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Shame and Animal Ethics: On Moral Shame's Critical Functions regarding Human-Animal Issues

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Abstract (in English)

Recently, there has been a renewed interest in the moral function of emotions within the field of ethics. Shame features prominently among the emotions that theorists have paid particular attention to. Sometimes characterized as a Jekyll-and-Hyde emotion, it tends to be endorsed or rejected as a moral emotion, depending on which of its faces is seen as having more significance. While its positive side suggests that it is a valuable moral emotion, its negative side suggests that it runs contrary to morality. Those who endorse a pessimistic view of shame point out, for example, that the experience of shame causes self-destructive behaviour and damaging forms of suffering. Furthermore, as the practice of public shaming has increased in popularity, the question of whether shaming others can be justified has gained new relevance. Not only might the practice of shaming be shameless but evoking shame might also turn out to be counterproductive, particularly when shame is (taken to be) obsessed with the "self" instead of moral principles or values. Consequently, some proponents of a pessimistic view argue that the morally progressive way to deal with shame – both individually and socially – is to overcome it. In contrast to this view, I defend the positive face of shame. Against the idea of shame standing to our disposal I argue that getting rid of it is not a possibility in the first place. Engaging with Sartre, Levinas and Agamben, I show that shame is an essential mark of subjectivity. Moreover, as I will propose with a view on animal ethics, there is moral value attached to shame, when it experientially represents to the subject its implication in a shameful or morally deficient state of the world, while it lacks moral value, when it blames the subject in abstraction from the fact of being so implicated. Shame has moral value in this sense, when the shamefulness giving rise to it is recognized to be a feature not of the subject qua person, but of the normative infrastructure the latter is subjected to. In this view, while shaming another person is wrong, shame's value in the field of animal ethics might consist in its critical potential with regards to the norms that regulate our consumption of animals.

Abstract (auf Deutsch)

In letzter Zeit kann ein vermehrtes Interesse an den moralischen Funktionen der Emotionen in der Ethik verzeichnet werden. Unter den Emotionen, denen besondere Aufmerksamkeit gilt, nimmt Scham nicht zuletzt aufgrund ihrer Ambivalenz eine herausragende Stellung ein. Manchmal als Jekyll-und-Hyde Emotion bezeichnet, wird sie als moralische Emotion entweder befürwortet oder abgelehnt, je nachdem, welches ihrer Gesichter als wesentlicher erachtet wird. Während ihre positive Seite sie als moralisch wertvolle Emotion auszuweisen scheint, legt ihre negative Seite bisweilen nahe, dass sie der Moral zuwiderläuft. So weisen Vertreter*innen einer pessimistischen Ansicht der Scham etwa darauf hin, dass die Erfahrung von Scham selbstzerstörerisches Verhalten und schädigendes Leiden erzeuge. Mit der aktuellen Zunahme verschiedener Formen öffentlichen Beschämens gewinnt darüber hinaus die Frage an Relevanz, ob oder inwiefern diese gerechtfertigt werden können. „Shaming“ stellt sich nicht nur als schamlos heraus, sondern zudem als kontraproduktiv, insbesondere wenn es sich auf das Selbst anstatt auf moralische Prinzipien und Werte richtet. Aus solchen und anderen Gründen argumentieren einige Vertreter*innen der pessimistischen Position, dass die moralisch fortschrittliche Art, mit Scham umzugehen, sowohl individuell als auch gesellschaftlich darin bestehe, sie zu überwinden. Im Unterschied dazu verteidige ich das positive Gesicht der Scham. Gegen die Vorstellung, Scham stünde derart zu unserer Disposition, argumentiere ich, dass wir uns ihrer nicht entledigen können. In Auseinandersetzung mit Sartre, Levinas und Agamben zeige ich, dass die Scham ein wesentliches Merkmal menschlicher Subjektivität bildet. Darüber hinaus zeige ich mit Blick auf die Tierethik, dass der Scham ein moralischer Wert beigemessen werden kann, insofern sie dem Subjekt seine Verwicklung in einen beschämenden oder moralisch defizitären Zustand der Welt erfahrbar macht, während sie diesen Wert vermissen lässt, wenn sie das Subjekt unter Absehung von diesen konstitutiven Bezügen befällt. Scham hat in diesem Sinne einen moralischen Wert, wenn die Schamhaftigkeit, die sie hervorruft, als Merkmal nicht des Subjekts qua Person, sondern der normativen Infrastruktur, der es unterworfen ist, erkannt wird. Während es also falsch ist, einzelne Person zu beschämen, liegt der Wert der Scham im Bereich der Tierethik in ihrem kritischen Potenzial in Bezug auf die Normen, die unseren Konsum von Tieren regeln.

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Introduction

Are we living in a shame culture? In her book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (2005), a WWII-era study commissioned by the United States Office of War Information in order to understand and predict the Japanese's behaviour, American anthropologist Ruth Benedict made the by now popular distinction between guilt cultures and shame cultures. Although this distinction is not entirely uncontroversial, it proved very influential and has considerably shaped discussions on shame's social functions. Benedict's distinction applies to the way societies maintain social order and sanction transgressive behaviour. In her view, guilt cultures, such as American culture, emphasize individual persons' conscience and operate via reinforcement of feelings of guilt and the threat of punishing socially condemned behaviours. Shame cultures, such as Japanese culture are based on the inculcation of shame and the threat of ostracism. Moreover, as has often been noted, guilt concerns one's behaviour, while shame relates to one's identity. In other words, shame is not about what one has *done* wrong or what one has failed to do but about what kind of person one *is* (or, at least, held to be). Against the backdrop of the current dominance of identity politics, the rise of so-called cancel culture and the emergence of phenomena such as flight-shame, COVID shame, meat shame and other forms of shame suggest a transformation of Western cultures. As philosopher Robert Pfaller has observed in his recent book *Zwei Enthüllungen über die Scham* (2022), however, there is not just the tendency to feel ashamed over all sorts of things but also and especially a multiplication of occasions in which feeling shame on behalf of others is deemed appropriate or necessary, which sets our culture apart from shame cultures as defined by Benedict. We sometimes even pride ourselves on feeling shame for others, as we take this as a sign of our wokeness, not the least because it is those whose actions, in our view, betray a shameless lack of sensibility for the moral concerns of minorities, the environment, etc., on behalf of whom we feel shame most often. As philosopher Elisa Aaltola (2017) has pointed out, the act of shaming now also features prominently in the context of animal liberation and activism. While not all shaming is explicit, meat eaters and fur wearers, for example, are often publicly shamed by activists (cf. ibid.; Dieck and Grimm, 2021). Furthermore, it is not just individuals that are the target of activists but also companies that are deemed responsible for exhibiting shameful values and practices.

The practice of shaming itself, however, raises a number of issues that cast doubt on its legitimacy and become all the more pressing as shaming gains in popularity. As philosopher Krista Thomason (2018) has argued, for example, shaming is problematic, because it shows a lack of respect for the other person. Furthermore, not just philosophers (cf. Nussbaum, 2004; Kekes, 1988) but also many empirical studies point toward the dangerous and (self-)destructive nature of the experience of shame as well as its link to aggression and violence (cf. Tangney et al., 1992; Lewis, 1971; Miller, 1985). Not the least, as Aaltola (2021) points out, shame was also shown to be correlated with eating disorders (Troop et al., 2008), depression (Andrews et al., 2002), anxiety disorders, trauma-related anxiety, and dissociation (Irwin, 1998; Tangney, 1995; Gilbert, 2003; Pinto-Gouveia and Matos, 2011).

At the same time, however, shame is not just an "ugly" emotion but also displays a "fragile beauty", as Deonna, Rodogno & Teroni (2012) have argued, which consists, not the least, in the self-reforming tendencies sparked, under the right conditions, by experiencing oneself to be lacking with regards to the values on holds on to. In a similar manner, Krista K. Thomason testifies to the ambiguous nature of shame, calling shame a "Jekyll-and-Hyde emotion with two faces" (2018, p. 1). Critical of the practice of shaming and mindful of shame's "dark side", Thomason, nevertheless, sees shame as a valuable moral emotion, arguing that a disposition to shame is tantamount to an acknowledgement of the limits of one's own self-conception and thus a necessary condition for our ability to treat others with respect.

It is in the context of considerations such as these that the present study is situated. The picture of shame that will emerge in the course of it differs from the usual one in a number of ways. Perhaps the most significant feature of its account of shame, setting it apart from others, is the way it reconfigures shame's relation to normativity. Whereas shame is commonly taken to affirm existing norms and/or values, constituting a response to their transgression or to one's failure to live up to them, the present account will differentiate this shame from a kind of shame that is critical of these norms and/or values. Raising the question of moral shame's functions with regards to human-animal issues, the thesis I will put forward is that shame's constructive role consists in its critical function concerning the normative infrastructure governing human-animal relations, in particular our consumption of animals. One reason such a function is usually overlooked, I will contend, is that the prevalent normative infrastructure is set against the emergence of such a shame. This is partly explained by the dominance of an ideology that

regards the consumption of meat as normal, natural and necessary – a system for which the psychologist Melanie Joy (2010) coined the now well-known term carnism. Moreover, shame is prevented from fulfilling its critical function as long as it remains tied to individual persons that are mistaken for the root cause of the problem. As long as meat-shaming targets individual meat eaters, it fails to do justice to the complexity of the issue, reductively blaming individuals instead of acknowledging their complicity in a shameful structure which, as I will argue, constitutes critical shame's proper object. This critical shame, which I will call zoophagic shame, allows to see as intolerable and shameful in society's relation to animals that which is usually and habitually taken for granted as just the way things are. If, as Marx once wrote, "shame is already a revolution" (1967, p. 204), then this might be taken to mean that the experience of shame, in its critical function with regards to the dominant norms, may allow to break with the habits and schemata through which we normally and unquestioningly relate to animals, affording an unfiltered view of the human-caused suffering of those creatures who are most vulnerable to the point at which it can no longer be ignored, indeed, making it unbearable. The relation between shame and power cuts both ways. While there is a shame that may be used to reinforce the status quo, there is also a form of shame that speaks truth to power, drawing into relief what is shameful, making it impossible to behave any longer as if it were not real.

In the first chapter, I will engage with analytical theories of the emotions, addressing some issues classical internalism and externalism face and presenting Sabine Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions as a way to avoid these problems. This serves two purposes. First, it will provide an answer to the question of moral emotions' nature. This will provide the theoretical basis on which I will develop the concept of shame. Second, it will allow to get a better grasp of the concept of shame that I will develop in the course of this study. It will make clear how moral shame needs to be conceived of in order to accomplish the tasks I will attribute to it. In particular, to conceive (moral) emotions as affective perceptions will lend weight from an analytical angle to an understanding of shame as a way of seeing (the intolerable). With these preliminary conceptual clarifications in mind, the second chapter turns to a discussion of shame's relation to human morality. Presenting different views on shame not just from philosophy but also from psychology, shame will emerge as a double-faced emotion. Although shame has a dark side, it constitutes a crucial element in human morality, as I will argue. Against pessimistic views on shame, according to which the morally progressive way forward would be

to overcome shame, an engagement with some of the most noteworthy philosophical positions on shame – such as those of Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas and Giorgio Agamben – suggests that shame is so firmly rooted in the structure of subjectivity that getting rid of it is not a possibility in the first place. Furthermore, I will stress shame's positive side by arguing for its value to human morality, following Krista K. Thomason's view, according to which a proneness to shame is tantamount to an acknowledgment of the limits of one's self-conception and thus a necessary condition of respect for other people's moral authority. For this reason, shaming is generally to be considered morally bad, as it betrays a lack of respect for others. The fourth chapter will analyze a case in point. An example of an animal rights activists' shaming of meat eaters will be used to argue that shaming is not just respectless and thus morally reprehensible but also tends to be ineffective. As shaming (and shame) concern the whole person – in contrast to guilt, which only concerns a person's actions –, a debate involving shaming runs the risk of forfeiting the morally contentious issue at its heart, turning the debate instead into a struggle over identities. Moreover, shaming others with the intent of altering their behaviour tends to mistakenly presuppose full responsibility for their choices. As Melanie Joy has shown, the consumption of meat cannot be regarded as a matter of mere individual choice. Looking at it in isolation from the apparatuses that normalize, naturalize and make appear necessary the consumption of meat (and animal products), ignores the normative social forces exerting pressure on individuals to conform. For this reason, animal protection activists who, for example, compare meat eaters with puppy torturers fail to take into account the social pressures that are working in favour of consuming animals and that make the comparanda actually incomparable. Non-vegans, as a matter of fact, have a partial excuse for consuming animals. Instead of shaming people, a critique of the status quo needs to see the shamefulness of a system that makes it so easy for people to turn a blind eye to the misery of billions of animals. I will argue in the fifth chapter that there is a shame that allows people to see the intolerable behind the façade of normalcy. It is the shame of being tainted by the existence of a wrong that should not and need not exist.

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1. Theorizing Moral Emotions

1.1. Internalism, Externalism and Cognitivism

In order to show how shame can play the role of a valuable moral emotion, I first need to clarify the concept of emotion my account presupposes. This is the goal of this chapter. I will start with a sketch of David Hume's moral sense theory, pointing out some problems this classic internalist theory faces. Externalism being no more promising, I will present Sabine Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions in order to argue that recent cognitivist theories of emotions may be able to evade these problems, while being able to account for emotions' justificatory function with regards to judgements and their explanatory or motivational role concerning (moral) actions.

David Hume's moral philosophical approach exemplifies how classical moral sense theory presupposed a concept of emotions as arational sensations. Hume famously writes:

> A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possest with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be oppos'd by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent. (Hume, 2007, pp. 266f)

What Hume calls a passion has no representational content. While rational judgements represent some analytic or empirical state of affairs as in some way existing, which is what makes them truth-apt in the first place, a moral judgement merely expresses one's approbation or disapprobation of an action. Consequently, Hume excludes moral judgements from the class of rational judgements. But if it is the case that it depends on one's own nature whether an action is either approbated or disapproved of, is morality then not rendered a purely subjective affair? Hume does not think so, since as humans we are still capable of morally evaluating actions relatively impartially from what he calls the "common point of view" (2007, p. 377). However, what still needs to be accounted for is how moral judgements can become practically efficacious. As it would be nonsensical to postulate the existence of normative reasons for action, if one were not able to act for these reasons, any moral theory has to solve this problem

of "moral motivation" (cf. Döring, 2002, p. 20). As moral judgements are normative – they do not simply describe how we *actually* act but rather say something about how we *ought to* act – , they provide reasons for action. The question is how these reasons can actually motivate action. According to Hume, "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will" (2007, p. 265). Reason's function is solely to provide the means to achieve passions' goals, which Hume famously expresses in the dictum of reason being merely the "slave of the passions" (2007, p. 266). Thus, it is up to the passions alone to motivate action.

In Hume's conception, then, the practical or moral judgements of a person depend entirely on their passions, at the same time as the latter constitute one's motive for action. In this way, it qualifies as a so-called internalist theory, according to which moral or practical judgements provide practical reasons for action, whose practicality consists precisely in their being, at the same time, motives for action. In other words, internalism postulates that an action's justifying reason and its explanatory reason are identical. Externalism, in contrast, does not require that they be practically identical. In fact, for an externalist it is one thing to be convinced of the moral rightness of an action and a different thing to have a motive to act accordingly.

One of the problems externalism faces is that it fails to make sense of rational guidance. If normative reasons were not necessarily motivating, the co-occurrence of a normative reason and an appropriate motive would be a mere coincidence, i.e., an action springing from such a co-occurrence would never be done *for* the reason, and this means that it would never be done *because* it is right, as Döring puts it (2007, p. 366f). The internalist, as exemplified by Hume, is able to formally account for rational guidance, insofar as an action's justifying reason just *is* its motivating reason. However, Hume's internalism faces the problem that it cannot properly account for the normativity of practical reasons. This is because for something to be a norm, it must be possible for someone to flout or counteract it. However, it is precisely this possibility that is prevented by Hume's account, since it is not possible to rationally criticize moral judgements on account of their being grounded in arational desires. Insofar as the passions have no representational content, they cannot contradict reason, and since they provide a person's motive for action, this person can never act irrationally with regards to their corresponding judgements (cf. Döring, 2002, p. 22). Thus, along with practical judgements' normativity Hume also suspends practical rationality, as the latter presupposes the possibility of practical

irrationality (cf. ibid.). His "solution" of the problem of how moral judgements may be the reason of an action basically "dissolves" this problem (cf. Döring, 2002, p. 20).

As we can see, both externalism as well as internalism in its Humean version are bound up with serious problems. Of the two alternatives, internalist theories are nowadays dominant. However, current internalist analyses of action and motivation differ significantly from their classical predecessors when it comes to conceiving of the relationship between emotions and morality. Most importantly, cognitivist theories ascribe to emotions an intentional or representational content. In its more recent versions, cognitivism restores the original connection between emotions and morality, by rehabilitating emotions as suitable motives for action, while at the same time, in contrast to classical moral sense theories, granting emotions a representational content without overintellectualizing them. Thereby cognitivism opens up the possibility that emotions play a role in the explanation as well as in the justification of actions (cf. Döring, 2002, p. 34). To grant that emotions are not arational feelings but that they have, in addition to a certain what-it-is-likeness of experiencing them, a representational content is to conceive of them as cognitions of some sort. The question, of course, is in what sense emotions can be thought of as cognitions. Emotions have been construed in many different ways: as kinds of judgement, appraisals, evaluative perceptions, evaluative feelings, patterns of salience, etc. (cf. Scarantino and de Sousa, 2021). While a consensus on certain topics has emerged among emotion theorists, the wide variety of conceptions suggests that theoretical fruitfulness, which is one of the desiderata of research on emotions in philosophy and the affective sciences, is often conceived differently depending on one's primary goal.

As my primary goal is to show how shame can play the role of a valuable moral emotion with regards to human-animal issues, theoretical fruitfulness is not primarily a result of conceptual analysis. Rather, I will follow the idea that moral philosophers working on moral emotions face two tasks: "First, we need to give a good account of emotions as people experience and live them. Second, we need to explain how those emotions fit into moral life" (Thomason, 2018, p. 6). As Thomason sees it, in order to address these issues one does not need to take a stand within the two main debates concerning the relationship between morality and the emotions, one being whether emotions ground or give rise to moral judgements and the other turning around the nature of moral emotions, i.e., "whether they are cognitive or non-cognitive, whether they are more like perceptions, more like beliefs, or more like judgements,

or whether they are something altogether different” (Thomason, 2018, p. 9). I agree with Thomason that such questions are important to ask when the purpose of one’s investigations is to gain conceptual clarity about an emotion, but that they are of limited use when it comes to elucidating its social functions as well as its meaning for a subject that experiences it.

However, since I will claim that part of emotions’ function in ethics is to convey moral knowledge and to motivate corresponding actions, it is important to see that this presupposes a concept of emotions that imports certain theoretical choices and interpretations. With regards to my account, I take it that emotions have a cognitive-affective structure that is best explained by an approach within the tradition of hybrid evaluative-feeling theories. Given the limited space and keeping in mind the restrictions my overall goal places on my account, I will not explicitly argue for this claim, but, in drawing on Sabine Döring’s representative account of emotions as affective perceptions, I will presuppose its validity. In short, I am taking on some of the core explanatory challenges any philosophical account of emotions must deal with (including differentiation, motivation, intentionality, and phenomenology) only to the extent that is conducive to my overall enquiry (cf. Scarantino and de Sousa, 2021).

1.2. Emotions as Affective Perceptions

Now that I have limited the scope of my account ex negativo, let me define its nature positively. First, it is in line with what Bell calls a bottom-up approach to moral psychology, which involves an “investigation of [emotions] themselves and consider[s] what role these emotions might play in a minimally acceptable morality" (2013, p. 274). As Thomason notes, the bottom-up approach “allows moral philosophers to stay truer to our emotional lives and to help provide clarity about our moral experiences” (2018, p. 9). In this way, following a bottom-up approach helps to ensure that I meet my first task, namely, to give an account of shame as people experience and live it.

My second task will be to show how shame can play the role of a valuable moral emotion, not just in the realm of human morality but also, and in particular, with regards to ethical human-animal issues. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will do some necessary preliminary work. Drawing on Döring’s account of emotions as affective perceptions, I will emphasize a consequence of this account, namely the possibility of “‘productive conflicts’ between

perception and judgement" (cf. 2007, p. 391). In analogy to the case of perceptual illusions, such as the Müller-Lyer illusion, there can be conflict without contradiction between what one emotionally experiences and what one believes. However, whereas it would be wrong for someone to revise their original judgement to be in line with their illusory sensory perception, the rationality proper to emotions as affective perceptions might indeed require one to revise one's original belief(s). In what follows, I will outline Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions, laying the conceptual groundwork for the possibility of such a productive conflict. My argument for moral shame's value will then build on this idea, showing that one might be required to revise one's customary beliefs about human-animal relations given one's experience of a particular form of shame. The present chapter will end with a defense of Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions against an argument by Brian Ballard, who argues that the experience of emotions confers an epistemic benefit on the subject which is best explained by conceiving of emotions not as perceptions but as an acquaintance with values. I will argue that Ballard's account falls short of a model of how emotions acquaint us with values. Not only is it reasonable to assume that perception is a useful model for how they achieve this, but Döring's account of emotions may in fact be enriched by integrating Ballard's insights.

1.2.1. Emotions and Morality: Gaining Ethical Knowledge through Affective Perception

As Döring points out, in choosing between the Humean and the Kantian view of practical reason, one is presented with a dilemma: In both cases, normative and motivating reasons come to be seen as mutually exclusive:

> While the Humean cannot account for the normativity of practical reasons but commits himself to the incoherent claim that arational desires are capable of rationalising actions, the Kantian fails for the opposite reason. Though the latter rightly points out that only states with a certain kind of content can enter into practical reasoning, he clings to the psychologically dubious postulate that pure reason has motivational force. As what I have called the 'Humean' versus the 'Kantian' view of practical reason corresponds to the two ways in which the belief-desire model of the explanation and rationalisation of action can be instantiated, this 'internalist dilemma' implies that rational motivation cannot satisfactorily be described in terms of that model. (Döring, 2007, p. 369)

Given that the belief-desire model does not adequately account for rational motivation, one is led to look somewhere else for a solution. Döring thinks this internalist dilemma can be resolved via recourse to the concept of emotions. Characterized as "an occurrent conscious state, with a certain feeling or affect, and with a certain kind of intentional content", an emotion is neither a judgement or belief nor a desire but something altogether different (Döring, 2007, p. 371f). Granted that a theory of emotion has to account for an emotion's intentionality as well as its phenomenology, one needs to explain how these constituents are linked with each other.

This is something so-called add-on views fail to do, as Döring points out. These views typically characterize an emotion's intentionality independently of its what-it-is-likeness, the latter being simply added on to these supposedly feelingless states as a separate component. If an emotion is constituted by both an intentional aspect and a certain feeling, then a theory of emotion must explain how these components are necessarily connected (cf. Döring, 2007, p. 374). One way of doing this is to conceive an emotion's intentionality as inseparable from its phenomenology (cf. Goldie, 2000). Döring's model for this conception of emotions is that of perception. Just as a perception's intentional content is part of its conscious, subjective character, so is an emotion's intentionality inextricable from its affective quality. Moreover, emotions are like perceptions non-inferentially related to the content of other states (cf. Döring, 2007, p. 376). Just as when I see a vertical line with a dot above it, I do not infer from that perception that it is an instance of the letter "i", so, for example, in being amused by a person's irritating behaviour, I do not infer from its property of being irritating its property of being amusing, but I rather immediately see the irritating behaviour itself as amusing (cf. Döring, 2007, p. 382). Furthermore, an emotion just as a perception represents the world in a certain way, without the need to affirm this representation as true. As certain perceptual illusions demonstrate, there may be conflict without contradiction between one's sensory perception and one's beliefs or judgements. When, as in the Müller-Lyer illusion, you see two lines as being of different length, although you believe or even know that they are of the same length, the content of your perception need not be revised in light of your judgement. In other words, as Döring points out, Moore's paradox does not apply here; there is no contradiction involved in saying "I know that the two lines are of the same length, but I do not see it. I see one line longer than the other" (2007, p. 380). The same goes for emotions. There is, for example, no contradiction involved in perceiving a snake as dangerous, although you know that it is not

dangerous. As Döring writes, “we often operate in a default mode in which we take the content of our emotions at face value” (2007, p. 379). It is this taking at face value the content of an emotion which, according to Döring, brings the emotion into a relation of justification of a judgement, in particular that of a moral judgement’s content: Experiencing indignation at someone’s action, for example, one may be led judge it as unjust (cf. Döring 2007, p. 384). Granted that moral judgements are a paradigmatic type of judgements that imply the existence of reasons for acting, the person’s indignation constitutes a motivation to act in such a way as to prevent further actions of this kind from happening in the future (2007, pp. 384ff). It is precisely the fact that an emotion is capable of both rationalizing a judgement and of motivating to act correspondingly which, on Döring’s view, resolves the internalist dilemma.

> In judging that she ought to take action against the punishment the person has not only a reason but is also motivated to do so. This is so because the chain of reasoning which leads to that judgement starts from an emotion. As we have seen, emotions are capable of both rationalizing and motivating, although their representational content is not that of belief, nor is their motivational force that of desire. The person’s judgement that she ought to take action against the punishment has motivational force due to the justifying relation holding between her judgement and her emotion. This relation forms a link in the form of necessary connection, and, because of that link, the emotion’s motivational force is transmitted to the judgement. (2007, p. 386)

Not just does Döring’s model account for practical irrationality, but it also allows that, “when it comes to a conflict between a normative judgement and an emotion, it may be the judgment rather than the emotion which gets things wrong” (2007, p. 390). To illustrate this point, Döring turns to an example used by Alison McIntyre (1990). Mark Twain’s character Huckleberry Finn decides to turn his friend Jim over to the slave hunters, after having helped him to run away from slavery. However, just when he has the opportunity to do so, he finds himself lying in order to protect Jim. As Döring points out, the crucial point is that Huckleberry Finn, having acted out of sympathy for his friend, does not endorse this emotion but rather castigates himself for his weakness, while Twain makes the reader believe that his protagonist did the right thing (cf. Döring, 2007, p. 390). Döring’s Aristotelian picture, in contrast to the Kantian picture, accounts for the possibility of gaining ethical knowledge through perception. This picture has it that we must first perceive the particular situation in a certain way, before the question arises

whether or not an action is right, as different descriptions of a situation may imply evaluations that are inconsistent with each other, such as when Huck's action is seen as either stealing property from its rightful owner or as ensuring that another human gets the freedom they are entitled to (cf. ibid.). Acting, like Huck, against one's supposedly "better knowledge", one may later come to the conclusion that one made an error in judgement and that it was right to act out of one's emotion. In fact, taking the representational content of an emotion at face value, one may arrive at a judgement that does not follow from the principles one had hitherto held, leading to the formulation of better or more comprehensive principles, for example concerning the scope of human rights and the immorality of slavery (cf. ibid.).

I want to emphasize this feature of Döring's account, because it is crucial to my account of the constructive role moral shame may play. As I will later show, its constructive role for animal ethics, on my view, consists in its critical function vis-à-vis the dominant norms governing human-animal relations. It is not just this or that belief, which may be justified or rendered problematic by an emotion, but, as I will claim, it is the validity of the belief-guiding norms, prescribing how one typically thinks of and behaves towards certain others, that may be troubled or put into question by certain emotions. "In the case of moral emotions, the possibility emerges that those emotions may give the thinker a non-inferential way of coming to know moral propositions", as Döring argues. (Döring, 2003, p. 229). If this is the case, then, provoked by and in light of the experience of shame, one may come to see our relation to certain kinds of animals in a way that conflicts with and calls into question our "better knowledge", the latter being informed by a narrative that is built to justify what suddenly comes to be seen as unjustifiable. Keeping Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions in mind, I will later argue that shame may be characterized as a way of seeing the intolerable. While this argument will not be directly informed by the concept of emotions that I have outlined in the present chapter, it will profit from it indirectly, insofar as the idea of shame as a way of seeing gains plausibility from an account of emotions as affective perceptions.

1.2.2. Emotions and Epistemology: Emotions as Acquaintance with Values

We have seen that emotions may be a non-inferential source of moral knowledge. On Döring's account, the epistemic benefit afforded by the experience of emotions is precisely due to their

nature of being affective perceptions. In his paper "The Epistemic Significance of Emotional Experience" (2021), Brian Ballard denies that the epistemic benefit proper to emotions can be explained by conceiving of them as perceptions. Rather, on his view, emotions' epistemic benefit arises because *emotions acquaint us with values*. I will end this chapter by presenting Ballard's argument. I will argue that his criticism of perception-theories of emotions is misguided, at least when it comes to Döring's, and I will suggest that Ballard's account is not incompatible with Döring's but may actually enhance it.

Imagine a situation in which you and your friend are looking out the window and witness an injustice. Let's say some other person is walking on the pavement when a cat crosses their path, and the person intentionally kicks it with his foot as if the cat was a football. You and your friend observe the same event; however, your friend observes it unaffectedly while you observe it with anger. Intuitively, you are somehow "better off" than your friend. As the main difference between the two of you is your friend's lack of emotional experience, this is plausibly what accounts for it. However, the question is what it precisely is about the emotional experience in virtue of which you are better off than your friend. We will get to that, but before that let us fill in some details. First, we can assume that the unemotional person does not lack a notional understanding of the action as injustice. The person might very well know the action to be unjust and even have a clear grasp of the properties in virtue of which it is unjust. In this regard, the emotional person is not better off than the unemotional person, and yet the latter is worse off in some other regard, the nature of which remains to be determined. Second, this intuition pump does not require us to assume that the unemotional person is either in principle unable to react emotionally to this injustice or has as a matter of fact never reacted emotionally to an injustice before. All we need to stipulate is that the person does not react emotionally to this injustice here and now. Third, notice that a case such as this one is all too common. For example, think about how often you learn about an event via the media that you (correctly) judge to be a case of injustice without being concomitantly moved in an emotional way whatsoever. So, this intuition pump certainly does not stipulate an otherworldly or mysterious case.

What this case, then, tries to convey is that "*when* we feel in accordance with our (correct) evaluative judgements, we seem to be better off in some way" (cf. Ballard, 2021, p. 115). In his article "The Epistemic Significance of Emotional Experience" (2021), Brian Ballard uses an intuition pump like the one I presented to examine the relationship between emotions and

evaluative judgements within the framework of "sentimentalist realism", i.e., the view that emotions play a significant role in the epistemology of value, in that they disclose values that exist independently of our minds (cf. 2021, p. 113). Ballard argues first that the benefit provided by emotional experience is of an epistemic kind, showing how various commonly proposed non-epistemic notions fail to capture the sense in which the unemotional person is worse off. The following question, then, is about the nature of the epistemic good furnished by emotional experience. Ballard considers four influential proposals and argues that none of these accounts fully succeeds in explaining the distinctive epistemic good of emotion. While I cannot go into his discussion in detail, the upshot he arrives at is that all the usual candidates are such that "those goods are, in principle, attainable without emotion" (Ballard, 2021, p. 121). Let me briefly mention these four accounts before introducing the only proposal Ballard deems successful, which is that *emotions acquaint us with values*.

First, he rejects as an explanation of the epistemic good provided by emotional experience the conception of emotions as necessary for the acquisition of evaluative concepts. While an emotion may indeed be necessary for us to acquire a corresponding evaluative concept, this does not mean it is required anytime we use such a concept in judgment. "The fact that experiencing emotions was at one point required for value concepts does not explain why it deepens or enhances judgment when we experience those emotions again" (Ballard, 2021, p. 117). Second, against theories of emotion that emphasize how emotions allow us to detect patterns of salience among the (potential) objects of attention in our environment, enhancing our ability to attend to the features relevant to making correct evaluative judgements, Ballard argues that, "while having the right emotions may help us attend to the relevant evaluative features, it is not *required* for so attending" (ibid.). Remember that your unemotional friend was able to attend to all the relevant features of the unjust event you observed and, on this basis, formed the correct evaluative belief of it being unjust. Third, Ballard thinks that theories according to which emotions justify evaluative beliefs on the model of perception fail, since besides emotions there may be other entirely non-emotional ways of forming evaluative beliefs while sharing all the epistemically relevant features of perception (cf. 2021, p. 118). So,

> if the epistemic benefits of emotional experience derive merely from its perceptual features, then non-emotional forms of evaluative perception will in principle provide the same exact epistemic benefits. But this is a problem

> for two reasons. First, many proponents of the perceptual theory hold that emotions provide epistemic benefits that are not otherwise attainable. (…) Second, (…) merely intellectual states do not provide the epistemic benefit that emotions do, even when the intellectual states share the perceptual features of emotion. (Ballard, 2021, p. 118)

This theory, then, fails to fully explain the epistemic significance of emotional experience. Fourth, Ballard rejects as an explanation those conceptions according to which emotions promote evaluative understanding by motivating the search for reasons. Suppose a (seemingly) dangerous situation elicits fear in you. The role of fear, on this account, is that it motivates you to determine whether there is genuine danger and, if so, why. However, the problem with this view is that it accords only an instrumental function to emotions and thus makes them dispensable: "Emotions are epistemically beneficial because of the results they tend to produce. Those results, however, can be achieved without emotions" (Ballard, 2021, p. 120).

For Ballard, then, the only view that avoids the problems all the other accounts face is the one Roberts and Wood (2007) hold, according to which emotional experience acquaints us with values. This is because calm reflection cannot acquaint us with values. While we can learn *about* value properties or *that* they are instantiated, unemotional reflection does not bring us into contact, i.e., acquaint us, with those objects or properties themselves. It is important to notice the contrast between being acquainted with a value concept which was acquired with the aid of emotions at some point and being presently acquainted with the corresponding properties. Recall our thought experiment again. You and your friend may believe all the same propositions about the cat. While your friend may be perfectly acquainted with the concept of injustice and able to evaluatively judge something to be just or unjust, the fact that he was not emotionally moved by the cat getting kicked like a football means that he was not acquainted *right then* with the concrete way in which this cat was treated unjustly. As Roberts and Wood put it, the unemotional observer

> does not appreciate the injustice, feel it or perceive it as the nasty thing it is. She has a notional understanding of the action as an injustice, but in a moral or spiritual sense there is something she's not 'getting.' Thus the emotion is a peculiar and indispensible vehicle of knowing something, and the kind of knowledge in question is acquaintance. (Roberts and Wood, 2007, p. 53)

Let us stop here for a moment. Drawing on Roberts and Wood, Ballard argues that the epistemic benefit emotions provide is best explained as a feature of their acquainting us with values. However, Ballard does not provide an answer to the question how exactly emotions achieve this. In virtue of which mechanism do emotions acquaint us with values? What Ballard seems to ignore, is that Roberts and Wood, in the very next sentence following the above quote, write that "[e]motional acquaintance of this sort is perception which is not sense perception" (2007, p. 53). The problem with Ballard's argument, then, is this: He criticizes various theories of emotions as incapable of explaining the epistemic benefit associated with emotions, but his own explanation remains incomplete. He tells us that emotions acquaint us with values, but he does not tell us how. And while Ballard dismisses accounts of emotions as perceptions, it is precisely as a form of perception in which Roberts and Wood characterize emotional acquaintance. Thus, even if Ballard was correct in dismissing the various accounts of emotions he discusses as explanations of an emotion's epistemic benefit, his own suggested explanation is incomplete. To a certain extent, he acknowledges this himself, writing: "Much more needs to be done, to fully explore this view. Especially, we must ask: *In virtue of what does emotional experience provide this acquaintance with value*?" (Ballard, 2021, p. 122). But he admits that he "cannot propose an account here", vaguely pointing out that "the phenomenal character of an emotion somehow serves to acquaint us with value" (ibid.). But what if, pace Ballard, conceiving of emotional acquaintance with values in analogy to perception, such as Roberts & Wood as well as Döring do, can account for this phenomenology? One plausible reason, why Ballard does not consider this, is that he thinks there is a "general explanatory challenge for the perceptual theory: The theory in its extant versions is unable to fully explain the epistemic significance of emotional experience" (2021, p. 118). The reason he believes this is because, while "[e]motions may be a form of evaluative perception, […] there may be other forms of evaluative perception as well, or perhaps ways of forming evaluative beliefs that share all the epistemically relevant features of perception. Some of these might be entirely non-emotional" (ibid.). Ballard is skeptical of perception-theories because he thinks they are unable to account for the epistemic benefit proper to emotions, since other *non*-emotional forms of evaluative perception, sharing the same epistemically relevant features of perception, would, in principle, provide the same exact epistemic benefits. As non-emotional, purely intellectually evaluative perceptions actually do not provide these benefits, as Ballard tries to show with a number of examples,

perception-theories fail to account for the epistemic benefit proper to emotions. This is Ballard's argument in a nutshell. The reason it is not valid, however, is that Ballard fails to acknowledge that perception-theories of emotions, such as, for example, Döring's, conceive of emotions as inherently *affective* evaluative perceptions. The crucial point, thus, is not to construe emotions simply as evaluative perceptions, which Ballard does, as this would indeed allow, in principle, for the possibility of accounting for the knowledge gained by them in alternative, entirely non-emotional ways. Döring conceives of emotions as *affective* perceptions. Emotions are evaluative perceptions, but it is crucial to see that their mode of evaluation is *affective*. Hence, as Döring writes, it is not the case that "emotions can be reduced to perceptual evaluations. An evaluation can be present while the emotion is absent. […] What distinguishes the emotion and makes it an affective perception is its feeling dimension, which is also called its 'affect'. […] an emotion necessarily involves a certain affect" (2003, p. 223). While emotions may be conceived of in analogy with perceptions, their representational content remains underdetermined by this analogy, as Döring and Peacocke point out it (cf. 2002, p. 95). They basically forestall Ballard's criticism by acknowledging that one may, for example, perceive a snake as dangerous without an accompanying fear of the snake (ibid.). What distinguishes such a fear from sensual perception is the former's constitutive affective dimension (ibid.). It is precisely this affective quality which accounts for the epistemic benefit or the moral knowledge, as Ballard and Döring call it respectively, that emotions afford. Because of this, Ballard's claim that emotions' epistemic benefit is due to their acquainting us with values does not conflict with Döring's account but can rather be integrated by the latter. It could be argued that emotions as affective perceptions acquaint us with values. Döring leaves open the question whether moral values are accessible only by a route that essentially involves the emotions (the "constitutive view") or whether emotions only make it easier to arrive at a moral judgement that one could, in principle, have arrived at without the contribution of an emotion (the "facilitative view"), so her framework allows for both options (cf. 2003, pp. 229f). Thus, if Ballard wants to defend a view that is not untypical of virtue theories, namely that emotions afford an epistemic benefit that could otherwise not be attained, then this is a view that can be held on the basis of Döring's conceptual groundwork.

To conclude, in this chapter I have highlighted some important features of the concept of emotions that the account of shame I will develop presupposes. I have given a brief sketch of

how the relation between emotions, judgements and moral agency has been conceived of in Hume's internalism as well as of some problems this theory and its externalist counterpart in its classical form face. Presenting Sabine Döring's account of emotions as affective perceptions, I have indicated that newer hybrid evaluative-feeling theories are able to evade these problems, accounting for emotions' justificatory as well as explanatory role concerning (moral) actions. I have emphasized that emotions' non-inferential relation to judgements may lead to productive conflicts between the two. In such cases, one may be justified in taking the emotion at face value, as it may be the judgement that gets things wrong. Furthermore, I have defended Döring's account from an argument that purports to show that perception theories of emotion cannot account for the epistemic benefit afforded by emotions, suggesting that Döring's account is immune to this criticism.

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2. The Two Sides of Shame

2.1. Shame as a Morally Destructive Emotion

In the previous chapter I have suggested that conceiving of emotions as affective perceptions can account for the ethical knowledge that emotional experience affords. This insight will support and make more plausible my account of shame as a way of *seeing*, which I will provide in the fifth chapter. In the present chapter, I turn to a discussion of shame's ambiguous status with regards to morality. As the philosopher Krista Thomason puts it, shame is a "Jekyll-And-Hyde emotion with two faces" (2018, p. 1). Shame has both a positive and a negative face. Not only will I defend shame's positive face, but I will also counter the pessimistic view on shame, according to which the morally progressive thing would be to get rid of it, by showing how some of the most noteworthy philosophical accounts of shame have pointed out that shame is central to the structure of subjecthood, so that getting rid of it is not a viable path in the first place. But first let us start with having a look at shame's negative face.

As Thomason writes, the occasions for feeling shame are manifold:

> We might feel shame when we fail to live up to our ideals, but we also feel shame about being low class or uneducated. We feel shame about being ugly. We feel shame about being seen naked, performing bodily functions, masturbating and having sex. Victims of violence and abuse feel shame about their victimization, people feel shame when they struggle with mental illness and addiction, and people who are disabled feel shame about their disabilities. We feel shame about things that seem to have nothing to do with our moral character, and we also feel shame mostly in front of other people. (Thomason, 2018, p. 2)

Although these cases appear quite heterogeneous, one may usefully categorize them into instances of "identity" or "image" shame, on the one hand, and "moral" shame, on the other hand (cf. Aaltola, 2017; 2021). As an example of image shame, consider the following case. You are listening to an online conference. As there is no need for you to switch on your camera, you do not bother dressing up. Instead, you are sitting in front of your computer wearing a combination of your beloved worn-out, but comfortable, sweatpants and a T-shirt – clothes you only wear at home alone. You walk away to get yourself a glass of water. As you come back to your desk, some of the participants seem to be suppressing a giggle. In this very moment you

notice that your camera has been switched on all the while. You flush, as you realize that you have unintentionally afforded them a view of yourself, wearing your old, worn-out sweatpants.

Following John Rawls' notion of "natural shame" (1999, p. 389), this kind of shame, which comprises shame about nudity, sex, one's class status, or one's appearance, is variously labeled "heteronomous" shame (Calhoun, 2004; Mason, 2009), "primitive" shame (Kekes, 1988; Nussbaum, 2004), or "group-centered" shame (Maibom, 2010) (cf. Thomason, 2018, p. 28). What makes cases like these instances of image shame rather than moral shame, Aaltola points out, is that it is not our moral self that is at stake here. Instead, "it springs from how others see oneself as a failed creature, and hence signals the possibility of social exclusion, an inferior status, and loss of dignity and power" (Aaltola, 2017, p. 268). Whereas image shame concerns one's social appearance or one's status as perceived by others, moral shame concerns one's moral character or moral self. In the case I describe above, one might say you have failed to comply to a certain norm according to which one does not dress in a certain way in a particular social context. But this does not make you a morally flawed person. This is because social life is regulated by norms not all of which are of a moral nature and yet to flout them may still constitute an occasion for shame. Additionally, there are violations of standards, such as how we look, how fit we are, how successful we are, that have nothing to do with morality and still provide occasions for shame and shaming – just think of body-shame as an example (cf. Dolezal, 2015). This distinction between image shame and moral shame is matched by a distinction between two corresponding kinds of shaming: non-agential shaming and agential shaming. What is characteristic about the former is that it does not involve holding the target morally responsible:

> Agential shaming involves holding the target morally responsible for some act or characteristic (i.e. blaming her) and inviting an audience to do so, too. Non-agential shaming is not a form of blaming, because it does not involve holding the target morally responsible. Rather, it likely involves the expression of an objective attitude like disgust towards the target, combined with an invitation to others to express similar attitudes. (McDonald, 2020, p. 24)

This focus on responsibility in case of agential shaming is likely to be due to the fact that what is at stake in these cases is precisely one's moral agency. As Aaltola writes: "Within the state of moral shame, we are not so much preoccupied with how we appear, but rather on the moral

content of our actions, and the way in which that content expresses our identity" (2017, p. 267). While moral shame concerns the moral content of our actions, image shame often concerns features of ourselves that we cannot reasonably be held responsible for. A person may be shamed for the natural size of their ears or for the biological fact that they are menstruating, but both of these features do not depend on a choice. It is a long-standing and rather uncontroversial position in philosophy and law that a person can be held responsible for an action only if they are free to choose and to act otherwise. If this is true, then there are many circumstances in which people experience shame or are shamed for things they are not responsible for. Not everything for which we are shamed is under our control.

It is this aspect of (image) shame which, to a large extent, gives shame its bad credit. From this perspective, shame appears to be an instrument of oppression, which those who belong to the majority or to a predominant group can yield against minorities or people who, for whatever reason, do not comply to what is defined as normal. Among other things, this is one of the reasons that leads many thinkers to adopt a pessimistic view on shame, according to which shame is a morally destructive emotion. According to this view,

> [s]hame has no positive role to play in our lives, and more than likely it will lead to unnecessary pain for the person who feels it. Advocates of the pessimistic view typically think we ought to do our best to get over shame. This task may be difficult if not impossible, but it would be better all things considered if we could manage it. Simply put, the pessimistic view holds that shame has no moral value and we would be better off without it. (Thomason, 2018, p. 127)

One can arrive at this conclusion via different routes. Thomason points out that there are two main versions: first, some philosophers argue that shame is morally immature, that it is primitive or backwards and thus something we should ultimately overcome. Second, some philosophers claim shame is corrupt from the start in that it is always unhealthy, leading to (self-)destructive or violent behavior (ibid.). I will present these versions in turn.

As Thomason writes, one of the most-well known arguments against shame stems from John Kekes. According to him, most forms of shame are primarily concerned with other people's opinion about us, hence shame's supposedly heteronomous nature. As such, shame holds us back, since "we are beholden to the opinions of others in ways that actually hinder our moral development" (Thomason, 2018, p. 127). While shame is useful in making us aware of our

shortcomings regarding standards or ideals that we deem important, it never does that without making us feel bad ourselves. Herein lies a serious danger of shame, according to Kekes:

> Shame does not merely alert us to our shortcomings, it makes us feel deficient on account of them. This feeling of deficiency, coming from such an unimpeachable source, is likely to be self-destructive. It tends to undermine our confidence, verve, and courage to navigate life's treacherous waters. Thus shame threatens to diminish our most important resource. It jeopardizes the possibility of improvement by weakening the only agency capable of affecting it. (1988, p. 282).

While shame, or rather the capacity to feel it, does not come without its moral benefits, Kekes goes on to argue that "whatever value there is in shame can be achieved in less self-destructive ways" (ibid.).

Martha Nussbaum's rejection of shame as a morally progressive emotion is for similar reasons to Kekes'. Following Freud, she argues that shame is rooted in primary narcissism according to which we feel ourselves "omnipotent" and experience shame whenever we realize that we are not the center of the world (Nussbaum, 2004, pp. 186f). As human beings, we are vulnerable and unto ourselves never complete. Shame as a sense of failure to attain some ideal state is then closely connected to our inevitable narcissistic failure at being complete and self-sufficient. Such a link between narcissism and shame has also been demonstrated empirically (cf. Gramzow and Tangney, 1992). Ideally, a child in the course of its development is given the feeling by their parents that having needs is okay and natural and that other people have legitimate needs and a right to live a life of their own. As a result, the child will renounce their demand for complete control. However, this is only the "ideal story", while "the mark of early narcissism on human life is deep" (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 188). Accordingly, Nussbaum writes that "the primitive shame that is connected to infantile omnipotence and (inevitable) narcissistic failure lurks around in our lives, only partially overcome by the later development of the child's own separateness and autonomy" (2004, p. 185). While primitive shame is in some sense necessary and inevitable, as parents and as a society we do have some degree of control over the damage shame does, she argues. In any case, primitive shame is never constructive, according to Nussbaum.

So much for shame's alleged backwardness. The second major line of criticism points out shame's (self-)destructive aspects and its link to violent and aggressive behaviour. As

Thomason writes: “What is perhaps most troubling is that shame seems to bear a connection to violence. People who feel shame sometimes engage in self-destructive behavior, and they sometimes engage in aggressive behavior toward others” (2018, p. 2). This link between shame and violence has also been noted by Nussbaum, who points out that shame often causes expressions of “narcissistic rage” (2004, p. 209). And, as Thomason writes, empirical work in psychology likewise demonstrates a link between shame and aggression or shame and rage (2018, p. 51). For example, Tangney et al. found that “shame-proneness was consistently positively correlated with anger arousal, suspiciousness, resentment, irritability, a tendency to blame others for negative events, and indirect (but not direct) expressions of hostility” (1992, p. 673). Similar observations have been made in clinical psychology (Lewis, 1971; Miller, 1985; Morrison, 1989; Lewis, 1992). Moreover, further indicators of shame’s poor consequences, seemingly disqualifying it as a constructive moral emotion, can be found in its connection to various mental disorders and poor psychological wellbeing. I have already discussed shame’s link with narcissism. But as Aaltola (2021, p.10) points out, shame has also been correlated with eating disorders (Troop et al., 2008), depression (Andrews et al., 2002), anxiety disorders, trauma-related anxiety, and dissociation (Irwin, 1998; Tangney, 1995; Gilbert, 2003; Pinto-Gouveia and Matos, 2011).

All of this makes it hard to see how shame could ever fulfill the function of a morally constructive emotion. Arguably, part of the explanation for the fact that shame is rarely “reparatory” can be found in its global nature. Here, shame’s distinction from guilt is illuminating: While guilt is about what we (fail to) do, shame is about our identity. Since guilt is associated with specific acts, its scope is locally restricted and comes with the promise of reparation. Shame, on the other hand, is related to the self, and the more it is connected to deep-seated aspects of the self that are hard to change, the less likely it appears that one can make good for one’s failings. As Aaltola writes, shame “concerns the whole of the self, not the specific actions that the self takes, and is thereby ‘global’ rather than ‘local’” (2017, p. 250). Restitution in the case of guilt is relatively easy in comparison to shame, as changing the whole of the self is not possible. As a consequence, when one’s self is under global critique and one’s identity is at stake, a common strategy is to engage in self-defensive behaviours like hiding, avoidance, self-blame or self-aggression (cf. Allpress et al., 2014, p. 1271). As Donald L. Nathanson has argued, „almost any affect feels better than shame. If we are to convert the

experience of shame into something less punishing, we must develop some group of defensive scripts that foster such a transition" (1992, p. 312). Nathanson distinguishes four such defensive scripts or affect management systems, namely "withdrawal", "attack self", "avoidance", and "attack other", and what they have in common is that in each case "shame affect is experienced differently – the *purpose* of the strategy is to make it feel different" (ibid.). While these mechanisms help us in avoiding the experience of shame, they are, on the other hand, often regarded as causing negative moral outcomes:

> Shame is, according to this construal, thereby a morally destructive emotion. It pushes people towards defensive positions, where they 1) seek to avoid those who criticise them; 2) become irrationally prone towards denial, as if they could not hear the moral arguments offered to them; 3) withdraw from normative engagement, thereby seeking to cover or hide their ashamed self; and 4) even resort to hostile, angry defences, filled with fury and revenge. (Aaltola, 2017, p. 250)

2.2. Shame as a Morally Constructive Emotion

2.2.1. Losing Shame, Losing Morals

As should be clear by now, a defense of shame faces serious challenges. In order to counter the pessimistic view, one needs to show "how shame can have moral value – why we would not be better off if we got over it", as Thomason puts it (2018, p. 145). In this section, I will argue that shame is morally constructive in two senses of the word constructive. On the one hand, it is literally an integral part of our morality without which the latter would not be what it is. As such, shame is a constructive constituent of morality. On the other hand, it is constructive in the sense of having positive as opposed to negative or destructive aspects and consequences for our moral life. These two understandings of "constructiveness" must be kept separate, although they are not completely unrelated. The fact that X is integral to Y in the sense of being constructive of it does not necessarily entail that X is beneficial to Y. In other words, the fact that shame is an essential component of human morality does not imply that shame is morally beneficial. An advocate of the pessimistic view on shame might accept the claim that shame is central to morality and yet argue that we would be better off without it. But the problem with this argument, I will show, is that it wrongly presupposes that we could get rid of shame, as it

were, while leaving the rest of our moral infrastructure intact and unaffected. I will argue that shame does not stand to our disposition in this way. In other words: to lose shame would mean to lose morals. And this is a conclusion that the pessimist about shame cannot readily accept. In this way, the two senses of moral constructiveness are connected: One might say that shame's central position in our moral infrastructure proves to be beneficial in that much of what we consider morally valuable is contingent on it. To dispose of shame would mean to throw overboard, along with it, much of what we hold morally valuable. Thus, shame's positive aspects and consequences are an indirect consequence of its central place in our moral infrastructure. As Thomason has pointed out, it is two things in particular that the shameless person lacks: 1) the recognition of points of view other than their own and 2) an acceptance of the limits of one's self-conception (2018, pp. 152ff, 158ff). Both of these features are of central relevance for morality. And both are contingent on a liability to shame such that to do away with it would mean to lose two essential building blocks of morality, which the proponent of the pessimistic view on shame cannot want to accept. As Thomason writes:

> I want to suggest that what is bad about shamelessness is that it reveals someone's failure to recognize the limitations of her own self-conception. Shame arises because some feature of my identity that I do not fully see as part of my self- conception becomes prominent or salient to me in a way that it was not before. Sometimes that experience is brought about by my interactions with others, and sometimes it comes about because I suddenly see myself in a different light. The things that cause us shame disrupt or shake our sense of ourselves. The fact that my sense of myself can be shaken in this way means that I do not see my own self-conception as the final authority on who I am. On my view, the shameless person suffers from a kind of imperviousness. We might say that the shameless person never feels self-conscious. Having no liability to shame means that the authority of my own self- conception is never called into question, disrupted, or shaken. (2018, p. 149)

So, the person liable to shame has two features that are of moral significance, namely, first, the recognition of another person's point of view, and, second, an acceptance of the limitations of their self-conception. Let me discuss them in turn. As Thomason argues, we need a liability to shame before we can even internalize another point of view and take seriously the demands of others (cf. 2018, p. 153). This is because a liability to shame allows me to give practical weight to views other than my own, i.e., to recognize the moral *authority* of others (cf. ibid.). I am not the center of the world unlike I am convinced in the phase of primary narcissism. To recognize

that other people have legitimate points of view as well as demands on me, is to respect those others as moral agents, Thomason argues (cf. 2018, p. 155). Thus, she writes: “Our liability to shame is partially constitutive of our respect for others as moral agents” (ibid.). Thomason does not claim that shame constitutes respect for others, but that we are liable to shame, *because* we are able to respect others (cf. 2018, p. 156). Shame is part of the same set of features of our moral psychology that give rise to respect for others. This is precisely the reason why shame cannot easily be disposed of, since, as Thomason writes, “our liability to respect will come with a liability to feelings of shame, and trying to get over shame would not leave the respect we have for others untouched. My claim is that a liability to respect and a liability to shame are two sides of one coin” (ibid.).

One can better understand Thomason’s point, if one keeps in mind that she defends an account of moral emotions, according to which what makes an emotion moral, is that it is constitutive of moral commitments, features of moral psychology or of moral agency – in short of features of moral life (cf. 2018, pp. 146ff). According to Thomason, it is the third section of Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* (1999), where one can find the best statement of this account of moral emotions. As Thomason puts it, according to Rawls, our moral emotional life does not come “piecemeal” (2018, p. 147). Moral emotions are always tied to non-moral emotions, such that “we could not do away with them without at the same time eliminating certain natural attitudes” (427). Thus, Rawls writes:

> One may say, then, that a person who lacks a sense of justice, and who would never act as justice requires except as self-interest and expediency prompt, not only is without ties of friendship, affection, and mutual trust, but is incapable of experiencing resentment and indignation. He lacks certain natural attitudes and moral feelings of a particularly elementary kind. Put another way, one who lacks a sense of justice lacks certain fundamental attitudes and capacities included under the notion of humanity. (Rawls, 1999, p. 428)

Importantly, for Rawls this holds true even when those emotions are negative ones like shame: “Now the moral feelings are admittedly unpleasant, in some extended sense of unpleasant; but there is no way for us to avoid a liability to them without disfiguring ourselves” (Rawls, 1999, p. 428). Therefore Thomason, drawing on Rawls, argues that “getting over feelings of shame would require (in Rawls’ words) ‘disfiguring’ the moral psychological mechanisms that are also behind our ability to respect others” (2018, p. 157). The consequence is that, as long as we

are committed to accountability to other moral agents, we cannot but be committed to be liable to feelings of shame (cf. 2018, p. 158).

As I already said, there is a second aspect of the moral value of shame, which is that it marks an acceptance of the limitations of our self-conception. Shame, in this way, is, as Thomason says, constitutive of a "*wide sense of self*", which is part of a moral commitment to humility (cf. 2018, pp. 158f). The fact that shame is intrinsically connected to humility can be seen in the fact that shamelessness is generally regarded as a vice. Shame is the necessary flipside to seeing my own self-conception as open to challenge by other moral agents. "We accept that we are not fully in control of who we are and that we may not be the best judges of ourselves. Seeing ourselves in this wide way is a mark of moral maturity, and in order [to] see ourselves this way, we have to accept some degree of uncertainty about our self-conceptions. A liability to shame is partially constitutive of that uncertainty" (Thomason, 2018, pp. 161f). The lesson we can draw from this is that shame is morally valuable in spite of its dangers, because we would not be better off without it; "our liability to it is an important part of moral life" (2018, p. 162).

2.2.2. Losing Shame, Losing Subjecthood

However, there is a further reason why we cannot say that we would be better off without shame: It is not just that we could not get rid of it, without disfiguring our moral emotional life, but that we cannot get rid of it, without disfiguring the kind of beings that we are. Shame is not just an essential constituent of our *moral* infrastructure, but it is arguably even more profound than that. Some philosophers in the tradition of continental philosophy, first and foremost Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas and Giorgio Agamben, have ascribed to shame an *ontological* dimension or significance beyond or beneath its function for morality but connected to it. I will discuss these thinkers in turn, arguing that what their accounts of shame reveal, is that we cannot say that we would be better off without shame, for the reason that shame is so deeply embedded in human subjectivity that it does not make sense to conceive of human subjectivity lacking the capacity for shame.

Thomason defines shame as a feeling of one's self-conception being overshadowed or defined by some feature of our identity (cf. 2018, p. 87). In his famous description of the voyeur,

spying through a keyhole, Sartre has given the exemplary account of shame construed in this way. As I am looking through the keyhole, I suddenly hear footsteps behind me in the corridor and become aware of the fact that I am being watched myself. The other person's look on me determines me in a certain way; it objectifies me. And this objectification by another subject means that I am not just who I think I am, or who I would like to see myself as. The look of the Other makes me an object for them that I therefore *am*. Shame is precisely the realization that I *am* this object: "[S]hame […] is shame of *self*; it is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging" (Sartre, 1978, p. 261). Shame provides me with an outside which is mine, insofar as it is part of my identity as being-for-the-Other. Yet, at the same time, it is not mine, since, as an object for the Other's look, it inevitably escapes me. The outside is mine, but only insofar as it marks the limit of my own self-determination. In a Hegelian manner, Sartre conceives of shame as the admission of the limitation of my own freedom through the Other's. Hence, he writes: "I can be ashamed only as my freedom escapes me in order to become a *given* object" (261). As I indicated, Sartre's account of shame can be reframed in Thomason's formula of shame as a feeling of one's self-conception being overshadowed by some feature of one's identity. In shame I experience myself as determined by some feature which is part of my identity but which I cannot admit or accept as such. Crucially, it is not that I cannot admit or accept this feature as (part of) myself just because my self-conception excludes it. This would mean that shame is entirely contingent on aspects of my individual psychological make-up. Sartre's account of shame does not hinge on whether, as a matter of fact, I am at peace with my identity, as it were, or whether I agree with the Other's judgement of myself. Let us assume that I have spied through the keyhole motivated by jealousy, as Sartre suggests. I might disavow my own jealousy at first, even though I am aware that the other person might have every reason to call me jealous. Let us imagine that my jealousy intensifies to the point where, after some time, I can no longer hide from myself the fact that I am indeed jealous and that I have spied through the keyhole for reasons of jealousy. Moreover, I have come to terms with this trait and have accepted it as part of my self. I might even be ready to admit that the other person was right in their judgement about myself and that I should have accepted it right away. In this case, my self-conception no longer excludes a feature of my identity that previously overshadowed it. I have managed to realign my self-conception with my identity by integrating a formerly rejected part of the latter into the former. Now, let us

assume that there exists a person whose self-conception is infinitely tolerant with regards to the features that happen to make up their identity. This person's self-conception is so shallow that it will be uprooted by the slightest resistance it encounters and they will try to accommodate their self-conception fully to their identity whenever there looms a conflict between them. If Sartre's account of shame would hinge on whether, as a matter of fact, one is at peace with oneself or whether one agrees with the Other's judgement of oneself, then it would follow that there could be a world with no shame in it. A world, populated by people lacking a profound sense of self, of the kind I have just sketched, would be a world where people might never experience shame. However, Sartre's account of shame clearly rules out such a possibility, because the possibility of shame is a corollary of the structure of intersubjectivity as such. As Lisa Guenther puts it: "For Sartre, then, shame is not just one emotion among others; it is the fundamental mood of intersubjectivity, just as anguish is the fundamental mood of freedom" (2011a, p. 26). With the existence of another subject capable of rendering me an object, I cease being-for-myself. As being-for-the-Other, I cease to be self-identical, as it were. At the same time, in a typically Hegelian manner, this dialectic is what allows self-consciousness to emerge in the first place, since "it is self-consciousness in general, which is recognized in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself. The mediator is the Other. The Other appears along with myself since self-consciousness is identical with itself by means of the exclusion of every Other" (Sartre, 1978, p. 236). Shame, according to Sartre, is precisely the realization of the fact that my being is, in principle, never fully mine and that I can never fully be myself without the Other. Shame in this sense is what Sartre calls "pure shame", as it needs to be distinguished from any particular occurrence or episode of shame:

> Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being an object; that is, of *recognizing myself* in this degraded, fixed, and dependent being which I am for the Other. Shame is the feeling of an *original fall*, not because of the fact that I may have committed this or that particular fault but simply that I have 'fallen' into the world in the midst of things and that I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am. (Sartre, 1978, pp. 288f).

For this reason, pure shame could also be conceived of as a transcendental form of shame, the condition of possibility for any particular occurrence of shame.

Even if Sartre's account of shame localizes it primarily on the level of ontology, the conceptual underpinnings of an ethics of shame are at least implicit. Immediately before Sartre introduces his analysis of the voyeur, he claims that the look of the Other reveals to me my bodily vulnerability: "What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that *there is someone there*; it is that I am vulnerable, that I have a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I can not in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense – in short, that I am *seen*. Thus, the look is first an intermediary which refers from me to myself" (259). More so than in Sartre, however, it is in Levinas where shame assumes a moral dimension. Levinas' oeuvre can be read as the attempt to dethrone ontology and to put ethics in its deserved place. It is a project of establishing "ethics as first philosophy" (Levinas, 1989). For Levinas, this is impossible without restoring the status of the other as Other. Criticizing the totalizing tendencies of traditional Western ontology, such as the correlation between knowledge and being, the metaphysics of presence, and the supremacy of the Ego, Levinas argues that such an ontology does not allow the Other to appear in its radical alterity. As Levinas writes: "The correlation between *knowledge*, understood as disinterested contemplation, and *being*, is, according to our philosophical tradition, the very site of intelligibility, the occurrence of meaning *(sens)*" (1989, p. 76). Given the disinterested and sovereign nature of the thinker and the Aristotelian ideal of the *bios theoretikos*, knowledge is enacted in what Levinas calls a "*bonne conscience*", assuming the character of an unbothered grasping or an appropriation that, in presenting to itself the object of knowledge, eliminates its otherness (cf. ibid.). "Knowledge is re-presentation, a return to presence, and nothing may remain *other* to it" (ibid.). When Levinas, alluding to Hegel, states that the "labour of thought wins out over things and men", this must be understood in a practical fashion (1989, p. 78). At least with the birth of modern science, humans begin to act out their self-declared sovereignty over nature in often devastating ways. Nature becomes the object of science's interrogations and is treated as a reservoir of resources to be exploited. With capitalism, lacking any internal limits, the world itself is turned into an object for total appropriation. Levinas puts it this way: "Modern man persists in his being as a sovereign who is merely concerned to maintain the powers of his sovereignty. Everything that is possible is permitted. In this way the experience of Nature and Society would gradually get the better of any exteriority" (1989, p. 78).

Under this *bonne conscience* of the *ego*, however, Levinas traces the operation of a non-intentional consciousness – a duration that the ego is subjected to, and which is "passive like time passing and ageing me without my intervening" (1989, p. 79). It is a "'consciousness' that signifies not so much a knowledge of oneself as something that effaces presence or makes it discreet" (1989, p. 80). Levinas calls this non-intentional consciousness a form of "*mauvaise conscience*" (1989, p. 81). It is a bad conscience because it literally calls into question the ego's assertion of my right to exist. With it, "the very justice of the position within being is questioned, a position which asserts itself with intentional thought, knowledge and a grasp of the here and now. What one sees in this questioning is being as mauvaise conscience; to be open to question, but also to questioning, to have to respond" (Levinas, 1989, p. 82). Famously, on Levinas' account it is the face of the Other which reveals an infinite demand, putting me in a position where I cannot but respond. I am guiltlessly responsible before the Other, to the point where my mere existence demands a justification.

> One has to respond to one's right to be, not by referring to some abstract and anonymous law, or judicial entity, but because of one's fear for the Other. My being-in-the-world or my 'place in the sun', my being at home, have these not also been the usurpation of spaces belonging to the other man whom I have already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world; are they not acts of repulsing, excluding, exiling, stripping, killing? (Levinas, 1989, p. 82)

Thus, like Sartre, who sees in my being-for-the-Other first and foremost a limitation of my own freedom, Levinas's account of the face-to-face encounter reveals that my freedom and spontaneity is always already troubled by the Other. However, perhaps more than Sartre, Levinas sees in this limitation explicitly the origin of any ethical relationship: "It is in the laying down by the ego of its sovereignty (in its 'hateful' modality), that we find ethics" (1989, p. 85).

It is here, where shame comes into play. In *Totality and Infinity* (2007), Levinas argues contra Descartes that the idea of infinity has its origin beyond the subject. The idea of infinity cannot be separated from its production. It cannot be said that the idea of infinity is found in the subject, it does not proceed from the self, but it is rather revealed to myself as the infinite being of the absolutely Other. As Levinas puts it, the difference between the idea of totality and the idea of infinity is precisely that "the first is purely theoretical, while the second is moral" (2007, p. 83). The initial relation to the Other is not theoretical, it is one of desire: "[H]e is

desired in my shame" (2007, p. 84). While it is necessary to have "the idea of infinity, the idea of the perfect, as Descartes would say, in order to know one's own imperfection", Levinas claims that the "idea of the perfect is not an idea but desire; it is the welcoming of the Other, the commencement of moral consciousness, which calls into question my freedom" (ibid.).

While I do not have space to go into detail concerning Levinas' concept of desire here, the important point is that the Transcendence of the Other puts me in a relationship to that which exceeds consciousness, not just limiting my own freedom, but, by calling it into question and demanding its justification, making it meaningful. At the same time as it reveals the arbitrariness of my freedom, it reveals to me the moral quality of my freedom for the first time. It is no surprise, then, that shame is ambivalent, according to Levinas. Measuring myself against the perfection of infinity, according to Levinas, is "accomplished in shame where freedom at the same time is *discovered* in the consciousness of shame and is *concealed* in the shame itself" (2007, 84). Guenther nicely elucidates this ambivalence in the following way:

> At the very moment I am commanded not to murder, I appear to myself as both a murderer and a responsible subject. At the very moment my freedom is put in question, I discover both its violence and its power to intercede for others. Shame is Levinas' name for the radical ambivalence of this moment as a pivot-point between murder and ethics, between violence and goodness. Shame itself is neither good nor evil, but is rather the feeling of inescapable exposure to these alternatives posed by the face of the Other. (Guenther, 2011a, p. 33)

It is important to see that what is at stake in Levinas' concept of shame is both ethical and ontological. Shame, one might say, reveals precisely that ontology is always already subordinate to ethics. And just as Sartre's account of shame has shown, we can conclude from Levinas' account that we cannot say that we would be better off without shame. Shame, as discussed by Levinas, is the experience proper to the discovery of one's freedom being called into question by another's freedom, which does not simply limit my own freedom but endows it with meaning, by allowing me to take on responsibility for the Other's demand. We could go so far as to say that the sovereign subject, naively content in its *bonne conscience,* is nothing less than the paradigmatically shameless person. In other words, shame is inextricable from the Ego's discovery that it must not take its place in the sun for granted. Shame, for Levinas, marks the subject's entry into morality at the same time as it is the source of critical reflection,

knowledge, and reason. As Guenther puts it, "reason is no longer to be found in a faculty of the individual subject, but in the practice of *giving reasons* to an Other who puts me in question; knowledge is no longer the essential correlation of consciousness to a world, but the offering of a world that was hitherto mine to an Other who commands me to generalize my singular experience, to put my sensible affects in common by using concepts" (2011a, p. 31). Hence, Levinas writes:

> The welcoming of the Other is ipso facto the consciousness of my own injustice – the shame that freedom feels for itself. If philosophy consists in knowing critically, that is, in seeking a foundation for its freedom, in justifying it, it begins with conscience, to which the other is presented as the Other, and where the movement of thematization is inverted. But this inversion does not amount to 'knowing oneself' as a theme attended to by the Other, but rather in submitting oneself to an exigency, to a morality. (Levinas, 2007, p. 86)

At this point, it is worth noting, however, that for the early Levinas, shame is not yet bound up with the Other, but it is already my own solitary relation to myself, which provokes shame. In *On Escape* (2003), Levinas is not so much haunted by the demand the Other makes on me, but, as Lisa Guenther notes, by "the burden of my own existence, the irremissibility of having-to-be, and the impossibility of escaping to an 'otherwise than being'" (2011a, p. 29). Interestingly, shame, understood in this way, is the experience not of a *lack*, but of a surplus or an *excess*, that I am but which I cannot integrate. As Levinas puts it: "The fault consists not in the lack of propriety but almost in the very fact of having a body, of being there" (2003, p. 67). In this sense, shame appears to be not heteronomous, but autonomous: It does not depend on an audience, but it has its roots in myself – I, myself, am both the origin and the object of this shame. I cannot bear myself and yet I am tied to myself, unable to escape. At the same time, this means that shame does not arise in response to a perceived lack with regards to an ideal I fail to achieve. Shame, conceived of in this way, is not so much a moral than an ontological phenomenon (cf. 2003, p. 63). As Levinas writes: "What appears in shame is thus precisely the fact of being riveted to oneself, the radical impossibility of fleeing oneself to hide from oneself, the unalterably binding presence of the I to itself" (2003, p. 64). In shame, it is our intimacy, our presence to ourselves, that is shameful, such that what shame discovers, in the last instance, is "the being who *uncovers* himself" (2003, p. 65).

Levinas' early account of shame, thus, seems to anticipate – in its consequences – the two major theses about shame that Robert Pfaller develops in his most recent book, *Zwei Enthüllungen über die Scham* (2022). First, Pfaller argues against the traditional claim of shame's heteronomous nature, claiming instead that shame arises not upon being exposed, but rather only at the point where the illusion of innocence, enacted for the Big Other, can no longer be maintained. Second, he argues against the view that shame is a product of a discrepancy between the ego and the superego. I will briefly summarize both arguments in turn.

Shame is not heteronomous, since it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the occurrence of shame that another person knows about (and condemns) a shameful act or feature of mine (cf. 2022, p. 70). In support of the claim that shame may occur in the absence of another's knowledge of my misdeed, Pfaller refers to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (2004), where Freud points out the self-punitive effect of transgressing a taboo: "We have trustworthy stories of how any unwitting violation of one of these prohibitions is in fact automatically punished. An innocent wrong-doer, who may, for instance, have eaten a forbidden animal, falls into a deep depression, anticipates death and then dies in bitter earnest" (2004, p. 25). According to Pfaller, this suggests that the taboo-cultures that Freud analyzed were actually shame-cultures. As a second case in support of his thesis, Pfaller analyzes the well-known case recounted by Bronislaw Malinowski of a young Trobriand man who committed suicide after his amorous relationship to his girl cousin became known. Pfaller argues that this case, which is usually discussed in anthropology and philosophy as a paradigmatic example of the heteronomous structure of shame, is usually misinterpreted. Malinowski's report explicitly states that the community had already known and disapproved of the Trobriand man's incestuous relationship with his cousin before he committed suicide. What actually drove this man to his deed was that a rival of his made the relationship public (cf. 2022, p. 73). As Pfaller writes, the rival was not indiscrete with regards to a supposedly secret liaison, but he only told the community what they had been knowing all along. But why does this change anything? According to Pfaller, this can only be made sense of, if one understands that shame-cultures always come with an imperative of discretion concerning shameful acts or features. Thus, one does not point out the other person's blemish, but one mildly ignores it out of solidarity (cf. 2022, p. 74). Consequently, it is only when the illusion of ignorance that is staged for the Big Other can no longer be maintained that shame will strike:

> Therein lies the proof that cultures of shame are not heteronomous cultures: It is not the knowledge and disapproval of others, but the breaking down of an illusion maintained by all until then, that is the cause of the lethal effects of shame. Thus, it is not the other people who form the leadership in this supposedly heteronomous culture. It is someone else: namely the instance for which the as-if has been staged. (Pfaller, 2022, p. 82; my translation)

Pfaller’s second thesis is that shame is not the result of the superego’s criticism of the ego concerning the failure to meet an ideal (secondary narcissism), but that shame is the result of a regression into primary narcissism. Whereas secondary narcissism is about the relation between the ego to its ideals and to the superego, primary narcissism concerns a stage in the psychic development of the child, when it is the child’s Ego which is his or her own ideal (cf. 2022, p. 122). According to Lacan, every human being has to go through symbolic castration, which marks the subject’s entry into the symbolic order. Before that, in primary narcissism, one feels “whole” and omnipotent, the world appears familiar and as one’s own: I am the world and the world is I. Symbolic castration marks the step at which the world is distinguished into an inner and an outer world and the subject is constituted as an I in separation from the Other. Primary narcissism is thereby overcome by the Ego and for this reason the part of the subject Pfaller calls the “Unter-Ich” (Octave Mannoni’s “naïve observer”) admires the Ego. The Ego is “somebody”, it acts a character, for lack of a better word. For this reason, the “Unter-Ich” looks up to the Ego in admiration. But if the Ego appears to lose this advance over the “Unter-Ich” and its detachment from primary narcissism’s omnipotence, i.e., when the Ego appears to fall back into primary narcissism, then shame arises. Just as in Levinas’ early account of shame, shame is not a phenomenon of lack. It is not the result of a perceived lack of the Ego with regards to an Ego-ideal; it does not depend on a top-down view. It rather depends on an upward view – a view from the lower recesses of the psychic topology, Pfaller argues. From there, the “Unter-Ich” looks up to the Ego in admiration and pride, for it has its place in the symbolic order. And it is precisely when one falls out of the symbolic order that shame arises. This is why shame can be characterized as a phenomenon of excess, and not, as has often been the case, as bound of with a lack. As Pfaller writes: “The I of shame does not just perform poorly in a continued belonging to the symbolic order. But it falls out of it completely. As an *Unding*, it has no place among the objects of the world, not even a bad one” (2022, p. 123; my

translation). Thus, one experiences shame when feeling out of place. One recalls here an aphorism in Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* – one of the few passages that deal with shame explicitly –, in which he traces this phenomenon with the discernment characteristic of the great psychologist he was:

> *Habitual shame*. - Why do we feel shame when we are rendered something good and distinguishing which, as we put it, we 'have not deserved'? It seems to us that we have forced our way into a domain where we do not belong, from which we ought to be excluded, into a sanctuary or holy of holies, as it were, where our feet are forbidden to tread. Yet it is through the error of others that we have arrived there: and now we are overcome partly by fear, partly by reverence, partly by surprise; we know not whether we ought to flee or to enjoy the blessed moment and its undeserved advantages. Whenever we feel shame there exists a mystery which seems to have been desecrated, or to be in danger of desecration, through us; all *undeserved grace* engenders shame. (2005, p. 327).

Incidentally, this helps explain why we often feel shame not just when we are subject to negative attitudes or judgements, but when others direct positive attention to us. In fact, it may not just be negative or even positive attention but rather finding oneself in any kind of *exceptional position* that may give rise to shame as a fear of regress into primary narcissism, such as winning in sports, holding a speech, or singing or playing in front of an audience (cf. Pfaller, 2022, p. 124).

Unlike Sartre's and Levinas' accounts of shame, Pfaller's account does not ascribe to shame an immediately moral function – not a morally constructive one, at any rate. However, just as in the other two accounts, shame appears as an essential feature of human subjectivity. Keeping this in mind, it simply does not make sense to claim that we would be better off without shame. This is because shame is firmly and deeply rooted in the structure of human subjectivity. If shame were to drop out of the image, human subjectivity would drop out, too.

There is one more philosopher who, like the ones I have discussed, considers shame essential for the structure of subjectivity, namely Giorgio Agamben. His account of shame is developed in a reading of Primo Levi's reflections on Auschwitz. His argument is notoriously difficult to follow, engaging not just with Levi, but also with Heidegger, Bettelheim and Antelme, as well as alluding to the philosophical accounts of shame by Levinas and Benjamin, sadomasochism, Kantian auto-affection, poetics, linguistics, and more. I do not have space to go into a detailed

discussion of Agamben's account. This is not necessary, however, because his references all serve the purpose of tracing the subject's being consigned to something that cannot be assumed by it, namely the inhuman at its core.

Arguably, even more so than for the authors I have discussed, shame for Agamben, in the wake of Heidegger, is more than one affect among others. Rather, it is "an emotive tonality that traverses and determines his [man's, T.K.] whole Being. Shame is thus a kind of ontological sentiment that has its characteristic place in the encounter between man and Being" (1999, p. 106). As the title of the third chapter of *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999), "Shame, or On the Subject" already indicates, Agamben tries to show how shame is fundamental, insofar as it discloses the structure of our subjectivity, revealing what it means to be a (human) subject. Agamben's examination of the literature of Holocaust survivors serves to bring something important to the fore. It is in the camp, in this state of exception, where one sees most clearly the double character of subjecthood, which is the "absolute concomitance of subjectification and desubjectification, self-loss and self-possession, servitude and sovereignty" (1999, p. 107). Shame is precisely the affect that discloses to me that, precisely in being subject, I am consigned to a being that I am subjected to. We have already seen in Levinas that intentional consciousness rests on a pre-reflexive, non-intentional consciousness, a stream of duration and of the unfolding of syntheses which do not depend on the Ego but precede it. Levinas was not the first, of course, to note this. His merit is to have determined this non-intentional consciousness as *mauvaise conscience*: a bad conscience that radically, from the ground up, troubles the Ego and exposes the latter's *bonne conscience* as a kind of *mauvaise foi*. In *mauvaise foi*, as Sartre conceives of it, the Ego is insincere when it thinks itself self-sufficient, denying that it is always already other. It acts as if the basic truth about itself were not true: that it is what it is not and that it is not what it is. What Levinas has shown, is that shame is concomitant to being consigned to that which I cannot assume but which is what is most intimate in us. Thus, Agamben writes: "In shame, the subject thus has no other content than its own desubjectification.; it becomes witness to its own disorder, its own oblivion as a subject. This double movement, which is both subjectification and desubjectification, is shame" (Agamben, 1999, p. 106). According to Agamben, it is the Muselmann – the camp prisoner, whose existence has been reduced to bare life, to the status of a living dead – who, precisely because he is present at his own defacement and desubjectification, paradigmatically reveals the structure of subjectivity. But to the extent

that the structure of subjectivity is shame or the "double movement of subjectification and desubjectification", we are all virtually Muselmänner (cf. Guenther, 2011b, p. 60). Being subjected to forces that are beyond our control, but which constitute, nevertheless, at the same time our innermost being: This, according to Agamben, is what gives rise to shame. For this reason, Agamben writes that shame "is nothing less than the fundamental sentiment of being *a subject,* in the two apparently opposed senses of this phrase: to be subjected and to be sovereign" (1999, p. 107).

What is important to see, is that this shame is ineliminable, insofar as it corresponds to the structure of subjectivity, of its double movement of subjectification and desubjectification. When we are there to witness our own desubjectification, we experience shame. Already our being in language as well as our biological processes, keeping us alive before we can even say I, speak to this fact (cf. 1999, p. 124f). Hence, Agamben writes: "The human being is thus always before or beyond the human, the central threshold through which pass currents of the human and the inhuman, subjectification and desubjectification, the living being's becoming speaking and the logos' becoming living. These currents are coextensive, but not coincident; their non-coincidence, the subtle ridge that divides them, is the place of testimony" (1999, p. 135). While the Muselmann represents an extreme case of desubjectification, the subject as such is all the time subjected to forces constitutive of itself and yet beyond its control. What characterizes the Muselmänner, is that they, more so than the average person, have witnessed the inner limits of the human. What the Muselmänner have witnessed is a state in which everything that made them human has broken down, revealing the *inhuman* that the human at every moment is – at least potentially or virtually. What the Muselmänner as "complete witnesses" bore witness to, as Agamben writes, is paradoxically that "*the human being is the inhuman; the one whose humanity is completely destroyed is the one who is truly human*" (1999, p. 133).

Although Agamben's concept of shame remains anthropocentric – the inhuman, to which giving a voice Agamben calls "testimony", refers to humans' "bare life" rather than to nonhuman animals, as Carlo Salzani points out (2022, p. 98) –, the latter argues that there is rooted in Agamben an obvious "*Entwicklungsfähigkeit* of these concepts for an interspecies ethics" (ibid.). He suggests that such a potential is provided by the link between Josef K.'s shame at dying "like a dog!" and Levi's phrase of the "shame of being human" (2022, p. 97),

which originates, as Salzani points out (p.96), in a comment by Levi about his own translation of Kafka’s novel *The Trial*. While Salzani tries to show that this can be developed “into a powerful antidote to the dualisms of the Open” (p. 97) – helping to overcome the anthropocentrism Agamben remains tied to –, it is the notion of the shame of being human that also constitutes the basis for my concept of zoophagic shame, which I develop in an attempt to explore the ethico-political value of “the shame of being human” with regards to human-animal issues.

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3. A Critique of Shaming

In the previous chapter, I have argued for shame's constructive role concerning morality and subjectivity. But that *shame* has moral value does not imply that *shaming* has moral value. I have already pointed out some reasons that make shame appear, to say the least, questionable as a moral tool. Nevertheless, flight-shame, meat-shame, body-shame and many other kinds of shame and their corresponding forms of shaming are on the rise. The objective of this chapter is an overdue critique of shaming. First, I will disentangle the various meanings the term "shaming" can have, and I will answer the question under which circumstances, if any, shaming may be justified. I will argue that shaming typically betrays a kind of shamelessness on the side of the shamer and is not, as a rule, morally justifiable. I will then turn to an analysis of an exemplary case of meat-shaming in the context of animal rights activism, arguing that shaming is not just shameless but also ineffective. If one aims to convince people of the necessity to alter their dietary habits, one should stay away from shaming consumers but should instead ensure that shame is felt about the wider socio-economic conditions keeping people in the thrall of meat.

As Thomason puts it: "Whether or not we ought to shame people or invite them to feel shame has more to do with episodes of shame than with the role that shame plays in our moral lives" (2018, p. 178). The question, then, is under which circumstances, if any, it might be morally appropriate to shame others. What needs to be clarified, at the same time, is what precisely is meant in each case when we talk of "shaming". I am drawing here on Thomason's differentiation of three practices: 1) *invitations to shame*, 2) *shaming*, and 3) *stigmatizing* (cf. Thomason, 2018, p. 177). I will discuss them in turn.

Suppose someone is mocking a male vegan, calling him soy boy. By countering the person with something along the lines of "How dare you talk to me like that?", the vegan invites them to shame, getting them to realize that they have said something inappropriate and that they have conducted themselves in a morally inappropriate way. Thus, such an invitation to shame aims to challenge or shake the other person's self-image. Essentially, our invitation to shame should make them consider that they have acted shamelessly. As Thomason says, when we invite someone to shame, our aim is to make them aware of themselves: "We want the shameless

person to see herself anew and to see that she is not always who she takes herself to be" (2018, p. 180).

While both inviting shame and shaming seek to bring part of the target's identity to the foreground of their sense of self, the difference between inviting shame and shaming is that shaming takes place publicly. Furthermore, shaming does not necessarily inspire self-awareness, but takes sometimes merely the form of censure (cf. Thomason, 2018, p. 181). In contrast to Thomason, I do not think that only shaming as opposed to inviting shame can be an attempt to change the shamed person's behaviour. The self-awareness an invitation to shame is supposed to give rise to in the target is arguably connected to their behaviour. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that inviting shame is a more subtle and indirect way of attempting to get someone to alter their habits and dispositions for the better. Invitations to shame literally invite the target to reflect on themselves by holding up a mirror to them, albeit not without suggesting what they ought to see if they look in the mirror. Shaming, in contrast to inviting shame, does not so much consist in holding up a mirror to somebody as marking them with an identity which the shamer determines without the target having any say. Like Hester Prynne, the protagonist of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter,* who was caught in adultery and sentenced to wear the scarlet letter "A" as a mark of her crime for everyone to see, the target of shaming is marked with an identity in an entirely heteronomous way. This act of marking is shared by stigmatizing, but one must not mistake one for the other. While stigmatizing, like shaming, draws attention to a trait, characteristic or misdeed, the stigma marks the person as a member of some group. As such, stigmatizing concerns primarily someone's social status, with the aim of lowering it.

Having distinguished the different meanings talk of shaming can have, the question now is under which circumstances – if any – shaming can be justified. When asking whether we should shame or not, we must be clear whether we are asking for a functional or a moral justification. It might be the case that shaming is very effective in achieving what the shamer has in mind, but this does not automatically morally justify this act of shaming (even if the outcome itself would be morally desirable). I will argue not only that shaming is not morally justified in most circumstances, but that, in any case, it is not particularly effective in bringing others to alter their behaviour.

3.1. The Shamelessness of Shaming

As we have already seen, it is far from guaranteed that people respond to shame in productive ways. Shame is often linked with aggression and people sometimes respond to shame with (self)destructive behaviours. One has to ask whether this response is an intrinsic feature of shame or a result of the circumstances in which shame arises or is provoked. In the latter case one would only have to make sure that the conditions for effective shaming are fulfilled. However, even if shaming were, under certain conditions, effective in altering someone's behaviour, to assume that this would be a sufficient justification of shaming passes over the question whether it is morally justifiable. I have argued that shame has moral value and that we would not be better off without it. But that shame has value for a moral community does not itself mean that moral agents have the right to shame others. As Thomason argues, the act of shaming might itself betray or constitute a kind of shamelessness on the part of the shamer. Remember that shame and shaming do not so much target a certain misdeed as they are concerned with a trait or feature of someone's identity. One is ashamed not of what one has done, but rather of being the kind of person that would do such a thing. Shame and shaming are not about what one *does* but who one *is*. This also shines a light on the shame-aggression link. It is no surprise that being the target of shaming may dispose one to lash out at the shamer, insofar as the act of shaming is perceived as an unjustified attack on one's integrity. Shame and shaming touch on the core of a person. As such, acts of shaming are necessarily caught up in a transgression of the boundaries of the target's autonomy.

This is why Krista Thomason thinks that shaming cannot be justified, except when it comes to inviting shame as a moral self-defense. She gives the example of an arrogant person, displaying a high horse attitude towards her, believing herself to be intellectually superior. In this case, meeting the arrogant person's behaviour with an invitation to feel shame about it can be an appropriate and justifiable response. One might object that one need not revoke to shaming; simply explaining to the person that one felt their attitude or behaviour as insulting would do the job. However, getting into an argument like this invites the other person to explain or justify their arrogance, which is not what one is after, when the other person's behaviour is ultimately unjustifiable (cf. Thomason, 2018, p. 189). Furthermore, the possibility of reasoning with the other person about their arrogance presupposes that they are open to our point of view

in the first place, which qua arrogance they are not (cf. ibid.). Lastly, there is a point where "respectful engagement becomes damaging to our own self-respect" (p. 190). Thus, inviting shame in a case such as the one described is a legitimate way to "protect my own self-respect by refusing to defer to someone else's illegitimate claims for esteem" (ibid.).

In all other cases, Thomason argues, shaming is morally unjustifiable. The main reason for this is that "[i]nviting people to feel shame as a way of inspiring their own moral improvement undermines our proper humility about our own self-awareness" (ibid.). What characterizes the shameless person is a lack of regard for the limits of their self-conception. Thus, the moral problem with shaming is that it betrays a lack of humility on the part of the shamer. As Thomason puts it: "Invitations to shame in those cases involve too great a danger of hypocrisy: we ought not be in the business of making ourselves moral educators who hold other's moral flaws up to them" (ibid.).

I agree with Thomason that we should be wary of moralizing, that is, if the latter involves disrespectful attitudes or behaviour towards other moral agents. While we do have an obligation to uphold the moral values of our community, this does not entail that we have the right to enforce these values by shaming those who do not live up to them. According to Thomason, a commitment to these values requires us to be moral agents, but not moralizing agents (cf. 2018, p. 203). In her view, moralizing is to be criticized when it refers to "an objectionable form of perfectionism" (ibid.). However, I want to stress that the problem is not with perfectionism. It only becomes a problem, if it is bound up with making others feel bad about themselves for failing to live up to a moral ideal. We have to be careful to hold separate what Thomason calls an "objectionable form of perfectionism" from moral education, grounded in moral expertise. In my view, there is no problem with the latter in itself, but we have to be aware of the danger of it turning into the former. While we might live up to one or more moral ideals, there may be others that we do not live up to, and there might be yet others we are not even aware of. This should not keep us from advocating for a good cause, especially if we find that our moral community is lacking behind in realizing it. But we do not have the right to make others feel bad about who they are, just because they fail to live up to what we think is morally right.

3.2. A Critique of Meat Shaming

Let us now turn to a critique of shaming in the context of animal rights activism. As we will see, shaming is not just itself shameless, but it is also ineffective. Elisa Aaltola distinguishes explicit and implicit acts of shaming. Explicit shaming in the context of animal rights activism may involve slogans such as "Shame on you!", throwing paint on a fur wearer, and naming and blaming farming companies that have been revealed to treat nonhuman animals sadistically, (cf. 2017, p. 248). Implicit shaming, on the other hand, is often unintended and less noticeable, but all the more frequent. However, in the following I will present a case of explicit shaming, since these cases are the most likely in exhibiting the features which make meat-shaming problematic in my view.

Consider, for example, Australian vegan activist and social media personality Tash Peterson. She is known for provocative public protests, which often involve covering her (half-)naked body in blood-like liquid and spilling it in stores that sell animal products, among them Louis Vuitton stores, KFCs, and supermarkets, shouting or otherwise displaying the slogan "If you're not vegan, you're an animal abuser" – a slogan that (as of now) also features prominently on all her social media profiles (cf. Foster, 2019; van Homrigh, 2021; Spence, 2022). There are various reasons for why this kind of provocative meat-shaming is problematic. First of all, drawing on Krista Thomason's account, it can be characterized as shameless. Peterson's calling all non-vegans animal abusers is, to a certain extent, respectless. Much of her public protests boil down to ad hominem attacks on non-vegans to the detriment of the moral concern that supposedly motivate her actions, which thereby threaten to become overshadowed by identity-related concerns. Being called an animal abuser for eating at a KFC might arguably set one up to defend oneself from what most people will see as an unjustified and outrageous accusation – much more than it sets one up to scrutinize the moral justifiability of one's dietary habits. Shaming, then, is, to a certain extent, not only itself shameless, but comes with is second problem, which is its emphasis on identity. Aaltola takes this to be one of the key dangers of evoking shame:

> [S]ince shame is obsessed with the 'self' instead of moral principles or values, the meat-eater or the milk-drinker, when evoked to feel shame, will be preoccupied with how the arguments of animal ethics affect her

> notions of 'self'. It is perhaps this which paves the way for the usual if regrettable emphasis of these debates – identity. Instead of concentrating on moral issues, the debate focuses on the identities of the advocates and the identities of those whom the advocates are trying to persuade […] This is one of the key dangers of shame: it can reduce morality into battles between identities as the ashamed seek to reaffirm their own sense of 'self' as acceptable and non-affected, with the result that the message of animal liberation is, quite simply, lost. (Aaltola, 2017, p. 253)

As Aaltola sees it, activists like Peterson do themselves and their mission a disservice when they make their actions turn around shaming non-vegans. Moreover, in my view, there is yet a third and related problem with shaming non-vegans. While shaming's emphasis on identity risks displacing the moral issue as the central point of contention, scapegoating individual non-vegans reinforces the idea that a diet involving animal products is the outcome of personal choice alone, leaving out the powerful ideological forces exerting pressure on people to keep consuming animal products. Identifying individual consumers as the sole or main locus of responsibility reinscribes the norms that shape and falsely justify their behaviour. Hence, shaming tends to reproduce the status quo, turning out morally conservative rather than progressive. Such a conservatism proves fatal for the lives of billions of animals every year. Although individual consumers must account for their actions, shaming them risks playing in the hands of those who have an economic self- interest in the perpetuation of a system that generates profit from the breeding and slaughter of animals for human purposes. Thus, shaming individual consumers fails to address the appropriate target.

3.3. Ordinary and Extraordinary Shame

Shame will only be constructive once it results from seeing the shamefulness at the heart of this system. What I mean will become clearer by first distinguishing meat-*shaming* from meat *shame* (and while I only talk about "meat" for the sake of brevity, all of the following considerations apply to "animal products" just as well). There are several differences between meat-shaming and meat shame that are grounded in the differences between shaming and shame in general. Firstly, meat-shaming is directed at other people. One tries to get others to see that they have done something they ought to be ashamed of. But this does not mean that the person getting shamed for eating meat will feel shame. Shaming and shame bear no essential

relationship with each other. As Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni point out, “the process of shaming is not essential to shame” (2012, p. 158). One may feel shame in different circumstances and for various reasons, many of which, as we have already seen, do not presuppose shaming. They claim that “shame fails to exhibit any essentially social aspect” (ibid.). In other words, shame may take place entirely in private. Furthermore, shaming “fails to exhibit any privileged connection with shame”, since shaming might provoke a number of different reactions, such as anger or feelings of humiliation, but not necessarily shame (2012, pp. 158f). And as Lucy McDonald says, “the precise nature of the relationship between shaming and shame is unclear; it cannot be causal since shaming often fails to produce shame. It cannot be necessarily a matter of the shamer’s intention, either, since some shamers are not interested in making their targets feel shame” (2020, p. 5). Thus, meat-*shaming* might not only fail to produce shame about eating meat in the other person, but it might also not even be underpinned by such a motive.

In contrast, meat *shame* is shame that one experiences as belonging to oneself. It may or may not be the result of being shamed. All that matters is that it emerges in oneself as a response to being seen or judged by another. I become ashamed of myself as a result of some real or virtual other’s opinion about me. Thus, the other is integral to this shame. But it is still experienced as pertaining to oneself. While shaming might be said to consist in an attempt to throw shame on someone, metaphorically speaking, in the hope of it getting stuck on them, shame in the proper sense is essentially *actively assumed*. Thus, even in the cases, when shame is the result of shaming, this shame consists in acknowledging that some judgement or view about oneself is grounded in features that are really part of one’s identity. In this sense, shame is active, even though it results from being passive with regards to some real or fictive other’s judgement or view about oneself. Its active component consists in accepting that one really *is* the object that the other subject determines one to be, as Sartre might have put it. This is also the way in which shame is ordinarily conceived. For this reason, let me refer to it as “ordinary shame”.

However, there is also a kind of shame that is not the result of being *seen* or judged. What makes it extraordinary, as it were, is that it is a way of *seeing*. Furthermore, while ordinary shame *presupposes* certain norms and values, extraordinary shame *calls into question* these very norms and values. Thus, extraordinary shame is not purely self-directed. This shame belongs to oneself only insofar as one recognizes oneself to be tainted by the shameful thoughts

and actions buttressed by the normative system with which one is complicit. One example for this extraordinary shame is what I term *zoophagic shame*: the shame of complicity in the avoidable suffering and death of animals for human consumption. Zoophagic shame arises as a feeling of complicity in a culturally sanctioned practice one comes to see as shameful. As I will show in the next section, the consumption of meat and of animal products in general cannot be understood as an isolated practice or as the result of a conscious choice, but it is based on an institutionalized belief system. Zoophagic shame arises not in response to being a failure in the eyes of other people. It is not a passive or heteronomous affect in response to being judged or seen. Rather, as I will later show, it is an affective *perception* or the affect proper to *seeing* something as shameful or intolerable. Zoophagic shame is being tainted by the misery animals are made to endure by humans in order to consume them. Consequently, it might arise under a variety of circumstances. One might feel it through affectively seeing the willed ignorance that occurs at a larger scale. One might feel it through affectively seeing the propaganda the meat and dairy industry tells us. One might feel it through affectively seeing one's own complacency, reassuring oneself that the animals one eats are slaughtered "humanely', after all. It might be shame about the fact that one values the taste of an animal higher than its life. And it might be shame about the fact that something like that is possible, after all.

But why does zoophagic shame rarely arise? At this point we have to take a closer look at the conditions that are responsible for preventing zoophagic shame from emerging.

3.4. The Repression of Shame

For most people, consuming meat – or animal products, in general – does not feel like a choice at all, because it is seen as a given, as "just the way things are" (cf. Joy, 2010, p. 27). In contrast to the terms vegetarian or vegan, there does not even exist a corresponding term to denote people for whom meat is part of their regular diet. When people are referred to as "vegetarians" and "vegans" instead of simply calling them "plant-eaters", then this is because these diets are usually linked to a certain belief system. In contrast to that, we refer to people who eat meat simply as "meat eaters". This makes it appear as if the practice of eating meat could be conceived of in isolation from these people's values and beliefs (cf. Joy, 2010, p. 29). However, as a matter of fact, the consumption of meat is the norm and as such part of the dominant cultural

background against which other diets stand out. The consumption of meat comes with its own belief system, for which Joy coined the term "carnism" (Joy, 2010, p. 27). And since its assumptions and practices are so deeply entrenched that they constitute the common sense, this system is practically invisible to us (cf. Joy, 2010, p. 29).

3.4.1. Carnism and the "Three Ns of Justification": Normal, Natural and Necessary

Among the mechanisms carnism makes use of to achieve this, the "Three Ns of Justification" are especially important, since they ensure that eating meat becomes normal, natural and necessary (Joy, 2010, p. 96). I will briefly discuss them in turn. First, meat eating is rendered normal via processes of normalization. As the dominant norm it assumes the character of a given, obscuring the fact that the consumption of meat is a choice, even if it may not feel like a choice. As norms carve out the path of least resistance, to stray from that path not only takes a willed effort but is also met with resistance and/or rejection from the mainstream, since norms are always prescriptive, dictating how we ought to behave (cf. p. 106).

Second, meat-eating is natural, which means that it is the way we think it ought to be. Through naturalization something's being natural is made to appear justified. Hence the fact that humans and their ancestors have been eating meat for at least two million years is taken to demonstrate that it is right to eat meat (cf. p. 107). However, it goes without saying that simply because something has a tradition (which is supposed to be grounded in nature) does not mean that it is morally acceptable to continue doing so. Naturalized behaviors are socially produced and, like norm, in principle subject to change.

Third, through making it seem inevitable, eating-meat is made to appear necessary. Although counternarratives are gaining in popularity, the carnist myth still enjoys hegemony. Arguably, the most powerful way to counter this myth, is with scientifically proven facts, testifying, for example, to the health benefits of a vegan diet. Another way of debunking it would be revealing that studies purporting to demonstrate the biological necessity of a carnist diet are often financed by the livestock industry and thus likely biased.

3.4.2. Carnism and the "Cognitive Trio": Objectification, Deindividualization, and Dichotomization

Having introduced the "Three Ns of Justification", it must be pointed out that these are not all there is to carnism's *modus operandi*. Joy distinguishes between the social and the psychological aspects of carnism: "Carnism is a social system, a social matrix. But it is also a psychological system, a system of thought, an internal matrix. It is a matrix within the Matrix. And just as the social matrix is set up to maintain the gap in our consciousness, so, too, is the psychological matrix" (Joy, 2010, p. 131). This psychological matrix is organized by the "carnistic schema", which is largely comprised of the "Cognitive Trio" of objectification, deindividualization, and dichotomization (pp. 117, 113). Let me briefly introduce these mechanisms in turn.

Through objectification, a living being is made to be perceived and/or treated as if it were a mere lifeless thing. As we do not have any moral duties toward things, objectification of animals allows us to treat them in ways we would be unable to, were we to perceive them as the sentient living beings they are, capable of suffering and of being harmed. While the animals that we consume are routinely objectified in various ways, the basic structure remains always the same: In order to be rendered an object ready to consume, the animal as a living being must disappear. As Carol Adams in her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (2010) shows, animals are physically and conceptually made absent *as animals* for meat to exist. There is no trace of the living animal's preceding existence left over in its commodified products. The animal has become what Adams famously coined an "absent referent". The absent referent allows us to forget about the animal as an individual living being and enables us to resist efforts to make animals present. According to Adams there are three ways in which animals become absent referents. One is literally through meat eating, where the animals qua living beings are literally absent because they are already dead and processed into consumable pieces (cf. 2010, p. 66). Another is definitional or linguistic. When we eat animals, we change the way we talk about them. For example, we talk about eating lamb or veal instead of "baby sheep or baby cow", which these animals literally were when they were killed (ibid.). Finally, the third way in which animals become absent referents is metaphorical, as when animals serve as metaphors for describing people's experiences. Adams gives the hypothetical example of a rape victim who describes

their experience in terms of having felt like a piece of meat (cf. p. 67). Here, the original meaning of meat gets lost through entering a human-centered hierarchy of meaning (cf. ibid.).

Let us return to our discussion of the carnistic schema. The second mechanism of the Cognitive Trio is deindividualization. "*Deindividualization* is the process of viewing individuals only in terms of their group identity and as having the same characteristics as everyone else in the group" (Joy, 2010, p. 119). In other words, through deindividualization an individual is stripped off everything that makes them a singular being, having its own and unique personality and perspective on the world, to the point of reducing them to nothing but an instantiation of their species. In this way, it plays a crucial part in bolstering clichés or stereotypies, such as, for example, "pigs are stupid and dirty" (which they are not).

The third component of the Cognitive Trio is dichotomization, which collapses complexity into a black-and-white picture of the world. When it comes to animals, as Joy argues, one of the most fatal dichotomies is that between "edible" and "inedible" animals, which comprises a number of other category pairs such as "domesticated-wild" and "intelligent-dumb" (cf. 2010, p. 122). Essentially, this process of filtering our perception of animals contributes to holding our cognitive dissonance at bay, allowing us, in other words, to pet our dog while eating a steak (cf. p. 123).

Joy's analysis of carnism helps us to see how it systematically prevents meat shame and zoophagic shame from emerging. If the assumption that eating animal products is normal, natural, and necessary is so deeply entrenched that it constitutes the unquestioned common sense, then shame about these norms can only arise if this common sense starts to crack. Only when one no longer sees the world *through* the filter of these norms, one can take a critical perspective *on* these norms themselves.

3.4.3. Shame on carnism! Do not shame carnists

The fact that the consumption of animal products constitutes the cultural norm raises interesting questions concerning individual consumer's blameworthiness. In the following section, I will present an argument by C. E. Abbate that shows that people consuming factory raised meat are only partially responsible for their actions and thus not fully blameworthy because of the cultural pressure exerted on them to consume these products. In line with Joy's analysis of

carnism, this provides a further reason for refraining from shaming individual consumers, as it suggests that it is rather the culture, in which they are embedded, that is to blame.

We are encultured to eat animal products from our early childhood onwards. Furthermore, as C. E. Abbate points out, "animal flesh is typically viewed as the keystone dish at important social and familial gatherings in Western culture […] and rejecting animal flesh is often perceived as a disruption of familial and cultural practices and traditions. Someone who rejects the 'standard' diet thus risks losing their *identity* as a family member, or as an American, or as a Mexican, and so on" (2020, p. 405). Additionally, the meat, egg and dairy industry strategically uses advertising to convince consumers that animal products are healthy, targeting especially men to promote the idea that eating meat is masculine and "a symbol of achievement, power, and domination" (Abbate, 2020, p. 406). Enculturation, prejudice, as well as expectations from family and peers exert significant pressure on meat eaters to stick with it, even when they would otherwise be ready to consume less or no meat at all. All in all, this "indicates that the cultural pressure to eat animals involves a broad-based cultural *threat*", Abbate argues (2020, p. 407). It is a cultural threat to one's masculinity, one's belonging to a social network or a family, or to one's racial identity (cf. ibid).

I doubt that it is appropriate to call the cultural pressure Abbate identifies a "threat". As she makes clear, she bases her notion of social duress on the legal definition of duress, which consists in "any unlawful threat or coercion used […] to induce another to act [or not to act] in a manner [they] otherwise would not [or would]" (Black, 1990; cited after Abbate, 2020, p. 404). Whereas the legal definition involves a legal notion of unlawful threat, Abbate states that she takes "the 'unlawfulness' found in duress to involve *immoral threat(s)*" (ibid.). The notion of duress she has in mind allows for degrees, and so a corresponding threat need not amount to having "a gun pointed to one's head" (cf. ibid.). It is for this reason that I think it would be more appropriate to characterize the meat eater's situation differently. Talking of a resistance that meat eaters must overcome, if they are to change their diet, is more appropriate. We could employ the language of dynamical systems theory and say that in our cultural system, "meat eating" is the point attractor within whose basin of attraction we find ourselves from our childhood onwards. We are like marbles in a bowl: unless the impulse is big enough to throw us over the bowl's edge, we will return to its lowest point. It is true that we might lose something in crossing the edge, but, at the same time, we might gain something. It is likely that we would

be healthier and perhaps we would be happier, as our diet will cause less harm, etc. This is a second reason for why I think Abbate's use of "threat" is problematic. It evokes a scenario where the prospective vegetarian or vegan has nothing to win.

However, this is just a terminological issue. Ultimately, I agree with Abbate's argument, which shows that "in order to be fully responsible, i.e., blameworthy, for one's actions, two conditions must be met: (1) the control condition (the freedom condition), and (2) the epistemic condition (the knowledge condition)" (2020, p. 402). Abbate's argument rests on the plausible premise that moral responsibility is not an "all or nothing" concept, but that an agent can be "completely blameless, fully blameworthy, or partially responsible for wrongdoing" (2020, p. 402). Given certain conditions, an agent can be excused for a morally wrongful conduct, i.e., he is not fully blameworthy since he is not fully responsible for it. In other words, blameworthiness and moral responsibility correlate. Abbate seeks to show that the typical consumer of factory raised meat (CFRM) is not fully responsible for his behaviour – i.e., they have a partial excuse – because they neither fully meet the freedom condition nor the epistemic condition. It is precisely because of the social duress meat eaters have to endure that they do not "fully meet the 'volitional requirement' of moral responsibility and thus have at least a partial excuse for their wrongdoing" (2020, p. 407). Furthermore, CFRM fail to meet the epistemic condition, since in order to be fully responsible for some wrongdoing, one must be sufficiently *aware* of what one is doing when one acts (cf. ibid.). Distinguishing *de dicto* awareness from *de re* awareness, Abbate claims that CFRM arguably lack the former. In contrast to being *de dicto* aware of an act's moral significance, meaning that one believes that the act is wrong, one is merely *de re* aware of an action's moral significance, "when one has the belief that the act has whatever features make it wrong, *without having the further belief that the act is wrong*" (ibid.). In other words, one has *perceptiveness* of the wrong but lacks a *critical appreciation* thereof. This means that even if CFRM "are presented with a detailed description of the conditions of factory farms and are thus aware of the features of meat eating that make it wrong, they still might fail to understand that meat eating is wrong because they lack a critical appreciation of the suffering endured by farmed animals" (Abbate, 2020, p. 408). Lacking de dicto awareness and hence critical awareness, CFRM fail the epistemic condition for full responsibility.

Arguing that meat eaters typically are not fully responsible for their wrongdoing, Abbate goes on to show that Norcross' Consumer-Torturer-Equivalence Thesis (C-TET) is wrong. The C-TET consists of two claims: "(1) The *behavior* of puppy torturers is morally on par with the *behavior* of consumers of factory raised meat (CFRM). (2) CFRM are just as *condemnable* as puppy torturers" (2020, p. 399). On Abbate's view, the second claim is wrong. Given that CFRM have a cultural excuse, which puppy torturers lack, they are not as condemnable, even under the condition that their behavior is morally on par.

I agree with this. Unlike Abbate, however, I am not convinced that puppy torturers, unlike meat eaters, necessarily act "*on their own accord*", that torturing puppies, unlike eating meat, is the result of an "authentic, individual choice", or that puppy torturers, unlike meat eaters, "*choose* their insensitivity" (cf. 2020, pp. 411, 413; emphasis in original). That there is no *cultural* pressure on people to become puppy torturers does not mean that every puppy torturer is fully responsible and hence fully blameworthy for his wrongdoing. This is because there may be noncultural, subjective reasons – such as a failed upbringing, a genetic disposition, or an acquired mental disorder – in virtue of which the puppy torturer may be partially excused. For this reason, the argument would come out stronger if the compared cases were more alike to begin with. Let us compare instead two identical twins, Carl and Peter, whose upbringing and cultural background are alike, but where Carl regularly eats members of the rapidly breeding stray cat population that pesters the neighborhood (but who is otherwise cognitively and socially inconspicuous), while Peter is a typical CFRM. Here, it is not just that the two behaviors are much more alike than in the original comparison, making it more likely that we see the two different behaviors as morally on par. More importantly, if one believes that eating factory farmed meat is *morally just as bad* as eating stray cats, but that eating pigs is *not (as) blameworthy*, then, *ceteris paribus*, the best explanation for this intuition would indeed be the cultural pressure exerted on the CFRM and not on the cat eater.

Thus, while I think that Norcross' attempt to put CFRMs on a level with puppy torturers is questionable to begin with, Abbate's refutation of the claim that they are equally condemnable brings to light important insights. Indeed, consumers of meat (and animal products, in general) are under the pressure of normative stereotypic attitudes and beliefs. And insofar as their consumption of meat (and animal products) is causally linked to this ideology, they are partially excused and thus not (fully) blamable. However, this does not amount to saying, "that cultural

influence is *fully* exculpatory" (Abbate, 2020, p. 411). Here we come back to Peterson's use of shaming in her animal rights activism stunts. I take the upshot of Abbate's analysis to be that we should "blame the culture, [and] don't blame the non-blameworthy" (cf. 2020, p. 411). This is in line with what I have argued above. When Peterson is shaming non-vegans by shouting "if you're not a vegan, you're an animal abuser", then she is not just respectless but also fails to pick the appropriate target for critique. Calling non-vegans animal abusers or equating meat eaters with puppy torturers neglects the social conditions exerting pressure on consumers. Hence, Abbate writes:

> If eating animals is, in part, a result of moral insensitivity that is caused and perpetuated by stereotypic attitudes and beliefs about farmed animals, then we must work to challenge these attitudes and beliefs. Because stereotypic attitudes and beliefs involve a demarcation of farmed animals from humans, we can challenge them by emphasizing the important similarities between humans and farmed animals. (2020, p. 412)

That people are under cultural pressure to keep consuming animal products does not mean that they are not morally responsible for their behavior at all, of course. But, as Abbate rightly points out, "CFRM have a partial excuse, and we ought to be sensitive to this, in part, because it's, at best, unproductive, and, at worst, counterproductive to blame CFRM. For instance, telling CFRM that they're just as bad as puppy torturers may shut down thoughtful discourse about the immorality of eating animals" (2020, p. 411). Recall Aaltola's worries about the use of shaming in animal rights activism, namely the risk of turning a moral issue into one about identity. Such a debate is about "the ontology of being 'the' type of a human person who uses other animals, which may result in shame" (Aaltola, 2017, p. 248). It is not uncommon for non-vegans to self-defensively lash out at vegans, if their identity is under attack. In this sense, Abbate notes that "we must acknowledge that some radical animal rights tactics are unlikely to help farmed animals. For instance, the 'disruption' tactics of Direct Action Everywhere, which often involve chanting 'meat is murder' in restaurants and grocery stores, may paint vegans as socially deviant, making it less likely that CFRM will be inspired to become vegan" (2020, p. 412).

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4. Zoophagic Shame: Seeing the Intolerable

I have argued that meat-shaming individuals is not just morally reprehensible but, importantly, also inefficacious, and misguided. Shame can play a constructive role, however, if its object are the social conditions or norms governing human-animal relations. In this chapter, I will further develop the concept of zoophagic shame, whose constructive role consists precisely in allowing to see these conditions as shameful.

Usually, shame is considered as a response to being seen or judged by a real or imagined Other, where that Other need not literally be a person different from myself, but can be an intra-psychic instance, as Pfaller, for example, has argued. It is the kind of shame we encounter paradigmatically in Sartre and Levinas, where what is crucial to the experience of shame is one's absolute passivity to another subject's gaze or judgement. But there is a different kind of shame, one that is not a result of *being seen*, but rather of a *seeing.* This is the kind of shame Holocaust survivor Primo Levi writes about in his reflections on Auschwitz, and which Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari touch on in *What is Philosophy?* (1994). The following quote of Levi will allow us to get a first grasp of this kind of shame:

> Another vaster shame, the shame of the world [when] those who faced by the crime of others or their own, turn their backs so as not to see and not feel touched by it: this is what the majority of Germans did during the twelve Hitlerian years, deluding themselves that not seeing was a way of not knowing, and that not knowing relieved them of their share of complicity of connivance. But we were denied the screen of willed ignorance. (Levi, 1988, p. 65)

Levi speaks in the quote above of a "vaster shame", of "the shame of the world". Deleuze and Guattari, in reference to Levi, write of the "shame of being human" (1994, p. 107) – a term that they incorrectly trace back to Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved*, since Levi, as Carlo Salzani points out (2022, p. 96), wrote already years before that in a newspaper article, commenting on his translation of Kafka's *The Trial*, about its protagonist Josef K. being "ashamed of being a man" (Levi 2015, 2350). In any case, this terminology already indicates that what is at stake here is not an ordinary kind of shame. What makes shame ordinary, on my view, is its taking place within a framework of norms and values. If their validity is taken for granted, shame can only fulfill a conservative function, bolstering or reinforcing the dominant normative system.

This is because ordinary shame presupposes a certain normative infrastructure, which makes any particular episode of shame intelligible or unintelligible in the first place. This normative infrastructure is shared by all members of the moral community. What counts as shameful or meriting shame in any given situation depends, to a certain extent, on the dominant norms and values that make up this moral infrastructure. In this way, ordinary shame never calls into question but precisely depends on the dominant norms and values in a (moral) community. When someone is ashamed of his body shape, for example, then this takes place against a backdrop of taken-for-granted ideals about how one's body ought to look, no matter whether this person subscribes to these ideals or not. The same holds true for practices of shaming. Meat-shaming and vegan-shaming, for example, presuppose the norm of eating animal products. It is on condition of these norms that someone can be shamed for being a vegan or a non-vegan.

In contrast, what characterizes shame of the world or shame of being human, and what makes it extraordinary is that it is precisely a *problematization* of this normative infrastructure. The vaster shame mentioned by Primo Levi consists in an affective seeing of something which should not exist, and yet has been allowed into existence, not least by willed ignorance. The horrors of the Holocaust were possible because those who knew about it turned their backs and simply did what they were ordered to do. What the existence of the Holocaust reveals is a complicity, whose seeming boundlessness permanently threatens the fabric of civil society. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari write:

> It is not only our States but each of us, every democrat, who finds him or herself not responsible for Nazism but sullied by it. There is indeed catastrophe, but it consists in the society of brothers or friends having undergone such an ordeal that brothers and friends can no longer look at each other, or each at himself, without a 'weariness,' perhaps a 'mistrust,' which does not suppress friendship but gives it its modern color and replaces the simple 'rivalry' of the Greeks. (1994, p. 107)

What is shameful and what, upon being sensed or realized, gives rise to a shame of being human is, for example, that even our noblest institutions, such as the human rights, are not free of compromise, as Deleuze and Guattari note (cf. 1994, p. 107). We experience shame of being human, when we realize that our world is full of compromise and collusion. It is important to note that it is not just extreme situations and events, such as the Holocaust, which may give rise

to it, but that, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, it may simply be the "values, ideals, and opinions of our time":

> Human rights say nothing about the immanent modes of existence of people provided with rights. Nor is it only in the extreme situations described by Primo Levi that we experience the shame of being human. We also experience it in insignificant conditions, before the meanness and vulgarity of existence that haunts democracies, before the propagation of these modes of existence and of thought-for-the-market, and before the values, ideals, and opinions of our time. The ignominy of the possibilities of life that we are offered appears from within. We do not feel ourselves outside of our time but continue to undergo shameful compromises with it. This feeling of shame is one of philosophy's most powerful motifs. We are not responsible for the victims but responsible before them. And there is no way to escape the ignoble but to play the part of the animal (to growl, burrow, snigger, distort ourselves): thought itself is sometimes closer to an animal that dies than to a living, even democratic, human being. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, pp. 107f)

My point in drawing on Levi's notion of "shame of being human" and on Deleuze and Guattari's adaptation of it is not to make an analogy between the Holocaust and animal cruelty. Rather, I want to draw attention to the nature of this shame. If "shame of being human" may arise in response to seeing the "values, ideals, and opinions" of one's time as shameful, then zoophagic shame as a species of this shame may arise through seeing the norms, values and beliefs shaping much of human-animal relations as shameful. Thus, zoophagic shame goes beyond the level of the individual human or animal, taking as its object rather the systemic conditions of our consumption of animal products.

At this point, we can define two ways in which it is distinct from ordinary shame and shaming. Whereas meat-shaming and vegan shaming are *conservative* with regards to the normative infrastructure determining human-animal relations, presupposing or even reinforcing it, zoophagic shame marks a *critique* of it. Furthermore, whereas ordinary shame is a response to *being seen* (and judged), zoophagic shame is a mode of *seeing*. As Deleuze and Guattari write, one is responsible *before* the victims. Such a kind of shame is "[n]ot catalysed by one's own action or inaction [at least not directly], or by a judgement on one's being, but simply by a shift in perception that changes our vision of what is before us" (O'Donnell, 2017, p. 16).

> [I]t is not just that I feel ashamed when the Other looks at me and appeals to me, but rather that I become ashamed at those rare moments when I become aware of my shamelessness, banality, insensibility and

> indifference to others and to the world, my complicity in suffering, or when I witness the brutality and pettiness of human existence. That is, I become ashamed when my gaze turns outward and I see how things are and what is happening, such that what was previously invisible is suddenly seen as intolerable. (O'Donnell, 2017, p. 2)

In a similar vein, Zembylas (2019), like O'Donnell referring to Deleuze's and Agamben's discussions of "shame of the world", writes: "What is shameful, for both Deleuze and Agamben, is not simply the sense of being judged by others as unworthy, unwanted, or wrong, but rather the awareness of one's complicity in Others' suffering" (p. 305). The occasion of shame is not me, at least not primarily, but rather the exploitative and speciesistic capitalist machinery I recognize myself complicit with. If I feel ashamed, then only for seeing my complicity in that which I recognize to be the real locus of shame's production. I am this shame's vessel, but it emanates from the shameful system I am complicit with. In this way, this shame is not a personal affair. On the contrary, it involves the encounter with intensities at a pre-personal level. Such an encounter or event is characterized by being *immediate*, shattering the clichés that mediate our ordinary and habitual perception of the world. In one of his books on cinema, Deleuze writes:

> We have schemata for turning away when it is too unpleasant, for prompting resignation when it is terrible, and for assimilating when it is too beautiful. It should be pointed out that even metaphors are sensory-motor evasions, and furnish us with something to say when we no longer know what to do. They are specific schemata of an affective nature. Now this is what a cliché is. A cliché is the sensory-motor image of the thing. Bergson says, we do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we only perceive what we are interested in perceiving, or rather what it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés. (Deleuze, 1989, p. 20)

According to the theory of perception laid out by Bergson in *Matter and Memory* (1988), we only perceive what we have an interest in. The clichés in terms of which we perceive the world are shaped by all sorts of forces determining our focus of interest. These include our biological needs as well as our individual preferences, but also social and economic forces. Ordinary perception takes place within the field of ideology. To some extent, what we perceive (and do not perceive) is a function of the latter. Furthermore, these clichés make us apathic to the world. Part of what ensures that we are able to deal with a complex environment, that is constantly

bombarding the organism with information of all kinds, is that we have mechanisms for effectively filtering this multisensory input, subtracting what is irrelevant from what is relevant. The formation of habits or sensory-motor schemes then allows us to navigate through life in the most efficient manner. However, once these schemes are formed, they operate without the contribution of consciousness and thus tend to close the organism off from new stimuli. Consequently, an organism that perceives the world in clichés is liable to shamelessness in the sense of "indifference, insensibility or *apatheia*" (cf. O'Donnell, 2017, p. 9). In contrast, as O'Donnell writes, shame "has the potential to be a proto-political and proto-ethical affect because it suspends and precludes the ready invocations of clichés and explanations. Shame reveals 'how it is', how this is impossible, but also how from such impossibility, something new may emerge to disrupt the dominant logic" (2017, p. 7).

As Deleuze and Guattari write, this feeling of shame is one of philosophy's most powerful motifs (1994, p. 108). It is one of the drivers of an immanent critique of the present in the name of the future. It is in this sense that Marx said: "Shame is already a revolution" (1967, p. 204). How can shame be a revolution? Marx certainly does not hold that shame is sufficient for changing the relations of productions. But the kind of shame that Marx as well as Deleuze and Guattari have in mind may open our eyes to *how things are.* It is one way in which we are able to see ideology at work and to recognize the contradictory nature of society's mode of production. But it does not just allow us a glimpse behind the façade of lies with which we are complacent. More to the point, it allows us to see our entanglement and complicity in the state of the world. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, "the ignominy of the possibilities of life that we are offered appears from within" (1994, pp. 107f). It reveals and makes us concomitantly feel the intolerability of the status quo and that we have undergone so many shameful compromises with it. If, in line with Pfaller, ordinary shame can be understood as the experience of an excess or of the threat of my falling out of the symbolic order, then it is my complicity in a state of the world, which has no place in the symbolic order – *How can this be real?* –, that becomes intolerable for me in the experience of shame that Marx, Levi and Deleuze have in mind.

Shame about society's exploitation of nonhuman animals through industrialized, intensive livestock farming can be a significant motif not just for critical thought but also a motivation to change one's diet or habits. The realization that one is complicit in so much of the harm inflicted on animals in our world can give rise to a revolutionary shame, driving one to put an end to this

shameful state of the world and change it for the better. However, as I have already pointed out, transforming our entrenched way of living is not an easy task, as it is firmly bolstered by powerful beliefs and cultural norms, which prevent us from seeing as intolerable the way billions of animals are mistreated by humans. As I have indicated, there is an ideology at work that keeps invisible the exploitation of animals for our consumption and makes the latter appear justified. In this way, carnism blocks the emergence of shame about one's complicity in the exploitation of animals, as the norms, beliefs and values bolstering it constitute the common sense. Therefore, the question that remains to be asked, and which I will address in the last section, is: Under which conditions can zoophagic shame arise? My thesis is the following: Shame must arise from a place that lies within this system at the same time as it points beyond it, revealing the system's contingency and inconsistency. The critique that zoophagic shame affords is an immanent one. If shame were to originate from an external position with regards to the system, it would not arise as a result of complicity with it. However, the system itself has no place for such a shame. Its ideology is set against its emergence and represses it. Therefore, the only place from which it can originate are the system's own cracks. In line with this idea, I will conclude by briefly exploring the possibility of taking Slavoj Žižek's Lacanian theory of ideology to conceptualize zoophagic shame's emergence within the cracks of ideology.

4.1. Encountering the Real

I have pointed out how the dominant logic of carnism creates clichés that make the consumption of meat appear normal, necessary, and natural. These clichés act like a speciesistic filter, which ensures that we can tolerate human-caused suffering of animals. We cannot see it as intolerable, as long as these filters are in place. In order for zoophagic shame to emerge, a certain encounter is needed. In Lacanian terms, what we encounter as intolerable, I suggest, is the real that subtends the symbolic order, the real on which we project our narcissistic fantasy of reality as a meaningful and coherent wholeness. The latter is the illusory projection of a reality in which the suffering of billions of animals at our hands is absent, as it has no place in it. It is not just the case that the animals we eat are literally made absent – rendered what Adams (2010) termed "the absent referent" –, ensuring that we do not form a connection between the living animal and the animal qua food on our plate, but our speciesistic symbolic order even reserves a space

for certain animals whose killing is considered legitimate. Jurisdiction usually distinguishes legal acts of harming or killing animals from illegal ones. For example, the Austrian Federal Act on the Protection of Animals (TSchG) states in §6 that the killing of an animal without a rational reason ("Tötung ohne vernünftigen Grund") is illegal. However, as the killing or slaughter of farm animals is considered a rational reason, it is *ex lege* justified. Under these conditions, it comes as no surprise that the uproar caused, whenever a case of malpractice at a farm makes the headlines, usually amounts to nothing more than the cynical reassurance of the collective of its concern for the welfare of these animals, without considering the more fundamental issue of treating them as if they were our property, rendering them mere commodities at our disposal. Maybe the expression of indignation about a revealed malpractice is not so much a protest against industrial animal farming than a reaction to the cracking of the fantasy of idyllic and pastoral animal farming.

If the Lacanian real, as Todd McGowan (2007) writes, is "the indication of the incompleteness of the symbolic order" and the point at which signification breaks down, a gap in the social structure" (p. 3), then one can say:

> T]o affirm the real is to affirm that the work of ideology never comes off without a hitch. Every ideology includes a point within its structure that it can't account for or represent. This is the point, the real, at which ideology opens up to the outside. The real thus allows ideology to include new phenomena, and at the same time, it marks ideology's vulnerability. When we call ideology into question, we do so from this real point within it. (ibid.)

In "Regarding the Pain of Others" (2003), Susan Sontag claimed that moral maturity or adulthood requires the acknowledgement of the extent to which humans are capable of inflicting suffering on others: "Someone who is perennially surprised that depravity exists, who continues to feel disillusioned (even incredulous) when confronted with evidence of what humans are capable of inflicting in the way of gruesome, hands-on cruelties upon other humans, has not reached moral or psychological adulthood. No one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia" (p. 89). Images conveying such suffering, however, are all too often perceived in the mode of a mere spectacle. While these images or photographs "should put to shame every narcissistic subject of advanced capitalism's murderous machinations" (Naudé, 2021, p. 17), the symbolic law structures our

experience of them in such a way that the real subtending them does not impinge on us in a traumatizing way. Instead of such shame, "the contemporary symbolic law allows us to experience the photograph simply through a shameless, indifferent, even blind, gaze, if not with an impotent sympathy by way of which we can separate ourselves and our privileges from the gaze of this image" (ibid.).

We seem to have reached an impasse. If the symbolic law works against the eruption of shame, and if the subject as such is always already interpellated into the symbolic order, then where do we find the resources for critique and for subversion? As I have suggested above, one of the reasons, why shaming people into seeing the reality of suffering they are complicit with does not work, is that it still presupposes the master signifiers' narrative that consuming animal products is normal, necessary, and natural. Blaming someone for something that they not only consider legitimate, but which *is* legitimate in the given symbolic order, is doomed to fail.

However, as I have pointed out, the wall of the symbolic order is not as closed as it seems. It is precisely the real which marks its incompleteness. Shame is one of the characteristic experiences of the eruption of the real. Even though Lacan considers shame to be "*respect for castration*, as an attitude of discreetly covering up the fact of being castrated" (Žižek 2005, p. 171), Žižek, on the contrary, asks whether that which remains after the introduction of the symbolic into the real – i.e., the remainder of castration – is not, by virtue of *escaping* it, that which allows to subvert the symbolic order (cf. ibid.). If shame, as Lacan puts it, is "the hole from which the master signifier arises", then shame need not be interpreted as the reintegration of the subject into the symbolic order, but rather allows the possibility of subverting it (cf. Lacan, 2007, p. 189). What is a master signifier?

> Master signifiers preside over the values and duties of the social order; they are passed down to us through the big Other, which is composed of our families, the institutions that shape us such as schools, church, the media and the laws that govern us as well as unwritten conventions. They are the hidden assumptions that we take for granted until there is an eruption of the Real. (Green, 2021, p. 80)

Crucially, then, if shame is the hole from which the master signifier arises, then it is also through shame that "the subversion, or even just the rotation, of the master's discourse" can take place (cf. Lacan, 2007, p. 189).

Therefore, it is precisely the emergence of the real in shame which provides a way out of the impasse we have encountered above. It is the notion of a radically autonomous moral subject we find in Lacan that points to a way out of our impasse. As Žižek makes clear, "Lacan's position is thus that being exposed/overwhelmed, caught in a cobweb of preexisting conditions, is *not* incompatible with radical autonomy" (2005, p. 140). In contrast to Butler's account of how the subject cannot ultimately set itself against the system of norms it is part of, being able only to subvert them by repeating them differently, Žižek maintains that Lacan allows for a "much stronger subjective autonomy: "insofar as the subject occupies the place of the lack in the Other (symbolic order), it can perform separation (the operation which is the opposite of alienation), and suspend the reign of the big Other, in other words, separate itself from it" (2005, p. 137).

At this point, we have to take a closer look at what shame, according to Lacan, exactly is. As a first approach, we have to note that shame or the experience of feeling ashamed refers us to our fundamental lack. In this sense, Žižek writes:

> [W]hen I see my crippled neighbor 'shamelessly' pushing toward me his disfigured limb, it is I, not he, who is overwhelmed by shame. When a man exposes his distorted limb to his neighbor, his true target is not to expose himself, but the neighbor: to put the neighbor to shame by confronting him with his own ambiguous repulsion/fascination with the spectacle he is forced to witness. (2005, p. 171).

But why does this make me ashamed? What is the condition of possibility for something to make me ashamed? What kinds of phenomena can make one ashamed? As Žižek makes clear, shame, according to Lacan, is never simply passivity, "but an *actively assumed passivity*: if I am raped, I have nothing to be ashamed of; but if I enjoy being raped, then I deserve to feel ashamed. Actively assuming passivity thus means, in Lacanian terms, finding jouissance in the passive situation in which one is caught" (2005, p. 147). To put it bluntly, it is never just a property of some event which makes the event shameful for me. To some extent like in Levinas, shame in Lacan "relies on some figure of 'big Other' whose presupposed gaze makes us ashamed" (2005, p. 177). But the difference to Levinas is that it does not remain limited to the (human) Other's face. In fact, the gaze is not something that belongs to any face. Hence, "the subject will be looked at whenever his object cause of desire is animated. Considered in this light, it is evident that the counter-gaze which calls the subject into the scene may have nothing

to do with gaze in its literal sense" (Huang, 2009, p. 129). The way Lacan uses the term gaze is different from our everyday use. It is not the case that the gaze is an active process emanating from a subject. Rather, the gaze is something we encounter in our field of vision and it. Correspondingly, the *objet petit a* is never some positive entity or object. Rather, it is the cause of desire. In *Seminar XI*, Lacan says: "*The* objet a *in the field of the visible is the gaze*" (1998, p. 105). The *objet a* thus pulls us into the visual field or scene, such that we become involved in it. Something, all of a sudden, is "at stake" for us. In this way, one can see why the gaze in Lacan cannot be ascribed to a (human) subject. All kinds of things can and will gaze at us, as long as they manifest the *objet a.* As Todd McGowan points out, the reason why Lacan invents the term *objet petit a* to refer to that which "the subject of language gives up in order to enter into language", is to put it in contrast to the big Other (*l'Autre)* – the symbolic order – and to suggest its irreducibility to the latter (cf. 2007, p. 6). What is crucial, then, is that the gaze – understood as the *objet a* in the visual field – can be understood as an encounter with the real, insofar as the *objet a* belongs to the order of the real. "As a manifestation of the real rather than of the imaginary, the gaze marks a disturbance in the functioning of ideology rather than its expression" (McGowan, 2007, p. 7).

How, though, may shame erupt in such an encounter? In order to explain the concept of the gaze, Lacan uses the example of looking at Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (1553). Depicting two world travelers among their riches, an unrecognizable blot at the bottom disrupts the order. It is unrecognizable, however, only if looked at straight from the front. As soon as one shifts position, looking at it from the side, a skull becomes visible. The skull is not simply there to see. The subject's involvement is needed for it to become visible. McGowan points out that "*The Ambassadors* is a privileged example for Lacan because the form that the gaze takes in this painting – a skull – renders explicit the relationship between the gaze and the subject's complete loss of mastery" (2007, p. 7). What the gaze reveals to me, ultimately, is the lack at the core of my being, my incompleteness and vulnerability. As we have seen, when my neighbor shamelessly exposes to me his crippled limb, the shame I feel is not for him. Rather, I am referred to my own lack. At this point, we have to recall Lacan's claim that shame is always actively assumed passivity. In other words, shame arises precisely because or insofar as we find jouissance in that which is transgressive from the point of view of the symbolic law. Interestingly, desire, motivated by the *objet petit a*, is drawn to "the point at which power is

entirely lacking, the point of traumatic enjoyment. This enjoyment is traumatic insofar as it deprives us of power but nonetheless compels us" (McGowan, 2007, p. 10). Perhaps, then, it is no surprise that death as the absolute master of the subject is such a privileged motive of jouissance. Crucially, since the gaze need not emanate from a human other, this suggests that any nonhuman representation of death and mortality may evoke shame as well. In this sense, Huang writes, "it stands to reason that we look askance at photography of atrocities: we feel too ashamed to look at the distressing images of others because we are reluctant to witness our own passivity, our shared vulnerability" (2009, p. 112).

In "The Animal That Therefore I Am", Derrida recounts what has, in the history of philosophy, become one of the most famous instances of an animal putting a human to shame. Derrida, naked in his bathroom, finds himself ashamed upon being looked at by his cat. In trying to account for this experience, Derrida – at one point writing about Bentham's famous thesis that moral considerability is not determined by the ability to speak or to reason, but by the ability to suffer – makes the interesting claim that "'Can they suffer?' amounts to asking, 'Can they *not be able*?'" (2008, p. 28). Derrida speaks of a "nonpower at the heart of power" and calls it a "possibility of the impossible" (ibid.). He writes:

> Mortality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of this impossibility, the anguish of this vulnerability, and the vulnerability of this anguish. (ibid.)

An animal need not literally gaze at us, in order to evoke shame in us. If the *objet a* encountered in the gaze is "our" primordial mortality, then the bodily remains of an animal, unable to literally look at us anymore, are perhaps even more likely to evoke shame.

As we have seen, we can be made ashamed by the animal other, but only theoretically speaking. If we fail to be made ashamed by, for example, media coverage of animal suffering, then this is because we fail to encounter it as the traumatic real. The question remaining to be dealt with, then, is under which conditions human-caused animal suffering needs to be encountered in order to allow for a shame provoking encounter with the traumatic real.

Arguably, a major risk, preventing such encounters, is sensationalism or the aestheticization of suffering. While news media tends to sensationalize animal suffering, some animal activists'

tactics are successful in provoking shame precisely because they depict the suffering in a way that is painful to look at (cf. Huang, 2009, p. 126; Baker, 2001, p. 220). As Huang points out, "some animal activists' tactics of representing the scenes of animal abuse […] are far more competent to re-create the context of animals' suffering and thereby enable us to be affected by these photographs" (2009, p. 126). "If photographs", as John Taylor writes, "fail to induce action, the fault lies not with photography but with the larger system which provides viewers with victims and then presents them as 'under', 'outer', or otherwise 'marginal' to 'normal', centered society, while punishing them either directly or through moral inaction and indifference" (1998, p. 148). It is precisely the fact that human-caused (farm) animal suffering has such a precarious status within our speciesistic morality which explains the risk of representations of animal suffering ending up as no more than something we regard "with a sense of morbid curiosity rather than concern" (Aaltola, 2014, p. 23).

As I have already mentioned, Susan Sontag argues that we have a duty to look at images of human-caused suffering. It is part of a person's moral maturity to confront it. However, we only have this duty on condition of our ability to act on behalf of the victim, Aaltola suggests. If the framing of a representation is central to the meaning conveyed, i.e., if the form of mediation is partly constitutive of content, then, correspondingly, our subjective approach determines whether an act of looking is either problematic or morally required (cf. Aaltola, 2014, p. 25). Differentiating between an aesthetic approach and a moral approach, Aaltola argues that "constantly anchoring images onto moral viewpoints may prevent them from becoming an occasion for a morally detached aesthetic experience" (2014, p. 27). The crucial issue emerging here is how to achieve "moral persuasiveness" (ibid.). Communication in a normative mode has to make sure that it "facilitates comprehension and exposure instead of outright refusal" (ibid.). Aaltola suggests that "extreme images ought to be accompanied by efforts to invite action and optimism that something can, indeed, be done", in this way preventing spectators from turning away due to feeling overwhelmed by the intensity and scope of the perceived suffering (2014, p. 29). However, aside from pointing out that the messages of animal advocates should be delivered in the form of arguments rather than accusations, she does not provide an account of the psychological underpinnings of moral persuasiveness in this context. It seems that we can find such an account rooted in Lacan. As Huang writes,

> if the news media is inclined to use photographs of animals to endorse voyeurism or sensationalism, animal rights activists can turn the tables by using it in an alternative manner. Capturing the animal's vulnerability and creating an adequate context for it, as I have indicated, is one way to make the shaming gaze stand out from the photographed image. And the mechanism of this alternative practice is not unlike the mode of the analyst's discourse […] In the analyst's discourse, the analyst's knowledge functions in the position of the truth without occupying the place of the agent, the object *a*. (2009, p. 130)

That the analyst's knowledge functions in the position of the truth, not occupying the place of the agent, means that the role of the analyst in psychoanalytic therapy is not to tell the analysands their hidden inner truth. The analyst's function is rather to facilitate the analysand's own discovery thereof. Huang argues that the same holds true for the photographer. The photographer ought to be put in the role of the analyst, by enabling "the spectator to be confronted by the object a standing out from the photographed image", which allows the spectator to "produce new master signifiers" (Huang, 2009, p. 130.).

The foregoing analysis suggests that our symbolic law prevents shame about human-caused animal suffering from emerging, because it prevents an encounter with the real. If the animal's suffering at our hands is encountered in a way that affects us precisely insofar as it refers us to our own lack, mortality, and vulnerability – which establishes, perhaps, something like a "Leidensgenossenschaft" between the animal and ourselves –, then this may evoke shame – not primarily of ourselves, but of the shamelessness of the system, which produces so much intolerable suffering. Such a shame occupies the person only insofar as they recognize themselves as a part of this machinery. If shame has a positive or constructive role as a moral emotion, then it consists, to a large extent, in exposing the real that ideology covers over, destabilizing it via an encounter with what it excludes.

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Conclusion

The present work has sought to determine moral shame's positive function regarding human animal issues. My first step was to give an outline of the concept of moral emotions that my account of shame presupposes. I have presented Sabine Döring's conceptualization of emotions as affective perceptions and suggested, contrary to an argument by Brian Ballard, that it is able to explain the specific epistemic benefit afforded by emotions. In the second chapter, an analysis of shame's functions within the realm of human morality has foregrounded shame's central place therein. Krista K. Thomason's analysis of shame as a sense of the limits of one's self-conception suggests that a liability for shame is constitutive of one's respect for another person's point of view. Despite the potentially detrimental effects of the experience of shame, the capacity to experience shame is valuable, because it is part of what constitutes moral maturity. On this view, the practice of shaming appears, on the whole, morally unjustifiable, as it betrays a lack of recognition of the authority of the other's point of view. The shameless person fails to exhibit respect for the limits of their self-conception. To put it bluntly, one might say that losing shame means losing morals. Moreover, contra the pessimistic view on shame, a reading of three of the most influential philosophical positions on shame to have emerged in the last decades – those of Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas and Giorgio Agamben – has suggested that they converge on the indispensability of shame with regards to the structure of subjectivity. Thus, getting rid of shame in order to achieve moral progress, as some pessimists on shame would have it, is no possibility in the first place. In the fourth chapter, I have turned to an analysis of the uses of shame within animal rights activism. I have taken the use of radical meat-shaming as an illustration of Thomason's point, that what makes shaming morally bad is the shamelessness on the part of the shamer, and I have pointed out shaming's ineffectiveness for achieving its supposed goal. If shaming is used with the intention of getting the someone to alter their behaviour, the prospects for achieving this are bad. Furthermore, a closer look on meat-shaming has shown that it often goes awry by failing to address the right target. Insofar as consumers are subject to a dominant normative infrastructure that normalizes, naturalizes, and makes appear as necessary the consumption of animal products, not the least by rendering invisible their mode of production, they can only be partially held accountable for the harm caused by their consumption. It is in this context that a form of shame, which I have termed

zoophagic shame, emerges, whose positive potential concerning human-animal issues consists precisely in its critical role with regards to this normative system. Drawing on Deleuze's interpretation of Primo Levi's phrase of the "shame of being human" as as a way of seeing the intolerable, I have suggested the concept of zoophagic shame for the way of seeing one's intolerable complicity in the perpetuation of a system that shamefully exploits animals for human purposes. While shame is most often conceived of as an outcome of *being seen* or judged, shame may also arise as a result of *seeing* something as shameful. Shame, in this picture, is not something we should want to get rid of, as some have us believe. It calls on us to take on the responsibility that is everywhere missing. Thus, it emerges here not in a negative or (self)destructive form. If shame of this kind can be conceived of as a response to the intolerability of a system with which one finds oneself complicit, then it becomes apparent that it must be of a different quality. If this shame can be characterized as negative at all, then it is because of its opposition to and critique of what comes to be seen as shameful. Precisely because the anthropocentric and speciesist form of neoliberal democracies' symbolic law prevents us from seeing certain forms of our treatment and use of animals as shameful, zoophagic shame is a critical affect with regards to it. Given that carnism works against the eruption of such a shame, the question arises as to the locus of shame. Drawing on Žižek's theory of ideology, I have suggested that zoophagic shame may emerge in the cracks of this order, contesting its semblance of necessity through an encounter with the real that insists in the gaze of the suffering animal.

Shame's emancipatory potential with regards to human-animal relations indicates an implicit politics of shame. The present work may be read as an attempt to take seriously Marx' dictum that shame is already a revolution and to contribute to the task of exploring its positive potential for animal ethics and human-animal relations. Tackling the issues of intensive livestock production, however, takes more than that. While it may start with shame, it certainly needs to go beyond it. But although improving the conditions of animals and respecting their moral status involves practical measures beyond the scope of ethics, a certain experience of shame, as I have argued, may shatter the clichés through which one habitually perceives the world, allowing to see, possibly for the first time, the intolerable conditions of existence of the animals suffering at our hands.

Those who wish to give a voice to those animals need to be aware of the difference between complicity and causation. While individual non-vegans might be complicit in upholding the status quo, they would not be, if it were not for powerful ideological forces exerting pressure on them on behalf of an economic system interested in self-perpetuation. Therefore, those who wish to act on behalf of the animals need to tackle the various systemic conditions influencing individual consumer's agency, lest they become themselves complicit in reinforcing these conditions. Part of the narrative that ensures the system's continued existence consists precisely in its insistence that there are no systemic conditions and, moreover, that eating animal products is not a moral issue but only a matter of personal choice. As Melanie Joy has shown, however, the consumption of animal products does not take place in a vacuum. One already learns as a child that eating meat – and animal products more generally – is normal, natural, and necessary. That beliefs like these are instilled into prospective consumers already at a very young age testifies to the fact that most people who consume animal products have never actually consciously decided to do so. It is simply what they have always done, what their parents have done and what countless generations before them have done. If something is morally wrong, however, it does not become morally right simply in virtue of having a tradition. The same holds true for the appeals to nature, i.e., the idea of the supposed naturalness of consuming animal products, that are, for example, often implicit in misleading commercials, unrealistically portraying animal agriculture in a pastoral and idyllic fashion. In this way, consumers are led to ignore the pressing moral issues at the heart of animal agriculture. To be a voice for the animals means to expose and reveal these issues, helping people in making informed decisions, instead of shaming them. People advocating to go plant-based need to remind themselves of the fact that they once were one of the "others" too, and that what they would have found most helpful in that situation is information, support and perhaps some good examples, some living proof that a different life is not just possible but even desirable. People want to be met with compassion not condemnation. One must be wary of creating barriers where bridges are needed.

My point, however, has certainly not been to dismiss or discredit activism per se. Direct, bottom-up action is needed to achieve social change, but it must be wary of false reductionism. Factory farming is a multi-faceted issue, whose victims are not just the animals confined in them. The animal slaughtering and processing industry, for example, is one of the most dangerous fields of employment. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2015 that the

frequency of injuries and illnesses was higher amongst workers in this sector than for all manufacturing and for all private industry (Smith, 2017). Besides health and safety hazards, workers at slaughterhouses are often driven there by systemic injustices. In line with this, a 2005-report by the Government Accountability Office to the U.S. Senate, found that more than 38% of production line workers are immigrants. Of all the workers employed in the meat and poultry industry, the report states, 20% were African American and 42% Hispanic or Latino (ibid.). Furthermore, livestock industry is a major greenhouse gas emitter, with a recent study published in the journal *Sustainability* estimating that livestock farming accounts for between 16,5% and 28% of all greenhouse gas pollution, thereby showing that the official figure of 14,5% published by the FAO is outdated (Twine, 2021). Moreover, a study published in *Science,* which investigated a dataset based on almost 40000 farms in 119 countries and covering 40 food products accounting for 90% of all food consumed, found that meat, aquaculture, eggs and dairy use roughly 83% of the world's farming land, while only providing 37% of our protein and only 18% of our calories (Poore and Nemecek, 2019). To make matters worse, factory farming constitutes a significant pandemic risk (Samuel, 2020).

In order to effectively tackle intensive livestock farming, one needs to take into account its multi-faceted issues. At the same time, however, one must be wary of the dangers that come with taking on board so-called extrinsic arguments, which appeal to considerations that are politically, historically, or logically separable from the aim they seek to promote (cf. Perlo, 2007, p. 6). As Katherine Perlo points out:

> When animal rights arguments are based on extrinsic features, or even include them prominently as supplements, the result may be inconsistency, concessions to speciesism, concealment of moral principles, unconscious double standards, ethical ambiguity, remoteness and uncertainty of projected outcomes, and the suggestion that animal-related considerations are not important enough to make the case on their own. (ibid.)

Like many animal rights activists and scholars, I am convinced that animal-related considerations are in and of themselves important enough to make a case on their own. However, I am also convinced that the struggle for animal equality is ultimately inseparable from the struggle against any kind of oppression. Thus, what implicitly underlies my argument for the constructive use of shame as a means of critique on behalf of the animals suffering at the hands of society is the conviction that the struggle for animal equality is ultimately an

interspecies struggle that encompasses human and nonhuman life alike and is directed against all kinds of social injustice and oppression. This idea is rooted in the “Ten Principles of Critical Animal Studies” laid down by Steven Best, Anthony J. Nocella, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti and Lisa Kemmerer in 2007, and it is an idea that is central to critical animal studies in general. As Steven Best, one of the founders of critical animal studies, writes, “’critical animal studies’ takes shape in awareness of historically-constructed ideologies and systems of power and domination in which humans have oppressed and exploited animals” (Best, 2007, p. 1). Insofar as it was one of the present work’s main objectives to show how shame may become a tool in the critique of such systems of power and domination, this work is in line with critical animal studies’ use of theory “as a means to the end of illuminating and ending domination” (ibid.).

In order to argue for shame’s critical potential as a means to such an end, one must – as I have attempted – give shame a new meaning by showing that it may not necessarily work in the name of power but that it can be used against it. Distinguishing between two forms of shame, namely “synchronic shame” and “diachronic shame” –, Eric Severson has argued that “shame is a powerful tool of synchrony, deployed through overt and covert means; shame provides powerful and mostly effective boundaries to enforce moral synchronization” (2021, p. 148). According to this logic, everything that is not normal, i.e., does not conform to the dominant norms and values, is rendered shameful. In this way, synchronic shame is marked by a shameless indifference toward the other. Synchronic shame occurs when those who are responsible blame others, often enough the victims themselves, for the harms they themselves have caused. For this reason, Severson writes: “This is, in fact, the clearest hallmark of privilege: those in power find gazing at suffering to be optional” (2021, p. 152). I have argued above that we must not ignore the suffering of others. Diachronic shame, which corresponds roughly to what I have called extraordinary shame – an example of which is zoophagic shame –, opens one up to the suffering of the other. As Severson puts it, it “pulls human beings out of the universal time and into particularized responsibility for the suffering other” (2021, p. 156). Zoophagic shame, as I have conceived it, is shame with regards to the animals suffering at our hands. What makes this shame a valuable moral emotion, is that it allows to see the intolerable in what is commonsensically regarded as the normal, natural, and necessary relation between humans and animals. But this shame is no less political. It reveals one’s complicity with a system that creates injustice and suffering, which demonstrates that shame need not be an

instrument of oppression in the name of power but that it rather creates a hitch in this system, a moment of truth that destabilizes the status quo. Contrary to the pessimistic view on shame, according to which shame needs to be overcome, the picture I have sketched suggests an ethics and a politics of shame that emphasize the need to embrace it. A liability to shame may be the only true safeguard against the shamelessness of one's time.

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