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A Critique of the Defense

Considering Moving Away from Shame and
Towards Pudeur

Bachelor's thesis in Philosophy
January 2022

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1. Introduction

The topic of this bachelor's essay is shame. More precisely, I investigate to what extent shame is a social emotion. Primarily, I consider and criticize Julien A. Deonna, Fabrice Teroni and Raffaele Rodogno's theory of shame. This theory is most clearly presented in Ch. 4 of their book *In Defense of Shame* (2012). They criticize the claim that shame is a social emotion, although they believe it has a grain of truth within it. I will first explicate their theory of shame and their view on the social side of shame. Thereafter, I bring in other philosophical theories of shame. Although Deonna and Teroni bring up a lot of important points about shame, they go wrong in one important way – or so I shall argue. They want to use shame as a means to be moral, which I disagree with. I bring in philosophers like Luna Dolezal and J. David Velleman to show how shame rather may be used to create feelings of love and belonging. I will discuss whether it is possible to move away from shame, and toward something like *pudeur*, or a sense of what should be kept private.

2. A theory of shame

In this section, I briefly present the theory of shame offered by Deonna, Teroni, and Rodogno in their *In Defense of Shame* (2012). In part 1 chapter 1 they discuss what they believe is a dogma on shame, namely that shame is a social emotion. They call this dogma 'The Social Conception of Shame'. They state that this conception is especially widespread in scientific and philosophical literature on this emotion, and that it seems to be self-evident to the public at large. In this part, they build what they believe is the most convincing case for this dogma, while simultaneously showing how they believe this has consequences for the moral irrelevance of shame. They call it a dogma because they ultimately disagree with its central tenets, but its undoubtable appeal makes it ideal starting point for their investigation. In chapter 5 they thoroughly criticize the claim that shame is a social emotion and reveal the grain of truth within it (Deonna et al., 2012: 21).

In chapter 4, Deonna and Teroni reveal their own theory on shame. At the beginning of the chapter, they write what they believe an account of shame should include. Firstly, they believe

it has to show that this emotion involves a negative evaluation of the self which is severe, but does not have an all-encompassing character. Secondly, it must look at different phenomenological explanations on shame that they have mentioned up till this point in the book and explain them. Thirdly, it must explain how we look at some shame-episodes as more rational than others, and this must be done from a rational standpoint. Fourth, it must explain how we often feel shame for others. Fifthly, it must differentiate shame from other self-reflecting emotions, such as guilt, self-disappointment, embarrassment, and humiliation. I will not consider this section. Sixth and lastly, it must acknowledge the fact that shame can arise from whichever value a self has (Deonna et al., 2012: 99).

3. The Identity of Shame

In this section, I offer an account of the definition of shame offered by Deonna and Teroni. As we shall see, they operate with a set of preconditions and conditions that must be met in order to identify something as “shame”.

In the section ‘The Identity of Shame’ Deonna and Teroni state that a subject’s identity is constituted by the values which she is attached, in the sense of her self-conception. Her values shape the expectations she has to others and herself, and through these values she will assess herself. In the section they specify this sense of self (Deonna et al., 2012: 99). Deonna and Teroni present an abstract formulation of shame, which they call the bare bones of this theory, that goes as follows: “In shame, we apprehend a trait or an action of ours that we take to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value as indicating our incapacity to exemplify this self-relevant value even to a minimal degree” (Deonna et al., 2012: 99). They also present three salient preconditions for shame, which goes as follows:

1. A subject must be complex enough to be attached to values
2. she must furthermore be attached to self-relevant values – i.e., values that she takes as imposing practical demands on her.
3. she must have the following discriminatory ability: she must be sensitive to the fact that she may fare more or less well as regards the demands these values impose on her (Deonna et al., 2012: 102).

When these preconditions are met, the subject will feel shame if, and only if, these conditions are met:

1. She comes to take a trait or an action of hers to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value.
2. She apprehends this as indicating a distinctive incapacity with respect to the demands of this particular value.
3. This incapacity is distinctive in the sense that it consists in the incapacity to exemplify, even minimally, this value (Deonna et al., 2012: 103).

The first condition shows how, when one feels shame, one not only feels that one fails to live up to one's own values, but one also actually feels that one exemplifies the opposite of this ideal. In this one sense, the evaluation featuring in shame is severe. The second condition shows how the subject's identity is at stake in shame. In shame, one not only feels that one cannot show one's self-relevant values. Rather, it shows that we feel that we do not have the capacity to meet the demands that are entailed by this self-relevant value (Deonna et al., 2012: 103). This is the sense in which shame speaks to the subject's identity, whilst its scope within this identity is not wholly complete. The third condition can explain how shame has an all-or-nothing character, because when one feels shame, one feels that one does exemplify one's own self-relevant values at all. The threshold for what we look at as acceptable behaviour has been crossed, and that feels severe (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 104).

To summarize, Deonna and Teroni believe shame is a distinctive sense in which one evaluates as unworthy. They write that they will go on to examine shame's virtues by testing and illustrating it in the light of the features that they said a theory of shame must accommodate and explain (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 104).

4. Shames Features Explained

In this section, I will investigate a couple of shame's features that Deonna and Teroni believe a theory of shame must accommodate and explain.

4.1. Severe, but not all-encompassing: According to Deonna and Teroni, shame consists in a severe, although not all-embracing, verdict of the self (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 104). There lies a severe evaluation of worthlessness that is involved in shame. This evaluation is severe, but not all-encompassing in three senses. Firstly, in shame, a trait or situation or action is understood as exemplifying the polar opposite of a given self-relevant value. Secondly, this motivates a view on ourselves as incapable of even minimally exemplifying the given value to

which we are attached. A threshold is crossed in this sense. Thirdly, and because of this, shame often spreads over surrounding values (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 106-107). It should be noted, however, that the sense in which sense is severe has nothing to do with its embracing the whole self. It is only the capacity that goes with one's attachment to a particular value that is put into question (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 105).

4.2. Phenomenology: Deonna and Teroni believe that a good account of any emotion should include what it feels like to experience it. They state that that their account of shame might then feel too complex and too cognitively demanding. To feel shame, one does not need to experience a series of full-blown judgements along the lines suggested in their earlier account of shame (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 107). They believe that the expressions "feeling small" or feeling "shrunk" perfectly illustrate how it feels to experience falling far short of our own expectations. Shame is the painful feeling we get when we fail to live up to our own self-relevant values (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 108).

4.3. Rationality: Deonna and Teroni write that shame, as any other emotion, has important rational constraints that bear on it (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 109). Their account of shame involves a feeling of incapacity to live up to our self-relevant values, even to a minimal degree. This suggests that shame can go wrong in at least three different ways. First, an episode of shame can be said to be inappropriate because the relevant situation does not qualify as one in which one's shortcoming manifests any sort of incapacity. For example, even though one has generosity as a value, one should not feel shame if one does not buy a gift for the son of a cleaning lady. Second, shame might be inappropriate because, although a situation indicates some sort of incapacity, the relevant threshold has not been properly set. For example, an amateur pianist should not feel shame because she is not a perfect pianist, just because she comes from a family of maestros. Third, the fact that some of our values are attached to inalterable traits leaves room for another kind of inappropriateness related to this emotion. For example, one should not feel shame over one's nose that one thinks is ugly (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 109). All this being said, the rationality of shame revolves around the demands that given self-relevant values impose on us and on others. Deonna and Teroni believe their looking at the rationality of shame revolves around the self-relevant values that we impose on ourselves and others. They believe what they have done in this section prepares for discussions about the two dogmas and the moral status of shame (Deonna, et. al., 2012: 112).

5. Deonna and Teroni's 'Shame for others'

This section is both an investigation and a discussion on the section 'Shame for others' in chapter 4 of *In Defense of Shame* (2012). In the section 'Shame for others' Deonna and Teroni start by writing that any satisfactory account of shame should explain how we often feel shame for someone else. Shame for others can arise out of cases of simple emotional contagion, where one can feel something like shame when witnessing another person's shame. There are also cases of shame (or quasi-shame) that can happen when we imagine ourselves in a situation in which another person finds himself. For example, one can imagine the shame one would feel if one were to make a fool of herself on a TV show. Shame's relation to emotional projection and emotional contagion is not different from other emotions to these phenomena (Deonna et al., 2012: 112).

Furthermore, Deonna and Teroni bring in an example of a more intriguing and specific case of shame for someone else. Jonas may feel shame over his father's racist remark even though it has nothing to do with him imagining himself making such a remark and discovering that he would feel shame. For Jonas, the situation seems to affect him in a more serious way. They ask: "Does shame for someone *else* affect our own identity, defined in terms of *self*-relevant values?" (Deonna et al., 2012: 113). They also explain that this issue is complex, however there are at least two ways (or strategies) of explaining these cases in terms of their favoured analysis (Deonna et al., 2012: 112-113).

Firstly, one could say that Jonas is ashamed *of himself* because of his father's racism. Jonas understands the racist remark as exemplifying a moral disvalue, and by association, that threatens his sense of himself as an open-minded individual. Deonna and Teroni also support this view by stating that these types of cases of shame are typically reported by saying that we are ashamed for someone else. Jonas may be ashamed of himself because his father is racist (Deonna et al., 2012: 113).

However, secondly, for Deonna and Teroni, the self involved in shame can be explained in terms of the values to which the subject is attached. This understanding of the self involved in shame can give an alternative explanation of shame for someone else. We adhere to some values directly and other values indirectly, because we love or deeply respect someone else. For example, one may care about privacy or honesty insofar as one's friend cares about those values, because a friend is, as Aristotle has said, "another self". Furthermore, Deonna and Teroni write: "Indeed, these "embedded" values may well give rise to shame for another, that

is, to a negative apprehension of another's self-conception as reflected in these embedded values." (Deonna et al., 2012: 113). My interpretation of Deonna and Teroni, on this point, is that we have these "embedded" values from the people we love or deeply respect, and when we get a negative apprehension of these people's self-conception, then we understand that our embedded values might be with fault, which can cause shame.

Deonna and Teroni also note that these two strategies can be used to understand why we may feel shame for past traits we no longer have. The shame we can feel for having been a bully can be understood by appealing to the first strategy because it likely involves a perceived threat to our self-conception: for instance, we can ask ourselves if we really are a caring and sensitive person given our past traits and deeds. One could critique this strategy by saying that it only involves perception. Do Deonna and Teroni believe that one feels shame only because it *looks* like one is going against her own self-relevant values? Is there not more to shame? The second strategy can help us understand other cases of shame for others. For example, we may imaginatively put ourselves "in our former shoes" and feel shame over a deed we once performed, even though such a deed would not elicit shame if we were to perform it now (Deonna et al., 2012: 113-114). My interpretation of this is that it sounds like empathy, even though their explanation of the second strategy sounds like more than that. One could critique them for not being clear on their points and arguments in this section.

6. Deonna and Teroni's 'Pluralism and the sense of shame'

This section is both an investigation and a discussion on the section 'Pluralism and the sense of shame' in chapter 4 of *In Defense of Shame* (2012). The section 'Pluralism and the sense of shame' starts by Deonna and Teroni stating that a satisfactory account of shame should be pluralist. They explain that what they mean by that is that shame can arise with any kind of value and that what can shame us is set by each of us. What matters for shame is the attachment we have with each value we care personally to exemplify. According to Deonna and Teroni, these values may belong to any family of values. They count moral, sexual, aesthetic, political, cultural, and intellectual, in addition to those values having to do with one's public image as examples (Deonna et al., 2012: 118).

Deonna and Teroni state that this pluralism seems to imply that *pudour*, self-respect, integrity, modesty, dignity, and decency do not stand in a privileged explanatory relation to shame, even though all of them point toward familiar and typical occasions for this emotion. They

ask what it is to reprimand someone severely as shameless if not to draw attention to their lack of *pudeur*, self-respect, integrity, modesty, dignity, and decency. A “sense of shame” is what they write that they will call our disposition to feel shame because this disposition may cover what all these notions denote and much more besides (Deonna et al., 2012: 119).

They note that pluralism does not sit well with the first dogma, namely that shame is a social emotion. The claim that shame is exclusively concerned with privacy and public appearances may motivate the thought that shame stands in a privileged or exclusive relation with the concepts of *pudeur*, modesty and decency when considered from the perspective of the self at stake in shame (Deonna et al., 2012: 119).

Deonna and Teroni explain what they mean by *pudeur*. In a broad sense, the French word “*pudique*” indicates a sensitivity to what one shows and what one keeps private, especially in matters of sentiments. They further explain that the difference between a person that shows *pudeur* and a decent person is that a decent person exhibits an acute sensitivity to what is done in front of or to others. These dispositional notions evoke families of values which different people, from different cultures and historical contexts, carry or have, often in slightly different ways. All these values can become determinants of shame when the circumstances call for it (Deonna et al., 2012: 120).

They believe the common thread unifying *pudeur*, modesty and decency is the sense of privacy, which they believe has its first and arguably most central area in matters related to the body. To clarify, it appears that control over bodily needs and instincts play a prominent role in all cultures during the process of socialisation. In addition, the values in this area are instilled very early on during development. Because of this, the body may be the first benchmark with regard to a person’s sensitivity to the distinction between what can be shown and what should be kept private. They understate this argument by pointing out that *pudeur* in French and *pudor* in Latin, both have roots in matters of the body and seems to designate more generally one’s sense of shame (Deonna et al., 2012: 120-121). Luna Dolezal looks at the body to understand shame, which I will elaborate on and discuss in a later section. Velleman seems to be in favour of *pudeur*, which I will also elaborate on and discuss in a later section.

The idea that these observations support is that issues of privacy and public image are an important ingredient for understanding shame in general. These issues of privacy and public image are made especially clear in situations involving sex and the body. Shame is a reaction

to perceived threats to our reputation or our privacy in general. Deonna and Teroni believe that this idea is at the heart of the first dogma (Deonna et al., 2012: 121).

One implication of Deonna and Teroni's understanding of shame's pluralism is that issues regarding privacy and public exposure only carve out one area of value potentially at stake in shame. However, the sense of shame covers a much larger area of concerns. More generally, these dispositional notions that they have claimed to stand in privileged explanatory relation to shame point toward domains of values that are self-relevant for most of us and thus potential occasions for shame. (Deonna et al., 2012: 121). That being said, are self-relevant values completely *self-relevant*? Do we not get our values from the culture we live in and the people we surround ourselves with?

Deonna and Teroni believe, depending on the circumstances and the person involved, that showing shamelessness or lacking a sense of shame is to show a lack of attachment to a family of values that various dispositional notions point towards. However, they point out that the large and diverse spectrum of shame should make us cautious about restricting our sense of shame to any family of values. They state that whether one should be satisfied with their account depends on the possibility of them being able to resist the first dogma whilst illuminating the episodes of shame that motivate it. Which they discuss in the next chapter of their book 'Socialism with Modesty' (Deonna et al., 2012: 121-122).

7. Deonna and Teroni's 'Socialism with modesty'

This section is an investigation and critique on their critiques on what they believe to be a dogma on shame – namely that shame is a social emotion. In chapter 5 'Socialism with modesty' they write that they define shame as the feeling of being incapable, even minimally, to meet the demands that are entailed by our self-relevant values. If one subscribes to the first dogma, that shame is a social emotion, this is wrong-headed. They call this a form of "socialism" about shame. I want to point out that the word "socialism" has a hostile ring to it in Deonna and Teroni's voice. What is wrong with socialism? That being said, they believe this dogma is grounded in primitive emotions of shame. The argument in favour of the first dogma goes as follows: although primitive scenarios occur in a *context* in which the gaze of another is paramount, it is rather at the *evaluations* featuring in shame that the social character of this emotion should be sought. These evaluations could be thought to be of a fundamentally social nature for three different reasons, which give rise to three strands within the first

dogma. First, shame is claimed to be *heteronomous* and disconnected from responsible action because of that. Second, shame is said to involve exclusively a concern with *appearances*, and not with the morally relevant features of the circumstance. Third, shame is understood to be taking the *perspective of another* upon oneself. They believe that the social conception of shame corresponds to important episodes of shame, but they systematically overstate their case. First, they focus solely on a subset of possible shame episodes. Second, they misunderstand the ways in which the causes of and reasons for shame can come apart. Because of this, they fail to distinguish shame from other self-reflective emotions, and especially embarrassment. For the same reason, Deonna and Teroni believe that none of these strands succeed in making a convincing case against shame's moral relevance (Deonna et al., 2012: 126).

Deonna and Teroni believe that the grain of truth within the social conception of shame is that shame socialism should be embraced with modesty. The first strand in the social conception is the only strand that can make a stand against shame's moral standing. Shame can be said to be social when the self-relevant values of privacy or reputation are at stake. Shame could perhaps be said to be not morally relevant when it is felt because of a person perceiving that he has failed with respect to these values. However, they do not believe one can draw from this local truth about shame to any conclusion about the general irrelevance of shame for morality (Deonna et al., 2012: 152).

Secondly, shame can be said to be social because we learn in contact with others about the circumstances that merit shame. They write:

What this observation regarding the acquisition of values supports is not any sweeping conclusion about the moral irrelevance of shame but rather an empirically driven cross-cultural inquiry into the values that are singled out in specific social and historical settings and that find in shame an especially powerful tool for their inculcation. As we have shown, there is no reason to think that moral values cannot be counted among them. Quite the reverse, in fact (Deonna et al., 2012: 153).

My interpretation of this convoluted quotation is that their view on our acquisition of values is not a conclusion about the moral irrelevance of shame. Rather, it is an empirical inquiry into how values are acquired in specific social and historical settings. Shame is an especially powerful tool in acquiring values. Deonna and Teroni believe that moral values should be counted among them.

Finally, shame can be said to be social because it is often triggered by the attitudes of others. They believe one has to understand the role others play in our feeling of shame to be merely ancillary. They claim that shame is never heteronomous, although they claim that they do not imply that others are not instrumental in effecting the change from doer to self-evaluator in shame. Others are often required for us to realize our moral shortcomings because they can draw attention to our theoretical or practical blind spots. They contribute to correcting, refining, or enlightening our moral sensitivity. Because of this, shame could be used for moral progress (Deonna et al., 2012: 152).

In this section they build their case for using shame as a means to act morally. I believe this is severely misguided, and I will build my case in the following sections by looking at Luna Dolezal and J. David Velleman's shame theories.

8. Luna Dolezal's points on shame

Luna Dolezal has both written a book on shame called *The Body and Shame: Phenomenology, Feminism, and The Socially Shaped Body* (2015) and an article on shame called "Shame, Vulnerability and Belonging: Reconsidering Sartre's Account of Shame" (2017). Both works look at bodily vulnerability to understand shame and try to use that understanding of shame for creating feelings of belonging and love.

In the article "Shame, Vulnerability and Belonging: Reconsidering Sartre's Account of Shame" (2017), Luna Dolezal explains how Sartre's account of shame, in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), reveals it as an essential structure of human existence. Dolezal compares Sartre's account of 'pure shame' with recent writing about shame in early child development, in particular Martha Nussbaum's account of 'primitive shame'. Her article explores inherent links between shame, the body and vulnerability, and ultimately concludes that our human need for belonging is the fundamental driving force behind shame, as well as what gives it its ontological status. The article argues, convincingly, that shame is not only about a painful awareness of one's flaws and transgressions with reference to norms and other, but also about a deeper layer of relationality through our bodily vulnerability (Dolezal, 2017).

Dolezal points out that various thinkers in recent philosophical writing have posited that shame has a central role to play in subject formation, in the construction of intersubjective relationships and crucially in the social politics of inclusion and exclusion. The philosophers

working in phenomenological fashion have posited that shame is central to the ontology of human existence, their argument being that without shame certain capacities of consciousness and intersubjectivity would not be possible. Dolezal points out that a central argument for these thinkers is that we would not have the capacity for reflective self-awareness without shame, nor would we become relational or political subjects. Accordingly, shame is theorized as an ontological structure which is central to the constitution of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Dolezal, 2017).

Dolezal states: “Understanding shame as intimately connected with bodily vulnerability gives us an alternative means to understand Sartre’s account of ‘original shame’ in *Being and Nothingness*” (Dolezal, 2017). According to Dolezal, Sartre believes shame to be a negative account of human relations as characterized by ceaseless objectifying and alienating responses between the self and other. She disagrees, and instead believes that original shame signals something fundamental to human existence. To be clearer, shame reveals our necessary vulnerability that is at the core of our relationship to others and our deep human need to maintain social bonds and feelings of belonging (Dolezal, 2017).

Dolezal points out that Sartre links shame fundamentally with the physical body and our inherent physical vulnerability. Furthermore, she states that the links between the body, shame and the exposure of the physical self have a long cultural and conceptual history. She writes that shame is connected with the body and nakedness and in particular the desire to conceal one’s nakedness. She refers to Velleman’s essay and points out that “Adam and Eve become aware of their naked state and cover themselves because they become ashamed of their nudity. In this story, the very origin of humanity is intimately linked with shame about the body.” (Dolezal, 2017).

She also points out a Greek origin myth told by Aristophanes, in Plato’s *Symposium*. In the myth, humans were once whole, double sided and spherical beings. Because of this wholeness, they were able to challenge the Gods for control over the universe. In order to stop the humans and create an unbridgeable gap between Gods and humans, Zeus used his lightning bolt to divide them in two so they walked on two legs and could turn and face their other halves. The humans were suddenly confronted with their own nudity and sexual organs that showed their physical vulnerability, need and desire. According to the myth, in this moment, humans became needy, insecure, and incomplete, and also perpetually seeking their once blissful and powerful state of completeness. As Aristophanes accounts it, this is both the

origin of love as well as the origin of shame. Just like the story of genesis, this creation myth positions shame at the origin of human experience (Dolezal, 2017).

If one looks at the etymology of the word shame, one can further see the link between shame, nudity and vulnerability. *Aidoia* is the word for the genitals in ancient Greek, it connotes the reaction of wishing to hide or conceal the physical body. The word shame in English comes from a pre-Teutonic word that means ‘to cover’, whilst ‘covering oneself’ is considered a natural expression of shame. The Danish word for labia, *skamloeber*, literally translate to the lips of shame and the German word for shame, *Scham*, also refers to the genitals (Dolezal, 2017). I may here add that it is the same in Norwegian, *skamlepper*. One may further wonder what kind of impact this word of labia has on our understanding of ourselves, and our sexuality. If a part of your own genital is described by a word that begins with “shame”, it is not unreasonable to believe that it has some sort of impact (however small), on how you relate to it.

Dolezal brings up the philosopher Max Scheler, who believes that nakedness has been traditionally associated with shame and that the reason we want to cover our sexual organs are because they are symbolic of our basic vulnerability as human beings. Our naked bodies reveal that we are fragile and the fact that we are ultimately biological and, accordingly, mortal beings. Traditionally, in western culture, humans have celebrated their minds, their capacity for reason and their connection to divinity. At the same time, they have denied and repressed the animal nature of human life and shunned the flesh. Consequently, nudity and the body are symbolically shameful because they disturb our conviction of the thought that we are more than merely animals. It reveals our undeniable corporeality, the fact that we are moral and imperfect, while at the same time sexual beings with bodily desires (Dolezal, 2017).

Our bodies have physical desires that challenge our rationality, for example they can be harmed, get sick and will ultimately die. The body is a symbol of our vulnerability, neediness, physical desire and ultimately the lack of control we have over our morality. Because of this, the body is a powerful source of shame, and especially when it falls ill or fails us (Dolezal, 2017).

All that being said, shame and the inherent vulnerability of the body is not only an expression of our cultural history or a feature of relations between self-aware adults. Rather, psychologists argue, it is a part of the basic developmental story of human beings (Dolezal, 2017). Dolezal goes on to discuss some developmental accounts of shame, to give us a means

to illustrate Sartre's account of pure shame as foundational to the embodied structure of human existence.

Dolezal points out that many thinkers believe shame to be an experience that requires self-awareness and an ability to imagine what others are thinking. She also states that it is argued that shame is an experience that is unavailable to young infants, and that it develops only when children gain the capacity for a particular type of reflexive self-awareness (Dolezal, 2017).

Dolezal takes an interesting and unexpected turn, when she goes on to look at shame in child development, and especially what Martha Nussbaum has written on primitive shame to get a deeper understanding of shame. Nussbaum theorizes that primitive shame begins in preverbal infantile development. Intrinsically, it is connected to the fact that humans have a prolonged period of helplessness at the beginning of their life. Infants are thoroughly dependent on others for survival and nourishment. Nussbaum believes primitive shame to be part of early human experience to manage this helplessness and embodied vulnerability. That being said, the realization that these physical needs and desires are beyond the control of the infant leads to frustration, and that frustration is an important part of the developmental process.

Nussbaum argues that when an infant realizes that it is dependent on others, we can expect a primitive and rudimentary emotion of shame to ensue. She explains shame as a painful emotion that is a response to a sense of failure to attain some ideal state. Dolezal states that empirical work in developmental psychology also gives support to Nussbaum's arguments. She also points out that Nussbaum, as well as Sartre, puts bodily vulnerability, embodied social bonds and physical dependency at the heart of shame. For example, when social bonds are withdrawn from infants, their bodily survival is threatened (Dolezal, 2017).

Experiments such as the blank face test have been performed to prove this. They have shown that when mothers do not respond to their young babies through movement, facial expressions or speech, the infants try to get their attention through smiling and gesturing. In other words, they try to re-establish an emotional contact with their caregiver. When the mothers do not respond, the babies start to display signs of distress and avoid eye contact. It is evident that the babies feel a huge distress and unhappiness about their mother's unresponsiveness, which is demonstrated by their bodily behaviour. The same body postures, physical gestures and face expressions these infants exhibit, are the same as somatic expressions of shame in adults like gaze-avoidance, bodily collapse or contraction and downward head movement or position. It has been posited that shame behaviour is a type of appeasement behaviour. In

other words, to withdraw from social contact though bodily withdrawal is a way to appease the other and an attempt to repair or maintain social bonds. The results of a blank face test, the expression of sad avoidance in the young infants, is described by some developmental psychologists as a type of proto-shame or primitive shame. Primitive shame does not require any particular mental content, it instead registers as a felt experience or affect through the physical body. To summarize, primitive shame is an embodied anxiety that regards the threat of losing the physical bonds of caregivers that transforms into social shame, or an anxiety regarding compromising one's social bonds. The concerns that regard physical survival become concerns regarding social survival (Dolezal, 2017).

Dolezal believes belonging is central for shame. Being moral is important for belonging. Shame can definitely be tied to morality, but one should not use it as a means to be more moral. Interestingly, in her book *The Body and Shame: Phenomenology, Feminism, and the Socially Shaped Body* (2015) it seems that she tries to understand shame in order to defeat it, at least to a certain extent, and build self-confidence. Perhaps she is more in favour of *pudeur* instead of shame. I believe one should ideally try to move towards *pudeur* and having a sense of shame. That being said, I also believe showing one's shame and vulnerability can lead to feelings of belonging and love.

9. Velleman's points on shame

In the article "The Genesis of Shame" (2006) J. David Velleman builds his own theory of shame. He argues that shame is the anxious sense of being compromised in one's self-presentation in a way that threatens one's recognition as a self-presenting person. He also argues that one could perhaps move away from shame towards a sense of what should be kept private. He does this to try to remove stigma around things that are completely natural, like the body and homosexual sex. I believe he argues for this convincingly, and I will elaborate on his theory of shame in this section.

In the article "The Genesis of Shame" (2006) Velleman compares Adam and Eve before they eat the apple in Eden's Garden with after they have eaten the apple. He does this to make us think about what the genesis of shame is. Why do Adam and Eve first get shame after they have eaten the apple? He points out that the text from the bible seems to suggest that they were ashamed because they realized they were naked, but then he asks, "what realization was that?" (Velleman, 2006: 45). He states that the realization that they were naked must have

been the realization that they were unclothed, which meant that they would have finally been able to imagine the possibility of clothing. However, the mere idea of clothing would have meant nothing to Adam and Eve unless they also saw why clothing was necessary. He asks, “And when they saw the necessity of clothing, they were seeing – what, exactly?” (Velleman, 2006: 45). In the article he proposes an account of shame that explains why eating from the tree of knowledge would have made Adam and Eve ashamed of their nakedness. He also states that his account will ultimately yield implications for current debates about the shamelessness of our culture. He writes in the introduction that the way to recover from our sense of shame is not, as some moralists propose, to recover our mere intolerance for conditions previously thought to be shameful. He also writes in the introduction that he will propose an alternative prescription which is derived from his diagnosis of how Adam and Eve acquired a sense of shame. Velleman points out that the story of genesis makes little sense under the standard philosophical analysis of shame, which he believes sees shame as an emotion of reflected self-assessment. According to this analysis, the subject of shame thinks less of himself at the thought of how he is seen by others (Velleman, 2006: 45-46).

He points out that the idea of Adam and Eve disobeying their sexual instincts could have been instrumental in the development of shame, via the development of privacy. He does not argue that shame is always concerned with matters of privacy. Although he states that matters of privacy are the primal locus of shame. Similarly, so are our genitals, which he believes is why our creation myths traces the origin of shame to the nakedness of our first ancestors. His analysis goes in stages, from the natural shamefulness of the genitals, to the shamefulness of matters that are private by choice or convention, to the shamefulness of matters that do not involve privacy at all. He believes the philosopher that comes closest to understanding shame is St. Augustine. In Augustine’s understanding of the story of genesis, man’s insubordination to God made God punish man by making him insubordinate to his own flesh, which is what made his sexual organs shameful. In other words, the genitals became shameful in punishment for original sin (Velleman, 2006: 49-50).

Before Adam and Eve ate the apple, they did not have free will. And when they got free will, they had to choose which instincts to act on. Velleman believes that our capacity to resist desires enables us to choose which desires that our behaviour will express. Usually, we are quite consistent with the choices we make over time and that develops into a profile of tastes, interests, and commitments on which we are willing to act. We also tend to resist impulses and inclinations that are incompatible with it. Velleman calls this self-preservation. The

reason we have this is because others cannot engage with you in social interaction unless they find your behaviour predictable and intelligible. He states that putting on an outward face seems like an essentially social enterprise, but he rather believes it to be a structure of the individual will. As an example of this he brings up Robinson Crusoe, who had to engage in a solitary form of self-preservation to survive (Velleman, 2006: 52-53).

He believes that threats to your standing as a self-presenting person are a source of deep anxiety, and that anxiety is what constitutes the emotion of shame. Velleman believes privacy is the central area for shame, because it is the central arena for threats to your standing as a social agent. Failures of privacy threatens the power inherent in your role as a participating member of the community, and this results in anxiety that constitutes the emotion of shame. Velleman believes that if someone peeks through your keyhole when your alone, you should not feel ashamed of the thought of what he has seen. Rather, you should feel angry or defiant. The proper occasions for shame are when you, on your own, fail to manage your privacy (Velleman, 2006: 55-56).

However, Velleman believes that failures of privacy are not the only occasion for shame, although he does believe that they are the central occasion. One's standing as a self-presenting person can be threatened without the exposure of anything specific, or of something one had not specifically hoped to keep private. One can feel shame about things that are public, or about nothing in particular at all. Velleman writes about his sixteen-year-old son as an example of this. His son feels shame when seen with his parents by his friends. Velleman believes it is because his son has made an image of himself as mature and like an adult to his friends, and when he is seen with his parents it is obvious that he is still a child. A person can also feel shame over aspects of himself that he accepts as conspicuous if they are so noticeable that they ruin his efforts as self-presenting. For example, a person who is obviously deformed may feel shame if he is perceived solely in terms of his deformity, excluding any self-definition on his part. Victims of social stereotyping can befall a similar effect: one is captured in a socially defined image that leaves no room for self-presentation (Velleman, 2006: 61-62).

In his conclusion, Velleman writes that he believes the moralists are wrong in their view of shame, not only about the means of reawakening shame, but also about its proper objects. He states that sexual behaviour calls for privacy, but the homosexual variety calls for no more shame than the heterosexual variety. Because of this, homosexual sex is no more an occasion for shame than heterosexual sex. He points out that people who think homosexuality is

shameful tend to be people that do not know any homosexuals, or do not realize that they do. For those people, heterosexual is the standard, and therefore homosexuality is especially salient. The fact that a person is a homosexual, if it comes to their attention, tends to occupy their mind. That fact is a private fact about a person because it involves the anatomy of her bedmates and what passes between them in bed. He believes that if someone's sexual orientation is especially noticeable to people, then only her presence will cause them to think about her private life in ways that will occasion shame. It is like a vicarious shame because there is stigma around it (Velleman, 2006: 68-69). I would like to point out that the same goes for victims of rape. Velleman writes: "But allowing people to know something should not be confused with presenting it to their view. There's a difference between "out of the closet" and "in your face", and what makes the difference is privacy." (Velleman, 2006: 69). Then he goes on to end the essay with this quote:

In short, Adam and Eve were right to avail themselves of fig leaves. Although the term "fig leaf" is now a term of derision, I think that fig leaves are nothing to be ashamed of. They manifest our sense of privacy, which is an expression of our personhood (Velleman, 2006: 69).

He could be interpreted to mean that one should have *pudeur* instead of shame. It is also clear that he believes shame to be a social emotion.

10. Concluding words

The topic of this bachelor's essay has been shame, and I have mostly investigated and considered the social side of shame. I have critiqued the shame of shame that is revealed in Julien A. Deonna, Fabrice Teroni and Raffaele Rodogno's book *In Defense of Shame* (2012). Although they bring up a lot of important and intelligent point on shame, they go wrong in one critical way. Namely, that they believe shame could and should be used as a means to act morally. This is perhaps true to a certain extent, but I do not think one should look at shame in this way. Rather, one should try, as best they can, to use her shame and vulnerability in order to create feelings of love and belonging. Ideally, one should try to move away from shame and towards *pudeur*, even though this may perhaps seem impossible. I suggest hanging around people who love and/or respect diversity and inclusion.

Kilder

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