representative are undergraduate psychology students from the US?) and how, etc.

Also, to Tangney and Dearing's premises belong some very fuzzy pieces of pseudo-evidence, for example

"In everyday conversations, people typically avoid the term "shame." In fact, one could easily argue that today's U.S. society is rather "shamephobic." The average person rarely speaks of his or her own "shame". Instead, people refer to "guilt" (e.g., "I felt so guilty when I realized what an inconsiderate person I've been") when they mean they felt shame, guilt, or some combination of the two." (11).

The reader is called to take them by word. More, when, not only when criticizing other authors, Tangney usually quotes herself as research evidence corroborating her own findings (I let aside when she purely describes the trajectory of her own research strain, although it is instructive to see she was always 'right'; see pp. 14-15, 21, 22, 24, 30, 38, 39, 45, 47, 73, 74, 75, 76, and so on). *One single study* of her own team suffices to "challenge anthropologists' public-private distinction" in regard with shame. Tangney approach would suit eventually an exploratory study, but hardly one aimed to falsify a hypothesis; and in the case of exploratory studies, data are triangulated to compensate for the lack of empirical research, but this is never the case here.

Tangney and Reading summarize the research made in the line of Helen Lewis, which research they find "converges" and grounds that both shame and guilt are moral, self-conscious, self-referential, emotions, which are negatively valued, involve self/internal attributions, are triggered by similar events (moral failures, transgression) and are usually experienced in interpersonal contexts (25).

The differences between shame and guilt are summarized as follows (also p. 25):

	Shame	Guilt
Focus of evaluation	Global self: "I did that horrible thing"	Specific behavior: "I did that horrible thing"
Degree of distress	Generally more painful than guilt	Generally less painful than shame
Phenomenological experience	Shrinking, feeling small, feeling worthless, powerless	Tension, remorse, regret
Operation of „self“	Self "split" into observing and observed "selves"	Unified self intact
Impact on „self“	Self impaired by global devaluation	Self unimpaired by global devaluation
Concern vis-à-vis the „other“	Concern with others' evaluation of self	Concern with one's effect on others
Counterfactual processes	Mentally undoing some aspect of the self	Mentally undoing some aspect of behavior
Motivational features	Desire to hide, escape, or strike back	Desire to confess, apologize, or repair

It is interesting to note that, following Izard and erasing Tomkins, Tangney considers shame and guilt “do not involve clearly definable, codable facial expressions” (26).

83: “The tremendous preoccupation which the self draws one's focus away from a distressed other, thus short-circuiting other-oriented feelings of empathy. In effect, shamed individuals are less likely to be concerned with the pain experienced by the harmed other and are more consumed with a focus on negative characteristics of the self”

Critique: But, observes Paul Gilbert again, the emphasis on negative devaluation of the self, a characteristic of Lewis/Tangney line to thought, does not suffice to distinguish shame: “The point is that a focus on negative evaluations of self as "object and subject" and escape behaviour does not distinguish shame from social anxiety” (Gilbert, in Gilbert and Andrews: 7).

TOSCA

The Test of Self-Conscious Affect is a scale developed by Tangney and Co, which allegedly measures maladaptive forms or aspects of guilt and adaptive aspects of shame that have been described in the literature.

TOSCA according to its proponents (say Tangney): TOSCA has been used to link morally relevant emotions with moral behaviour in longitudinal family studies (ex: Tangney & Dearing 2002). The strong claim is that shame-proneness assessed in adolescents predicts later behavioural problems (suspension from school, drug use, and suicide attempts, a lower tendency to apply to college and to do community service). As always, the contrast is the adaptive guilt: according to this study, guilt prone adolescents are less likely to make suicide attempts, use drugs, have problems with the criminal justice system, and more likely to apply to college and do community service. [The compiler (which among others has studied criminology): ‘have problem with the criminal justice system’ is hardly a viable criterion. More visible a teenager is more trouble he has anyhow]. TOSCA repeatedly produces evidence that: shame does not deter transgression

and “socially undesirable behaviour”; guilt does deter transgression and “socially undesirable behaviour”

Critique of TOSCA

Patrick Luyten, Johnny Fontaine and Jozef Corveleyn claim that “First, a judgmental and logical analysis showed that the TOSCA primarily measures mild and adaptive forms and aspects of guilt and maladaptive aspects of shame. Next, principal components analyses (PCAs) in a student ($N=328$) and adult ($N=542$) sample showed that items that had a high loading on the guilt factor primarily were items that referred to reparative behavior, while items that had high loadings on the shame factor consisted primarily of items that referred to low self-esteem. To investigate to which extent these items were responsible for correlations found with the TOSCA, we constructed a revised guilt scale containing only items that referred to reparative behavior and a revised shame scale consisting of items that only referred to negative self-esteem, and related these to indices of interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning. The revised TOSCA scales reproduced both the pattern and magnitude of correlations obtained with the original TOSCA scales. Thus, taken together, the results of this study support the interpretation of the TOSCA guilt scale as a measure of mild and adaptive forms of guilt and the TOSCA shame scale as a measure of maladaptive aspects associated with shame. Implications of these findings for further research on the nature of guilt and shame are discussed.” (Luyten, Patrick; Fontaine, Johnny; and Corveleyn, Jozef 2002, abstract of Does the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) measure maladaptive aspects of guilt and adaptive aspects of shame? An empirical investigation. In *Personality and Individual Differences*, 33(8): 1373-1387)

What is wrong with TOSCA?

- 1. It assesses shame via global negative self-statements.**
- 2. Its guilt scale measures above all feelings of guilt which are associated with a tendency to reparation;**
- 3. Its shame scale measures maladaptive aspects of shame.**
- 4. TOSCA suffers from construct underrepresentation**

There is criticism to TOSCA and its conceptualization of shame and guilt by **O'Connor et al**, but I did not yet develop an opinion on their *Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire-67* (IGQ-67). They claim that guilt is by far not that positive, it can be linked to irrational beliefs, may be maladaptive, and can lead to emotional distress. This group focused on highly debated forms of guilt: survivor guilt, separation guilt and omnipotent responsibility guilt.

The cognitive and attributional model of Michael Lewis

(Lewis, M, 1992: *Shame The exposed self*, The Free Press. Lewis, M. 2008: *Self-Conscious Emotions: Embarrassment, Pride, Shame and Guilt*. In Lewis, M.; Haviland-Jones, J. M.; Feldman Barrett, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Emotions*, The Guilford Press, 742-57). The 2008 article reproduces a table schema from 1992 (copyright protected, therefore consult: Lewis, 2008: 746, or Lewis, 1992: 65.)

1. The **Standards, Rules and Goals** (SRG) that regulate behaviour are *the first feature* of the model, defined here as ‘beliefs’ about what is “acceptable for others and ourselves with regard to standards having to do with actions, thoughts, and feelings” (2008: 745-6). This is a rather muddled definition, and any epistemologist would bemoan the mixing of beliefs, standards, emotions (subjective, normative, inter-subjective). SRG are culture-dependent prescription (“are prescribed by culture”), and differ across societies, within societies, across groups, within groups, and from one individual to another. To acquire membership

in a group we learn the SRG of that group. SRG are inherent to groups (order is inherent to the social). By the age of one year, children start to learn the appropriate action patterns that reflect the SRG of their culture. By the age of two, children distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The acquisition of SRG continues over the life span.

2. The *second feature* of Lewis' model is **evaluation**: "The evaluation of one's actions, thoughts, and feelings in terms of SRGs is the second cognitive–evaluative process that serves as a stimulus for self-conscious emotions" (746). Evaluation has an internal and an external aspect. By the beginning of the third year, children seemingly start to show distress when violating SRG. Evaluation is related with **responsibility** (internal evaluation) or **no-responsibility** for **success** or **failure** to comply with SRG.

3. The *third feature* is **Attribution about Self**. Self-attributions are *global* or *specific*. "Global attribution refers to an individual's propensity to focus on the total self." (747). For example when one says "Because I did this, I am bad (or good)", evaluating and qualifying the whole self and not the action. The self is both object and subject of the focus: "The self becomes embroiled in the self. It becomes embroiled because the evaluation of the self by the self is total. There is no way out" (ibidem). Such global evaluation makes people confused, speechless (H.B. Lewis), and unable to act. They are "driven ... to hiding and disappearing" (a short-cut of reasoning, of the Lewises, not of the individual embroiled in global self-attribution). "Specific attribution" means that the individual is attributing "good" or "bad" to an action of the self. The whole self does not stay under judgement, but a specific action.

With the mainstream, Lewis finds that *personality patterns* or *personality styles* or *dispositional factors* are behind the/a propensity for global or specific self-attributions. To these styles, one has to add the situational factors, what "some" call "*prototypic situations*", which unfortunately did not receive as much attention.

Lewis claims this mode is symmetrical in relation "with positive and negative self-conscious emotions". He defines shame as: "Shame is the product of a complex set of cognitive activities: individuals' evaluation of their actions in regard to their SRGs and their global evaluation of the self. The phenomenological experience of a person having shame is that of a wish to hide, disappear, or die (H. B. Lewis, 1971; Lewis, 1992). It is a highly negative and painful state that also results in the disruption of ongoing behavior, confusion in thought, and an inability to speak. The physical action accompanying shame is a shrinking of the body, as though to disappear from the eye of the self or the other. Because of the intensity of this emotional state, the global attack on the self-system, all that individuals can do when presented with such a state is to attempt to rid themselves of it. However, since it is a global attack on the self, people have great difficulty in dissipating this emotion" (2008: .748).

Shame is not the result of a situation, but of the interpretation given by the individual to the event (this is rather a platitude but it supposes to mean: there are no mala per se in triggering shame) and it is not dependent on the presence of a public.

In this model, **GUILT** is "produced when individuals evaluate their behaviour as failure but focus on the specific features or actions of the self that led to the failure. Unlike the focus in shame on the global self, the focus in guilt is on the self's actions and behaviours that are likely to repair the failure. From a phenomenological point of view, individuals are pained by their failure, but this pained feeling is directed to the cause of the failure or the object of harm. Because the cognitive–attributional process focuses on the action of the self rather than on the totality of self, the feeling that is produced—guilt—is not as intensely negative as shame and does not lead to confusion and

to the loss of action. In fact, the emotion of guilt always has associated with it a corrective action that an individual can take (but does not necessarily take) to repair the failure.” (ibidem)

Because of its focus on specific actions, guilt allows us to get rid of through actions (reparations). The subject and the object of the emotion remain here separate, making the emotion less intense and less conducive or even unrelated with maladaptive behaviour. Guilt may merge into shame and become maladaptive, for example if the corrective action “not be forthcoming” (either in thought, feeling or deed – H.B. Lewis, 1971).

Cultural models of shame and guilt

1. CULTURAL MODELS OF SHAME AND GUILT, YING WONG AND JEANNE TSAI

In Tracey, Robins, Tangney (eds.), pp. 209-232

Wong and Tsai work with a rather old and fuzzy *definition of culture*: “historically derived and socially transmitted ideas (e.g., symbols, language, values, and norms) and practices (e.g., rituals, mores, laws), as well as artifacts (e.g., tools, media) and institutions (e.g., family structure) that are simultaneously products of human action and producers of future action (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181). Anthropologists and cultural psychologists have recently used the term “cultural model” to describe organized patterns of ideas and practices related to specific social, physical, and psychological phenomena, including the self and emotion.” (210)

Dominant models of shame and guilt (pp. 210-211)

According to the dominant opinion, people experience shame and guilt when they have done something “bad” or “wrong” in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. Shame and guilt are emotions that are devalued and that should be actively avoided.

Shame occurs when one is negatively evaluated by others for behaving inappropriately, involves global and stable attributions for transgressions, and is associated with maladaptive consequences.

Guilt occurs when one negatively evaluates one’s own self for behaving inappropriately, involves specific and temporary attributions for transgressions, and is associated with adaptive consequences.

“In some versions of the mainstream, when people attribute their transgressions to their global and stable self (“I can’t believe *I* did that”), they experience shame, but when people attribute their transgressions to transient actions or states (“I can’t I believe I did *that*”), they experience guilt (H. B. Lewis, 1987; Tangney, 1991, 1998; Tracy & Robin, 2004).

“In some other versions, some argue that the emotions differ in their orientation to self or others. While shame typically involves being negatively evaluated by *others* (real or imagined), guilt typically involves being negatively evaluated by *oneself* (e.g., Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002). In other words, whereas shame has an “external” orientation (i.e., being oriented to others), guilt has an “internal” ori-

entation (i.e., being oriented to the self) Shame, therefore, is associated with the fear of exposing one's defective self to others. Guilt, on the other hand, is associated with the fear of not living up to one's own standards (Benedict, 1946; Kitayama et al., 1995)."

Finally, *guilt leads to reparative action*, whereas shame does not.

Assumptions in mainstream theory (pp. 211-212)

1. there is a stable self that can be differentiated from one's temporary actions.
2. internal and external orientation can be easily separated and that internal orientation is more powerful and genuine than external orientation
3. which conveys the assumption that the self is bounded, separate from others and defined by stable personal characteristics (independent-self construal)
4. being negatively evaluated by others or by oneself is bad and should be 'actively avoided'.

These are sometimes seen – for example for our authors – as US conceptions of the self.

Other cultures, other selves

The picture is made with the wide brush: the contrast, rather childish, I would say, is between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Remains unclear how the psychologists checked for the both assumption, and how thick the evidence is. After this wide brush, it follows

A collectivist model of shame and guilt (pp. 212-213)

1. Collectivistic countries such as China, Japan, Korea, 'promote' an 'interdependent' self
2. Here external influences are seen as essential as the internal ones
3. Selves are contextually and situationally dependent
4. Therefore situational changes in the self are seen as normative (In Confucianism individuals are expected to cultivate and improve themselves, therefore changes in the self are explicitly valued and expected
5. Few, if any, aspects of the self are seen as immutable
6. Feeling bad about one-self is not only normal, but to some degree expected because it serves the larger goal of self-development.

Empirical research on alternative models of shame and guilt

1. Chinese shame and guilt: p. 212: "Li et al. (2004) produced a list of terms related to shame in the Chinese lexicon by consulting the dictionary and by asking research subjects to generate terms related to shame. Another set of research subjects then grouped the terms into different categories on the basis of how similar or different the terms were to each other. Hierarchical cluster analyses revealed that participants viewed guilt as a component of shame rather than as a separate construct. Indeed, when translated into English, some Chinese terms that are related to shame are often translated as guilt (e.g., *kui*), or as a combination of shame and guilt (e.g., *xiucan* and *xiukui*) in English (Li et al., 2004)." Some research suggests that *can kui*, a form of Chinese shame, "functions to prompt people to try their best

possible” and the fear of *xiu kui*, which one feels when one discovers deficiencies in oneself, is usually enough to deter shame-inducing actions.

In Chinese culture, people experience guilt when they feel an absolute standard is violated, whereas people experience shame when a situation specific standard is violated. In Western cultures, shame and guilt are not distinguished in this way. Because Confucianism focuses more on situations and relations, and Confucianism is a dominant philosophical tradition in many East Asian contexts, experiencing shame in these contexts is more appropriate than experiencing guilt (Cho, 2000; Bedford & Hwang, 2003).

Shame and guilt may be less differentiated in collectivistic contexts because in these contexts people do not view themselves as separate from their relationships with others, their contexts, or their actions. Consequently, there is less emphasis placed on having an “internal” orientation in collectivistic than in individualistic contexts (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). *Therefore, the differences between shame and guilt in individualistic cultures, which largely rest on this distinction, may be less pronounced* in collectivistic cultures. Future research is needed to test this hypothesis.

With the very wide brush....

*Elicitors/triggers of shame and guilt (216):
“Because Western cultural contexts assume a self that is separate from others, only the individual who committed the transgression typically feels shame or guilt. However, collectivistic cultural contexts assume a self that is connected to and exists in relationship with others, some claim. It could be that in collectivistic models of shame and guilt, these emotions may be induced by others’ actions (...).”*

Role of Shame (216-217)

Some studies carried in Japan suggest that negatively evaluating the self, a core component of shame, is not universally viewed as harmful to psychological well-being.

For example, a popular Hindu story tells how Kali’s shame saved the world. Some studies (1994, 2003) seem to suggest that Hindu Indians value shame in more positive terms than Americans. In collectivistic terms, it could be that shame is viewed less negatively. But also in Europe research has been made into the negative/positive connotation of shame: Spaniards seem less afraid to express shame than Dutch people. Lab experiments showed that Hong Kong Chinese students had a much less negative view, so to say, than Americans and Asian American students. Shaming is rather a common strategy in parenting in China. Given the greater valuation (or lesser devaluation) of shame in collectivistic cultures compared to individualistic ones, it should not be surprising that in many East Asian and other collectivistic contexts shame plays a more salient role in everyday life (e.g., Crystal et al., 2001). In general, compared to US culture, Chinese culture has much more elaborate models of shame and guilt (in Chinese dictionaries one finds more than 80 terms related to shame). In Li et al. research, their subjects came with 113 terms.

This led some to claim that shame is a 'focus emotion' in collectivistic cultures – notice the slide from (some) Chinese subjects in a research to China and 'collectivistic cultures' – did anything change in the epistemological awareness of social psychology since 1946? And this although research with different ethnic groups (and I have all the time to mention, Asian states are never, except Japan, national states) found significant variation. The conclusion of the two authors is that more DIRECT research is needed to conform this – i.e. most 'conclusions' come not from direct research.

Western models do indeed, with significant research to back them up – but which much research biased in the favour of the alleged model – state that shame is good and guilt is bad. A cross-cultural study carried in 1995 (Walbott and Scherer) with respondents from 37 countries found that shame is a much less disruptive event in the alleged collectivistic cultures.

Questions for future research (pp. 217-218)

- If a culture like the Chinese culture has such linguistic richness for 'shame', it could be that more models are to be constructed to understand inter-cultural variation. That goes for western cultures as well: GB Shaw linked the capacity to feel shame with respectability;
- The internal/external differentiation may ask for more complex models of 'external' – 'face keeping' has at least three meanings.
- There are strong reasons to believe that in western contexts as well shame may lead to adaptive behaviour (self-improving rather than self-defeating behaviour)
- The link between different construals of the self – individualistic and collectivistic – and constructions and shame and guilt has been not proved, but assumed.
- More studies are needed that measure the physiological and behavioural components of shame and guilt. This is particularly important when studying shame and guilt across cultures because of the difficulty of accurately translating emotion; most cross-cultural studies relied on self-reports, despite scales/indices of shame exist (*rather funny but typical: our models are biased but not enough research is based on them!*) 
- Theoretical models that incorporate cultural factors are missing: this is an unhappy formulation, maybe the other way round: theories are missing, in which shame and guilt are integrated in the broader culture);

To conclude (p. 219): In contexts that promote an independent self, shame and guilt are both devalued emotional states; they are experienced by people who commit transgressions, and there are clear distinctions between the two states. Because guilt is based on internal standards and leads to adaptive consequences, it is preferred to shame, which is based on external standards and leads to maladaptive consequences. However, in contexts that promote an interdependent self, shame and guilt are viewed more positively; people can feel shame and guilt for actions that they themselves did not commit, and there is less of a distinction between shame and guilt. Most importantly, in these contexts, experiencing shame is associated with adaptive consequences. These findings suggest that current models of shame and guilt—which assume an independent self—may be incomplete when applied to other cultural contexts.

Shame and Guilt as Morally Warranted Emotions

Ferguson, T., Brugman, D., White, J., Eyre, H.

In Tracy, J., Robins, R., Tangney, J.P. (eds.) (2007) *The Self-conscious emotions. Theory and Research*, New York and London: The Guilford Press (pp. 330-350)

Leading idea is: "Why shame continues to play the starring emotional role in tortuous psychological dramas has long remained a mystery to us. Conversely, guilt's leading role in tales of morality and heroic defeat of a darker, shameful alter ego rings false to our experiences. Equally unclear, moreover, is whether extant findings truly reveal shame's devastating consequences and/or mirror westerners' beliefs and norms regarding shame's aversiveness."

The authors believe that it is a *mistake to separate shame and guilt* as common in mainstream research: "whether the two states' co-experience, rather than either experience in isolation, is a powerful motivating force in moral decision making and behavior." They address in what measure and how the factors contributing to intrapersonal and interpersonal adjustment are "not the states themselves, but facets of the situations in which they are aroused (e.g., perceptions of control) and the methodology frequently employed to measure them."

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