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The Ethics of Shame in Ancient Greek Tragedy

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the ethical significance of shame (Gr. *aidôs*/*aischunê*) in Ancient Greek tragedy, focusing on how this complex emotion is depicted in the works of Sophocles and Euripides. It argues that shame, traditionally viewed as a negative emotion, serves as a crucial lens for understanding the ethical frameworks of these tragedies. By analyzing key texts—Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Philoctetes*, and Euripides' *Helen*—the work elucidates three interrelated dimensions of shame: its intersubjective structure, its evaluative aspects concerning beauty and ugliness, and its connection to embodiment. The study proposes that the ethical subjectivity inherent in shame is inextricably linked to the subject's relationship with others, open to the aesthetic evaluation of others, and fundamentally vulnerable in its embodied state.

Taking up the old discussion concerning shame and guilt cultures, this study puts forth a novel approach to the concept of shame culture. It proposes that instead of simply taking shame as an indicator of a culture that values masculine, competitive, and egocentric ideals, a detailed study of the workings of shame can help us call into question the values and assumptions behind the ethical relevance of guilt.

Divided into three main chapters, the study begins by focusing on the intersubjective structure of shame in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Examining the play in conjunction with modern phenomenological analyses of intersubjectivity (particularly those of Jean-Paul Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas), the study argues that besides being structured around the exposure to the Other, shame is intersubjective also in the sense that it can move inter subjects, transmitting according to a model of contagion. The second part of the dissertation offers an interpretation of *Philoctetes*, with a focus on the evaluative aspects of shame. Building on the idea of aestheticizing ethics in antiquity, especially as developed by Michel Foucault, it proposes that the values intrinsic to shame operate in a manner analogous to aesthetic values, and that shame (especially *aidôs*) serves as the mediator that binds the ethical subject to these values. Third, the study addresses the relationship between shame and the body, by reading Euripides' *Helen* alongside Giorgio Agamben's and Sara Ahmed's theories of shame. On the one hand, the study proposes that public shaming and defamation have profound effects on the bodies of their victims and, on the other, that it is precisely the bodily vulnerability of the subject that makes shame possible in the first place. The study proposes that the experience of vulnerability is also a place where self-love can emerge, and that shame is, ultimately, a desire to protect and take care of the self.

Keywords: ancient tragedy, shame, guilt, emotions, shame-culture, subjectivity, embodiment

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Käsillä oleva väitöskirja tutkii häpeän (kr. *aidôs*/*aiskhynê*) eettistä merkitystä antiikin kreikkalaisessa tragediakirjallisuudessa. Tutkimus tarkastelee, millä tavoin häpeän tunne ja häpeällisyyden teemat esiintyvät erityisesti Sofokleen ja Euripideen näytelmissä. Työn lähtökohtana on, että häpeä, joka on perinteisesti nähty negatiivisena ilmiönä, tarjoaa erinomaisen työkalun traagisen etiikan sisäisen logiikan erittelyyn. Kolmen keskeisen tekstin – Sofokleen Kuningas Oidipus ja Filoktetes sekä Euripideen Helena – analyysin pohjalta työ ehdottaa, että häpeää määrittää kolme toisiinsa kietoutuvaa aspektia: tunteen intersubjektiivinen rakenne, sen suhde esteettisiin arvostelmiin sekä sen perustava ruumiillisuus. Väitöskirjan tavoitteena on osoittaa, että häpeän tunne viittaa sellaiseen eettiseen subjektiviteettiin, jonka olemista määrittää subjektin suhde toisiin, sen asema esteettisenä objektina ja sen ruumiillinen haavoittuvaisuus.

Tutkimus ottaa osaa niin sanottujen häpeä- ja syyllisyyskulttuurien ympärillä käytyyn keskusteluun tarjoamalla uutta näkökulmaa häpeän sisäiseen logiikkaan. Sen sijaan että häpeä ymmärrettäisiin yksinkertaisesti indikaattorina kilpailuun ja henkilökohtaiseen kunniaan perustuvasta kulttuurista, häpeän yksityiskohtainen tarkastelu mahdollistaa syyllisyyden eettisen aseman kyseenalaistamisen.

Työ jakautuu kolmeen päälukuun. Ensimmäinen luku keskittyy *Kuningas Oidipuksen* lähilukuun ja häpeän kokemuksen intersubjektiiviseen rakenteeseen. Osiossa näytelmää luetaan vasten modernin fenomenologian piirissä esitettyjä intersubjektiivisuuden analyyseja (erityisesti Jean-Paul Sartren ja Emmanuel Levinasin) ja argumentoidaan, että sen lisäksi, että Sofokleen kuvaama häpeän kokemus rakentuu toisen katseelle paljastumisen varaan, häpeän intersubjektiivisuus näkyy myös tunteen kyvyssä levitä hahmojen välillä, tartuntataudin tavoin. Toisen pääluvun keskiössä on *Filoktetes*-näytelmä ja häpeän suhde arvoihin ja arviointiin. Antiikin etiikan esteettisyyttä koskevan keskustelun valossa esitetään, että antiikin häpeän kannalta keskeiset arvot (*kalon* ja *aiskhron*) toimivat esteettisten arvojen tavoin. Luku argumentoi, että häpeä (erityisesti *aidôs*) toimii välittäjänä, joka sitoo eettisten subjektin näihin arvoihin. Viimeiseksi työ käsittelee häpeän ja ruumiillisuuden välistä suhdetta sellaisena kuin se näyttäytyy Euripideen *Helenassa* sekä Giorgio Agambenin ja Sara Ahmedin häpeää koskevissa analyyseissa. Yhtäältä päättävä luku esittää, että julkisella häpäisyllä ja nöyryytyksellä on perustavia vaikutuksia uhriensa ruumiiden tasolla, ja toisaalta ruumiillinen haavoittuvaisuus on häpeän tunteen välttämätön mahdollisuusehto. Lopuksi työ ehdottaa, että häpeää määrittää aina halu tulla rakastetuksi ja halu saada huolenpitoa.

Asiasanat: antiikin tragedia, häpeä, syyllisyys, tunteiden filosofia, häpeäkulttuuri, subjektiviteetti, ruumiillisuus

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CONTENTS

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The objective of this dissertation is to study the ethical significance of shame in ancient Greek tragedy. In a study on *ethics*, both elements of this objective call for clarification: Why shame? Why tragedy?

To begin with the latter, a point of departure for this study was a sense of perplexity I felt while reading the works of the classical tragedians of Athens. For me, the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides always seemed to include something foreign and inexplicable in the ethical dilemmas that formed the heart of their dramatic movement. Why is some form of suffering acceptable and others are not? Why do the characters choose to act in certain ways while other courses of action seem unthinkable? Why is someone condemned while others are praised? From this perplexity arose the present study's founding premise: that tragedy presents its own peculiar ethical rationality. An ethical rationality that in some respects diverges from the more familiar philosophical approaches to ethics – both ancient and modern.

Shame, on the other hand, brings with it another kind of confusion. From the vantage point of modern ethics, shame is deeply ambivalent, potentially violent, and often discriminatory. In ancient Greek ethical thought, however, shame (Gr. *aidôs*/*aischunê*) plays a significant role. It is often portrayed as a beneficial emotion and an indispensable element in the foundations of communities. In Greek tragedy, shame is a complex compound phenomenon, which is understood both as an emotion and as an appropriate *attitude* toward the shameful and ugly (*to aischron*). However, shame is also a destructive element in the dramas, driving both individuals and communities to ruin.

One premise of this study is the contention that shame is key to understanding the ethical rationalities of tragedy. Shame helps to clarify those aspects of tragedy that sometimes feel foreign, illogical, or even unethical to modern audiences or readers. These are, I will argue, the consequences and rationalities of an ethics of shame, an ethics that takes as its foundation the intersubjectivity of being, a sense of beauty, and the body.

The dissertation focuses on three interrelated aspects of shame—the intersubjective structure of shame, the values attributed to shame, and the close

relationship between shame and embodiment. This study will be guided by four central research questions:

1. What is the experiential structure of shame and how is this structure assembled around vision, the experiences of seeing and being seen, in the tragedies? How does the self become visible to itself in shame, and how does the intersubjectivity of shame play into this self-relation?
2. How is shame connected to processes of evaluation—both self-evaluation and the evaluation of the actions and traits of others? How and what kind of values inform the experience of shame? How does the connection between shame and (especially) aesthetic values enable shame to be conceived as an ethically indispensable emotion in Greek texts?
3. How is shame related to embodiment, particularly to the potential fragility of the body? Does the link between shame and embodiment also reflect gendered ways of experiencing shame? How does embodiment function in situations of active and abusive shaming?
4. Finally, in addressing the above questions, I aim to explore how shame is connected to (ethical) subjectivity. What and who is the subject of shame?

I shall address the first three questions in relation to three different tragedies. First, the intersubjective structure of shame will be examined in relation to Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Second, Sophocles' *Philoctetes* will be analyzed with respect to the evaluative aspects of shame. Finally, I shall examine the embodied aspects of shame through a reading of Euripides' *Helen*. Based on these three close readings of individual tragedies, I offer the following insights:

1. With *Oedipus*, I demonstrate that the element of vision and the act of looking are essential in the experience of shame, which emerges within an interpersonal *web of gazes*. The experiences of looking and being seen impact not only the ashamed person but also the witnesses. Thus, I propose that shame is transferred by means of a model of *contamination*, by virtue of proximities rather than chains of cause and effect.
2. In my reading of the *Philoctetes*, I discuss the negative value of the *aischron* (shameful/ugly), arguing that the evaluation that takes place in shame is simultaneously ethical and aesthetic. I suggest that the evaluative aspects of shame render it a socially beneficial emotion or attitude *but* that the evaluation is often potentially exclusionary and unjust. Shame and shamefulness, I argue, are phenomena that mark the fringes of a community.
3. In my reading of Euripides' *Helen*, I suggest that shame is intimately related to the vulnerability of the body—to the fact that all bodies are potentially vulnerable both to being looked at and to being harmed. Through an exploration of the gendered phenomenon of victim shaming,

I argue that the experience of shame may be fundamentally separated from the notion of responsibility, given that it arises from the subject's bodily passivity.

4. The argument that runs throughout the chapters considers the subject of shame. I shall argue that the subject of shame has specific characteristics: by virtue of its interconnectedness, it is vulnerable to a contagious feeling of shame, it is sensitive to the aesthetic evaluations of others, and its embodiment is both a source of vulnerability and a site of reparative self-love.

My work builds on previous studies that have focused on shame in ancient Greek thought (or, in some cases, specifically on the emotion of *aidôs*).[1] Owing to the central position that it occupies in Greek ethics, the theme of shame/*aidôs* has been the subject of extensive commentary. Carl von Erffa's *Aidôs* from 1937 and Douglas Cairns' *Aidôs* from 1993 are the most comprehensive studies on the instances of *aidôs* in Greek literature. Both treat textual material from Homeric epic up to the fourth century BCE and also investigate the role of *aidôs* in the extant works of the three major tragedians. While these studies are indispensable as resources to support our understanding of Greek shame, my study offers a closer analysis of the selected tragedies and aims to contribute greater philosophical depth than is permitted by a philological approach.

A key strand that has emerged in the study of ancient shame is the discussion of "shame cultures" (discussed in greater detail below). This discussion considers what it might mean more generally for Greek ethics that so much weight is put on shame as well as on the phenomena connected to reputation: merit, honor, glory, and disgrace. Significant contributions include E. R. Dodds' *Greeks and the Irrational* (1951), Arthur Adkins' polemical *Merit and Responsibility* (1960), and Bernard William's brief discussion in *Shame and Responsibility* (1993). My dissertation shall serve as a comment within this conversation on the cultural meanings of shame and merit in Greek literature. While I side with the recognition that Greek literature from Homer to the tragedians placed significant weight on shame and honor, I will argue against interpreting the so-called shame culture as an ethically underdeveloped system of valuation.

More philosophically motivated studies on ancient shame have quite naturally focused on the role of shame in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. The numerous studies of shame in the ethical theories of Plato (e.g., Fine 2016; Tarnopolsky 2010; Futter 2009; Cain 2008; Moss 2005; Kekes 1988) and Aristotle (e.g., Jimenez 2020; Raymond 2017; Fussi 2015; Konstan 2006; Belfiore 1992) serve as valuable parallels for a study on tragic shame. In light of the special position that tragedy holds in classical Greek ethics, I highlight the need for an original and extensive philosophical study of the significance of shame in the tragedies.

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[1] Some commentators maintain that Greek *aidôs* is not the same emotion as modern shame. I shall return to the differences between ancient and modern shame below.

By introducing a more historical perspective the study also contributes toward understanding the modern concept of shame. I discuss and elaborate on several modern and contemporary theories of shame including Scheler (1987 [1913]), Levinas (2003 [1935]), Sartre (2003 [1943]), Tomkins (2008 [1963]), Taylor (1985), Agamben (1999), Ahmed (2004), Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni (2011), and Dolezal (2015).

My research material consists of all extant tragedies attributed to Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Of these, as noted above, I have chosen to focus on three individual tragedies: Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Helen*. This will permit a close analysis of the texts, each of which centers the emotion of shame both on the level of the plot and on the level of the central imagery. Each of these plays sheds light on a different aspect of shame. I have chosen *Oedipus*, *Philoctetes*, and *Helen* specifically as representatives of the aspects of shame identified above—intersubjectivity, values, and embodiment, respectively. The Greek text of Euripides' *Hippolytus* is from W. S. Barrett 1964 and *Helen* from Allan 2008; the text of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is from R. D. Dawe 2008 and *Philoctetes* from Seth L. Schein 2013. For the Greek text of Plato, I have used Burnet (ed.) *Platonis opera*, 1967. For Aristotle, I have used the editions in the Oxford Classical Texts series.

Sophocles' *Oedipus* stages one of the most violent eruptions of shame in surviving tragedy, the protagonist's act of self-blinding. Themes of shame and vision make *Oedipus* an excellent source for exploring shame's social and intersubjective aspects. In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, shame functions on the level of the plot, as the emergence of shame marks the point of reversal in the drama. The play exemplifies how shame can guide ethical and aesthetic evaluation. Euripides' *Helen*, in turn, presents a protagonist who suffers because she is actively shamed by others in her community. The play focuses on the public humiliation of Helen as well as the shame associated with sexual violence, thus highlighting the connection between the emotion, gender, and the body.

The material studied in this dissertation, then, is drawn from mythological, non-philosophical literature. Nonetheless, my approach to the selected texts is philosophical. I maintain that a philosophically motivated reading of literary sources—prose, poetry, and drama—can yield new and original insights into these texts. I shall ask how shame functions in each play and how it is dramatically represented in addition to asking what the emotion tells us about each play's ethical reasoning and what kind of subjectivities this emotion presupposes and helps to construct. I shall not read the plays in a vacuum but rather within their broad historical context, drawing on examples from epic, lyric, and—most notably—philosophy. In particular, I shall discuss Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of shame, reading them in relation to tragedy. Given that Plato and Aristotle were well acquainted with tragedy, their writings on shame, ethics, and emotions in general often offer valuable parallels to and commentaries on tragedy.

INTRODUCTION

In a famously confusing speech, the character of Phaedra in Euripides' *Hippolytus* makes perplexing remarks on the nature of shame:

> Life's pleasures are many:
> long talks and leisure – a lovely evil –
> and *shame* (*aidôs*). Yet it is of two sorts, one being no bad thing,
> another burden for houses. If the right moment were clear,
> there would not be two things designated with the same letters.
> (E. *Hipp*. 383–7.)[2]

Among life's many pleasures, Phaedra lists discussions and idleness—as well as shame. Already the categorization of shame as pleasant strikes the reader (or the audience) as peculiar. Phaedra goes on to distinguish between two distinct, yet homonymous types of shame. One of the two is "not a bad thing," but its counterpart is a shame that "burdens houses." Phaedra's statement succinctly exemplifies tragic irony, as it is precisely shame—her own shame—that will bring her house to ruin.

The dramatic constellation of Euripides' *Hippolytus* coheres around the illicit desire that Phaedra, the young wife of king Theseus, feels for her stepson, Hippolytus. This love, she acknowledges, is commonly considered a great shame, and shame is also the emotion that she herself experiences as a result of her forbidden love.[3] But when (as the audience might expect) Phaedra's illicit feelings are ultimately disclosed to Hippolytus, who then rejects her in disgust, Phaedra's shame becomes even more violent. To save her face, she pens a letter in which she falsely accuses Hippolytus of rape—thereby passing on the

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[2] εἰσὶ δ᾽ ἡδοναὶ πολλαὶ βίου, / μακραί τε λέσχαι καὶ σχολή, τερπνὸν κακόν, / αἰδώς τε. δισσαὶ δ᾽ εἰσίν, ἡ μὲν οὐ κακή, / ἡ δ᾽ ἄχθος οἴκων. εἰ δ᾽ ὁ καιρὸς ἦν σαφής, / οὐκ ἂν δύ᾽ ἤστην ταῦτ᾽ ἔχοντε γράμματα.' Translations of the *Hippolytus* are from Kovacs 2005. Here the translation has been modified significantly. Kovacs translates *aidôs* as "awe" and takes *dissai* as referring to the *hêdonai* and not to *aidôs*. However, Kovacs' interpretation rests on an assumption that there is a lacuna in the passage (see Kovacs, 1980). On the passage, see also Segal 1970.

[3] Phaedra has become literally sick with shame; cf. *hê nosos,* 269.

shame[4]—and hangs herself. As the accusation reaches Theseus (Phaedra's husband and Hippolytus' father), he curses his son to death for "shaming his father's bed" (944).[5] And when Hippolytus tries to defend his honor in vain, Theseus remains unmoved, for his own has been violated. The son dies before the truth emerges, and the goddess Artemis reproaches the horrified father realizing his mistake, saying that he should "hide [his] body beneath the earth's depths in shame" (1290–1).[6] As the affective tide has touched everyone in the drama,[7] the play ends up with two dead bodies and one ruined life. Shame has proven to be a burden to the house.

The play, then, centers on the notions of shame and reputation in its procession of shaming and insults, lies and false accusations, loss of reputation, family disgrace, violence, and death. It is a study on how *the wish to avoid shame*, to *save one's face*, can lead people to desperate actions. Shame and disgrace circulate between the drama's characters as they try to avoid the horrifying prospect of losing one's reputation. As Phaedra says, it is not worth having shameful deeds against one's name "all to save a single life" (720–21).[8] For her, keeping her name clear is more precious than life itself.[9]

This is a study on the tragic affect of shame. *Tragic* because shame carries with it the potential to develop into violence; because of its destructive affinities with other emotions, such as pride and disgust; its transmissibility from person to person as though it were an infection; and its complex relationship to forms of vulnerability, such as love. Shame, in its tragic potentiality, fuels the plot of the *Hippolytus*, from the relatively harmless offense of harboring illicit desire into a full-blown disaster. However, as Phaedra points out, shame is ambivalent. Although its consequences are violent and catastrophic, no one in the play suggests that they would be better off without shame. Phaedra voices an attitude that is evident throughout Greek tragedy in general: shame is both destructive *and* beneficial. The task of this dissertation is to study this phenomenon and address the question of how something that brings so much pain can also be a "pleasure."

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[4] It should be noted that, in the tragedies, rape is considered a shame *both* for the perpetrator *and* for the victim. I shall discuss the theme of victim shaming in the final chapter of the dissertation.

[5] ἤσχυνε τἀμὰ λέκτρα.

[6] πῶς οὐχ ὑπὸ γῆς τάρταρα κρύπτεις / δέμας αἰσχυνθείς.

[7] Not even Artemis is untouched by the emotion, admitting that she has "come to shame" (*êlthon es tod' aischunês* 1332) for not being able to save Hippolytus.

[8] οὐδ᾽ ἐς πρόσωπον Θησέως ἀφίξομαι / αἰσχροῖς ἐπ᾽ ἔργοις οὔνεκα ψυχῆς μιᾶς.

[9] In commentaries, Phaedra's shame has been seen as a dangerous, selfish, and shallow instance of the emotion. Bernard Williams calls Phaedra's shame a "conventional [form of] shame, an overwhelming concern for her own reputation" (Williams 1993, 96). Charles Segal sees it as an example of "externalized shame," which he defines as a tendency to give into social convention at the cost of "private morality." According to Segal, Phaedra will give so much weight to public opinion that "The idea of wrong-doing in itself seizes and terrifies her imagination less than its social consequences, being 'seen' and 'caught'" (Segal 1970, 282). David Kovacs is critical of these readings. He argues that Phaedra's choices in the play are very much in line with the moral reasoning of her own time. Thus, according to Kovacs, she is consistent and principled, acknowledging the value and worth of a good reputation in the society in which she lives. (Kovacs 1980).

In his seminal book, *Greeks and the Irrational* (1951), E. R. Dodds suggested that the world depicted in Homer's epics is best defined as a "shame-culture." A "shame-culture," Dodds proposes, differs from the so-called "guilt-cultures" of modern Western societies by virtue of its emphasis on a different type of moral sanctioning. Whereas guilt is based on "internal sanctions," such as pangs of conscience, a sense of sin, or an assumption of responsibility, shame, on the contrary, relies on "external sanctions," such as losing face or public ridicule.[10] Indeed, for the Homeric heroes resemble Euripides' Phaedra in this respect as the attainment of honor or glory, saving face, and avoiding public disgrace appear to have represented for them the highest of ethical goods—in the place of other, more modest virtues, such as fairness or humility. The attitude is exemplified in Heraclitus' fragment, according to which, "The best men seek for one thing only, an everlasting fame (*kleos*)" (DK B29). As Dodds frames it, a shame culture is one that places greater weight on *honor* than on *justice*. (Dodds 1951, 28–50).

Taking up Dodds' proposition, Arthur Adkins (1960) argues that shame culture was not restricted to the Homeric world but persisted well into the lifetimes of Plato and Aristotle (Dodds himself claimed that the ancient shame culture gave way to a guilt culture during the sixth century BCE, and saw the classical tragedies as manifestations of this newly emerged sensibility).[11] According to Adkins, shame culture defines an ethical outlook that adopts outward appearances as its premise, in which the ultimate ethical task is then not *to be* good but *to appear* good in the eyes of one's friends or enemies. Because of this, he infers, the Greeks were unable to conceive of such basic moral concepts as justice, moral responsibility, or conscience, being—at least up until Plato and Aristotle—in some sense im*moral*.

Adkins' and Dodds' positions have since been heavily criticized, but also misunderstood. The most exhaustive criticisms have been advanced by Bernard Williams (1993) and Douglas Cairns (1993) in their studies on Greek shame and ethics.[12] Both call into question the claim that the Greeks were somehow morally (or psychologically) underdeveloped, as Adkins seems to suggest. Rather, Williams and Cairns argue that the ancient Greek concept of shame is, in fact, similar to our modern conception of guilt and that, consequently, the difference between shame and guilt cultures is merely a hypothetical projection. It is difficult not to agree with Cairns and Williams; a theory of temporally distinct cultures defined by a single emotion is rudimentary at best (already a perusal of the Homeric epics reveals a difference between the logics of public honor within the military context of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*'s emphasis on the stealthy

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[10] Dodds adopts the term from Ruth Benedict's influential anthropological study on the specifics of Japanese culture and society, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). Benedict uses the term "shame-culture" to describe Japanese society, contrasting it with the Western "guilt-culture." Understandably, Benedict's division has been contested by anthropologists for its Eurocentrism (for an overview, see Lie 2001).

[11] However, the ethical entanglements of the *Hippolytus* seem to speak to this kind of valuation as well.

[12] I should note here that Cairns does not exactly study ancient shame; rather, his study focuses on the ancient emotion of *aidôs*, which he claims is distinct from shame (Cairns 1993, 14). I shall return to this later.

application of cunning intelligence), and for morally underdeveloped people, the Greeks appear to have engaged in surprisingly detailed discussions on ethical problems.

However, for modern readers of the *Hippolytus*—as well as of other tragedies, Homeric epic, archaic lyric and elegiac poetry, Athenian oratory, or Plato's dialogues—it is evident that shame and endeavors to *avoid* it are ubiquitous. Shame is a governing emotion and a prominent value marker in the ethical discourses of classical Greek literature. Questions of public reputation, personal honor, and humiliation are indeed pronounced when compared with "our own" modern philosophical ethical or moral discourse. Phaedra's preoccupation with shame and name are not unique to her but rather are questions with which she is expected to struggle.

The premise of this study, then, will be the recognition that *there are indeed differences between systems of ethics*. Different historical periods and different cultures or groups conceive of ethics in different terms, not only when it comes to defining a good life or praiseworthy action, but also on the level of *what is taken to be the field of application of ethics*. One such difference lies between the tragic understanding of ethics and modern ethical discourses. This study suggests that a key to this difference lies in how the tragedies give (ethical) weight to phenomena that are associated with shame. That is, I will revisit the perhaps already obsolete idea of shame culture, and consider the possibility of discovering an ethical rationality governed by shame instead of guilt.

While the notion of guilt is discussed in the dissertation at times, the primary task is to shed light on the phenomenon of shame, *aidôs* and *aischunê* in Greek,[13] perhaps the less "honorable" of these two emotions. I will aim for a representation and elaboration of a shame-ethics proper, rather than a comparison between the two emotions and their respective ethical rationalities. I suggest that the very nature of shame has been insufficiently grasped in the debates that surround cultures of shame and guilt.

In tragedy, shame appears as a manifold phenomenon, being at once both social and intimately personal, private and public, embodied and discursive, evaluative and unreflective, beneficial and destructive, touching both those at the top of political hierarchies and those who barely count as subjects. The main objective of the dissertation is to analyze how shame functions in the tragedies: how the experience is staged and performed, how the emotion works on the level of the plot, and which things count as shameful. The work analyzes in particular how the emotion of shame and the accompanying negative evaluation of

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[13] Ancient Greek has two terms that can be used to denote shame or shame-related phenomena. These are *aidôs* and *aischunê*. I shall return to the ancient terminology of shame later in the introduction. Here, it should be noted that there is no consensus on whether these two are synonymous or whether they have different fields of application (*aischunê* aligning more with the modern-day sense of shame and *aidôs* meaning something like "sense of shame" or even respect and awe). Anticipating my own argument, I note here that I consider both terms to refer to different facets in the cluster of shame-related phenomena. However, I maintain that both mean something like shame, in that they are feelings that arise when people are exposed to the eyes of others, involve blushing, and are often used more or less interchangeably in ancient texts.

"shamefulness" appear and function in classical tragedies. I do not aim for a strict—or potentially reductive—philosophical definition of the emotion. Rather, I wish to offer a thick description of this rich and multifaceted phenomenon.

As the discussion around shame and guilt cultures shows, the study of past ethics (or conception of emotions) is invariably colored by the reader's belief system or horizon of interpretation. Owing to the historical distance between us and the ancient Greeks, it goes without saying that the requirements for interpretation are particularly challenging in our case. In discussions concerning historical configurations of shame and guilt and the respective "cultures," different conceptions and contentions of what ethics is—or *should be*—have also clouded the picture. Commentators have wished either to shield the Greeks from accusations of immorality or to condemn them to a stage of permanent underdevelopment. In my reading of the tragedies, I aim (and this is no small task) for a certain "methodological ignorance"—that is, to avoid reading the tragedies with pre-established conviction on what an ethics should contain. Rather, I intend to read the texts as though I did not know whether shame is good or bad—for, if we are to believe Phaedra, it is ambivalent.

Shame and justice

There is a traditional view expressed in ancient Greek literature that takes shame – especially *aidôs* – to be a prerequisite for all forms of living in common. In a well-known passage from Plato's *Protagoras*, the eponymous character delivers a lengthy speech on the origins of human societies. Protagoras says that when the first people were created in the past, the gods forgot to furnish them with any means of protection—such as the wings, thick fur, or sharp claws that all non-human animals had—which left them vulnerable to the attacks of other animals. Seeking protection, people came together to form the first cities just to realize that they were unable to live together, for they lacked (alongside wings and claws) a civic art (*politikê technê*). Witnessing the injustices that people perpetrated against one another, Zeus decided to intervene, as Protagoras explains:

> Zeus was afraid that our whole race might be wiped out, so he sent Hermes to bring justice (*dikê*) and a sense of shame (*aidôs*) to humans, so that there would be order within cities and bonds of friendship to unite them. [And when Hermes inquired whether these should be distributed to all citizens or only to a few, Zeus replied] "To all, and let all have a share. For cities would never come to be if only a few possessed these, as is the case with the other arts. And establish this law as coming from me: Death to him who cannot partake of shame (*aidôs*) and justice (*dikê*), for he is a pestilence to the city." (Pl. *Prt.* 322c1–d1)[14]

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[14] All translations of Plato are from Cooper (ed.) 1997, unless otherwise indicated.

Aidôs and *dikê*, shame and justice, Protagoras claims, are indispensable skills (*technai*) for people who wish to live with one another.[15] Without them, a city will come to ruin, and a human being prove a pestilence to his or her community.

Protagoras' vision of shame and justice arriving among people is effectually a reversal of a much older, Hesiodic myth (Corey 2015, 52).[16] Whereas in Protagoras' story, people begin without shame and justice, acquiring them only through divine intervention, Hesiod's people begin with all the virtues required for communal life but eventually lose them because of their wickedness. In Hesiod's myth, the final phase of these early people's demise leads to the disintegration of social bonds and rejection of conventions—children do not honor their parents; brothers fight brothers; guest-friendships perish; and oaths, honesty, and justice lose their meaning. As Hesiod writes, "shame will no longer exist" (*aidôs ouk estai*, Hes. *Op.* 192–3). Instead,

> Shame (*Aidôs*) and Indignation (*Nemesis*) will cover their beautiful skin with white mantles, leave human beings behind and go from the board-pathed earth to the race of the immortals, to Olympus. Baleful pains will be left for mortal human beings, and there will be no safeguard (*alkê*) against evil. (Hes. *Op.* 197–201)[17]

To live together, the myths of Hesiod and Protagoras suggest, people need "safeguards against evil." One necessary safeguard is shame, the other one if found from the sphere of law and justice (*dikê*, *nemesis*).[18]

For the same idea expressed in a tragic context, let us consider a speech from Sophocles' *Ajax*. In a lengthy dispute over whether one should bury a traitor (which is, in effect, a dispute over honor and justice), King Menelaus declares,

> The laws (*nomoi*) of a city can never function well where no one is afraid […] when there is no protection of fear and shame (*aidôs*). Even if a man has a mighty frame, he must remember that he can be brought down even by a small mischief. Know that when a man feels fear and shame (*aischunê*), then he is safe! But where he can be insolent (*hybrizein dran*) and do as he pleases,

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[15] This means that, according to Protagoras people were not social or political *by nature*. The divinely endowed *aidôs* and *dikê* that make communal life possible are not inherent capacities but rather skills or arts (*technai*). Unlike other *technai*, these two should not be distributed exclusively to the few but to all (cf. McCoy 1998).

[16] Whereas Hesiod's people start out with *aidôs*, *nemesis*, and *dikê*—and lose these "cooperative" virtues because of their baseness—in Protagoras' account, people start out without these "divine bulwarks against evil" and only later are granted *aidôs* and *dikê* (Corey 2015, 49).

[17] Translation Most 2018, modified.

[18] The texts refer to two different concepts (*dikê*, *nemesis*) that are both familiar from legal discourse. Plato's Protagoras speaks of *dikê*, which translates quite straightforwardly as 'justice.' Hesiod's myth pairs shame with the personified *nemesis*, which can be translated as 'rightful indignation' but also shares an etymological and conceptual root with the Greek word for law, *nomos*. On the *aidôs*–*nemesis* pair, see Cairns 1993, 51–54; Redfield (1975, 116) calls *aidôs* and *nemesis* "a reflexive pair" in the Homeric literature: "*Aidôs* inhibits action by making the heroes feel that if they acted thus they would be out of place or in the wrong. *Nemesis* drives one to attack those who have shown themselves lacking a proper *aidôs*."

believe that that city, though at first it has sailed along easily, will in time sink to the bottom! (S. *Aj*. 1073–1083)[19]

Again, shame (here Menelaus speaks of both *aidôs* and *aischunê*) appears alongside law and as a prerequisite for living in a *polis*. Keeping individualistic impulses and uncivilized hubris in check, shame allows the state ship to sail happily.

In all these passages, both shame and justice/law are presented as essential communal and political factors. Shame can make people refrain from doing things that are considered ugly (*aischron*), while justice keeps scales balanced. In Menelaus' speech, however, the relationship between shame and the sphere of law is more nuanced: there, shame is not only a companion to but also the very condition of possibility for laws to function, and for justice to exist. It is noteworthy that in these passages neither shame nor justice is considered sufficient by itself. This would indicate that these safeguards *are not coincident*. Neither are they subordinate to each other, neither shame to justice nor justice to shame.

This simple recognition serves as a basis for my discussion of shame in the dissertation: that shame and justice belong to two different ethical discourses. Dodds' suggestion that a shame culture is one that values honor over justice catches a fundamental feature of shame, which is that it bears no *necessary* correlation with justice or with law in general. Building on this distinction, I will suggest that shame has its own rationality, and its own language of connectedness, embodiment, and aesthetics, which *is not that of justice*. The language of justice and law, of *dikê* and *nemesis*, on the other hand, is the domain proper of guilt. In what follows, I shall revisit the discussions on shame and guilt cultures through the lens of justice and its place in different ethical discourses in order to address the following question: What if the juridical register is not the sole or even the principal register in which ethics can be apprehended? What if justice (*dikê*) would not be an all-encompassing principle of ethics?

Ethics and morals

One way of capturing the difference between shame and justice is to consider the philosophical distinction between *ethics* and *morality*. The division has been formulated in several ways throughout the history of philosophy, but the one I am discussing here is to define ethics as dealing with the question of *how to live a good life* while conceiving morality as referring to doctrines concerning *what one ought to do*.[20] In this scheme, morality is conceived as a subspecies of ethics,

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[19] Translation Lloyd-Jones 1997. Translation slightly modified. Lloyd-Jones translates *aidôs* here as 'respect.'

[20] As ethics and morality have been differentiated in several ways, not all of them match the model chosen here. Note that the differentiation employed here is *historical* rather than analytical: see below and, e.g., Foucault 1990.

which, in turn, is taken to refer more vaguely to the aspects of good life and living together with others.[21] However, as with crude philosophical dichotomies (such as the divide between shame and guilt cultures), the issue is, of course, considerably more complex. Here, it will suffice to outline the difference insofar as it can help the basic distinctions between shame and guilt. To better grasp the difference between these two types of ethical reasoning, we can consider two emblematic examples in the history of philosophy.

The term 'ethics' is derived from Aristotle's term *êthikos* (i.e., pertaining to character) and his studies on the virtues of character, *êthikai aretai*. Aristotle opens the *Nicomachean Ethics* by stating that happiness, *eudaimonia*, is the chief aim of all living beings (*EN* 1.7. 1097a34–1097b21). In other words, happiness is presented as the foundation of the very discipline established in the book. According to Aristotle, happiness consists of both living and acting well or, in other words, acting according to virtue (*EN* 1097b22–1098a20). The goal for an individual, then, is the cultivation of one's habits (*ethê*) so that one's character or disposition might develop into a virtuous one. The virtuous life is good also in the sense that it "is also pleasant in itself," for virtuous individuals (*EN* 1199a7–21). These elements—happy life, virtuous character, pleasure—are the key points in which ethics differs from what later comes to be defined as morality.[22]

While Kant did not invent the term morality, he is often taken as the paradigmatic example of the approach and style. In the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, Kant states that morality—*Moralität*—has nothing to do with happiness. Happiness is merely a regard for the self, a regard that may jeopardize morality (Kant 2015 [1778], 70–71; 73). Furthermore, morality does not include pleasure but "displeasure of the action" and is defined by the moral subject's reluctant submission to the moral law (Kant 2015 [1778], 80). According to Kant morality or moral worth "must be placed solely in this: that *the action takes place from duty*, that is, *for the sake of the law alone*" (Kant 2015 [1778], 81; emphasis mine).[23] This type of moral language and reasoning, however, is by no means confined to Kant. The influence of the legal discourse infiltrates the moral philosophies of both deontologists and utilitarians (for example in the form of obligation), as well as the idea of infinite responsibility shared with thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jaques Derrida. We can recognize its effect, moreover, on the political demands of minority *rights*, climate *justice*, or *accountability* of the privileged.

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[21] For example, Williams defines morality as a specific *branch* of ethics, one that is preoccupied with duties and obligations as well as with blame, judgment, and punishment (Williams 2015 [1985], 7–9; 193–202).

[22] Aristotle's ethics has been discussed extensively. For general discussions on happiness, virtue, and pleasures in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, see, e.g., Annas 1993; Kraut 1979; Lear 2004; Long 2004; Heinaman 2011; and Charles 2017. For an analysis of the role of happiness in ancient ethics in general, see Rabbås et al. 2015.

[23] In his wish to marry morality and respect for law, Kant was not so much innovating as formulating a wider trend in the moral philosophy of his time—at least, if we are to believe David Hume. In *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1777), Hume complains that "modern philosophers" treat "all morals as on a like footing with civil laws, guarded by the sanctions of reward and punishment." (quoted from White 2002, 94).

This difference between the styles of ethical discourse has sometimes been interpreted as a difference between *ancient ethics* and *modern morality*. The ancients did not have morality, the moderns have forgotten ethics, the story goes; and depending on the writer, this is a blessing or a curse, either for the ancients or for the moderns.[24] However, this distinction has been heavily criticized. As Julia Annas (1992) points out, the claim that Plato or Aristotle did not discuss problems associated with "morality" in this taxonomy is plainly erroneous: surely they were interested in questions of punishment, liability, justice, and so on, besides contemplating the ethical question of how one should live one's life.[25] Consider, for example, Plato's fantasies of posthumous trials meting out punishments for wrongs committed during life (i.e., *Grg.* 523a4ff.). And to be sure, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, besides being the paradigmatic text of eudaimonism, also offers one of the first discussions concerning the basis on which people can be held responsible for their actions (*EN* III, 1–5).[26]

The difference in ethical reasoning labeled as ethics and morality need not, however, be a difference in the *problems* treated within ethical or moral philosophy. It is, rather, a difference in the *mode* of thinking, in the framework in which something comes to be identified as moral or ethical in the first place. It is also a question of *style* and that of *language*.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche speculates that the origin of *morality* (separated from ethics in general) lies in the "sphere of legal obligations." There, "the moral conceptual world of 'debt', 'conscience', 'duty', 'sacred duty', has its breeding ground" (Nietzsche 2006 [1887], 2.6., 41). While Nietzsche's claim is polemic, his intuition about the legal underpinnings of morality has garnered support from later writers—Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze, and Bernard Williams among others. Particularly appealing is Nietzsche's recognition that there are styles of moral philosophy that operate mainly *within a juridical discourse*—and that seem to predominate ethical discourse, both in Nietzsche's time and ours—but that there are and have been also those styles of ethics that employ a different kind of logic.

Applying Nietzsche's distinction to historical change in ethical thought, Foucault distinguishes in the *History of Sexuality* between the "code-oriented

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[24] For the long debate on the nature of Greek eudaimonistic ethics, see White 2005, especially chapter 3.

[25] The claim that ancient Greeks lacked morality is also called into question in Everson (1998), who recognizes a familiar mode of moral reasoning in the Greek concept of *dikaiosunê* (justice). Everson, however, also recognizes that the ancient emphasis on *eudaimonia* distinguishes ancient ethical theories from modern moral ones, which, in turn, generally center around questions of how to act in particular circumstances. Both Annas and Everson concentrate on philosophical sources—more specifically, philosophical sources from Plato onwards. In discussing pre-Platonic ethics, Kahn (1998) notes that concepts such as duty, moral obligation, and rights are missing from Greek deliberations and that the role of justice in ethical discussions was highly debated.

[26] Nicholas White (2002, 61–73) also questions the ethics—morality divide, arguing that ancient ethical discussions do not form a uniform, harmonic, and straightforwardly eudaimonistic view on ethics but concern those themes that are often grouped under morality. My argument does not assume a harmonized view of ancient ethics but rather a fundamentally pluralistic one—that is, I maintain that tragedies make use of both moral and ethical discourses simultaneously.

moralities" (i.e., those working with juridical concepts) and the "ethics-oriented moralities" peculiar to ancient ethical thought (Foucault 1990 [1985], 29–30). According to Foucault, in ancient ethics-oriented thinking, central ethical concerns concerned the ways in which the subject made themselves into a subject of ethics in the practices of the self. By contrast, regarding the "code-oriented moralities" (or "morality" in the vocabulary that I am using here), Foucault observes,

> With moralities of this type, the important thing is to focus on the instances of authority that enforce the code, that require it to be learned and observed, that penalize infractions; in these conditions, the subjectivation occurs basically in a quasi-juridical form, where the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws, to which he must submit at the risk of committing offences that may make him liable to punishment. (Foucault 1990, 29–30)

What Foucault describes is not merely a difference in branches of philosophy, a difference that would amount to different types of problematics and questions, but a difference in the mode of thinking. In code-oriented morality, the juridical sphere dictates which problematics become understood *as* moral.[27]

As Foucault and Nietzsche notice, the bulk of the basic concepts in current ethical vocabulary are loan from juridical discourse. Moral questions are framed by referring to guilt and justice as well as to responsibility, obligation, duty, or conscience. Again, depending on perspective, this is either a blessing or an adversity for ethical thought. The latter stance is taken by Deleuze who, in pursuing an ethics that would be free from the constraints of the legalistic outlook, calls for ethics without morality. According to Deleuze, the difference is that "morality presents us with a set of constraining rules of a special sort, ones that judge actions and intentions by considering them in relation to *transcendent values*…: ethics is a set of *optional rules* that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved" (Deleuze 1995, 104, emphasis mine).[28]

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[27] Rather than positing a definite break between ancient ethics and modern morality, Foucault saw the shift from ethics-oriented to code-oriented moralities as part of the historical process of so-called juridification. This historical direction of Western thought, Foucault writes in *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, "has led us to take law and the form of law as the general principle of every rule in the realm of human practice" (Foucault 2005 [1982], 112). Although sometimes the historical transition from ethics to morality is explained by referring to Christian influence on ethics, Foucault does not equate juridification with the growing authority of Christianity (Foucault 1990, 30) – although he does note the tendencies of codification in Christian morality: "Subjection was to take the form not of savoir-faire, but of a recognition of the law and an obedience to pastoral autonomy" (Foucault 1990, 92; 1984, 356). For an important study on shame's central role in early Christian ethics, see Burrus 2008. Foucault himself seemed to believe that the trend of code-moralities was waning in the late twentieth century, as he formulated in an interview: "the idea of a morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence" (Foucault 1988, 49).
[28] Elsewhere, Deleuze defines morality as "the system of Judgement…which always refers existence to transcendent values" (Deleuze 1988, 23).

It is precisely transcendence and judgment that make morality unappealing to Deleuze.

Giorgio Agamben's take on the juridification of ethics is even harsher; he regards the phenomenon as a tragedy for ethics. According to Agamben, there is no more "irreparable ruination of every ethical experience than the confusion between ethical…categories and juridical concepts" (Agamben 2000, 130). That is, for Agamben, law does not belong to ethics—it threatens its existence.[29] Yet, owing to the pervasiveness of today's code-oriented paradigm of morality, in which the discourse of rights, social justice, or, say, climate accountability takes center stage, other kinds of ethical outlooks—such as the ethics of shame—become difficult to grasp.

If we take seriously the distinction between juridical and other kinds of ethical discourses, we can see that both guilt and justice are at home within the juridical while shame is not.[30] This has direct consequences for the discussion of shame cultures. For, it is difficult to say whether honor was categorically valued over justice at any point in ancient Greek history so as to make any period of the ancient world representative of shame culture. It is easier to note that *shame* can often be immune to justice—for someone experiencing shame simply tends to assign greater weight to honor than to justice. Phaedra is so occupied with keeping her family's reputation intact that she gives no thought as to whether it is just to implicate Hippolytus in a crime that he did not commit. Shame and guilt simply attend to two very different discourses, to different orders of valuation and judgment. Shame may be unjust (or just), but justice is not necessarily the only constituent of ethics.

As the examples of Protagoras, Hesiod and Sophocles illustrate, both justice *and* shame are indispensable for living together. In Plato's *Laws*, *Dikê* is the daughter of *Aidôs* (Pl. *Lg*. 943e1–3); the chorus of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* suggests that in the absence of shame and virtue (*Aidôs* and *Aretê*), lawlessness (*anomia*) rules over laws (E. *IA* 1090–1095); and Aeschylus' Eumenides demand that the altar of justice must be shown *aidôs* (A. *Eu*. 538–9). Again, both shame and justice are essential, but they are not the same.

I will not claim that ethics in general would be exhausted by shame. Shame, however, opens up one possibility of thinking about ethics *beyond* the juridical. Could there be an ethics that makes no reference to justice, responsibility, or guilt? An ethics without a trial, without law? An ethics focused on living in a world with others, in which people could make ethical decisions based on, for example, a deed's beauty or ugliness or a shared bodily condition and vulnerability? Can ethics exist without the definite "right" or "wrong" determined by a judge? For the world, according to Phaedra's testimony, is a messy one. It is an embodied, shared, value-laden world full of ambiguities filled

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[29] Elsewhere, Agamben claims that "[r]esponsibility and guilt […] express simply two aspects of legal imputability; only later were they interiorized and moved outside law." Therefore, "[t]o assume guilt and responsibility […] is to leave the territory of ethics and enter that of law" (Agamben 1999, 22–23).

[30] That guilt is a juridical concept is also often noted in the literature concerning the *emotion* of guilt: see, e.g., Taylor 1985, 85.

with a cascade of emotions: shame and the fear of shame, desire and love, contempt, indignation, hatred, regret and forgiveness—and oblivion. An ethics that could respond to such a world filled with emotions, bodies, other people, beauty, and ugliness is, I shall suggest, an ethics of shame.

If the Aristotelian eudaimonistic ethics navigates toward securing happiness, tragedy shifts the focus to the limits of this happy life. It asks how we can cope with misfortune, and how we might bear that which appears to be unbearable. Unlike the therapeutic strands of ancient philosophy, tragedy does not offer any guidelines or suggestions as to how one might live a good life. Rather, it examines the happy life of ethics through its negations: the plays are not examples to be avoided but dilemmas to be contemplated. Tragedy shows us that there are better and worse ways of treating others and oneself but not necessarily a single 'right' way and that shame occasionally leads to disaster but sometimes it is justice that fails.

Tragedy offers an excellent opportunity to view the discourses of shame and guilt side by side. As a genre, tragedy builds on the negotiation of different ethical and moral logics, including the sphere of law and justice, the old Homeric codes of heroism, and religious beliefs as well as shame, honor, and the aesthetic order of beauty and ugliness. To be precise, in scholarship tragedy is more often associated with the emergence of law and a new understanding of guilt than it is with shame: In Dodds' narrative, the "archaic guilt-culture" gave rise to "some of the profoundest tragic poetry that man has produced" (Dodds 1951, 49). The notion of *tragic guilt* lives on in commentary—as Agamben notes, "tragedy appears as the guilt of the just and comedy as the justification of guilty" (Agamben 1999b, 6–8)[31]—as well as in translation. An indication of this attitude is the tendency to use guilt-related terminology in translations even when the original says something entirely different (Howe 1962, 134).

As noted, the recognition that ancient Greek lacked a word for the emotion of guilt has on its part driven the shame-culture narrative. However, although the *emotion* of guilt is missing from the tragic vocabulary, the dramatic language is often filled with technical juridical terminology.[32] For this reason, Jean-Pierre Vernant can claim that tragedy emerged at the specific point in history that is marked by the development of legal practices, institutes, and vocabulary as well as the ideas of law, justice, and responsibility (Vernant 2006 [1972], 25–27). Rather than simply echoing the legal language, tragedy calls it into question: "We find imprecision in the terms used, shifts of meaning, incoherences and contradictions, all of which reveal the disagreements within legal thought itself" (Vernant 2006 [1972], 25). Meaning that although the emotion is missing, the

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[31] Agamben also contrasts a 'tragic' guilt with comic or innocent shame elsewhere (see Agamben 2010, 21; 1995, 65). However, Agamben also notes that the tradition of reading tragedy through the lens of guilt and innocence begins only with Hegel (Agamben 1999a, 96).

[32] The concepts for denoting both juridical guilt and cause in general are *aitia/aitios*. I shall return to this question in the dissertation's second chapter, arguing that the difference between the emotion of guilt and the legal category is both subtle and decisive.

juridical discourse of morality—with its questions of liability, punishment, law, and justice—is already present in antiquity.

The Greek tragedies, I wish to suggest, can suspend the very logic of legalistic morality—adherence to the constraints of law may devolve into destruction, as in the case of *Antigone*. Therefore, while tragedies pose questions relating to the consequences of our actions, the contradictions of justice, alongside the values of beauty and ugliness, the framing of these ethical problems is neither *primarily* nor *exclusively* concerned with the framework of the juridical. Consider Protagoras' myth of *aidôs* and *dikê*, shame *and* justice: besides *dikê*, there is also always *aidôs*.

Shame and guilt cultures, once more

While there is no word for the emotion of guilt in the Greek vocabulary, shame, meanwhile, is all-pervasive. It is not difficult to determine whence the categorization of shame culture derives (should one wish to consider these two emotional states capable of defining cultures). However, the label of shame-culture was never intended simply to assert that shame would be the prevailing affect in a culture. Rather, the debate over shame and guilt cultures has always been a debate over different modes of evaluating shared life, over an ethics of shame and the morality of guilt. (To be precise, the focus has been as much on the concept of responsibility as it has on guilt.)[33] I wish to suggest that scholars have tended to approach the discussion from the framework of juridical morality, assuming that the language and logics of morality is the only true mode of ethical reasoning.

To return to Dodds' division, it should first be noted that it starts with a simple premise: that shame rests on *external* sanctions while guilt rests on *internal* ones. Taking Homeric epics (particularly the value system of the *Iliad*) as representative of a shame culture, Dodds suggests that honor and public opinion are the most important values in the Homeric world: "Homeric man's highest good is not the enjoyment of quiet conscience, but the enjoyment of *timê*, public esteem" (1951, 17). Rather than striving for internal harmony, a Homeric hero was preoccupied with *what people say*.[34] Yet, a shame culture is characterized not only by the "pressure of social conformity" resulting from the weight given to public opinion but also by *indifference toward intentions* in moral evaluation. If it is the outer appearance that matters in the end, then intention is secondary (Dodds 1951, 18; 3).[35] According to Dodds' progressivist narrative, then, the

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[33] On the ancient concept of responsibility, see also Vernant (1990).
[34] Redfield makes the same claim, suggesting that in Homeric guilt culture, "The heroes do not distinguish personal morality from conformity; in a world where 'what people say' is the most reliable guide to right and wrong, the two are practically identical" (Redfield 1975, 116).
[35] Dodds locates the emergence of guilt culture in the Archaic period and links it with the growing emphasis on justice, particularly to the evolution that culminated in the perception of Zeus as a divine agent of justice (1951, 32–35) and to the developments of criminal and civil law. Furthermore, Dodds sees the Archaic sense of guilt later transforming into a sense

Homeric Greeks were unable to develop "a *true* view of the individual as a person, with personal rights and personal responsibilities" (Dodds 1951, 34, my emphasis).

While Dodds provides only a sketchy description of shame culture, these claims have formed the basis for subsequent discussions on shame in ancient Greek societies: there, one finds honor in place of conscience, public appearance in place of private virtues, and social conformity in place of personal convictions. A. W. H. Adkins reiterated this idea in *Merit and Responsibility* (1960), claiming that in Homeric culture, "the chief good is to be well spoken of, the chief ill to be badly spoken of, by one's society, as a result of the successes and failures which that society values most highly. In other words, Homeric society is a 'shame-culture'" (1960, 154). As noted, Dodds used the label to define the Homeric world, locating the beginnings of guilt culture already in the archaic period. Adkins, meanwhile, sees the characteristics of shame culture as persisting well into the classical period: until Socrates, "no one takes a firm stand and says 'let them mock'" (1960, 155).

Like Dodds, Adkins maintains that the emphasis given to merit is a sign of primitivity, whereas elaborate conceptions of responsibility stand for progression (Adkins 1960, 49). In fact, Adkins suggests that some progression is already evident in fifth-century Athenian drama. There, both the old tendency to give weight to appearance *and* a new kind of "morality" — based on a "proper" understanding of responsibility, intention, and justice — appear side by side.[36] These two tendencies, Adkins notes, are not coincident: there is a "difference between the 'logic' of *aischron* [shameful, ugly] and that of (say) 'wrong'" (Adkins 1960, 157). We do not have to accept Adkins's narrative on progression to appreciate the insight that the sphere of appearances — the sphere of shame and merit, of aesthetics, of the beautiful and ugly — has its own internal composition that differs from that of the sphere of law (Adkins 1960, 163–64).

As noted, Williams and Cairns (1993) continue the discussion, taking, however, a critical stance on Dodds' and Adkins' progressivist narrative.[37]

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of sin: "Strictly speaking, the archaic sense of guilt becomes a sense of sin only as a result of […] the 'internalising' of conscience – a phenomenon which appears late and uncertainly in the Hellenic world, and does not become common until long after secular law had begun to recognize the importance of motive" (1951, 36–37).

[36] For the full discussion concerning tragedies, see Adkins 1960, 153–194. Already in the *Hippolytus*, we see that the picture is not as simplistic when it comes to intentionality — for in shameful action, "both the deed and the longing for it bring disgrace (*dusklea*)" (405).

[37] Both maintain that developmental accounts of ethics and morality reveal more about the writers' *own* beliefs concerning their society and its systems of morality. Williams' main critique goes against what he calls a "progressivist" narrative in which the "primitive" Greek ideas about ethics are contrasted against the "developed" ideas of modernity. In this narrative, shame culture stands in contrast with a supposedly more "mature" guilt culture, which claims to have a better grasp of freedom, agency, and moral responsibility — and which has an undeniable Christian flavor to it (Williams 1993, 4–5). The idea that we — the moderns — would have any more mature grasp of morality or a "developed moral consciousness," is, according to Williams "basically a myth" and "a delusion of progression" (Williams 1993, 5–6). In saying so, Williams does not claim that there has not been any material or political development in people's lives but that the idea of improvement in the human ethical potential seems doubtful. What, Williams asks, do we mean, after all, by the supposedly developed concepts of guilt and moral responsibility? Cairns' critique follows

Despite their criticisms, both Williams and Cairns admit that there is some rationale for using the label of shame-culture when referring to certain aspects of Greek culture.[38] For all scholars writing on Greek shame agree on one thing, which is that the culture depicted in early Greek literature is, after all, permeated by different expressions of shame. It is not, then, a question of whether shame was important and abundant in classical Greece, but *what we should make of this shame*. Cairns, for instance, turns the claim that the Greek *aidôs* would mark a preoccupation with "what people say" on its head. He suggests that rather than egotistic interest in one's reputation, *aidôs* could be seen as sensitivity to the opinions of others—as caring and respect for their perspectives (Cairns 1993, 140). At least Protagoras and Hesiod appear to suggest that communal life *depends* on the existence of such reciprocal affective bonds.

What both Cairns and Williams do call into question is the basic distinction between internal and external sanctions. As Cairns argues, it would be difficult to imagine a society reliant on *exclusively* either external or internal sanctions, a society in which either social pressure or personal feelings of failure had any place at all (Cairns 1993, 27–47). Moreover, both argue that connecting shame with external sanctions gives a falsely simplified idea of the working of shame. For, while shame might always involve some sense of an audience—a sense of failure in the eyes of others—both Cairns and Williams stress that this 'audience' may also be an internal one. In shame, one fears exposure, witnesses, and what others might say or think, but this feeling often arises when no actual other is present. One can, and indeed often does, feel shame when alone, before an imagined, fantasized, or anticipated other. According to Cairns and Williams, this imagined other is an internalization of the standards and values of the given society—which leads them to conclude that there cannot exist a shame culture proper as the sanctions of shame are internal as well (Cairns 1993, 15, 43–44, 139–146; Williams 1993, 98–102).[39]

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the same lines. He notes that the distinction between primitive forms of external sanction in contrast with the modern form of internal sanction is supported "by certain a priori assumptions relating to the uniqueness of Western society" (Cairns 1993, 32).

[38] Williams writes, "There is some truth in the idea that Homeric society was a shame culture, which persisted (if in altered forms) certainly into later antiquity and no doubt longer than that. But if we are to make such a claim, we have to get clearer about what is involved in shame itself" (Williams 1993, 78). The proper definition and understanding of shame in a shame culture is also Cairns' concern. However, unlike Williams, he wishes to abandon the label of shame culture altogether, writing that "too often Homeric or classical Athenian society is characterized as a shame culture simply because evidence makes it quite clear that these societies placed considerable stress on honour, shame, and reputation" (Cairns 1993, 43). That is, Cairns recognizes the importance of shame and its associated values in ancient Greek culture but insists that this feature does not serve as a basis for a meaningful distinction—he suggests that the difference between shame and guilt cultures is merely a question of degree and not an absolute dichotomy (Cairns 1993, 46). My contention here is that no one has actually claimed that there *would* be a clear dichotomy between the two outlooks. For example, Dodds says that "the distinction is only relative, since many modes of behaviour characteristic of shame-cultures persisted throughout the archaic and classical periods" (1951, 28).

[39] Christopher Gill (1996, 75–77) argues along the same lines as Williams and Cairns: that shame in a shame culture is internalized. "Such internalization," writes Gill, "can reach the point where the people concerned perform the sort of acts that would legitimately gain honour without any explicit desire or expectation of gaining such honour" (Gill 1996, 75).

While the remark that one can feel shame when alone is indisputable, I shall be more skeptical regarding the separation between the internal and external in operation here. Rather than insisting on internalization, I shall ask whether *all* values and valuations are external to a degree. To what does the *internality* of a subject refer in the first place?

Cairns and Williams, on the other hand, pursue a different direction, arguing 1) that shame can (and indeed usually does) work through the process of 'internalizing' the attitudes, values, and expectations of others and 2) that, therefore, it draws near to the supposedly internal guilt. Both Cairns and Williams conclude that *aidôs* is "quite often closer to guilt than shame" or "something like guilt as well" (Cairns 1993, 26; Williams 1993, 90).[40] That is, although Cairns and Williams note the lack of any term denoting the emotion of guilt in the classical Greek vocabulary, they both insist that the Greeks are familiar with the phenomenon: they simply described the experience in the vocabulary of shame.

It is noteworthy that in all analyses of the early Greeks' shame cultures, the writers are often less interested in shame itself than they are in the *lack* of guilt and responsibility. Williams notes this inclination in his predecessors (even as his own analysis is not entirely in the clear in this respect), taking their pejorative attitude to be an indication of the pervasiveness of *Kantian* influence in modern conceptions of morality.[41] As Williams notes, if one approaches Greek literature with Kantian tendencies (as Adkins explicitly admits doing),[42] then Greek ethics can easily appear *immoral*. Williams writes that,

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Thus, the goal of acting in an honorable way would be more important than actual honor itself.

[40] According to Cairns, in *aidôs*, there is "no distinction in terms of external and internal sanctions; no exclusion of the existence of the phenomenon of conscience; no denial of the existence of personally endorsed standards" (Cairns 1993, 46). Moreover, "So while the operation of *aidôs* in Homer does presuppose a minimal sort of conscience, this does not coincide with our concept of conscience in all its applications. Nor *is aidôs* conscience, any more than guilt is conscience for us; rather both these emotions, in their respective contexts, spring from and refer to conscience, if conscience is understood as that which encodes the standards and values of the individual" (Cairns 1993, 145–46). My reason for opposing this view is simply that conscience is itself a complex concept with its own history. The conceptual history of conscience derives from the Greek phrase *sunoida emautô*, "to know with oneself," rather than from *aidôs* (see Bosman 2003, 55–56; Sorabji 2014, 15–18; Dover 1974, 220–23). Although the Greek sources suggest that shame often looms nearby when one "knows with oneself" (see Ojakangas 2015, 213–24 for examples), conceptually, this early stage of conscience is considerably closer to guilt than shame, as they both operate within the juridical language. For, *sunoida*-structure is often used in the sense of sharing knowledge of a crime (*LSJ sv.* σύνοιδα).

[41] Noting also Christian influence (Williams 1993, 4–5).

[42] According to Adkins, "For any man brought up in western democratic society the related concepts of duty and responsibility are the central concepts of ethics; and we are inclined to take it as an unquestionable truth […] that this must be true of all societies. In this respect, at least, we are all Kantians now" (Adkins 1960, 2), and, furthermore, "even if we do accept [that there are societies that do not have the concept of duty and responsibility], we are only too inclined to interpret it merely as an indication of the moral deficiency of those who are so unfortunate to not to be Kantians" (Adkins 1960, 3).

[t]his is nowhere more true than with the concept of shame. In the scheme of Kantian oppositions, shame is on the bad side of all the lines. This is well brought out in its notorious association with the notion of losing or saving face. "Face" stands for appearance against reality and the outer versus the inner, so its values are superficial; I lose face or save it only in the eyes of others, so the values are heteronomous; it is simply my face to save or lose, so they are egoistic. (Williams 1993, 77–78)

The three accusations against shame that Williams lists here—that shame is *superficial*, *heteronomous*, and *egotistic*—still persist in many contemporary philosophical debates over the moral worth of shame.[43] A person who is experiencing shame cares too much about how they appear to others, puts too much weight on the opinions of others, and has too much concern for themselves. Yet, this criticism is possible only on the assumption that appearances are by definition false, that subjects should or could be truly autonomous, or that self-love is an unwelcome emotion. These are not the premises of this dissertation; on the contrary, I shall maintain that subjectivity is essentially intersubjective rather than autonomous, that appearances are a rich field of aesthetic values rather than merely false illusions, and that the self-love out of which shame grows may be understood as a wish to protect and care for the self rather than as narcissistic egoism.

When Williams and Cairns insist on the guilt-like qualities of *aidôs*—its internality, its autonomy, its correspondence with the evaluation of responsibility—they end up defending the ethical value of shame by transforming it into something else, by fitting shame into the discourse of guilt. I hold that the tendency to assume that the underlying assumptions concerning moral agency leads to interpretations in which shame is perceived mainly in terms of its *failure* to be something else while its own logic, its proper ethics, go unnoticed. To reiterate, the premise of this dissertation will be that the difference between shame and guilt is largely a distinction between the two types of

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[43] The moral value of shame has also been called into question in the debates concerning moral emotions in general, largely based on its correlation to external affirmation. For example, Martha Nussbaum has argued that shame is, at least in the form it first takes in human life, a primitive emotion, starting with the premise that childhood shame is rooted in an infantile fantasy of one's omnipotence, which is inevitably called into question by the realization of one's essential vulnerability. Because shame is the reaction to this kind of narcissistic wish (and failure) to be in control, Nussbaum suggests that (early) shame is both narcissistic and primitive and can easily lead to harmful behavior, such as aggression and shaming of others (Nussbaum 2004, 184–85). Contrasting shame with guilt, Nussbaum writes, rather suggestively, "Thus in my account guilt is potentially creative, connected with reparation, forgiveness, and the acceptance of limits of aggression. Shame of the primitive type is a threat to all possibility of morality and community, and indeed to a creative inner life" (Nussbaum 2004, 208). Similar claims—that shame is egoistic, that it is based on a desire to gain external affirmation or love, and that it rests on heteronomous values—recur in arguments that seek to deny the moral worth of shame (see, e.g., Kekes 1988; Westerlund 2022). In the field of psychology, June Tangney has promoted the view that shame is a harmful, aggressive, and thus morally negative emotion (see, e.g., Tangney and Dearing 2003). Calhoun (2004) synthesizes the most common arguments against shame.

discourse to which they belong: the juridical discourse of morality to which guilt belongs and the ethical discourse in which shame finds its home.

Aidôs and *aischunê*

I have thus far spoken of *shame* quite freely. However, the object proper of this study is the experience which the ancient Greeks called with the specific terms of *aidôs* and *aischunê*. Sharing the same basic phenomenology of averting gazes and experiences of heightened, painful visibility, both can be translated as 'shame,' albeit with two reservations. First, the semantic fields of these terms are wider than that of the contemporary English 'shame'.[44] Second, the respective semantic fields of *aidôs* and *aischunê* do not entirely overlap, though they are sometimes used in a manner that seems interchangeable.[45]

In the *Hippolytus*, Phaedra uses derivatives of both to express her shame:

> Nurse, cover my head up again! For I am ashamed (*aidoumetha*) of my words. Go on, cover it, the tears stream down from my eyes and my gaze is turned to shame (*aischunên*). (243–46)[46]

Phaedra says that she feels shame, *aidôs*, for what she has said—fearing that she has disclosed her love for Hippolytus—and then continues to say that her gaze has turned to shame, now *aischunê*. Similarly, in the passage from Sophocles' *Ajax* quoted above, *aidôs* and *aischunê* were named as protectors of cities, the two terms used apparently interchangeably (S. *Aj*. 1073–1083).[47] However, when we survey Greek literature for both terms, some differences arise.

The most evident peculiarity of *aidôs* in the literary sources is that it tends to appear as a personified deity—as in Hesiod's account quoted above. Pausanias

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[44] It should be noted here that I use 'shame' as an umbrella concept for various phenomena –feelings, sentiments, experiences, and phenomena ranging from modesty and embarrassment to humiliation and excruciating shame. In this, I follow the idea that there are "family-relations of feelings" that share the same affective base (e.g., Tomkins 2008; Nathanson 1994). However, other researchers have advocated for an approach in which shame is structurally and sharply distinguished from these bordering emotions—for example, one argument is that shame *must be* distinct from humiliation because shame is internal while humiliation is simply external (Zahavi 2015, 226; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 156–60). In this study, the umbrella approach is more useful because *aidôs* and *aischunê* both denote various emotive phenomena from feelings of acute humiliation to those of respect. Furthermore, I maintain that the emotions we recognize ourselves as experiencing are also dependent on the vocabulary we have for them.

[45] Whether or not these two terms have the same scope of meaning has been debated. Williams (1993, 194) takes terms derived from *aid-* and *aischun-* to refer to the same emotion, suggesting that the earlier term *aidôs* is later replaced with *aischunê*. Cairns (1993, 300-301) suggests that the medial verb forms *aideomai* and *aischunomai* are synonymous.

[46] μαῖα, πάλιν μου κρύψον κεφαλήν, / αἰδούμεθα γὰρ τὰ λελεγμένα μοι. / κρύπτε: κατ᾽ ὄσσων δάκρυ μοι βαίνει, / καὶ ἐπ᾽ αἰσχύνην ὄμμα τέτραπται.

[47] This interchangeable use of *aidôs* and *aischunê* is particularly evident in Euripides. See, E. *Hec*. 968–972; E. *Ph*. 1276; E. *Supp*. 911–12; E. *Her*. 1160 and 1199; E. *Or*. 101; E. *IA* 1341–42; E. *Hel*. 415–6. However, it is also evident in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1424–1426.

reports that the Athenians have erected a throne for *Aidôs* (as well as for Rumor, *Phêmê*) in the Agora (Paus. 1.17.1).[48] This is also evident in tragedy: in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Aidôs* is said to share the throne with Zeus (S. *OC* 1268). In the *Hippolytus*, Hippolytus claims that "*Aidôs* tends the garden" of Artemis (78),[49] connecting *Aidôs* intimately to the virtue of self-constraint (*sôphrosynê*), exemplified by the goddess Artemis.[50] In such cases, *aidôs* is often translated as a "sense of shame," "sense of honor" or as "respect," rather than simply as "shame."

In this respect, *aidôs* functions as a general sensitivity to the opinions and values of others and of one's community as well as an *inhibition* to act in ways that might invoke disapproval.[51] Besides naming a feeling or an emotion, *aidôs* also denotes an *attitude*. Hippolytus prides himself on only having friends whom *aidôs* prevents from doing "shameful services to their companions" (E. *Hipp.* 998–99).[52] The opposite of this attitude is *anaideia*, a lack of *aidôs*, which manifests as an unwelcome indifference toward other people's opinions (E. *Alc.* 726–7).[53] The absence of the proper attitude of *aidôs* leads to the other type of shame, *aischunê* (e.g., E. *Ba.* 263–65).[54]

The nominative form of *aischunê* can refer to shame as an emotion, as in the quotation from Ajax, where a man who "feels fear and shame (*aischunê*)" is more secure than one who is guided by hybris (S. *Aj.* 1079–83).[55] More often, however, it refers to disgrace as the state of being *in* shame or shame*d*. Thus, the death of Hippolytus is said to be a source of *aischunê* for Artemis because she was unable to save her favorite (E. *Hipp.* 1332), and in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *aischunê* is named as

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[48] *Aidôs* as a personified deity: Pi. *O.* 7.44; Pl. *Lg.* 943e1; X. *Smp.* 8.36.

[49] *Aidôs* is treated as a goddess also in E. *IA* 821; 1090. There is also one case in which *Aischunê* appears as a deity: in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, a throne of *Aischunê* is mentioned (A. *Th.* 409).

[50] The *aidôs–sôphrosynê* pair also appears in E. *Tro.* 1027. See also, Pl. *Charm.* 160e–161a, where Charmides suggests that *sôphrosynê* is the same thing as *aidôs*.

[51] *Aidôs* as an attitude marked with sensitivity to other's perspectives: A. *Supp.* 345; A. *Eu.* 539; S. *El.* 249; E. *Med.* 439. E. *Supp.* 911–12; E. *Hipp.* 998; E. *IA* 559–67. In other instances, it functions more familiarly as an emotion of shame or embarrassment. After killing his mother, Orestes admits that he "has *aidôs*" for his foster father Tyndareus and wants to cover his face when meeting him (E. *Or.* 460). Pentheus, meanwhile, says that he is "full of *aidôs*" for having to wear women's clothes (E. *Ba.* 828).

[52] οἷσιν αἰδὼς [...] / μήτ᾽ ἀνθυπουργεῖν αἰσχρὰ τοῖσι χρωμένοι.

[53] *Anaideia*: S. *El.* 607, 622; S. *OT* 354; S. *Phil.* 83; S. *OC* 516; E. *Alc.* 694; E. *Her.* 165; E. *Her.* 556–7; E. *Tro.* 788, 1027; E. *IA* 379–80. In Euripides' *Medeia*, shamelessness is named as the greatest sickness of mankind (E. *Med.* 469–472).

[54] E.g., in Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the chorus sing, "For a sense of shame is wisdom, and it brings with it the surpassing grace of seeing and knowing the thing that is needful. Then what men think of you shall bring to your life a fame that does not grow old." (τό τε γὰρ αἰδεῖσθαι σοφία, / τάν τ᾽ ἐξαλλάσσουσαν ἔχει / χάριν ὑπὸ γνώμας ἐσορᾶν / τὸ δέον, ἔνθα δόξα φέρει / κλέος ἀγήρατον βιοτᾷ. E. *IA* 563–67).

[55] *Aischunê* as emotion also e.g., S. *El.* 615; S. *Phil.* 120; E. *IA* 188.

one of the misfortunes of Oedipus (S. *OT* 1284).[56] *Aidôs* rarely functions like this.[57] Generally, to experience and exhibit *aidôs* is a commendable state, while to find oneself in the state of *aischunê* is a disaster.

However, when the cognate verbs are examined, the differences become more difficult to discern. The mediopassive verbs *aideomai* and *aischunomai* both typically refer to the feeling of being ashamed or embarrassed or more generally to experiences of inhibition in relation to deeds or thoughts that meet with others' disapproval.[58] Therefore, in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the heroine is asked whether she does not "feel *aidôs* for thinking differently from [the people in the city]" and in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, she affirms that she indeed does not "feel *aischunê* for displaying disobedient anarchy to the city" (S. *Ant.* 510; A. *Th.* 1029). In Euripides' *Hecuba*, the eponymous character declares first that she feels shame (*aischunomai*) on looking into the eyes of an old friend because her life has turned into a disaster and then repeats that she is embarrassed (literally, that *aidôs* holds her) and "cannot look [at the former friend] with a steady glance" (E. Hec. 968–72.)[59]

Unlike *aidôs*, *aischunê* also has an active verb form, *aischunô* (or *kataischunô*), which means "to shame"—as in Phaedra's determination to die so that she will not "shame her family" (E. *Hipp.* 420) or in the frequent accusations of 'you have shamed me' or 'your city' and so on.[60] The medial form of *aideomai*, meanwhile, has its own specific sense of "to respect" or "to honor" someone or something— such as the altar of justice, an oath that one has made, or the breast of one's mother (A. *Eu.* 539, 680, 710; *Ch.* 896). In the *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's housemaid tells her that she feels *aidôs* for her "suppliant hand" (E. *Hipp.* 335).[61]

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[56] *Aischunê* as disgrace: A. *Pers.* 774; A. *Th.* 683; S. *Aj.* 174; S. *Tr.* 66, 597; E. *Heraclid.* 840; E. *Andr.* 244, 877; E. *Hec.* 1241; E. *Supp.* 767; E. *Her.* 1423; E. *Tro.* 172; E. *Ion* 288, 395, 854; E. *Hel.* 67, 201, 687; E. *Rh.* 102. However, one exception may be found in tragedy, in which *aischunê* does not denote disgrace but a commendable attitude akin to *aidôs*: according to a line in Euripides' *Children of Heracles*, "In the eyes of good men *aischunê* is more precarious than life" (E. *Heraclid.* 200). Here, *aischunê* cannot mean disgrace or the state of being in shame.

[57] However, Aeschylus sometimes uses *aidôs* to denote disgrace as well. In the *Agamemnon*, Agamemnon asserts that it would be a shame (*aidôs*) to walk on an expensive cloth and ruin it (A. *Ag.* 948), and Cassandra says that it has been a shame (*aidôs*) for her to speak about Apollo's attempt to seduce her (A. *Ag.* 1204). In the *Suppliants*, Io is said to "weep away the grief of her shame (*aidôs*)" (A. *Suppl.* 578–79).

[58] *Aideomai* as feeling shame/embarrassment also occurs in A. *Ch.* 899; A. *Ag.* 937; S. *Aj.* 506–7; E. *Alc.* 823; E. *Heraclid.* 43, 813; E. *Ion* 336, 977; E. *Ph.* 1276, 1489; E. *IA* 451–2, 833, 839, 848 900. *Aischunomai* as feeling shame also at: A. *Prom.* 642; A. *Ag.* 856; A. *Ch.* 917; S. *El.* 254; S. *OT* 1079, 1424; S. *Ant.* 540; S. *Phil.* 1382–83; E. *Heraclid.* 516, 541; E. *El.* 45, 900; E. *Ion* 341, 367, 1074; E. *Hel.* 415; E. *Ph.* 510; E. *Or.* 98, 281; E. *Ba.* 204; E. *IA* 981.

[59] αἰσχὺνομαί σε προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον, / Πολυμῆστορ, ἐν τοιοῖσδε κειμένη κακοῖς. / ὅτῳ γὰρ ὤφθην εὐτυχοῦσ᾽, αἰδώς μ᾽ ἔχει / ἐν τῷδε πότμῳ τυγχάνουσ᾽ ἵν᾽ εἰμὶ νῦν / κοὐκ ἂν δυναίμην προσβλέπειν ὀρθαῖς κόραις. Compare this with Euripides' *Heracles* where Heracles hides his face when seeing a friend, saying that he feels shame (*aischunomai*) for the evil deeds he has done—and when the friend inquires why Heracles is veiled another character explains that it is because Heracles is ashamed (*aidomenos*) before the eyes of his friend (E. *Her.* 1160; 1199).

[60] E.g., A. *Th.* 546; *Supp.* 996; S. *El.* 518; *OC* 929; E. *Heraclid.* 828; *Tr.* 1041. *Aischunô* can also mean 'to rape,' and is used in this sense in the *Hippolytus* at 1165.

[61] *Aideomai* as feeling of respect or honoring: A. *Pers.* 810; A. *Supp.* 345; A. *Ag.* 362; A. *Ch.* 896; A. *Eu.* 539, 549, 680, 710, 760; S. *Aj.* 1356; S. *OT* 647, 654; S. *OC* 247, 1192, 1268; E. *Alc.* 857; E.

At least *aidôs*, then, opens a far wider semantic field than the English 'shame'. As an attitude, *aidôs* governs the area of intersubjective relations of respect, contempt, and power.[62] If *aidôs* and *aischunê* are felt for one's *own* loss of honor, *aidôs* may also be felt for the recognition of honor of *another*.[63] As a general sensitivity toward honor, *aidôs* includes both sensitivity for one's own honor *and* that of others: it includes the two sides of the coin in the dynamic and shifting power relations between all kinds of people. It is unsurprising, then, that the vocabulary of *aidôs* and *aischunê* often occur in relation to delicate social relations, including power imbalances. In Greek tragedy, these include speaking in public,[64] guest-friendships,[65] and scenes of supplication[66] as well as unmarried women entering public spaces.[67] That is, Greek shame is not only an emotion but also an organizing element in communal relations that governs the appropriate ways of relating to others.

One way of demonstrating the subtle difference between *aischunê* and *aidôs* has been to compare them to pairs of terms used to denote shame in other languages: the French *honte* and *pudeur* and the Italian *vergogna* and *pudore* (Lansky 1996, 796). A similar division exists between the Finnish *häpeä* and *häveliäisyys*.[68] The difference somewhat resembles that between the intense and acute feeling of shame and the sense of shame or inhibition. While my cursory survey of the *aidôs* and *aischunê* vocabulary used in tragedy points in this direction, it is difficult to conclude a specific meaning of a term from literature which, as is to be expected, does not include any systematic attempt to define the terms used.

A helpful source on the differences between *aidôs* and *aischunê* (and one that is therefore also often discussed) is Aristotle, being the only classical author who offers definitions of each. While analysis of Aristotle's definitions of *aidôs* and *aischunê* will not offer any definitive truth as to how the terms should be understood in tragedy, they present a *possible* way of articulating the difference in antiquity. Aristotle discusses *aidôs* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the context of

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Heraclid. 1027; E. *Hipp.* 1258; E. *Hec.* 286, 515, 806; E. *Her.* 556–7; E. *Ion* 179; E. *Or.* 37. Translating these is often ambiguous.

[62] For the relationship between shame and power, see the Appendix.

[63] Thus, in older translations, *aidôs* is sometimes translated as 'awe.' It is important to note that respect and awe are not necessarily far removed from shame.

[64] Public speaking: e.g., A. *Th.* 1029; *Pr.* 642; *Ag.* 856, 1204; *Ch.* 665–6; E. *El.* 900; *Tro.* 718; *Ion* 336, 861, 934; *Hel.* 415; *IA* 379–80, 981

[65] Guest-friendships: e.g., A. *Ag.* 362; *Eu.* 549; S. *OC* 516; E. *Alc.* 601, 823, 857; *IT* 949; E. *Rh.* 842.

[66] Supplication: e.g., A. *Supp.* 28, 192–4, 362, 455, 491, 641; S. *OC* 237, 247; E. *Med.* 326; *Heracl.* 101, 285; *Hipp.* 335; *Hec.* 286, 806; *Supp.* 164; *Tro.* 1027; *Hel.* 949; *Or.* 682; *IA* 900, 1246

[67] Women in public: e.g., A. *Pr.* 134; E. *Heracl.* 43; *Andr.* 877; *IT* 375; *Ph.* 1276–7, 1489; *Or.* 98–101; *IA* 188, 833, 994.

[68] Lansky explains the difference as that between "the emotion itself," and its "defence, i.e., the comportment which keeps the emotion from emerging" (1996, 769). Konstan (2003, 1041) does not accept this comparison—but his criticism rests on the assumption that the division demarcates the distinction between "retrospective" and "inhibitory" aspects of shame. This is not what Lansky claims. Therefore, although Konstan rightly notes that *aischunê* can also arise from imagining *future* humiliation, this does not mean that *honte* and *aischunê* would differ in this respect. I shall discuss this further below.

virtuous dispositions and concentrates on *aischunê* in the discussion on the possible emotions of an audience in the *Rhetoric*.[69]

According to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *aidôs* is usually defined as "a kind of fear of disrepute (*fobos tis adoxias*)" (*EN* 1128b10–12). Following the tradition of Hesiod and Protagoras, Aristotle discusses *aidôs* as a possible candidate for a virtuous disposition but then diverts from his predecessors by stating that *aidôs* is rather a sort of semi-virtue instead of a full-blown one.[70] For while Aristotle notes that people tend to commend those who are prone to feel *aidôs* (the *aidêmoi*) he excludes it from virtues proper for two reasons. First, because rather than an acquired and stable disposition, it is an emotion or affection (*pathos*). According to Aristotle's reasoning

> being ashamed makes people blush (*erythrainontai gar hoi aischynomenoi*), and the fear of death makes them turn pale. So both appear in a way to be associated with the body (*sômatika*), a feature which seems to belong more to an affection than to a disposition (*dokei pathous mallon ê hexeôs einai*) (*EN* 1128b13–15).[71]

In taking *aidôs* to be strictly a *pathos*, Aristotle differs also from those instances (for example in the tragedies) where *aidôs* is depicted as an *attitude* that must be exhibited (women in public, the young before their elders, and so on). Second, *aidôs* cannot be a disposition of a virtuous person for the reason that people tend to feel shame *after* doing or planning on doing shameful deeds. A properly virtuous person, however, does neither do nor plans to do anything shameful in the first place—and thus has no need for shame.[72]

Aristotle defines *aischunê*, on the other hand, in the *Rhetoric* as follows:

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[69] The relationship between *aidôs* and *aischunê* in Aristotle's work has been discussed in Jimenez 2020; Raymond 2017; Fussi 2015; Konstan 2003; Cairns 1993, 415–19; Belfiore 1992. In his commentary on the *Rhetoric*, Grimaldi (1988) suggests that *aidôs* and *aischunê* are homonymous. Cairns (1993) and Williams (1993) also adopt this view.

[70] Defined as "semivirtue of the learner" in Burnyeat 1980, 78. The brief passage dedicated to *aidôs* in the *NE* comes immediately after the lengthier studies of virtuous dispositions, such as courage, temperance, and magnanimity. The context dictates the tone and therefore the central question of the passage is whether *aidôs* is or is not a virtuous disposition. On the question of *aidôs* and virtue in Aristotle, see Belfiore 1992, 189–216; Curzer 2012, 341–54; Raymond 2017; Jimenez 2020.

[71] Translation modified. Translations of *Nicomachean Ethics* are from Broadie and Rowe 2002 unless otherwise indicated.

[72] This omission has been widely discussed in later scholarship, for example, already by Alexander of Aphrodisias (see Raymond 2017). Raymond argues that Aristotle's omission of *aidôs* from the list of virtuous means is not as straightforward as it seems. Even though *aidôs* resembles an occurring emotion more than a steady dispositional mean, it is elsewhere introduced as an *emotional mean* (Aristotle says that one who feels shame in a proper way—not too little nor excessively—is *aidêmon*, EE 3.7. 1233b26–29). The difference between emotional mean and dispositional mean lies in the fact that the first is a disposition to feel in a certain way, and the latter a disposition to choose and act in a certain way. Raymond, however, is not convinced that the *aidêmon* would not also choose to act in a way that is in line with his emotions (e.g., the *aidêmon* would probably choose to act in a way in which he might be able to avoid disgrace, Raymond 2017, 112–29). For our purposes, it does not make a difference whether Aristotle sees *aidôs* as a virtue, as a conditional virtue, or as something else. What is decisive for us is the mechanics of *aidôs*, which Aristotle takes apart.

Let shame (*aischunê*) then be defined as a kind of pain or uneasiness (*lypê tis ê tarachê*) in respect of evils (*kakôn*), past, present, or future, which seem to (*phainomena*) tend to bring ill repute (*adoxian*). (Ar. *Rh.* 1383b12–14)[73]

Echoing the definition of *aidôs*, here too the object of emotion is disrepute: *adoxia*.[74] Both types of shame, then, are in essence feelings of pain or uneasiness related to bad reputation.

The key difference between the two lies in the affects to which *aidôs* and *aischunê* are compared: *aidôs* is like fear, while *aischunê* resembles pain or general discomfort. Of fear, Aristotle writes that it is "pain or uneasiness due to imagining (*ek phantasias*) some destructive or painful evil *in the future*" (Ar. *Rh.* 1382a21–22).[75] This would indicate that *aidôs* is a future-oriented fear of bad repute while *aischunê* would seem to be a present-tense experience, like pain.

The same temporal difference between Aristotelian *aidôs* and *aischunê* surfaces in the passage on *aidôs* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[76] Aristotle writes that even if "shamelessness (*anaischuntia*) is something bad, and so is not being ashamed (*mê aidesthai*) at doing shameful things," it is no better option to "feel *aischunê* after having done such things." (*EN* 1128b32–33).[77] Here, too, Aristotle appears to use *aidôs* to denote the anticipatory feeling of restraint in relation to shameful and ugly things. *Aischunê*, by contrast, arises retrospectively after the shameful deed has been done. In other words, in *aidôs*, the deed would loom in the future, while in *aischunê*, it would already have transpired.

In other instances, however, the situation is less straightforward. As seen in the *Rhetoric* passage quoted above, *aischunê* concerns disrepute past, present, *and future*. Thus, the temporal difference cannot readily be pinpointed in the timing of the disrepute. If there is in fact a difference, it seems to be located within the component of imagination, *phantasia*, that contributes to the emotion. In the fear-like *aidôs*, pain arises from an impression of a *future* evil (*ek phantasias mellontos*) (Ar. *Rh.* 1382a21–22), which in this case is bad reputation. *Aischunê*, meanwhile, is said to be "an impression about bad reputation (*peri adoxias phantasia*)" (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a22). Here, there is a difference in the temporality within the *phantasia* not in the actual deeds. In *aidôs* the *phantasia* is of future disgrace; in *aischunê*, the accompanying *phantasia* is of a shameful situation, which is imagined as present.[78]

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[73] All translations of the *Rhetoric* are from Freese 1926. Translation modified. Freese translates *kakôn* as "deeds," but it is better to take it as referring to "evils" in more general sense, as Aristotle holds that also the things that one *suffers* can bring shame.

[74] A similar definition may be found in Plato, who writes that, "shame is fear of base things before *friends*" (Pl. *Lg.* 647b7).

[75] See Dow (2011) on Aristotle's treatment of different emotions as pains and pleasures with differing objects in the *Rhetoric*.

[76] On the temporal difference, see the comments on the section in the editions of Taylor 2006, 235; Irwin 1999. As Konstan (2003, 1036) notes, "[i]n this passage, *aidôs* is clearly understood to inhibit bad behaviour, while *aischunê* reflects back on it with regret." However, in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle also uses the two words interchangeably: cf. Ar. *Rh.* 1384a33–36.

[77] Translation modified.

[78] For this point, I wish to thank Luis Salazar for making an argument for the importance of *phantasia* in the Aristotelian definitions of shame.

Multifaceted emotion

As a working definition, Aristotle's formulation of *aidôs* and *aischunê* as pain felt in relation to bad reputation is useful. In this study, however, I aim for a thick description of the studied phenomenon rather than for a clear-cut and exhaustive definition of (ancient) shame. For I maintain that ancient shame is a multifaceted phenomenon comprised of strands of bodily affect, of codified performances of proper attitude of respect, of accompanying semantics of reproach, defilement, sickness, and disgust, and of its own evaluative criteria – among other things. Already the Aristotelian working definition opens further questions: what kind of pain are we talking about, what causes bad reputation, in whose eyes, in what conditions, and with what consequences?

I have, however, identified three aspects that are especially pronounced in this multifaceted phenomenon. These are shame's relation first, to the social realm, second, to the processes of aesthetic evaluation, and third, to the body. I will call these the *intersubjective*, *evaluative*, and *embodied* aspects of ancient shame. Yet I maintain that the phenomenon of ancient shame is by no means exhausted by these three aspects: they are its central features and point to its different functions and meanings.

To elaborate, let us consider each of these aspects in ancient context: First, shame is embedded in the social realm. For Plato and Aristotle, shame, particularly *aischunê*, is by definition "fear of bad reputation" (Pl. *Lg.* 646e10–647a2; Ar. *EN* 1128b10–12). So too for Phaedra, who notes the importance of witnesses in her shame. "For just as I would not have my good deeds unknown," she declares "so may I not have a throng of witnesses to my shameful (*aischra*) ones" (403–4).[79] It is, then, a phenomenon that is intimately connected to the ways in which the subject is perceived by others. Thus, in the tragedies shame appears often alongside the terminology denoting reproach (*oneidos*, *elenchus*, *lôbê*, etc.) and, on the positive side, honor (*timê*, *eudoxa*, etc.).

Second, as we have seen in Aristotle and the case of Phaedra, shame is intimately linked to a general concern on how one *looks* in the eyes of others. This emphasis on how things look leads us to the most important term related to *aidôs* and *aischunê* in Greek literature—the 'shameful': *aischron* or *aischos*. Aristotle notes that *aischunê* is experienced over the shameful (Ar. *Rh.* 1367a7) and that *aidôs* induces people to refrain from base deeds because of their shamefulness—*dia to aischron* (*EN* 1179b11–13). Besides translating as 'shameful,' *aischron* also means 'ugly' in an aesthetic sense, further emphasizing the aspect of appearance in shame.[80] As Phaedra notes, shame ensues because although "we know and understand what is noble (*ta chrêst'*), we do not bring it to completion. Some fail from laziness, others because they choose some other pleasure over beauty (*anti tou kalou*)" (380–83).[81]

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[79] ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ / μήτ᾽ αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.
[80] On the aesthetic aspects of shame and shamefulness, see Chapter 2.
[81] τὰ χρήστ᾽ ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν, / οὐκ ἐκπονοῦμεν δ᾽, οἱ μὲν ἀργίας ὕπο, / οἱ δ᾽ ἡδονὴν προθέντες ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ / ἄλλην τιν᾽.

Third, shame is embodied, *sômatikon*, as Aristotle says. On the one hand, this is due to its distinct and intense physical symptoms. Aristotle mentions blushing (Ar. *EN* 1128b13), Euripides has Phaedra suffer from several afflictions assumed to originate from her shame: she is hiding indoors, lying in a "bed of sickness," afflicted by a "secret grief," not eating or drinking, the color of her body altered, and exhibiting signs of mental illness (131ff., 174–5, 241). On the other hand, shame is tied to embodiment already in the common impulse to hide or cover up one's body in shame. Artemis tells Theseus that he should hide his "body (*demas*) beneath the earth's depths in shame" (1290–91).[82] This experience is echoed in Greek vocabulary in which the word for genitals is *aidoia*, a derivative of *aideomai*. That is, the body is both a *locus* of the shame symptoms and a common *object* of shame.

Intersubjective, evaluative, and embodied perspectives serve as the starting points of this dissertation's three main chapters, which consist of three case studies of tragic shame. Before turning to tragedy, however, I shall briefly survey how these three aspects have been discussed in contemporary philosophical debates on shame—ranging from phenomenological tradition and psychoanalytic discussions to analytical accounts of moral emotions and feminist theory. These discussions can promote a greater sensitivity to the different forms and functions that shame can assume as well as an enhanced understanding of why shame has been treated as an immoral emotion (or a moral one, for that matter).[83] I shall use these theories and their concepts as analytical *tools* for thinking about shame in antiquity. Differences in contemporary and ancient perspectives on the emotion may help to throw the peculiarities of antiquity into sharper relief. Contemporary theories show how shame *can* be understood but not necessarily how it should be understood.

1. Intersubjective

As noted, the importance of the witness in shame serves as one entry point to the emotion. One is afraid of bad repute in the eyes of others and feels shame when exposed to the gaze of an other. The intersubjective basis of shame is stressed particularly in the phenomenological tradition, the most influential account being that of Jean-Paul Sartre.[84] In *Being and Nothingness* (1943), shame is not only intersubjective but serves as a model for the fundamental intersubjectivity that conditions the very experience of being human.

Sartre illuminates his analysis on shame with an oft-cited vignette: imagine a scenario in which an individual is peeping through a keyhole, spying on a scene taking place behind the door. Immersed in his activity, he has forgotten himself entirely. Suddenly, there is a crackling sound behind him. Immediately the spy

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[82] πῶς οὐχ ὑπὸ γῆς τάρταρα κρύπτεις / δέμας αἰσχυνθείς.
[83] This connects our issue to recent debates on the so-called moral emotions. Moral emotions can include any emotion that governs communal life with others—for example, pity, love, anger, indignation, disgust, gratitude, and so on. See Steinbock (2014) for a phenomenological discussion of the theme and Haidt (2003) for a psychological overview.
[84] On Sartre's analysis of shame, see Dolezal 2017, Guenther 2011, and Zahavi 2010.

is alarmed—perhaps someone has *seen him*—and at once becomes conscious of himself, feeling shame (Sartre 2003 [1943], 282–85). This experience of being caught in the middle of an act, being seen by some other, is, for Sartre, the archetypical experience of shame. For him, shame is the basic affect of being seen by the other: "I am ashamed of myself as *I appear* to the Other" (Sartre 2003, 246).

According to Sartre, the experience of shame demonstrates how the other is implicated in my self-relation. The *I* one is ashamed of, comes to be *because of the gaze of the other*. "I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am" Sartre formulates (2003, 312). Therefore, shame for Sartre is not so much an emotion as an ontological mode of being *with* or being *for* others. However, it is notable that in Sartre's account of intersubjectivity, this realization of one's mediateness is not neutral. The emotion arising from exposure and the mediated look is a *distressing* shame rather than, say, an excited pride or a neutral recognition. Sartre suggests that through the externally mediated perspective, a subject understands the uncomfortable fact that they can become an *object* of someone else's gaze. This objectifying gaze "strips me of my transcendence" (Sartre 2003, 286).

While Sartre presents the look of the other and intersubjectivity in general as an extremely negative—stagnating and dominating—relation,[85] his main observation on shame is a useful one. That in the very constitution of our subjectivity, there is a structure of being-for-others, and the emotion of shame exposes this structure. As Lisa Guenther explains, "I am always already in relation to Others, even before I become aware of myself as a separate subject … the presence of the Other [is] in the midst of my own intimate self-relation" (Guenther 2011, 27). Shame reveals the extent to which any subjectivity is built on relations with others. It also allows us to become conscious of this aspect of our subjectivity, which typically remains hidden or latent. In the *Hippolytus*, the mediated self-relation surfaces not only in shame but also in self-compassion, as when Hippolytus wishes that he "could *stand apart looking at myself* so that I might weep at the misfortunes I am suffering" (1078–79).[86]

In addition to the phenomenological accounts of shame, the intersubjective or interpersonal perspective is also highlighted in Silvan Tomkins' psychological account of shame and shame-related affects. In Tomkins' theory, affects (which he defines as the biological or hardwired aspects of our emotions) are categorized based on their different physiological and embodied reactions. Tomkins pins shame down to the gesture of lowering one's eyes and head. This he takes to be a way to *interrupt interpersonal communication*:[87]

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[85] On this point, see Heinämaa 2020. Lisa Guenther writes, "Even if shame does characterize our relation to Others who challenge our freedom, it tells us little about our relations with Others who nurture and support our freedom to the point where an experience of shame is even possible" (Guenther 2011, 27).

[86] εἴθ᾿ ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον / στάνθ᾿, ὡς ἐδάκρυσ᾿ οἷα πάσχομεν κακά.

[87] Tomkins locates the origin of shame in a child's early experiences of parental disapproval, observing how even infants might evade eye contact with their parents (Tomkins 2008, 367–68).

> [T]he shame response is an act which reduces facial communication [...] By dropping his eyes, his eyelids, his head and sometimes the whole upper part of his body, the individual calls a halt to looking at another person, particularly the other person's face, and to the other person's looking at him, particularly at his face (Tomkins 2008 [1963], 352).

Shame is interpersonal and social by virtue of the fact that it is a *circumvention* of communication, an interruption in the interpersonal circulation of a positive affect.[88] Owing to its emphasis on facial communication, shame is also self-reflective—for according to Tomkins, "the self lives in the face, and within the face the self burns brightest in the eyes" (Tomkins 2008 [1963], 359).[89]

The social, interpersonal, or intersubjective aspects of shame have given raise to charges of the emotion's heteronomy and shallowness, and it is on this basis that theorists like Adkins have condemned shame as morally inadequate.[90] Yet, others have argued that these intersubjective aspects are, on the contrary, ones that are fundamental to ethics. For instance, Luna Dolezal (2017) argues that shame can reveal our shared condition of bodily vulnerability and thus serve as a basis for ethical being-together. In its intersubjectivity, shame enables us to realize our basic togetherness and connectedness. Cheshire Calhoun (2004), on the other hand, notes that morality, in general, is something that we practice together, and thus shame is important because of its ability to make us sensitive to the perspectives of others.

In antiquity, the commonly recognized ethical importance of shame rested precisely on its social aspects. Ancient writers appear to have taken the need for external affirmation for granted. One is not only allowed but is in fact *expected to* take proper care of one's reputation and to respect the opinions of others. How could one live among others without taking into consideration how one is perceived by those with whom one lives in the shared world?

2. Evaluative

Another common way of defining shame (particularly within the analytic tradition, e.g., Rawls 1971, Taylor 1985, Calhoun 2004, Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011) is to understand it is a negative evaluation of the self: as a loss of self-esteem or diminishing of self-respect.[91] According to a common formulation,

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[88] On the link between shame and the interruption in the circulation of positive affect, see also Sedgwick and Frank 1995; Nathanson 1994; Ikonen and Rechardt 1993.

[89] Tomkins also observes that shame is typically preceded by a positive state of interest or enjoyment, so that shame "operates ordinarily only after interest or enjoyment has been activated and inhibits one or the other or both. The innate activator of shame is the incomplete reduction of interest or joy" (Tomkins 2008, 353). As an example, he takes the common experience of embarrassment in a situation in which we smile at someone (i.e., show interest) who refuses to smile back (i.e., the interest is reduced).

[90] I.e., Adkins 1960; Nussbaum 2004; Tangney and Dearing 2003; Westerlund 2022; Kekes 1988.

[91] The evaluative approach to shame has its predecessors for example in Spinoza and Descartes, who define shame in terms of negative evaluation. Spinoza writes that "Joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause, we shall call love of esteem, and the sadness

the loss of self-esteem results from *a failure to live up to some value, ideal, or norm* — in the eyes of others or in one's own eyes.[92] The self-evaluative approach differs from the intersubjective outlook in that it emphasizes a cognitive component of the emotion—the negative evaluation or judgment of the self by the self—rather than the ontological structure underlying the emotion. To explain tragic shame from this perspective would be to say that Phaedra's shame originates in her realization of her failure to fulfill the values of marital fidelity, the social norms of female chastity, or the ideals of womanhood.

In her influential book on self-reflexive emotions, Gabriele Taylor (1985) connects shame to the deterioration of self-respect. "Whenever a person experiences shame," Taylor writes, "then he experiences an injury to his self-respect," suggesting that the loss of self-respect results from an awareness that one's "expectations [concerning oneself] are being frustrated" (Taylor 1985, 80). These frustrated expectations may be anything that "the agent thinks of great importance, of great value to himself and to the life he envisages himself as leading" (Taylor, 1985, 80).[93] This forms the baseline of the evaluative definition of shame: a self-conscious subject evaluates themselves and finds the self to be lacking in relation to their values or ideals. Shame constitutes a triangulation between the subject, the process of evaluation, and the standard against which the evaluation is assessed.

Some of the most important elements in this cognitivist account of shame are adopted from psychoanalytic theory of shame and guilt. In a seminal study, Gerhart Piers distinguishes between the two by appealing to the psychoanalytic structure of the psyche. According to Piers, "[s]hame arises out of a tension between the Ego and the Ego-Ideal" and therefore differs from guilt, which is a tension "between Ego and Super-Ego" (Piers and Singer 1953, 11). In the psychoanalytic model, Super-Ego represents the idea of a *punitive parent* who establishes rules and laws for the ego, whereas Ego-Ideal stands for the *parental ideal* to which the ego compares itself.[94] Accordingly, guilt follows from transgressing the rules of the parent, shame from failing the ideals: "Shame occurs when a goal (presented by the Ego-Ideal) is not being reached. It thus

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contrary to it, shame – I mean when Joy or Sadness arise from the fact that the man believes that he is praised of blamed" (Spinoza 1985 [1677], II/163).

[92] Deonna et al. define shame as the feeling of being incapable of exemplifying some self-relevant value even to a minimal degree: "In shame, we apprehend a trait or an action of ours that we take to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value as indicating our incapacity to exemplify this self-relevant value even to a minimal degree" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 102; 98–103). Rawls says that shame is a blow to self-esteem (Rawls 1971, 440–46) and Taylor that shame is a blow to self-respect (G. Taylor 1985, 77–81). Differences in the evaluative accounts lie in the ways in which the subject is defined, how the process of evaluation is described, and, most importantly, what count as the standards of evaluation.

[93] While Taylor recognizes the importance of the external perspective in shame, she does not take it to be the foundation of the emotion, writing that the external "observer is merely the means towards this end [i.e., critical self-assessment], and as such is dispensable" (G. Taylor 1985, 59).

[94] The Ego-Ideal does not consist solely of the parental ideals, but includes also later ideals, goals, wishes, and values, as well as identifications with siblings and peers, "collective ideals," and the "awareness of the Ego's potentialities" (Piers and Singer 1953, 14–15).

indicates a real 'shortcoming.'" Therefore, Piers concludes, "Guilt anxiety accompanies transgression; shame, failure." (Piers and Singer 1953, 11).

A variation of Piers' distinction is to say that guilt is experienced over a bad *deed* whereas shame concerns the (whole) *self*. In *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (1971), Helen Block Lewis suggests, "The experience of shame is directly about the self, which is the focus of evaluation. In guilt, the self is not the central object of negative evaluation, but rather the thing done or undone is the focus" (Lewis 1971, 30).[95] The distinction based on deed and self has been influential, but its application to ancient texts is problematic, for in the ancient sources these two are often indiscernible.

In a recent argument for the positive moral value of shame, Julien Deonna, Fabrice Teroni, and Raffaele Rodogno (2011) take the correlation between shame and values as an indication of shame's moral worth. Because shame indicates a failure to live up to a value, it can pave the way for course correcting. The writers' central problem, however, concerns the autonomy or heteronomy of these values, and to defend shame's moral worth, they claim that "shame is never heteronomous" (2011, 125). They insist that the values failed in shame—whether social, aesthetic, intellectual, or moral— be one's own. A shame-inducing value is one that the subject is "attached to," one that is constitutive of her person, or one she "endorses herself" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 80, 100, 125–26).[96] For the writers, the difference between heteronomous and autonomous values is crucial. Shame experienced over one's own moral failures appears beneficial, while the shame that one might feel, for example, as a woman in a sexist culture is less so.[97]

The most obvious problem with insisting on the autonomy of values is that this fails to grasp the phenomenology of shame: surely, shame does not *feel* this way. Antigone may not feel shame at thinking differently and espousing different values to other citizens, but not everyone is capable of being so adamant in defending their convictions. Furthermore, the distinction between autonomous and heteronomous values appears too neat.[98] Are not most of the

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[95] See also Lynd 1958, 49ff., suggesting that shame concerns the "whole self."

[96] We could ask whether Phaedra feels shame because she has failed her own values or because she has breached the norms of female behavior in her society. Following Deonna et al. we could suggest that Phaedra feels shame because she believes, like Hippolytus, that women are "the evil of mankind" (616–17), and a "miasma for all" (406–7). Deonna et al. attempt to circumvent this problem by arguing that even in a situation wherein someone feels shame because of social disapproval—for example, someone who is mocked publicly for being ugly—this is not because of the external devaluation but because the subject *themselves values their own reputation* (2011, 130). That is, the shame results not from the quality of having an ugly nose but from failing to exemplify the value of being approved by others. See Calhoun (2004) for criticism.

[97] Dismissal of external, heteronomous values from shame usually requires that shame is distinguished from feelings of humiliation, which is taken to be an emotion arising from public disgrace. While I am skeptical that emotions would have such rigid outlies as the writers suggest, the differentiation is unhelpful in Greek context as the Greek vocabulary does not reflect a division between shame and humiliation.

[98] Deonna, Teroni, and Rodogno insist on this counterintuitive point because they believe that if shame is heteronomous, then it is necessarily also a non-moral, egoistic, and ugly emotion (2011, 135). Compare Williams' suggestion that heteronomy can also be a morally important factor in shame: often, the values, standards, and expectation of others can show

values that we endorse adopted from the others with whom we live? At what point do values become one's "own," distinct from those of others? Can we really distinguish between values that are adopted and values that are not?

Sara Ahmed notes that if we establish our notion of shame on the ego-ideal, we should recognize that it is an idealization that originates somewhere: it is received from intimate interpersonal connections with family, friends, and so on. The values or norms that we espouse are often acquired from those with whom we have lived and grown up or from those whom we have admired. "[*W*]*e feel shame because we have failed to approximate 'an ideal' that has been given to us through the practices of love.* What is exposed in shame is the failure of love, as a failure that in turn exposes or shows our love," Ahmed writes, adding that "my shame confirms my love, and my commitment to such ideals in the first place" (Ahmed 2004, 106; emphasis in the original).

This is a perspective that I wish to maintain throughout the chapters: if values are involved in shame, in most cases, they are received, adopted values that are shared with others. I maintain that this is also true in the case of the most important value terms relating to tragic shame—*aischron* (shameful/ugly), and its counterpart, *kalon* (fine/beautiful). Despite the disputes over what is beautiful and what is ugly in the tragedies, we do not encounter purely private notions of beauty or ugliness.

3. Embodied

Finally, there are theories that take as a starting point the central role of embodiment in shame—compare the typical scenario of being caught naked.[99] A common argument is that shame is rooted in the very structures of human embodiment, that it is precisely our embodied condition that makes shame possible in the first place.

In his classical study on shame, Max Scheler suggests that a human being feels shame because he (and for Scheler, he is predominantly male) participates in both the "spiritual" life of individual personhood and the "drive-life" of his animal body-organism. In Scheler's words, "man's unique place within the structure of the world…is between the divine and animality. It expresses itself nowhere both so clearly and so immediately as in the feeling of shame" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 3).[100] Shame originates in the fundamental divide within subjectivity

one where one has erred. These external values are not so much, Williams notes, "the prejudices of the community" but the values of those others whom one appreciates or admires (Williams 1993, 81, 84–85).

[99] Paradigmatic example is of course the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis, who, in the beginning, were naked "and did not feel shame." The result of eating from the forbidden tree is, in effect, shame: their eyes are opened so that they see that they are naked and cover themselves with leaves (*The Bible*, Gen. 2:25; 3:7). See Velleman (2003) for an analysis of this scene.

[100] Scheler writes furthermore: "To the origin of the feeling of shame there belongs something like an imbalance and disharmony in man between the sense and the claim of spiritual personhood and embodied needs. It is only because the human essence is tied up with a 'lived body' that we can get in the position where we must feel shame; and only because spiritual personhood is experienced as essentially independent of the 'lived body' and of

that is one's embodied spirit. In Scheler's theory, "because we're more than our bodies, we can feel shame; but because we are bodies we must feel shame" (Dahlstrom 2017, 244).[101] There is a sentiment that there is something uncannily foreign in the organic life of human beings that gives rise to shame.

We may discern echoes of this idea—that shame reveals the human inability to escape the lived body—also in the analysis of Emmanuel Levinas, who writes that "[s]hame arises each time we are unable to make others forget our basic nudity," and therefore it is not by chance that "shame is primarily connected to our body" (Levinas 2003 [1935], 64). This is because shame is an experience of our inability to *flee from* ourselves (or our 'being' as Levinas puts it).[102] Giorgio Agamben elaborates Levinas' notion of the inescapability experienced in shame, re-phrasing his definition by writing that shame is an experience of "being consigned to something that cannot be assumed" (Agamben 1999a, 128). The thing to which one is consigned to is the material, flesh-and-blood organism, especially its *passivity* and *affectivity*. The body has an innate potential to be affected, impacted, and hurt, and shame means experiencing this potential vulnerability.[103]

In her feminist analysis of the emotion, Sandra Bartky (1990) recognizes that shame is an emotion that is often experienced by those who are painfully aware of their vulnerable social condition—the subjugated groups of a community, those who do not receive the external interpersonal affirmation, those who fall outside societal norms, and whose bodies are particularly vulnerable to harm.[104] In the context of the tragedies, these groups consist of women, slaves, criminals, the sick, the disabled, children, suppliants, and other outsiders. For this very reason, shame has the capacity to be conventional and normalizing. It punishes

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everything that comes from it, is it possible to get into the position where we can feel shame" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 5). Shame arises when there is "attention upon the individual's body to more than a normal degree, i.e., these deviations make the body conspicuously present to others" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 29).

[101] In addition, Scheler distinguishes between body shame (e.g., shame for being caught nude) and psychic shame (e.g., shame for lying) (Scheler 1987 [1913], 27). However, their common root lies in the friction between embodied condition and 'higher forms' of our lives: that "it is the constitutive condition of all psychic shame that there is a consciousness of distance between spirit and the lived body-soul, i.e., the tendency to lose oneself spiritually in some way or other into a kind of objective, value domain so that subsequently one becomes aware of his limited and needy lived body as the starting point of these acts" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 83–84).

[102] We may note that for Sartre, too, the gaze of the other reduced the seen one to an *object*—a material, passive thing to be looked at—and hence to immanence. However, in Sartre's account, the heightened sense of embodiment always *follows* from an exposure to the Other—therefore, Sartre's shame remains intersubjective at heart. In this, he differs from Scheler, according to whom shame "is not even exclusively a social feeling" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 15).

[103] Luna Dolezal explicitly traces shame back to this bodily vulnerability, claiming that "shame is fundamentally about our relations with others and our connection to our social world through our sense of embodied vulnerability and our striving for belonging" (Dolezal 2017, 435). Vulnerability and shame are also discussed in Zahavi 2015 and Guenther 2011.

[104] Applying Martin Heidegger's concept of attunement (the affective mode in which one encounters the world), Bartky suggests that shame becomes an attunement that colors the experience and existence of women in general. Bartky explains this by suggesting that women have been conditioned to be ashamed of themselves in a patriarchal society that values male traits (Bartky 1990, 83–98). As Ahmed notes, "Shame can also be experienced as the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence" (Ahmed 2004, 107).

most harshly those who breach the confinements of a norm.[105] Consequently, shame may be dangerous for those bodies that do not fulfill the ideal of a strong male body of a citizen-soldier.[106]

These three aspects of shame—the intersubjective, evaluative, and embodied—are all uniquely illustrative perspectives on the emotion.[107] They all speak to the emotion's ethical significance—now as well as in antiquity. The intersubjective aspect of shame is a feature that grounds its ethical role in the very primary sense of being a being among others. From this perspective, shame can open one up to others and communities of others. Secondly, shame is connected to values, and through this connection, it can reveal our positive attachments to values, ideals, and norms as well as the value-formation and value-acquirement processes. Finally, the embodied aspect of shame is capable of disclosing something of our basic vulnerability—which again is a condition shared with others.

Studying historical emotion

Reading ancient depictions of *aidôs* and *aischunê* alongside modern discussions on shame gives rise to the question regarding the historical nature of emotions. Is the shame we feel now the *same* emotion, feeling, or affect that we recognize as shame in the ancient texts? In using contemporary analyses to shed light on the ancient emotion of shame, I am not suggesting that an emotion would be ahistorical. Indeed, the manifestations and meanings attached to a certain emotion shift and change through time—and conceptualizations of shame may vary even when we move from one contemporary language to another. Yet, unlike some commentators,[108] I do not wish to claim that ancient shame is

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[105] Scholars working within feminist, postcolonial and queer theory have long paid attention to shame in different subjugated groups , see Mann 2018; Fischer 2018; Bewes 2010; Sedgwick 2003, 35–65; Bartky 1990, 83–98; Fanon 2008 [1952], 96.

[106] An ethical or moral concern with shame might be that we tend to think that people *should not* have to feel shame for their subjugation. As an example, we might consider the accusations of sexual violence in the *Hippolytus*. In ancient Greece, sexual violence was considered shameful not only for the perpetrator but also for the victim (and the male patron of the victim). The victim's shame seems not only unfair and undeserved but also harmful.

[107] These three accounts also overlap in important ways. Intersubjective theories often need to refer to shared values that both the subject and the witness recognize (Sartre's voyeur feels shame before the other because of a shared sense that spying is shameful). Intersubjectivity is also fundamentally embodied; we are together as bodies, and we are visible to others as bodies with surfaces. Value-based accounts, by contrast, must explain to what extent the values relevant to shame are private and to what extent they are shared in a society and adopted from others. The values, norms, and ideals against which we compare ourselves in shame are formed in social relation—thus, they introduce intersubjectivity to the heart of the value-based accounts. Finally, body-based approaches must explain how bodies become burdened with some values. A body in 'itself' is not necessarily inhuman and passive but becomes such through a process of value-formation. Shame related to the body is also usually connected to the fact that the body reveals its vulnerability to some other, which again brings us to the intersubjectivity of shame.

[108] E.g., Konstan (2006) emphasizes the difference between the emotion-concepts of different cultures, languages, and times, claiming that *aidôs* is *not* shame.

entirely different from the modern one: there are sites of overlap. We do still *recognize* the signs of shame depicted in Euripides' play: the prospect of being sick with shame over an illicit desire is not restricted to antiquity.

In the field of affect studies,[109] emotion is understood as a complex phenomenon that is located in the nexus of psychological, cultural, and linguistic as well as bodily, material, and preconscious. Affect is sometimes used to refer to the pre-linguistic aspects of emotion (although affects and emotions do not automatically map neatly together), forming the material and preconscious base of all feeling, an undifferentiated affect-flow. Emotion, on the other hand, is the label or name that is attached to an affect (or, more precisely, some bundle or excerpt of the affect-flow) and therefore historical and harnessed with meaning.

Conceiving emotion this way means that it is *neither* simply universal and a-historical *nor* just discourse. This is something I maintain with shame: it names a phenomenon that takes place in bodies. Yet, I am not convinced that we would have direct access to the pre-linguistic affect-flow, for all experience is always mediated through language, meaning, culture, signification, and so on. Therefore, although I do think the emotion has an affective baseline that is not historical, this baseline is not the object of this study. Instead, I will study the emotion as it is named and performed, and this aspect of the emotion, I contend, is historical and does undergo changes.

In the dissertation, I recognize that ancient shame is a complex phenomenon. Rather, the phenomenon under scrutiny is by no means a clear-cut entity. *Aidôs* and *aischunê* in the tragedies encompass experiences, attitudes, values, acts, language, performances, representations, and so on. The two terms come with their own thick and rich semiotics. As an emotion, ancient shame blends with other emotions, especially distaste and disgust (*duschereia*)—*aidôs* and *aischunê* often appear alongside signs of impurity and defilement (*miasma, agon,* etc.)—but also with anger and fear. The emotion is context-dependent so that the shame of a woman might function differently from that of a king, thus manifesting itself as a spectrum from the modesty of an *aidoiê* girl, the public humiliation felt by an adulteress, the inhibition of a young boy to perform disgraceful acts, and to the shame of a murderer.

While the study is philosophical, the material of the study, strictly speaking, is not. As already noted, no definitions of shame are to be found in the tragedies. What is found, instead, is a rich array of performances of shame, staged instances of emotion, and a variety of emotionally motivated agents. Because the study approaches the experiences of human beings as they are framed and performed in ancient plays (and not as they are experienced in the first person),[110] it is a study of representations of an emotion. As such, the shame encountered in the tragedies is not so much an emotion experienced by unique individuals but is always that of a specific character type: a king, a young man, a woman. Consequently, the representations are both normative depictions of shame (one

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[109] See for example Gregg and Seigwarth 2009; Figlerowicz 2012.
[110] While we do not have access to the performances themselves, the texts offer various verbal cues, from long reports of emotion to subtle stage directions embedded in the text.

is likely to feel this way; this is the depiction that the audience is likely to recognize) and negotiations of those normative accounts (why would one feel this way? should one feel this way?).

In a sense, Greek theater may serve as a microcosm for Greek society, as though the polis were a stage on which the condition for any identity, or even for one's very *existence* as a person, lay in the fact of being witnessed by others. Conversely, as Hannah Arendt writes, Greek "theatre is political art par excellence; only there the political sphere of human life is transported into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is a man in his relationship to others" (Arendt 1998, 188). Because a theater (lit. a place of watching) requires that an audience gather to observe the actors and to witness the actions taking place on the stage, it offers a wonderful medium for exhibiting, studying, and reconsidering shame. It reiterates and enforces the theme of the audience in shame by presenting a world of looking on the stage within a world of looking at the theater.

This study has three main chapters. Each chapter presents a case study of a classical tragedy, adopting as a starting point one of the three aspects discussed above. The case studies shed light on the internal logic of shame, its functions, and its principles. The first chapter is a reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which concentrates on the intersubjective elements of Oedipus' shame (and that of the other characters). The phenomenon of gaze—the reciprocity and ambivalence of seeing and looking in the structure of shame—provides a focal point through which I shall study the different configurations of self–other relations that found the subject. I shall also probe further into the difference between shame and guilt, suggesting that one crucial difference lies in the *subject* of the emotions: the subject of guilt is individuated whereas that of shame is intimately entangled with others.

The second chapter is a reading of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, in which I concentrate on the theme of evaluation. The play depicts three characters with three different relationships to both shame and the value of *aischron*. I shall maintain that the key to understanding the ancient notion of shame is the appreciation of the *aesthetic* quality of this value. The chapter will also discuss the related and often-repeated idea in Greek literature that shame is a necessary feeling for communal life because it can impart lessons about what is beautiful and what is ugly. A central argument in the chapter is that shame is a feeling that connects the subject to these values, that is, as an explanation of why the values have value for the ethical subject in the first place.

The third chapter focuses on the issue of embodiment with Euripides' *Helen*. I shall study, on the one hand, how the very possibility of shame might be rooted in the embodied condition of a subject and, on the other hand, how a body becomes shameful in the first place. I shall argue that in the play, the phenomenon of reputation or *doxa* (represented in the play with the device of the almost ephemeral *eidôlon*) becomes life-threatening by marking the body of the shamed woman. I shall pay special attention to the play's theme of sexual

violence—and the shame related to it—discussing the link between shame and femininity.

Throughout the dissertation, I shall argue that shame, as it is represented on the tragic stage, can support our contemplation of subjectivity itself. Shame may reveal something unpleasant about the dependency, superficiality, and narcissism of a subject, but it also reveals the subject as bound to others, in need of love and affirmation, and striving for beauty. As painful as shame is, it would be a mistake to say that it is ethically harmful. Rather, as an emotion corresponding to the conditions of shared life, it is an experience that is essential to the development of ethical subjectivity. This will be the thread running throughout the dissertation: Who is the subject of shame? What kinds of ethical subjectivities does shame allow? Or, in other words, who is the subject of ethics?

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS: THE OTHER IN SHAME

At the end of Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Oedipus' long search for the cure of the plague in Thebes, for the murderer of the previous king, and for his own identity has come to an end with horrible consequences. His crimes of patricide and incest are finally exposed, and "everything has become clear (*ta pant' an exêkoi safê* 1182), as the hero declares. The exposure culminates in a scene of violence whose force has endured millennia: Iocasta, Oedipus' mother-wife hangs herself and Oedipus plucks out his eyes with golden pins torn from her dress. Consistent with tragic conventions, these actions take place within the closed doors of the *skênê* and the audience only learns about the violence through the narration of a messenger. Force of this scene is, nevertheless, visceral. I will quote the narration at length:

> With a dread cry, as though someone guided him, [Oedipus] rushed to the double doors, forced the bending bolts inwards from the sockets, and fell into the room. There we beheld the woman hanging by the neck in a twisted noose of swinging cords. And when he saw her, with a dread deep cry he released the halter by which she hung. And when the hapless woman was stretched out on the ground, then the sequel was horrible to see: for he tore from her raiment the golden brooches with which she had decorated herself, and lifting them struck his own eye-balls, uttering such words as these: that they should not see his dread sufferings or his dread actions, but in the future they should see in darkness those they never should have seen, and fail to recognize those he wished to know. Humming these words, he struck his eyes with raised hand not once but many times. At each blow, the bloody eyeballs bedewed his beard, and sent forth not sluggish drops of gore, but all at once, a dark shower of blood came down like hail. (*OT* 1260-1279.)[111]

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[111] δεινὸν δ' αὐσας ὡς ὑφ' ἡγητοῦ τινος / πύλαις διπλαῖς ἐνήλατ', ἐκ δὲ πυθμένων / ἔκλινε κοῖλα κλῆιθρα κἀμπίπτει στέγηι. / οὗ δὴ κρεμαστὴν τὴν γυναῖκ' ἐσείδομεν, / πλεκταῖσ ἐώραισ ἐμπεπλεγμένην. ὁ δέ' / ὥπως ὁρᾶι νιν, δεινὰ βρυχηθεὶς τάλας, / χαλᾶι κρεμαστὴν ἀρτάνην. ἐπεὶ δὲ γῆι / ἔκειτο τλήμων, δεινά γ' ἦν τἀνθένδ' ὁρᾶν. / ἀποσπάσας γὰρ εἱμάτων

Oedipus' self-blinding is a familiar topic from the histories of philosophy and literary criticism. The audience members, the readers, and the critics keep asking same question as the horrified chorus: "What madness has come upon you, unhappy one?" (1299-1300).

Historically, one answer to the enigma of self-blinding has been to read it as a self-accepted, voluntary punishment for the crimes committed, an indication of Oedipus' tragic guilt. For example, Friedrich Schelling has famously interpreted Oedipus as an epitome of tragic guilt, which he saw as the acceptance of a guilt one is not responsible for.[112] In psychoanalytic theory, the act of self-blinding symbolizes self-castration, and thus, punishment.[113] I will read it, on the contrary, as a spectacular performance of shame.

In answering the chorus' question, Oedipus demands to know, "After bearing such a stain upon myself, was I to look with steady eyes on this folk?" (1384–85).[114] Filled with a language of visibility, eyes, and fame, as well as that of pollution, dirt, defilement, the semantics of the play suggest that shame is its main attunement from the beginning to end. Thus, in this chapter, I will study the intersections of shame, eyes, vision, and witnessing by following closely the lead of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. I shall focus especially on the intersubjective dimensions of Oedipus's shame: the interpersonal, the communal, the reciprocal.

I shall begin the chapter by studying the configurations of looking, the experiences of being seen, and the countering wish to hide from sight that predominate the discourse around shame and its staged representations. Drawing on phenomenological accounts of shame, I shall argue that, in shame, we can detect a mediated self-relation in which the self is seen through the eyes of others. Second, I shall investigate how shame works in a community. I shall argue that the personal experience of shame can also affect the community as a whole because of shame's capacity to circulate between subjects as though it were a contagious disease. By analyzing the various instances in Greek literature in which the witness to a crime becomes somehow implicated in or polluted by the crime, I shall demonstrate how a witness may also be affected by the shame that they witness. Finally, I shall consider the interpretations in which Oedipus' self-blinding has been read as an indication of his feeling of guilt. By studying the reception history of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, particularly commentators' tendency to read Oedipus' shame as guilt, I will suggest that shame itself has a power to deter,

χρυσηλάτους / περόνας ἀπ' αὐτῆς, αἷσιν ἐξεστέλλετο, / ἄρας ἔπαισεν ἄρθρα τῶν αὑτοῦ κύκλων, / αὐδῶν τοιαῦθ', ὁθούνεκ' οὐκ ὄψοιντό νιν / οὔθ' οἷ' ἔπασχεν οὔθ' ὁποῖ' ἔδρα κακά, / ἀλλ' ἐν σκότωι τὸ λοιπὸν οὓς μὲν οὐκ ἔδει / ὀψοίαθ', οὓς δ' ἔχρηιζεν οὐ γνωσοίατο. / τοιαῦτ' ἐφυμνῶν πολλάκις τε κοὐχ ἅπαξ / ἤρασσ' ἔπειρεν βλέφαρα. φοίνιαι δ' ὁμοῦ / γλῆναι γένει' ἔτεγγον, οὐδ' ἀνίεσαν. / φόνου μυδώσας σταγόνας, ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ μέλας / ὄμβρος χαλαζῆς αἵματός [ἐτέγγετο]. Translation adapted from Jebb (1887). For the translations of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, I have otherwise used Lloyd-Jones 1997.
[112] For Schelling, see ch. 1.3.1.
[113] In psychoanalytic tradition, the eyes equal genitals, and a link between eyes and genitals is indeed also a recurring theme in Greek textual evidence (Caldwell 1974; Devereux 1973). Eyes and genitals also have an equal share in shame – cf. the Euripidean proverb according to which shame (*aidôs*) is in the eyes and the fact that the term for genitals is *aidoia*.
[114] τοιάνδ' ἐγὼ κηλῖδα μηνύσας ἐμὴν / ὀρθοῖς ἔμελλον ὄμμασιν τούτους ὁρᾶν;

as if even a representation of the feeling would have a power to defile its audience. Drawing a conceptual distinction between emotional–moral guilt and legal–factual guilt, I shall suggest that rather than portraying guilt as a distinct *emotion*, the tragedies discuss ways of determining guilt in a *legal* sense. When it comes to Oedipus, however, his legal guilt is not the central problem of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, but that of *Oedipus in Colonus*.

Reading the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles with and against the intersubjective theories of shame, I will argue that shame is a fundamentally ethical experience as it reveals the interconnectedness of subjects. For while Oedipus is an arrogant figure for whom the basic intersubjectivity, or being-with, poses a problem, his shame also makes possible an emergence of ethical self-awareness of the destructiveness of his actions to the people around him. As in Phaedra's monologue, here too shame is twofold: it is both a destructive emotion that threatens living-with *and* an emotion at the foundation of ethics. In the chapter, then, Sophocles' play serves as a platform in which the ethically founding and destructive aspects of shame can be studied side by side. For, even as the morality of shame has been called into question, I maintain that *there is no solipsistic ethics*, an ethics without others.

1.1   Shame is in the eyes

A fragment from Euripides' lost play, *Cresophontes*, reads, "Shame is in the eyes, child" (E. fr. 457).[115] This passage is preserved only as a quotation in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* but the correspondence between eyes and shame recurs throughout Greek tragedy: Sophocles' Ajax demands to know "what eyes (*poion omma*) am I to show my father?" (S. *Aj.* 462) after his public humiliation; Neoptolemus wonders "with what look (*pôs…blepôn*)" one could dare to utter shameful lies (S. *Ph.* 110); in Euripides' *Heracles,* the hero is said to feel shame *before* or *for* the eyes of his friend (*aidomenos to son omma*, E. *Her.* 1199); in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Agamemnon says he does not want to "lift [his] eyes (*blephara*) too high shamelessly (*anaides*)" (E. *IA* 378–9); and Iphigenia "has the eyes of shame (*aidous omm'*) of a free woman" (E. *IA* 993–4). If there is indeed a locus for the feeling of shame, it is found in the eyes, in the gaze.[116]

Aristotle refers to Euripides' proverb in his discussion on shame in the *Rhetoric*. He notes that people are more ashamed of things that are done "before eyes [of others] and in broad daylight," explaining that this is the idea behind the proverb. Therefore people "feel more ashamed before those who are likely to be always with them or who keep watch upon them, because in both cases they are *under the eyes* (*en tois ofthalmois*) of others" (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a33–b1).

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[115] αἰδὼς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι γίγνεται, τέκνον.
[116] Already in the *Iliad*, shamelessness may be detected in the 'dog face' of an offender (*kunôpa; kuneos…ôpa, Il.* 1.158; 9.373). In comedic setting, the chorus of Aristophanes' *Wasps* complain that there is "no more shame in the eyes (*oud en ophthalmois aidôs*)" of bad-behaving slaves (Aristoph. *V*. 446–7).

This vocabulary of eyes of shame is accompanied by indications of hiding from the said eyes. Euripides' Phaedra attempts to conceal her shameful condition by remaining indoors "with fine-spun clothes shading her blond head" (E. *Hipp*. 131f.), her "eyes turned to shame" (*ep' aischunên omma tetraptai*, E. *Hipp*. 246). In a similar manner, Sophocles' Ajax hides in a tent in shame, Euripides' Heracles veils his head, and Orestes, when seeing a man for whom he "has most shame in his eyes," asks "What darkness can I find for my face? What cloud can I spread before me in my efforts to escape the old man's eye?" (E. *Or*. 460–61; 467–9).[117] Or recall how Socrates veils himself in the *Phaedrus* when he is about to deliver a shameful speech.[118] When "the eyes turn to shame," they need to be hidden from sight.

While veiling is a common way to cover the eyes of shame, the ultimate hiding place from shame in tragedy is death: Ajax throws himself onto his sword;[119] Phaedra hangs herself, as do Oedipus' Deianeira and Iocasta and Euripides' Leda in the *Helen*. Recall how Phaedra explains her decision to kill herself in order to "not have a throng of witnesses to my shameful deeds" (E. *Hipp*, 403–4).[120] Like veiling, suicide is a way of severing oneself from a shared world of looking and seeing.

The connection between eyes and shame speaks to the social dimension of the emotion.[121] While the centrality of eyes and vision in shame is a cross-culturally recognized phenomenon, the reciprocal experience of seeing and being seen might have a pronounced meaning in Greek social life.[122] As has been noted, in archaic and classical Greece, the identity, person, or worth was inseparable from what was visible to others: everyone was under the eyes of others, and "seeing was not separable from being seen" (Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, 20). Or as Vernant puts it, "One was 'what others saw in one'" (Vernant 1995, 18). In the Greek vocabulary, the word for eyes, *omma*, is often used as a metonym for the face and for the *person*.[123] Conversely, the common word for face, *prosôpon*, means, precisely, that which is *before sight*.

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[117] οὖ μάλιστ᾽ αἰδὼς μ᾽ ἔχει / ἐς ὄμματ᾽ […] / τίνα σκότον / λάβω προσώπῳ; ποῖον ἐπίπροσθεν νέφος / θῶμαι, γέροντος ὀμμάτων φεύγων κόρας;

[118] On this particular scene, see Adamczyk 2023; on the different, often shame-related meanings of veiling in Greek antiquity, see Cairns 2002.

[119] On Ajax's suicide and shame, see Lansky 1996.

[120] Ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ / μήτ᾽ αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.

[121] As noted in the introduction, some contemporary theorists seek to downplay the role of the other as well as the social dimension of shame. For example, Deonna et al. (2011) argue that shame does not depend on external perspectives because it is *primarily* a judgment of the self over the self. However, it would be disingenuous to deny that in the presence of the other, shame is often both more acute and more intense. Consider, for instance, sex. While sexual acts have their own share of shame both in antiquity and now, it would seem to make a difference whether one has sex in private or in public.

[122] Scholars have traditionally defined ancient Greece as a culture predominated by vision — an "ocularcentric" culture that "privileged sight over other senses," (Jay 1993, 21–26) or a culture of so-called *Augenmenschen* (Malten 1961; Luther 1966). See Blundell et al. 2013, who note that an emphasis on eyes and vision may be found in many cultural spheres, both past and present, and is thus not unique to classical Greece.

[123] *LSJ* sv. ὄμμα.

1.1.1 Spectacle of shame

Oedipus' eyes have come to serve as the sign of his identity. We know Oedipus as the blind one, as the figure who is unable to *see* – both after his act of self-blinding and before, when he still had his vision but could not "see the trouble he is in" (413). As Oedipus declares when striking the eyes with pins, they have failed to fulfill their basic function of looking, seeing, and recognizing what they see – and fromnow on they will see only darkness (1271–74).

The story of Oedipus is familiar to everyone, but it is worth revisiting the basics. When Oedipus was born, his parents Laius and Iocasta heard a prophecy that their baby would kill his father and marry his mother. Horrified, Laius pierced the baby's ankles and ordered him to be abandoned on a mountain site, but the servant assigned to the task, took pity on the baby and gave it to foster parents. Growing up, young Oedipus heard a rumor that his parents were not his real parents, and decided to inquire the truth from Delphi, where he was informed that he would kill his father. In the following journey, Oedipus would strike an old man (i.e., Laius) to death, meet and defeat the Sphinx, and marry the queen of Thebes (i.e., Iocasta). This is the backstory. Sophocles' play takes place many years later, when Thebes is suffering from a plague resulting from the unsolved death of Laius. As the king, Oedipus sets out to uncover the mystery: ruling all possible witnesses to come forth, interrogating potential criminals, and gathering evidence – only to realize that he was the man he was looking for.

But why does he choose blinding? This is what the horrified chorus wishes to know when the bleeding hero returns to stage. As they note, Oedipus could also have simply killed himself: "You would have been better dead than living but blind" (1368). Oedipus explains to the chorus:

> I do not know with what eyes (*ommasin poiois*) I could have looked upon (*blepôn…proseidon*) my father when I went to Hades, or upon my unhappy mother, since upon them both I have done deeds that are too evil for hanging. Then, would the sight of my children be lovely (*teknôn…opsis…efimeros*) for me to look upon (*prosleussein emoi*), since their origins were what they were? No, never to my eyes (*ou dêta tois g'emoisin ofthalmois pote*)! (1371–77)[124]

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[124] Translation modified. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὄμμασιν ποίοις βλέπων / πατέρα ποτ᾽ ἂν προσεῖδον εἰς Ἅιδου μολών, / οὐδ᾽ αὖ τάλαιναν μητέρ᾽, οἷν ἐμοὶ δυοῖν / ἔργ᾽ ἐστὶ κρείσσον᾽ ἀγχόνης εἰργασμένα. / [ἀλλ᾽ ἡ τέκνων δῆτ᾽ ὄψις ἦν ἐφίμερος, / βλαστοῦσ᾽ ὅπως ἔβλαστε, προσλεύσσειν ἐμοί; / οὐ δῆτα τοῖς γ᾽ ἐμοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ποτε·] Dawe (2006) judges the lines 1375–77 to be potentially spurious, because line 1377 repeats the point made already in the line 1371. Dawe suggests that the mention of the children is an interpolation because the lines occur immediately after the line in which Oedipus adds that his eyes are equally unable to behold his city and its statues of gods, unholy as he is (1378–79). I do not see any reason that his children would be out of place here: Oedipus is simply listing *everyone* at whom he is unable to look – parents, children, the city, the gods – in other words, he recounts all the relevant social spheres that he inhabits. In fact, Dawe insists that most of the ending from line 1424 onwards is a later addition. For countering arguments, see Finglass 2009. Goldhill (2014) suggests that the difficulties perceived in the ending of *OT* may result from the

In line with the common vocabulary of eyes and shame, Oedipus finds the thought of having to meet the gazes of his dearest people unbearable. Blinding, then, appears to be an attempt in hiding, like a child might cover her eyes and imagine she cannot be seen, or in the sense that Phaedra and others veil their faces in shame.[125] If eyes are the locus of shame, then the act of self-blinding is *an attempt to annihilate one's shame.*

Oedipus, indeed, repeats his wish to disappear several times; he requests to be either lead away from stage ("Take me away as soon as you can, take me" 1340–1), hidden "somewhere abroad" (1410–1), killed, or thrown to the sea, "where no one will behold me any longer" (1411–3).[126] But whereas for Ajax or Iocasta death serves as the ultimate hiding place, Oedipus' shame appears to be so severe that it would follow him to death. Even in Hades he wouldn't know "what eyes" to show his father and mother (1371)—hence, his decision to blind himself rather than commit suicide.

But while the act of self-blinding may be interpreted as a symbolic gesture of covering/hiding oneself in shame, it, in fact, achieves the opposite effect. Because of his self-mutilation, Oedipus has become *hyper-visible*. Already, the reported scene of blinding itself is intensely visual. Although the action takes place only in report, the messenger's words produce a vivid image for the mind's eye of the hero striking "his eyes with raised hand not once but many times," so that "at each blow, the bloody eyeballs bedewed his beard, and sent forth not sluggish drops of gore, but all at once, a dark shower of blood came down like hail" (1275–79). When Oedipus returns to the stage, wearing a new mask that represents the bloody hollows that are now where his eyes once were,[127] the mutilated eyes draw attention to that which is no longer there—the eyes—and to the very fact that he is *not* hidden. As the chorus exclaims, Oedipus has become a spectacle, a *theama*, for everyone to see (1295).

Oedipus' hyper-visible condition is an exaggeration of the body as it is experienced in the moment of most shameful exposure; too noticeable, at the center of everyone's attention, burning with visibility, and marked with shame. In Oedipus' case, the declared wish to disappear occurs together with a contradictory wish *to expose* one's shame. Immediately after Oedipus has blinded himself, "he cries for someone to unbar the gates and show (*dêloun*) to all Cadmeans his father's slayer and his mother's..." (1287–1289)[128]—unable to finish his sentence, the messenger leaves the second crime unnamed. By commanding the doors open, Oedipus demands total exposure of his crimes, which appears to contradict the anticipated instinct to hide in shame.

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interpretative tradition: because scholars come to the text with preconceived ideas about the play's meaning, they have struggled to accept the text when it appears to clash with such preconceptions.
[125] Cairns also suggests that Oedipus' "self-blinding is…related to his desire for concealment, and therefore to his shame" (Cairns 1993, 217).
[126] ἔνθα μήποτ᾽ εἰσόψεσθ᾽ ἔτι.
[127] Beer 2012, 106.
[128] βοᾷ διοίγειν κλῇθρα καὶ δηλοῦν τινα / τοῖς πᾶσι Καδμείοισι τὸν πατροκτόνον, / τὸν μητέρ᾽– αὐδῶν ἀνόσι᾽ οὐδὲ ῥητά μοι…

The internal contradiction in the act of *declaring one's desire to hide* is not, however, so foreign to other shame reactions. Consider the act of veiling. Phaedra, for instance, repeats that she feels shame, calls her eyes shameful, and loudly commands others to veil her head, all gestures that make her shame more noticeable and visible. Meanwhile, Socrates veils his head in the *Phaedrus* precisely to *express* rather than hide his shame. Thus, the most paradigmatic gesture of shame in the ancient texts does not so much hide one's face but *communicates* to others the desire to hide. The act of communicating the wish to hide is also a matter of controlling one's exposure by making the exposure itself visible to others. In Oedipus' case, it is a performance of shame.

Furthermore, for Oedipus, the wish not to be seen is accompanied by an explicitly stated wish *not to look*. He is not only an object to be looked upon, but the one who actively looks upon others. As the hero asks: "with what eyes would I look upon my father" (1371) and "was I to look upon these [people] with steady eyes?" (*orthois emellon ommasin toutous horan*; 1385). To destroy the eyes means not having to look at others, as if the very reciprocity of looking would make it unthinkable. For Oedipus, the annihilation of his eyes serves, through the metonymic relationship between the eyes and the face, as a means of erasing his person from the reciprocal world of looking. In this way, Oedipus' shame is expressed in fundamentally social terms: the eyes pose a problem because they are the organs that link him to the world that he shares with others.

1.1.2 Being-with

Of intersubjective theories of shame, perhaps the most influential is that of Jean-Paul Sartre. Like Plato and Aristotle, Sartre roots his account of shame in the general phenomenological observation that the experience of shame includes a sense of being seen. Recall Sartre's vignette depicting a shame inducing situation: someone bent in front of a keyhole, and caught in the act of eavesdropping on something not meant for her ears (Sartre 2003 [1943], 282ff.). According to Sartre, shame arises exactly in the experience of being exposed to the look of the other; in shame, "I am ashamed of myself as *I appear* to the Other" (Sartre 2003 [1943], 246).

As a reaction to the Look of the Other, Sartre's shame has, as Lisa Guenther formulates, "a triangular structure" (Guenther 2011, 26). In shame, the subject turns back to itself via the other. Sartre suggests that in shame, the subject becomes conscious of its very visibility, of the fact that one appears to the other. It is a recognition that one is not only a *subject* but also an *object* of the other's gaze—Sartre calls this becoming conscious of oneself as one is given to an outside perspective a process of objectification. The realization amounts to a new kind of self-knowledge: for in forcing the subject back upon itself via the gaze of the other, shame "realizes an intimate relation of myself to myself (Sartre 2003, 246). This self-knowledge, the sense of oneself as an object to be gazed at would not be possible, Sartre notes, without reference to the other. In the self-relation realized in shame, "the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me" (Sartre 2003, 246).

Emphasizing the importance of the other in shame is not to say that shame cannot be experienced in solitude—Sartre asks us to imagine a variation of his vignette in which the source of the sound is just a rattle of an old house. The person peeping at the keyhole might still feel shame because she *imagines* that she is being watched. This is to say, the other might as well be an "imagined other."[129] What is significant is that in any case, the idea of the other is a necessary *structural* element in the experience of shame—the other is always already somehow implicated in the experience.

In ancient examples of imagined other, the idea gains normative weight. As writers since antiquity have asserted, not only *can* one imagine being watched by another but perhaps one even *should* imagine some other as witnessing one's doings even when one is, indeed, alone. The requirement to feel shame before oneself *in the same manner as one feels shame before others* is laid out by Democritus, who advises, "Even if you are alone, do not say or do anything base (*faulon*), and learn to feel shame before yourself (*seauton aischunesthai*) much more than before others" (DK 68 B 244).[130] Moreover, "The one who does shameful things should first of all feel shame before himself" (*heauton proton aischunesthai chreôn ton aischra edronta*, DK 68 B 84).[131] The imagined other serves as a guarantor of honorable behavior.[132]

In any case, the solitary shame is structured according to the model of shame before real others. Democritus' exhortations are comprehensible precisely because one can recognize the underlying and presumed form of shame—that which is felt before the other—and *try to learn* to model a private experience of shame in accordance with it. Aristotle provides an example of this kind of attempt in the *Rhetoric*:

> Cydias, when haranguing the people about the allotment of the territory of Samos, begged the Athenians to picture to themselves that the Greeks *were standing round them and would not only hear, but also see* what they were going to decree. (Ar. *Rh.* 1384b32–35)

In this example, the shame that one experiences before oneself happens through the visualization of enemies' eyes around oneself. The other's perspective might be imagined, but it must be possible and potential. For Sartre, in his example, one does not feel shame because one hears a noise but because the source of the noise might be another subject.

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[129] On the "imagined other" see Williams 1993, 82.

[130] Translations of Democritus, Taylor 1999.

[131] Translation modified. In a third fragment, Democritus writes, "Do not feel shame before other people rather than before yourself, nor be more willing to do wrong if no-one will know of it than if everyone will. But feel shame before yourself above all (*heautôn malista aideisthai*), and set up this law in your soul, so that you will never do anything discreditable" (DK 68 B 264).

[132] The other does not necessarily need to be a *human* other; a god may also serve as a witness. *Oedipus Tyrannus* speaks of "the all-seeing time" (1212), *Oedipus at Colonus* of "the all-seeing Eumenides" (*OC* 42).

Pertaining to the theme, there is a curious detail in the messenger speech reporting Oedipus' self-blinding. The messenger says that as Oedipus stabs the golden pins into his eye sockets, he also *addresses his eyes*. The messenger reports that Oedipus struck his eyeballs,

> uttering such words as these: *that they should not see his dread sufferings or his dread actions*, but in the future they should see in darkness those they never should have seen, and fail to recognize those he wished to know (1270–73).[133]

This minor remark in the story seems to be significant. Oedipus addresses his eyes as though they were something external to his speaking, acting, and suffering self. Here the self turns back to itself through a mediated perspective. In his shame, Oedipus is as much an object to be looked at as he is the one *looking* and *bearing witness*, acquiring an outside perspective on the self. While it is clear that in this self-reflexive movement he comes to see himself as if from the outside, it is less clear that he has really *internalized* an outside perspective. In addressing his own eyes as though they were someone other, Oedipus appears to *externalize* his own perspective in the form of a projection.

The difference is subtle, but I believe that the shift in emphasis is important here, for it seems that the understanding of the *subject* varies depending on how we phrase the idea of self-reflexivity. The eye must become an "other" because the eye cannot look at itself. In stead of *adopting* an external perspective of the other and submerging it within the self, the process of externalization makes one's own perspective foreign; to make the self into an other.[134]

The intersubjective underpinning of Oedipus' shame is underlined also by the hero's wish to become *deaf* in addition to being blind. When Oedipus tells the chorus that he does not want to meet the eyes of others, he adds that,

> Indeed: were there a way to choke the source of hearing, I would not have hesitated to make a fast prison of this wretched body, so that I should have known neither sight nor sound. For it is sweet for our thought to dwell beyond the sphere of grief (*to gar tên frontid' exô tôn kakôn oikein gluku*, 1386–90)[135]

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[133] αὐδῶν τοιαῦθ᾽, ὁθούνεκ᾽ οὐκ ὄψοιντό νιν / οὔθ᾽ οἶ᾽ ἔπασχεν οὔθ᾽ ὁποῖ᾽ ἔδρα κακά, / ἀλλ᾽ ἐν σκότωι τὸ λοιπὸν οὓς μὲν οὐκ ἔδει / ὀψοίαθ᾽, οὓς δ᾽ ἔχρηιζεν οὐ γνωσοίατο.

[134] In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Phaedra voices another experience of this externalizing movement. In wondering how adulterous women can live with their shame, she asks whether they do not fear "that the darkness, their accomplice, and the timbers of the house will break into speech?" (οὐδὲ σκότον φρίσσουσι τὸν ξυνεργάτην / τέραμνά τ᾽ οἴκων μή ποτε φθογγὴν ἀφῇ; E. Hipp. 415–18.) Here, the roles of a witness and a co-conspirator are projected onto the inanimate darkness and the walls of the building.

[135] ἥκιστά γ᾽ · ἀλλ᾽ εἰ τῆς ἀκουούσης ἔτ᾽ ἦν / πηγῆς δι᾽ ὤτων φραγμός, οὐκ ἂν ἐσχόμην / τὸ μὴ ἀποκλῆισαι τοὐμὸν ἄθλιον δέμας, / ἵν᾽ ἦ τυφλός τε καὶ κλύων μηδέν · τὸ γὰρ / τὴν φροντίδ᾽ ἔξω τῶν κακῶν οἰκεῖν γλυκύ.

Blinding is not enough, one must become deaf as well. The ultimate comfort, for Oedipus, would be severing himself from social reality altogether. The capacities of seeing and hearing, he asserts, connect one's interiority (one's thoughts, *tên frontida*) to the relational world of intersubjectivity. Closed off from the world shared with others, the mind has a dwelling-place "outside evils" (*exô tôn kakôn*). In this impossible place, safe from reference to others, the life of the mind would be *sweet*.

In fact, the solitary place outside the world of others would seem to be a sweet dwelling place for Sartre as well. It has been noted that for Sartre being-with- and for- others is essentially a question of power (Heinämaa 2020; Kirkpatrick 2017; Guenther 2011). Sartre sees the basic attunement of communal life as humiliating, and thus the experience and the structure of shame attest to the fact that we are not in power, nor are we in control—of our being, of our life, of our world. Shame, Sartre writes, is an experience of a "fall," a recognition of "myself in this degraded, fixed, and dependent being which I am for the Other" (Sartre 2003, 312). For Sartre, as for Oedipus, shame stems from an experience of vulnerability in relation to others.[136]

Yet no such secluded place is available to Oedipus or to anyone else for that matter. As Oedipus' words imply, *if* he could block "the stream of hearing though [his] ears" (1386–87) as he can block sight, *then* there would be no shame. This is the realization at the center of Sartre's analysis of shame.[137] For Sartre, the other-mediated self-relation is not *only* the constitutive part of shame but also a fundamental experience of being a subject: "rather than merely being a self-reflective emotion [shame] is an emotion that reveals our relationality, our being-for-others" (Zahavi 2015, 213).[138] The ability to feel shame reveals that the subject is always already mediated through the perspective of the other. In other words, it makes visible the constitutive intersubjectivity that is embedded in the structure of all subjectivity. The self represents a "sweet" dwelling place for thoughts whereas the outside perspective introduces an "evil" from which the

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[136] As Lisa Guenther points out, Sartre describes a subject that strives to be in control and powerful; in other words, "For Sartre, the subject's deepest desire is to become like God: a being who exists in-and-for-itself, recoiling the split between subject and object" (Guenther 2011, 26). As noted in the introduction, shame does not appear to be a haphazardly chosen example in Sartre's analysis of intersubjectivity, but be a basic attunement of social life. That is, in his account, communal life is not only shame-inducing; it is also fundamentally distressing and agonizing. In fact, the Other of the look bears closer resemblance to the Judeo-Christian god than to a fellow human being (see Kirkpatrick (2017, 137ff.) on Sartre's religious language in the analysis of shame). The look is "vertical, hierarchical and global," and furthermore, it appears that "the verticality of the look is a structural feature of my being for others, my very relatedness" (Heinämaa 2020, 49).

[137] Sartre introduces shame at the beginning of his discussion of the existence of other minds, i.e., the problem of solipsism. Thus, shame in Sartre serves as an illustrative example, rather than being of interest in its own right.

[138] Dolezal formulates this point: "for Sartre, my very existence depends on the other on the most foundational level. Being-seen-by-another, for Sartre, is a constitutive part of experience. As such, the other is there from the beginning and not added on to a solitary subject at some later stage" (Dolezal 2017, 427). Consequently, shame in Sartre's analysis increasingly loses its resemblance to an emotion—rather, it is "an ontological structure" of a subject (Dolezal 2017, 422).

self is unable to escape — as the outside perspective is embedded in the very ability to see.

In asserting that the subject is not self-contained but is always already *with* others, Sartre continues the line of phenomenological analysis of intersubjectivity beginning with Edmund Husserl.[139] Influenced by Husserl's theory of intersubjective objectivity, Martin Heidegger formulates a notion of *mitsein* or 'being-with.' Heidegger claims that a subject's experience of being is primarily being-with others, which is to say that every human being is always already with others in the world. Because every human being exists alongside others, our subjectivity is fundamentally rooted in this shared condition, and consequently all solitary existence is merely a modification of this basic intersubjective condition (Heidegger 2001 [1927], 153–68).

In further elaborating on Heidegger's analysis of being-with, Jean-Luc Nancy makes the plurality of being a starting point of ethics. Echoing Heidegger, Nancy notes that any singular being, any "I," becomes possible only because it is preceded by a plurality, an "us," in relation to which the I can become an I in the first place. Conversely, in a solipsistic world, there would be no need for a singular selfhood (Nancy 2000, 93–99). For Nancy, this means, then, that the primary of the subject to the world is an *ethical* one. This idea of the always already related subject that stems from plurality can help us understand the Greek ethics of shame and honor. Besides being heteronomous, the so-called shame-culture is also inherently plural and intersubjective. However, Oedipus of *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a figure for whom this intersubjectivity of being poses a *problem*.

1.1.3 Oedipal subjects

If shame is an essentially intersubjective emotion and if ethics is essentially intersubjective, then claims about the interconnectedness of the two might be expected to be quite uncontroversial. Yet, as noted, in contemporary philosophical discussions, shame has been sometimes taken as an unethical emotion, or even as an emotion threatening ethics. This position is forcibly argued for by Martha Nussbaum (2004), but a suspicion towards the ethical value of shame is shared among other philosophers as well (see Westerlund 2022, 2019; Ogien 2002; Kekes 1988).[140] Building on psychological accounts of infant shame, Martha Nussbaum (2004, 177–189) introduces a notion of primitive shame, a type of shame that arises from the subject's inability to accept their vulnerability and neediness in relation to other people; it is an infantile reaction whereby the

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[139] The notion of intersubjectivity stems from Husserl's analysis of objectivity. Husserl notes that we invariably perceive the world such that we understand that it is also perceived by others. Seeing a tree, a person, or a play, one always and without conscious reflection understands that the same things are also perceptible to others. Therefore, the other is always already implied in our perception of the world and, in other words, we experience the world intersubjectively (Moran 2004, 175–79).

[140] In psychology, June Tangney has published a considerable amount of research on the negative effects of shame. See e.g., Tangney 1991 and Tangney and Dearing 2004, ch. 5.

subject realizes that in a world inhabited by other people, she is not omnipotent.[141]

In fact, this kind of shame of a self-absorbed and godlike subject is also looming in the background of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. While we witness the violent eruption of shame in the final scene of the play, a lingering shame has followed Oedipus' steps throughout the play, masked with an exaggerated pride. As though behind his prominence and fame, there lurked a constant threat of being dishonored, of being put to shame. It is precisely this latent shame of a thin-skinned, prideful subject that is ethically hazardous.

The *Oedipus Tyrannus* opens with a scene in which Theban priests accompanied by children have come to Oedipus' palace in supplication to seek help with a plague that ravages the city. They approach Oedipus as the one person who can help them and save the city. Invoking how Oedipus has already once saved Thebes, they call him "the first of men" (*andrôn de prôton* 33), "the mightiest man in the sight of all" (*kratistôn pâsin Oidipou kara* 40) and "the best of mortals" (*brotôn arist'* 46). The fame of his past deeds is in line (47-8). In his wisdom, he is *almost* like a god (*isotheos* 16, 31). From the very beginning, then, Oedipus is represented as a prominent figure defined by his *kleos* (honor and fame), a man who introduces himself as "the all-famous man (*pâsi kleinos*) called Oedipus" (8).[142] He is the sovereign of the city, a king, and the savior of his country; he has, after all, saved the country by outsmarting the Sphinx with his wit. In possession of both power and knowledge, at the center of his world, Oedipus is a paradigmatic image of a sovereign subject.

After Oedipus is summoned to help with the mysterious plague, the audience soon learns that the unsolved and unavenged murder of the previous king has left behind pollution, *miasma*, and that the solving of the crime would bring purification. To begin his investigation, Oedipus summons the old seer Teiresias for questioning. However, although Teiresias is well aware of the murderer's identity (he is a seer, after all), he refuses to disclose his information. Instead, he immediately laments, "how terrible it is to have wisdom when it does not benefit those who have it" (316–7)[143] and declares that he will reveal nothing of his knowledge but will "bury it in silence" (341, 328–29).[144] The refusal invites a violent reaction: Oedipus quickly accuses Teiresias of betraying the people and destroying the city (331)[145] and then abruptly insults the old man by exclaiming, "Won't you, the evilest of evils, who would anger (*organeias*) even a stone, speak out" (334–5),[146] claiming that Teiresias is "disrespecting the city" (*atimazeis polin* 340) and speaking "without shame" (*anaidôs*, 354). As a reverse side to his pride,

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[141] See Deonna, Teroni and Rodogno (2012, ch. 2) for further criticism of this view.

[142] ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους καλούμενος. See Nooter (2012, 81ff.) for an in-depth analysis of Oedipus' *kleos*.

[143] φεῦ φεῦ· φρονεῖν ὡς δεινὸν ἔνθα μὴ τέλη / λύῃ φρονοῦντι.

[144] ἐγὼ σιγῇ στέγω. Like Oedipus' own knowledge of his crime, Teiresias' knowledge, too, is a threat because it is solipsistic. He cannot share his wisdom with others, and this isolation is seen as a curse.

[145] ἡμᾶς προδοῦναι καὶ καταφθεῖραι πόλιν;

[146] οὐκ, ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε, καὶ γὰρ ἂν πέτρου / φύσιν σύ γ᾽ ὀργάνειας, ἐξερεῖς ποτε.

fame, and honor, Oedipus is quick to see the attempts to resist his power as insults, and he is quick to feel shame.

Teiresias' answer takes up the term that Oedipus uses in his insult, *orgê*. In Oedipus' line, it refers to anger, but Teiresias uses the term in a different sense: "You find fault with my temper (*orgê*), but you do not see your own that lives with you, and yet you blame me" (337–38).[147] Teiresias questions Oedipus' temper or disposition, *orgê*, which lives within him, unnoticed. According to the old seer, Oedipus' eyes are in a sense already 'blinded': "I say to you that without noticing you live in the most shameful communion (*aischisth' homilount'*) with your dearest, not seeing in what kind evil you are in" (366–67).[148] Shame, or the source of shame, is already there but goes unnoticed—it is denied, concealed, and perhaps overlooked.

While Teiresias initially withholds his knowledge and offers only opaque responses, his statements become increasingly plainer when the scene unfolds. After being questioned and provoked by Oedipus, Teiresias finally and unambiguously declares what he knows: "I say that you are the murderer of the man whose [murderer] you seek" (362).[149] The fact that Oedipus, close to the beginning of the play, is told quite straightforwardly that *he* is the killer of the previous king and is nevertheless unable to grasp this seems peculiar—Oedipus calls Teiresias' words "enigmatic" (439).[150] Why does the search for the murderer, and consequently the play itself, not end here? After all, we the audience, and Oedipus himself are told that *this man is the murderer he is looking for*. Instead of accepting Teiresias' words as they are (an instance of courageous *parrhêsia*), Oedipus takes them as insults, for he immediately lashes back, "You won't be glad speaking disaster twice" (363),[151] going on to reproach (*oneidizô*, 372-3) the seer: "You are blind in your ears, in your mind, and in your eyes" (370-1; repeating the insult at 389).[152] Oedipus' vulnerability to shame drives him to read the situation as abuse and prevents him from understanding the truth of Teiresias' words.

Unlike the helpless citizens of the polis, Teiresias is unwilling to affirm Oedipus' *kleos*, and it is because of Oedipus' preoccupation with his *kleos* that he

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[147] ὀργὴν ἐμέμψω τὴν ἐμήν, τὴν σὴν δ᾽ ὁμοῦ / ναίουσαν οὐ κατεῖδες, ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ ψέγεις.

[148] λεληθέναι σε φημὶ σὺν τοῖς φιλτάτοις / αἴσχισθ᾽ ὁμιλοῦντ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὁρᾶν ἵν᾽ εἶ κακοῦ. The theme of blindness predominates in Teiresias' words, as he reproaches Oedipus: "Though you have sight, you do not see what a state of misery you are in, or where you dwell, or with whom." (σὺ καὶ δέδορκας κοὐ βλέπεις ἵν᾽ εἶ κακοῦ, / οὐδ᾽ ἔνθα ναίεις, οὐδ᾽ ὅτων οἰκεῖς μέτα, 413–14); and "A blind man, though now he sees, a beggar, though now rich, he will make his way to a foreign land, feeling the ground before him with his staff. And he will be discovered to be at once brother and father of the children with whom he consorts; son and husband of the woman who bore him; heir to his father's bed, shedder of his father's blood." (τυφλὸς γὰρ ἐκ δεδορκότος / καὶ πτωχὸς ἀντὶ πλουσίου ξένην ἔπι / σκήπτρῳ προδεικνὺς γαῖαν ἐμπορεύσεται. / φανήσεται δὲ παισὶ τοῖς αὑτοῦ ξυνὼν / ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πατήρ, κἀξ ἧς ἔφυ / γυναικὸς υἱὸς καὶ πόσις, καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς / ὁμόσπορός τε καὶ φονεύς, 454–60.)

[149] φονέα σε φημὶ τἀνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν.

[150] πάντ᾽ ἄγαν αἰνικτὰ κἀσαφῆ λέγεις.

[151] Translation modified.

[152] As Worman (2014, 335–36) suggests, "it is this division of modes (i.e., truth-telling or prophesy versus abuse) that makes it possible for Teiresias to reveal the end of the story, the answer to the mystery, without effectively ending the play."

regards any opposition or crossing words as violations of his honor rather than as telling the truth. Like the Sartrean subject, Oedipus too lives in a world governed by a play of power. The others and their perspectives pose a threat to the sovereign power that Oedipus represents. Therefore, Oedipus is also deaf to the knowledge that the other might offer, for the self-knowledge mediated by the perspective of the other could only be attained at the price of shame.

As the Sartrean subject resembles Oedipus in their pursuit of control and power, the two characters bring to mind yet another subject that we often encounter in the literature concerning shame, the infant. This is the character at the heart of Nussbaum's idea of "primitive shame," which she construes on the psychoanalytic and developmental accounts of early shame. This is a type of shame, defined with reference to a "narcissistic defeat," is one that Nussbaum deems morally highly dubious, (Nussbaum 2004, 183-4).

In psychological literature, debate surrounds the question of when the first rudimentary feelings of shame emerge in a child's life.[153] Although the estimates vary (from 4 months to 36 months),[154] there is a consensus that early shame is connected to the first experiences in which the world, and especially other people start to take shape as something foreign to the 'self' of the infant. Shame emerges alongside the child's transitioning from an early nonobjectal state to gaining of objective self-awareness, that is, to the child's growing awareness that besides being the nexus of her own experiences, she is also an object for others to see (Broucek 1991, 37–43; Lewis 1992, 46ff.).[155] Freud introduces the notion of "primary narcissism" in defining this early nonobjectal stage, in which the child is yet incapable of distinguishing between itself and the world, and is driven by an egoistic "instinct of self-preservation" (Freud 1957 [1914], 73–74). All an infant "cares for" in this preobjectal stage is to satisfy its needs and avoid pain. As the "world revolves around its needs, and is fully arranged to meet its needs" the infant child is very much the center of its universe (Nussbaum 2004, 179).

This infantile omnipotence, however, is combined with the child's fundamental and complete dependency on other people. This conflict between helplessness and omnipotence, Nussbaum suggests, gives rise to primitive shame: "When an infant realizes that it is dependent on others, and is by this time aware of itself as a definite being who is and ought to be the center of the world, we can therefore expect a primitive and rudimentary emotion of shame to ensue" (Nussbaum 2004, 183; Morrison 1989, 49).[156] The feeling, then, emerges in unison

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[153] See Zahavi 2015, 228–35 on the discussion.

[154] See Broucek (1991, 29–32) for an overview of studies where infants seem to show signs of shyness/shame already during their first year. Lewis dates the emergence of shame to the end of the child's third year (Lewis 2007). Most writers find the first instances of shame somewhere between these.

[155] In this, the psychological account is not unlike Sartre's account of objectification implied in shame. In both cases, shame emerges at the moment when the subject enters into a reciprocal, interpersonal relationship with the world of others.

[156] Westerlund (2022; 2019) argues that shame springs from our basic need for social affirmation and, hence, can never be truly altruistic (i.e., moral).

with the earliest experiences of helplessness, neediness, and vulnerability—but as a violent *denial* of this basic human impotence (Nussbaum 2004, 189ff.).[157]

Again, intersubjectivity is conceived not simply as a human condition but as a threat and a source of pain. Furthermore, the story of the infant realizing his or her impotence and vulnerability is, in effect, the story of Sophocles' Oedipus. We have already seen how Teiresias' reluctance to assert Oedipus' omnipotence, his *kleos* of a god-like sovereign, gave rise to a hostile reaction. Similar reactions recur one after another in the following scenes. After the disastrous encounter with Teiresias, Oedipus accuses him of conspiring with Oedipus' brother-in-law Creon to remove him from power—again fearing for his own sovereignty. When Creon tries to defend himself, Oedipus reads his words as a breach of the shared code of shame ("you have the nerve to show your face," Oedipus says, 532–35). Later when Iocasta realizes Oedipus' identity and reacts with horror and shame, Oedipus recognizes hers as a shame reaction but for the wrong reasons. He assumes that Iocasta believes him to be the son of a slave and thus scorn him: "That woman perhaps – for she is proud with more than a woman's pride – feels ashamed (*aischunetai*) of my lowly origin" (1078–79).[158]

The same proud disposition, *orgê*, has already surfaced in Oedipus' past. While still a young man living in the house of his (adoptive) parents, Oedipus encountered a drunken man at a party, who told Oedipus that he was not the son of his father (literally, that he was a counterfeit son of his father, 779–80). As with his interaction with Teiresias, rather than considering the possible truth of the statement, Oedipus understands the claim about his identity as an attempt to shame him. Although Oedipus' parents made the guest pay for his *insult* (*oneidos*, 783–84), Oedipus says that the claim kept "*creeping* on him" (786).[159]

For the subject of primitive shame—be it the god-like Oedipus, the narcissistic infant or Sartre's character living in a solipsistic totality—the other is perceived *as a threat*, someone who might distort the subject's enjoyment of its own power and withhold external affirmation. With both Teiresias and with the drunken guest, self-knowledge would come at the price of losing the *kleos*, and the proud man rather turns a blind eye to his self. The creeping feeling of shame causes Oedipus to turn a blind eye to any potential disgrace. This is, then, the image of the infantile and narcissistic subject of shame, one that holds onto the phantasm of their omnipotence at the price of denying vulnerability and all other aspects of self that run contrary to this ideal. A violent feeling of shame is, then, the reverse side of the fact that we are invariably with others and thus cannot dwell in the sweet place of interiority. This narrative of the threatening other, however, gives rise to another question: Does the fact that we are bound to others necessarily lead to a *tragedy*? Furthermore, to *whom* is it a tragedy?

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[157] "In shame, one feels inadequate, lacking some desired type of completeness or perfection. But of course one must then have already judged that this is a type of completeness or perfection that one rightly ought to have" (Nussbaum 2004, 184).

[158] αὕτη δ᾽ ἴσως, φρονεῖ γὰρ ὡς γυνὴ μέγα, / τὴν δυσγένειαν τὴν ἐμὴν αἰσχύνεται. He also tells the chorus to "Leave this woman to glory in her princely stock" (ταύτην δ᾽ ἐᾶτε πλουσίῳ χαίρειν γένει. 1071).

[159] ὑφεῖρπε γὰρ πολύ.

1.1.4 The other

The idea of a threatening other does not, however, match Oedipus' situation in one crucial sense: it is not *he* who is in danger but, indeed, the *other*. After all, is it not Oedipus ashamed because he has *murdered the other*? In an encounter with the other, the subject is not only potentially threatened but potentially threatening to the other. This is what Emmanuel Levinas says of the encounter with the Other in his main ethical work, *Totality and Infinity* (1962), in which Levinas introduces his version of intersubjectively emerging shame. Levinas' leading claim is that in a face-to-face encounter with the Other, the subject does not experience itself as a victim of potential harm but, on the contrary, *the self is revealed as capable of murdering the other*.

Indeed, already halfway through the play, discussing the death of Laius with Iocasta, Oedipus learns that the previous king was killed at a crossroads between Thebes and Delphi—and his mind begins to wander (726–27). As it happens, he himself has killed a group of men at the same intersection. For after he had learned in Delphi about the prophecy that he would kill his father, Oedipus set out to find some other city to live in. Soon he encountered an old man with his servants riding a wagon on the road who, Oedipus says, attempted to drive him from the road by force. Characteristically enraged, Oedipus struck the driver, and after an exchange of blows, the men "paid back with interest" (810). As Oedipus declares (proudly, perhaps) to all listeners, "I killed them all!" (813).[160]

Shifting perspectives from first-person to second, Levinas also shifts the perspective to the experience of shame. It is this revelation of one's capability to harm the other and not the revelation of one's own vulnerability, Levinas claims, that gives rise to shame. The contrast with Sartre is diametrical: when, in Sartre's account, the other reveals the vulnerability of the I, in Levinas' account, it is precisely the other whose vulnerability is in question. In Levinas' words, "The freedom that is capable of being ashamed of itself founds truth […] The Other is not initially a *fact*, is not an *obstacle*, does not threaten me with death; he is desired in my shame" (Levinas 1979, 83–84). For Levinas, the encounter with the Other is the founding moment of ethics—which is to say, of relation with the Other.

Levinas starts his thesis by imagining a subject *prior* to the ethically founding encounter with the Other. This is a self-contained, free, and isolated object that exists in a state of solipsistic enjoyment, in Levinas' terminology, a "totality." This totality resembles the totality of Oedipus in his free command of his powers, his hubristic fantasy of fighting off his destiny and becoming an equal to a god (and we can note again the similarity to Sartre's subject and to the infant). According to Levinas, without the Other, the subject does not feel shame or guilt and is not exactly an ethical subject. However, as Levinas moves to consider the subject's relation to the Other in the *Totality and Infinity*, shame enters the picture (thus mirroring Sartre here as well). In a familiar way, the Levinasian Other calls into question the freedom or omnipotence of the subject.

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[160] κτείνω δὲ τοὺς ξύμπαντας.

According to Levinas, the encounter with the Other introduces a rupture to the totality of the solipsistic subject. The Otherness of the Other is not reducible to the subjective totality, rather, this Otherness is *infinitely* other. Thus, according to Levinas, an encounter with the Other gives rise to the idea of infinity in a subject—that is also the idea of perfection. This means, furthermore, that only through the Other does the subject come to know perfection, as well as the *imperfection* of oneself and one's solipsistic world. It is here that shame enters Levinas' theory. The realization that the Other exists as a real other that cannot be subsumed into the totality of the subject's own being leads to shame: "it accomplishes itself as *shame* in which the freedom discovers itself murderous in its very exercise" (Levinas 1979, 84.)[161] The other calls into question the freedom and omnipotence of the subject, revealing that one has the capacity to kill. This realization, which the Other not only makes possible but also *commands*, is called shame.

Oedipus has of course known from the start that he is the murderer of not one but several people. Hitherto, however, this fact has not been a source of shame. A killing that was provoked by a slight of honor and that has apparently not pained the doer since becomes a source of shame only as it becomes a public matter. Fearing that the old man whom he had killed was, in fact, Laius, Oedipus prays that he would never be *marked* with this kind of *stain*:

> Never, never, O sacred majesty of the gods, may I see that day, but may I vanish from among men before I see the stain of such disaster come upon me. (830–33)[162]

The solipsistic self has been unable to turn toward itself and recognize itself as a murderer. It is only in the context of his potential exposure as a murderer, as marked with a stain (*kêlis*), that the prospect of shame and self-knowledge even become thinkable for Oedipus. In the play, it is in and through shame that Oedipus comes to *know* his identity, his self, and the deeds he has committed; in shame, he learns that *he himself* is the murderer they are looking for. Only then does Oedipus become capable of self-knowledge.[163]

Acquisition of self-knowledge, then, requires shame and it requires the mediation through the perspective of the other. This exposure to the gaze of the

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[161] Guenther (2011, 32) elaborates Levinas's account of ethical shame, writing, "the ethical shame which the Other provokes in me, does not make me feel stuck to myself; rather, it opens a way of getting un-stuck from my own suffocating relation to being. This way points beyond the subject, towards a being-for-the-Other to the point of substitution and even dying-for-the-Other, but it also points before the subject, to the conditions of possibility for my own freedom."

[162] μὴ δῆτα μὴ δῆτ', ὦ θεῶν ἁγνὸν σέβας,/ ἴδοιμι ταύτην ἡμέραν, ἀλλ' ἐκ βροτῶν / βαίην ἄφαντος πρόσθεν ἢ τοιάνδ' ἰδεῖν / κηλῖδ' ἐμαυτῷ συμφορᾶς ἀφιγμένην

[163] The theme of knowledge has been, of course, at the heart of the *Oedipus Tyrannos* from the beginning. A quest for knowledge initiates the whole movement of the plot: the audience has abundant knowledge about what Oedipus does not know, and the withdrawal of information is what keeps the story rolling. Knowledge is also at the core of Oedipus' person; he is the one who "knows the feet" in the Sphinx's riddle while being the one who, in fact, knows nothing.

other must be a real prospect, not simply imagined in the internalized shame, for otherwise Oedipus would have no reason to attempt to tear himself from the intersubjective web of relations. He could simply remain in the sweetness of the totality of his own subjectivity. The other is required because the self becomes a possible object of the look only through exposure to others. The outside perspective that the self acquires in relation to itself—as the eyes of Oedipus turn back to him to "see his dread sufferings and his dread actions" (1270-1)—is possible only because the self is always already with others. In the totality of a solipsistic subject, it would not have an outside.

Because the self is *for the other*, the other can play a crucial point in self-knowledge. Intersubjective shame reveals to the subject that it is simultaneously too vulnerable and too powerful, that it may be threatened by others, and that it can pose a threat to the other; it is in the midst of power relations. Oedipus is revealed as helpless, connected, exposed, powerless—and a murderer and criminal. This basic level of connectedness, however, amounts to a tragedy, above all, to the subject who strives for totality, control, and power in the first place. It is precisely because the other is always implicated in shame that shame is potentially an ethical emotion. Only the other can reveal the self as murderous— simply because, in murder, it is the life of the *other* that is in question.

For Levinas, the very experience of falling from power not only gives rise to shame but is the condition of possibility for any ethical relation in the first place.[164] This is also the message of *Oedipus Tyrannus*. For what is the omnipotent and free totality of a subject other than *hubris*? As the play's chorus sings in the second stasimon, "*Hubris* gives birth to a tyrant" (873), and the only consequence of this *hubris* is a fall from heights dictated by necessity. As the tragedies strive to show one after the other, the un-shamed self of omnipotent hubris is violent and disruptive. Thus, although the fall from power is painful and shameful, the *hubris* of the contained subject is even more dangerous.[165]

1.2 Contagious feeling

The intersubjectivity of shame can be considered from two perspectives. First, it can be approached from the perspective of the intersubjectively constituted subject—the one who, in shame, is revealed to be mediated by the other. The second perspective on intersubjective shame is that of the *other*—for, as I shall argue, shame is an affect that touches not only the one who is shamed but also those who bear witness to that shame. It is an intersubjective emotion in the sense

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[164] ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον: / ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν, / ἃ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα, / ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ᾽ / αἶπος ἀπότομον ὤρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν, / ἔνθ᾽ οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ / χρῆται, 873–80.

[165] This resonates with Steinbock's observation that shame calls into question the sovereignty of a subject: "Shame calls me into question; it is not something that I will, and is in fact an experience I want to avoid. It holds me in check precisely in my sovereignty over others as self-salience and resistance to others" (Steinbock 2014, 76).

that it has the capacity to move *inter* subjects, to affect the bystanders, forcing them to partake in the shame.[166] In what follows, I shall focus on the theme of witnessing in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and suggest a model of shame, in which the emotion is transmitted through touching and proximities. In the play, shame is spreading with the logic contamination, like the ritual pollution, *miasma*, that defiles the city. As its means of transmission it takes the many lines of vision in an intersubjective reality.

1.2.1 Festering wound beneath a beautiful surface

Let us start with the *miasma*. As has been noted, there is an overarching effect of doubling in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*.[167] Lurking behind the glorious, beautiful, and wise Oedipus is another Oedipus, polluted, mutilated, and ailing, inhabiting a "shadow plot" that underlies the surface narrative and reverses the meaning of all of Oedipus' deeds. When Oedipus escapes from his home, the other returns to his; while Oedipus kills an unknown man at the crossroads, the other kills his father; when Oedipus weds the queen of Thebes, the other marries his own mother; and while Oedipus acts as the detective, the other seeks to hide the truth.[168] The other Oedipus in the play is characterized by a creeping sense of dirt – indeed, the shadow figure *dwells* nearby, living with or in close proximity to Oedipus.[169] This Oedipus is a bearer of pollution and sickness.

Indeed, the semantics of dirt and disease permeate the play.[170] This is evident, of course, in the raging plague (*loimos*, XX) that ravages the city. In the beginning of the play, as Oedipus sets out to identify the cause of the plague, he soon learns that at its root lies uncleaned pollution (*miasma*) that has been nurtured (*tethrammenon*) in the city (96-98). His task is to release the city from the blood (*tod' haima*) of the previous king (99–101), to "clean up" (*katharmô*, 99) the *miasma*, and to "banish the dirt (*musos*)" (38) from its confines. In a statement exemplifying tragic irony, Oedipus declares to his subjects that his sympathy for them resembles a sickness (*nosos*): "I know well that you all are sick, and though

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[166] This is also an observation that Lewis makes based on her work as a psychotherapist: "Shame, by nature, is contagious […] just as shame has an intrinsic tendency to encourage hiding, so there is a tendency for the observer of another's shame to turn away from it" (Lewis 1971, 15–16).
[167] Noting the tragic irony in Oedipus' words throughout the play, Vernant writes, "The ambiguity of [Oedipus'] words translates not the duplicity of his character, which is all of a piece, but more profoundly the duality of his being. Oedipus is a double" (Vernant 1978, 477). Zeitlin notes that Oedipus is the first to notice the presence of this double: "In his search for the murderer, Oidipous at first can also be said to see double: he imagines that there is an other, a stranger, but discovers that the other was only a fugitive phantom of the self" (Zeitlin 1990, 139).
[168] We can see the effects of doubling also in Teiresias' prophecy: "the double lash of your mother's and your father's curse with dreadful foot will one day drive you from this land, with darkness upon those eyes of yours which now can see" (καὶ σ᾿ ἀμφιπλὴξ μητρός τε καὶ τοῦ σοῦ πατρὸς / ἐλᾷ ποτ᾿ ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε δεινόπους ἀρά, / βλέποντα νῦν μὲν ὄρθ᾿, ἔπειτα δὲ σκότον, 417–19).
[169] Teiresias suggests that Oedipus does not see his own temper (*orgê*) that *lives* with him, sharing a dwelling (*vaiô*) unwitnessed (337-8).
[170] See Meinel (2015, 46-75) on the theme.

you are sick there is not one of you who is as sick as I am" (59–61).[171] Teiresias, on the other hand, calls Oedipus "an unholy polluter" (*anosiô miastori*, 353). Later, when Oedipus realizes that he himself has killed the previous king, whose wife he has married, he recognizes that he has "*stained* (*chrainô*) the bed of the murdered man with the hands by which he perished" (821–22).[172] By the end of the play, the pollution has accumulated to such an extent that "neither Ister nor Phasis could possibly wash this house clean again (*nipsai katharmôi*)" (1227–28).[173] Thus, when the blinded Oedipus enters the stage, he has become an *agos*, a holy pollution (1426–27).[174]

Yet Oedipus' body has been marked with shame in another way as well: by his wounds. Besides the wounds of his mutilated eyes, there are also the old wounds in his feet. When Oedipus' parents learned about the prophecy that their newborn child would kill his father, Laius "pinned his ankles together" (718)[175] three days after the child's birth and had him abandoned in the mountains. These wounds are, according to Oedipus, "an ancient evil (*archaion…kakôn*)" (1033), and "a dread brand of shame (*deinon g'oneidos*) that I took from my cradle" (1035). But there is yet another secret scar, to which Oedipus refers in the final scene as he laments his miserable life:

> Ah, Polybus, ah, Corinth, and you that were called the ancient house of my father, how beautiful was I, your nursling, and what *wound of evils was festering underneath*! Now I am found to be evil and of evil birth. (1394–97)[176]

The former beauty of Oedipus, his beautiful and pure self, was always marked with a secretly rotting scar of evils (*kakôn hypoulon*, 1396). The other Oedipus has been hiding underneath from the birth. The wound functions as a metonym for his shame; just as the festering wound was concealed by Oedipus' beauty, his shame was disguised by his glory. This is the image of Oedipus' double self: one wounded, debased, stained, festering in secret, the other beautiful, glorious, omnipotent, and visible.

The polluted status is also reflected in the affinities between Oedipus and the ritual scapegoat figure of *pharmakos*, as recognized in anthropologically informed studies. As Jean-Pierre Vernant interprets,

> at the last rung of disgrace appears Oedipus Swollen-Foot, abominable contamination, concentrating in himself all the impurity of the world. The

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[171] …εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι / νοσεῖτε πάντες· καὶ νοσοῦντες, ὡς ἐγὼ / οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὅστις ἐξ ἴσου νοσεῖ.

[172] λέχη δὲ τοῦ θανόντος ἐν χεροῖν ἐμαῖν / χραίνω, δι' ὧνπερ ὤλετ'.

[173] οἶμαι γὰρ οὔτ' ἂν Ἴστρον οὔτε Φᾶσιν ἂν / νίψαι καθαρμῷ τήνδε τὴν στέγην.

[174] τοιόνδ' ἄγος / ἀκάλυπτον οὕτω δεικνύναι. This sense of being stained is echoed in the Oedipus at Colonus, in which Oedipus calls himself "a man in whom every stain of evils has made its dwelling" (πῶς σ' ἂν ἄθλιος γεγὼς / θιγεῖν θελήσαιμ' ἀνδρός, ᾧ τίς οὐκ ἔνι / κηλὶς κακῶν ξύνοικος; OC 1132–34).

[175] καὶ νιν ἄρθρα κεῖνος ἐνζεύξας ποδοῖν.

[176] ὦ Πόλυβε καὶ Κόρινθε καὶ τὰ πάτρια / λόγῳ παλαιὰ δώμαθ', οἷον ἆρά με / κάλλος κακῶν ὕπουλον ἐξεθρέψατε. / νῦν γὰρ κακός τ' ὢν κἀκ κακῶν εὑρίσκομαι.

divine king, purifier and saviour of his people, re-joins the contaminated criminal whom it is necessary to expel like a pharmakos, a scapegoat, so that the city, pure again, may be saved (Vernant 1978, 484).

Traditionally, *pharmakos* rites, which appear both as an actual historical practice in various Greek cities and in myth, were performed to cleanse a city or a community of pollution. The ritual purification took place either annually—as in Athens, where it was performed during the Thargelia festival in order to purge the "contamination accumulated in the course of the past year" (Vernant 1987, 486)—or on special occasions—for example, to save a city from plague, famine, or drought (Bremmer 1983, 301). In the ritual, a member of the community was chosen and designated as a *pharmakos*, often celebrated as if a member of the royalty, and then expelled from the city.[177] In myth, the *pharmakos* was often a king or a king's child, but in the historical ritual, the *pharmakos* was chosen from among the subjugated groups of the society. For instance, he or she may have been "of low origin and useless" or "common and maltreated by nature," a slave, a criminal or a poor man, a foreigner, or the ugliest person in the city.[178]

In short, *pharmakos* was someone who was marked with shame, someone who did not fit the model of the ideal citizen. The expulsion of a *pharmakos* freed the city from its own pollution insofar as all the dirt, shame, and evil of the collective body was projected onto the scapegoat figure. As a mutilated foreigner treated as a king, Oedipus is a mirror image of the bearer of accumulated ritual defilement.[179]

1.2.2 Witnesses

As already noted, when the blinded and defiled Oedipus returns to the stage in the end of the play, the scar of evils no longer covered up, he has become a *theama*, a sight for all to see. From the reactions of the chorus and other onlookers, it soon becomes clear that beholding this spectacle has a forceful effect on the onlookers. First, the chorus voices a wish they never had seen Oedipus in the first place (1217). But when they do, they sing,

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[177] In mythical accounts, human sacrifice has also been one option, Bremmer 1983, 315–18
[178] Bremmer 1983, 303; Schol. Ar. Eq. 1136, Schol. Ar. Ra. 733, Plut. M. 693, Strabo 10.2.9., Call. fr. 90 Pf, Tzetzes Chil. 5.729 Τῶν πάντων ἀμορφότερον
[179] Several features connect Oedipus to the figure of *pharmakos*. There is the shame and disfigurement of his body and the fact that he is also a foreigner who is treated as a king. His presence in the city is related to the *miasma*, and it is possible that his removal from the city would purify it (137–38). This purification is intended to release Thebes from the plague and sickness (28) but also from its current state of infertility, against which the *pharmakos* ritual also protected (25, 170–73). Yet, as Pucci (1992, 171) notes, unlike a *pharmakos* Oedipus is not in fact expelled from the city at the end of the play, but accompanied back to his house by his daughters to be hidden in the very heart of the city.

Alas, alas, you hapless man! I cannot even look on you, though there is much I desire to ask, much I desire to learn, much that draws my wistful gaze: with such a shuddering do you fill me! (1303–6)[180]

Witnessing Oedipus makes the chorus shudder. The mutilated king's overt exposure is met with a reluctance—even a prohibition—to look at. In a double move, like Oedipus' wish to both conceal and expose himself, the chorus expresses both their inability to look at Oedipus and their compulsion to stare—to ask questions and to learn everything.

The prohibition to look is affirmed by Creon who orders that Oedipus' body be removed from sight. His anxiety over Oedipus' heightened visibility is expressed in the terms of shame: "But you," he tells his servants,

> if you no longer feel shame (*katasichuneisth'*) before the children of men, at least feel shame (*aidesth'*) for the all-nurturing flame of our lord the Sun, and don't show so openly such pollution (*agos*) as this, one which neither earth, nor holy rain, nor the light itself can welcome. (1424–28.)[181]

Oedipus' shameful presence is met with a corresponding attitude of shame. Creon's impulse is to hide and re-cover the pollution by removing Oedipus' body from sight (in the same manner as the chorus turn their eyes away from him and the witnesses try to keep his crimes and origin a secret). Threatening even the sun and the rain, Oedipus shame haunts the entire scene. It becomes the shame (*aidôs/aischunê*) of Creon and his servants, simply because they are forced to bear witness to it.

Bearing witness has, in fact, been a problem throughout the play. As he begins the search for the "undecipherable trace of the ancient guilt" of the unsolved murder (109),[182] Oedipus declares an edict ordering everyone who shares knowledge of the previous king's murder to come forward. The edict (222ff.) has been the object of scholarly discussion because of its ambivalence.[183] For the consequences of not following the edict are extremely harsh; Oedipus declares that those who fail to comply shall be both expelled from the city and cursed. The harshness of the punishment has led readers to assume that it must be intended for the murderer. Yet, as Edwin Carawan (1999) and Jean Bollack (1990) compellingly suggest, it seems that the edict is directed at the *witness* to the crime rather than for the *perpetrator*—as if knowledge of the murder might somehow implicate him as an accomplice to the deed.

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[180] φεῦ φεῦ δύστην᾿ · ἀλλ᾿ οὐδ᾿ ἐσιδεῖν / δύναμαί σε, θέλων πόλλ᾿ ἀνερέσθαι, / πολλὰ πυθέσθαι, πολλὰ δ᾿ ἀθρῆσαι · / τοίαν φρίκην παρέχεις μοι.
[181] ἀλλ᾿ εἰ τὰ θνητῶν μὴ καταισχύνεσθ᾿ ἔτι / γένεθλα, τὴν γοῦν πάντα βόσκουσαν φλόγα / αἰδεῖσθ᾿ ἄνακτος Ἡλίου, τοιόνδ᾿ ἄγος / ἀκάλυπτον οὕτω δεικνύναι, τὸ μήτε γῆ / μήτ᾿ ὄμβρος ἱερὸς μήτε φῶς προσδέξεται.
[182] ἴχνος παλαιᾶς δυστέκμαρτον αἰτίας;
[183] See e.g., the discussions in the editions of Finglass 2018 and Dawe 2006, as well as Carawan 1999; Dyson 1973.

Oedipus begins the edict by ordering the witnesses, "whoever" (*hostis*, 224) they might be, not to remain silent but to indicate the murderer, whether a Theban or a foreigner (224–26; 230–32). If, Oedipus adds, the witness comes forth voluntarily, he shall "not bring out the charge against himself," but will be allowed "to depart the land in safety" (227–29).[184] However, Oedipus continues, if the witness "keeps silent out of fear," then no one must "give shelter to or address this man, whoever he is (*ton andra…hostis esti*) or make him a partner in prayer or sacrifice, or give him a share of the lustral rite"(234, 236-40).[185] Rather, he will be banned from all houses for "he is the defilement (*miasma*) for us" (241–42). Shifting from a legal to a religious register, Oedipus then curses "the doer," stating, "I pray solemnly that the doer (*ton dedrakot'*) whether he is alone or with partners, may, in the horrible way he deserves, wear out his unblest life" (246–48).[186]

Oedipus' language is vague throughout the edict; he refers repeatedly to "someone" (*tis*, 230; 233), "that man" (*ton andra*, 236) "whoever" (*hostis*, 224, 236), and a "doer" (*ton dedrakot'*, 246). As noted, the harshness of the punishment—total exclusion from the community—has led many commentators to assume that the punishment must be intended for Laius' murderer.[187] However, this interpretation is not amply supported by the manuscript text, and the *lectio difficilior* seems to point to a more ambiguous meaning.[188] Thus, following the more difficult reading, Carawan suggests that a witness who conceals his knowledge might be indirectly responsible for the plague because by withholding his knowledge, he hinders the investigation and, thus, the possibility of purging the plague. Therefore, the witness might be considered an accessory to the murder by "sharing responsibility for the plague upon the community even if they had taken no part in the plot itself" (Carawan 1999, 195).[189]

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[184] "…if he [the witness] is afraid of bringing out the charge against himself – I assure that there is no other harm than to depart from the land in safety" (κεἰ μὲν φοβεῖται τοὐπίκλημ᾽ ὑπεξελὼν / αὐτὸς κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ· —πείσεται γὰρ ἄλλο μὲν / ἀστεργὲς οὐδέν, γῆς δ᾽ ἄπεισιν ἀβλαβής, 227–29).

[185] εἰ δ᾽ αὖ σιωπήσεσθε, καί τις ἢ φίλου / δείσας ἀπώσει τοὔπος ἢ χαὐτοῦ τόδε, 233–34. τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀπαυδῶ τοῦτον, ὅστις ἐστί, γῆς / τῆσδ᾽, ἧς ἐγὼ κράτη τε καὶ θρόνους νέμω, / μήτ᾽ ἐσδέχεσθαι μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινά, / μήτ᾽ ἐν θεῶν εὐχαῖσι μήτε θύμασιν / κοινὸν ποεῖσθαι, μήτε χέρνιβος νέμειν·, 236–40.

[186] κατεύχομαι δὲ τὸν δεδρακότ᾽, εἴτε τις / εἷς ὢν λέληθεν εἴτε πλειόνων μέτα, / κακὸν κακῶς νιν ἄμορον ἐκτρῖψαι βίον.

[187] Dawe wishes to correct the Greek of the manuscript, switching the lines 244–51 and 269–72, so that the edict might make more sense. The argument for this transposition is that if lines 236ff. onward describe a ban for the *murderer*, then the curse appears to repeat the earlier content of the edict unnecessarily. See Dawe 2006, 95. If, however, we read the edict as shifting between the witness and the murderer, then it appears that this cursing of the criminal is warranted.

[188] In textual criticism, the more difficult reading—that is, a reading that acknowledges the apparent inconsistencies of the manuscript text rather than editing them to a more understandable form—is taken to be better or more likely than the original form. Thus, the attempts to make the edict 'make more sense' risk drastically altering the original text rather than preserving it.

[189] Immediately after the edict, the chorus answer Oedipus, "since *you put me under the pain of curse* I say I neither killed *nor can reveal* the killer" (276), indicating that the chorus at least understand that *they* have been cursed along with/instead of the murderer. In the

Indeed, as Oedipus continues with his edict, unwittingly curses himself—as a pledge of his commitment to the task—he again emphasizes the aspect of witnessing:

> And for myself I pray that if [that man] should become a resident of my house, I, *sharing the knowledge*, might suffer the same things, which I have just called down on others. (249–51)[190]

The tragic irony of his words is evident.[191] Yet, here Oedipus curses himself not in the role of the murderer but in that of *a witness*. He prays that if he himself should happen to *live with* the killer and *share the knowledge* of the crime he too might suffer in the manner he has called down on other people. Thus, it appears as though the simple fact of *having seen* (as in the sense of *oida*) or having been in close *proximity* to the murderer would implicate the witness in the crime. As we know, the criminal other does indeed dwell in Oedipus' house, sharing his hearth (he is *xunestios*, 244–45), and as he voices the curse, Oedipus is, unbeknownst to himself, both the subject and the object of his proclamation.

Oedipus' only condition in his curse is that he should share knowledge of, be conscious of, or have borne witness to the crime (*emou xuneidotos*). The verb Oedipus uses, *sunoida*, has several meanings: Taken literally, it means "having seen with" or "knowing with," while in normal usage, it can refer more neutrally to "being conscious of something." It is more frequently used in cases wherein the subject of the shared knowledge is a crime or some other misdeed.[192] Bearing witness is dangerous in other tragedies as well. In *Antigone*, for instance, the men who guard the body of Polynices grow anxious when they find out that someone has touched the body. One of them explains, that they are ready "to go through fire and to swear by the gods that we had neither done the deed *nor shared knowledge (xuneidenai)* of who had planned it or who had done it" (265–67).[193] The same guard also asserts, "I did not do the deed, *nor did I see the doer*, and I could not with justice come to any harm" (238–40).[194] The assumption here seems to be that seeing or sharing knowledge of a crime somehow implicates the witness and can serve as grounds for punishment.

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subsequent dialogue, the chorus and Oedipus speak repeatedly of the witness and not of the murderer—at 293, Oedipus says that "no one sees the *witness*," and at 294, the chorus answers that the *witness* may have fled the country "upon hearing your curses." See, again, Carawan 1999.

[190] ἐπεύχομαι δ᾽, οἴκοισιν εἰ ξυνέστιος / ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γένοιτ᾽ ἐμοῦ ξυνειδότος, / παθεῖν ἅπερ τοῖσδ᾽ ἀρτίως ἠρασάμην.

[191] As Oedipus later realizes, "with a curse laid on me by no other mouth than my own" (καὶ τάδ᾽ οὔτις ἄλλος ἦν / ἢ 'γὼ 'π᾽ ἐμαυτῷ τάσδ᾽ ἀρὰς ὁ προστιθείς, 819–20).

[192] Later, the verb will also come to mean 'moral conscience' in the sense of knowledge of a self-committed crime—a sense, to be sure, that is not present in Oedipus' words, though the witness here is the same person as the criminal. On the various uses of *sunoida*, see Bosman 2003.

[193] τὸ μήτε δρᾶσαι μήτε τῳ ξυνειδέναι / τὸ πρᾶγμα βουλεύσαντι μηδ᾽ εἰργασμένῳ. Translation Lloyd-Jones 1994, modified.

[194] τὸ γὰρ / πρᾶγμ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἔδρασ᾽ οὔτ᾽ εἶδον ὅστις ἦν ὁ δρῶν, / οὐδ᾽ ἂν δικαίως ἐς κακὸν πέσοιμί τι. Translation modified.

As Carawan notes, this is echoed in later legal discourse. Aeschines' speech *On the False Embassy*, for example, contains a reference to ancient oaths concerning the preservation of a religious shrine. According to Aeschines, an assembly of Greeks swore that "…if anyone should violate the shrine of the god, *or share some knowledge (ê suneidê ti)*, or make any plot against the holy places, they would punish him with hand and foot and voice, and all their power."[195] Again, Lysias' speech *Against Philocrates* includes an assertion that those who share knowledge (*hoi suneidotes*) of a crime are subject to the same penalty as the criminals.[196] This claim is also found in Plato's *Laws*, where it is asserted, "If a man receives stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen (*gignôskôn*), *he must suffer the same penalty as the thief*" (Pl. *Lg*. 955b5–6). In all these cases, those who share knowledge of a crime are, to some extent, as punishable as the criminal is.

Some texts suggest that witnesses are in danger of inviting *miasma* upon themselves. Antiphon's third *Tetralogy* includes a claim that "those who prosecute and testify (*marturountes*) without giving heed to justice bring into their own homes [angry spirits of vengeance], defiling them with the defilement (*miasma*) of another, because they share in the impiety of him who did the deed" (3.1.3).[197] In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Socrates converses with the pious Euthyphro who is planning to prosecute his father because he knows that he has committed a murder. Euthyphro explains his decisions by saying that he invites *miasma* upon himself by withholding his knowledge: "The pollution is the same (*ison gar to miasma ginetai*) if you knowingly (*syneidôs*) keep company (*synês*) with such a man and do not cleanse yourself and him by bringing him to justice." (Pl. *Euthphr*. 4c1–3).[198]

1.2.3 Defiled vision

This attitude might help us to understand the many witnesses encountered in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. For they all share a peculiar *reluctance* to disclose information about the murder. We have already seen that Teiresias does not wish to bring to light his knowledge about the murder but rather "buries it in silence" (341). Similarly, when Iocasta realizes that Oedipus is her child—because of his wounded feet—she tries to prevent Oedipus from probing any further into his past: "Regard it not," she tells Oedipus "waste not a thought on what he said; it would be vain" (1056–57). And when Oedipus does not let the matter rest, she

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[195] Aeschin. 2.115. Translation Adams 1919.
[196] Lys. 29.11: "For it would be a strange thing, when those who connive with the thieves in a private larceny are to be subject to the same penalty, that this man, conniving with Ergocles in a theft of the city's property and receiving bribes at your expense, should not incur the same punishment, but should win the fortune left by his accomplice as a prize for his own wickedness" (translation Lamb 1930).
[197] Translation from Maidment 1941.
[198] In Plato's *Laws*, someone who fails in the task of prosecuting for the murder of his near relative might invite *miasma* on himself like the witness and be subject to banishment: "If the next of kin does not prosecute the crime, the pollution (*miasma*) must be deemed to have arrived at his own door, owing to the murdered man's supplications for atonement. Anyone who wishes may bring a charge against the next of kin and force him to keep away from his native country for five years, according to law" (Pl. *Lg*. 866b3–7).

begs, "For the gods' sake, if you have any care for your own life, do not continue this search! My *sickness* is enough (*halis nosous'egô*)" (1060–61).[199]

The final witness brought before Oedipus is an old servant of Laius—who also happens to be the sole surviving eyewitness of the murder and the one who knows Oedipus' true identity. Like Iocasta and Teiresias, he, too, refuses to share his knowledge.[200] Instead, when interrogated, the old servant tries to avoid meeting Oedipus' eyes (1121–22), and rather than disclosing what he knows, he begs to be sent "far from the sight of this town" (758–62)[201]—just as Oedipus himself will later beg. The averted eyes and the desire to be hidden from sight are, of course, also common symptoms of shame. The shame, then, appears to attach to the witness through physical proximity—that is through the *touch* of vision—like *miasma* or any kind of pollution, which transmits through a process of contamination. Witnessing and sharing knowledge of a crime somehow stains and marks the witnesses—just as the *miasma* of the unsolved murder erupts as a plague that attaches to whichever bodies it reaches.

If we consider ancient theories of seeing, we may note that most operate according to a haptic model of perception. In Empedocles' theory, perception occurs "through objects fitting into the pores of each sense organ" and a sensation occurs when the object touches (*haptô*) the sense organ in the right way (DK A 86). Democritus, meanwhile, explained seeing through a model in which the air between the eye and the seen thing becomes compressed and solid because "there is always effluence [of atoms] arising from everything" (DK A 135). In Plato's *Theaetetus*, perception is said to be born from the "intercourse and mutual friction" between the perceptible and the perceiving; in seeing, the eye becomes filled with sight (Pl. *Tht.* 156a7–8; 156a–e). Later, Aristotle will describe perception as the receipt of perceptible input through a transmitting medium without form "in the way which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold" (Ar. *de An.* 424a17ff.),[202] and Epicurus write that vision occurs because we receive a very delicate film of imprints flowing from the surface of perceived bodies (Epic. *Ep. Hdt.* 46–49).

In these theories of vision, something almost tangible reaches the perceiver from the visible object. Thus it is not difficult to see how pollution, dirt, or shame might travel through the 'touch' of vision. There is, however, no need to accept any kind of theory of perception to recognize that this model captures the phenomenology of bearing witness to something one wishes never to have seen. The affective power of a secret shame causes one to shudder as though *touched* by the sight. Shame flows between different eyes—from the eyes of the shamed one to the eyes of the witnesses. Therefore, it is not exactly contained within a

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[199] μὴ, πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τι τοῦ σαυτοῦ βίου / κήδηι, ματεύσηις τοῦθ᾽ · ἅλις νοσοῦσ᾽ ἐγώ.
[200] When questioned, he pretends not to understand Oedipus (1129, 1131, 1144) and curses those who are letting the truth slip: "To hell with you! Won't you keep silent!" οὐκ εἰς ὄλεθρον; οὐ σιωπήσας ἔσηι; 1146.
[201] ὡς πλεῖστον εἴη τοῦδ᾽ ἄποπτος ἄστεως.
[202] Translation by Smith in Barnes 1991. In Aristotle's theory, seeing takes place through a medium of air or water and it is not certain whether there needs to be an actual physical contact or not, see Ar. *De An.* 11.7.

subjective space but rather floats around like pollution.[203] It is, then, intersubjective also in the sense that it has the capacity to move *in between* people.

To sum up, shame is intersubjective on both sides. Its structure is fundamentally intersubjective on the level of the subject who finds itself in shame, but it is also intersubjective on the level of the community. It has the capacity to traverse inter subjects, crossing the subjective borders of minds or experiences and affecting the witnesses and bystanders. In this way, the shame experienced by Oedipus is transformed into the shame of the chorus and that of the sun and the rain.

1.3   The guilt of Oedipus

Almost 25 years after the first staging of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Sophocles revisited the Theban saga in his last surviving play, the *Oedipus at Colonus*. In the play, the now old Oedipus wanders around in exile, with the help of his daughter, Antigone. Feeling still dishonored (*OC* 285-6, 428, 1374) and contagiously polluted (*OC* 1132ff.), he reflects on his crimes one last time before his death. Even as he still feels himself as "a man in whom every taint of evils dwells (*kêlis kakôn xunoikos*)" (*OC* 1133-4), he now declares that "according to the law I am clean! (*nomô…katharos*)" (*OC* 548). That is, in the last rung of his life, the tyrant tries to escape his shame one more time, now by appealing to the workings of law. Even if he is polluted, at least he is not guilty of his crimes (e.g., *OC* 266-7, 270-4, 439, 539, 548, 960ff.).

My reading of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* has emphasized the different configurations of shame. However, shame has not been the emotion that has played the most significant role in the long history of the play's reception.[204] Instead, commentators and readers of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* have tended

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[203] Here, we can also consider the blind seer Teiresias, who appears in the play. It seems that at least in some accounts Teiresias lost his vision because he was witness to things that he should not have seen. Apollodorus' *Library* offers three alternative explanations as to why Teiresias lost his vision. First, "some say that he was blinded by the gods because he revealed their secrets to men." Second, "Pherecydes says that he was blinded by Athena; [because] Teiresias saw the goddess stark naked, and she covered his eyes with her hands, and so rendered him sightless." Third, "Hesiod says that he beheld snakes copulating on Cyllene, and that having wounded them he was turned from a man into a woman, but that on observing the same snakes copulating again, he became a man. Hence, when Hera and Zeus disputed whether the pleasures of love are felt more by women or by men, they referred to him for a decision. He said that if the pleasures of love be reckoned at ten, men enjoy one and women nine. Wherefore Hera blinded him, but Zeus bestowed on him the art of soothsaying." (Apollodorus 3.6.7, translation Frazer 1921.) In all three stories mentioned here, Teiresias' blindness is a punishment for having borne witness to or sharing knowledge of some forbidden thing (the secrets of the gods, Athena's nudity, and the mystery of female pleasure). Teiresias becomes blind because he has violated the prohibition to look. Although we do not know what the secrets of the gods are, the witnessing of the naked Athena and revelation of a secret of female sexuality are strongly connected to shame. Teiresias is both the reason and the witness of the naked goddess's shame (and perhaps Hera's shame as well).
[204] For a reception history of the Oedipus myth, see Edmunds 2006.

to emphasize the experience of guilt in place of shame.[205] Taking a cue from Oedipus in Colonus, they raise a different set of questions: Was Oedipus guilty or innocent? Did he have a choice; should he have known better; or was he a victim of his fate? And if he was innocent, then why impose on himself the punishment of self-mutilation and blindness?

In the previous section, we saw how, one by one, the witnesses try to evade shame—Teiresias, Iocasta, the chorus, Creon, and Oedipus himself. The horrified reactions of the witnesses face to face with Oedipus' blood-gushing eye sockets suggest that it is easier to turn away from than to confront shame. If I am correct in suggesting that the emotion spreads according to a model of contagion, then it is exactly the experience of shame that compels the onlookers to look away—out of shame. Looking at and accepting the feeling of shame, I suggest, may have been difficult for the play's commentators as well.

In what follows, I shall first make a brief survey of different interpretations of the crimes of (Sophocles') Oedipus from Greco-Roman antiquity up to Freud and up to the classicists writing in the twentieth century. My aim is not to undertake a comprehensive study of the reception history of this play but rather to highlight several tactics employed in turning away from shame of which the main one is to turn Oedipus' shame into guilt. Second, I shall argue for my choice to read the play through the lens of shame by considering the differences between shame and guilt, and by drawing a conceptual distinction between emotional–moral guilt and factual–legal guilt. I have highlighted the intersubjective aspects of shame in this chapter. Considered in contrast with guilt, the intersubjectivity and sociality of shame should become even more evident. My main argument in this section will be that shame presupposes a different understanding of subjectivity from the supposedly private, innate, and solitary experience of guilt. The subject of shame is visible, social, embodied, and connected, whereas the subject of guilt is construed around a conception of a personal interiority, which is thought to contain wishes, choices, will, and intentionality.

My claim is that it is exactly this subjective structure of guilt that has made it into a *moral* emotion if we understand morality as the juridical thread running in the history of ethics. Guilt, the common understanding goes, is the emotion or experience that arises from the realization that one has committed a wrong or violated some moral standard, and the emotion of guilt marks the acceptance of one's responsibility and desire to make amends. However, I aim to demonstrate that the different conceptions of subjectivity implied by shame and guilt speak to different understandings of ethics.

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[205] In his analysis of the history of interpretation around *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Michael Lurje suggests that seeing Oedipus' guilt as the central problem of the play results from what he calls Christianizing and moralizing readings of the play, which became popular from the early modern period onwards (Lurje 2012; 2004).

1.3.1 Reception

An early scholarly discussion on Oedipus can be found in Sextus Empiricus' *Against the Ethicists*. Criticizing the views of the first Stoic philosopher, Zeno of Citium (c. 334 – c. 262 BC), Sextus cites Zeno's views on the crimes of Oedipus:

> Thus Zeno, after stating the facts about Jocasta and Oedipus, asserts that there was nothing dreadful in his rubbing his mother. "If she had been ailing and he had done her good by rubbing her body with his hands, it had not been shameful (*ouden aischron*); if he stopped her grief and gave her joy by rubbing her with another member, and begat noble children by his mother, what shame was that (*ti ên aischron*)?" (*Adv. math. XI*, 191ff)[206]

Sextus attacks Zeno by claiming that the Stoics did not condemn even incest as inherently shameful.[207] For our purposes, Zeno's argument is notable not so much because of his stance toward incest but for the fact that although Oedipus' shame is recognized and named, it is in the same breath *denied*. For Zeno claims that there *should not* be anything to feel shame for. The shame is, in a way, explained away—and perhaps its stain is cleansed.

A couple of hundred years later, another Stoic philosopher, Seneca (c. 4 BC-AD 65), reworked Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* into a play of his own.[208] In contrast to Sophocles' version, Seneca builds the play's narrative around the workings of fate and the questions of guilt and innocence. After plucking out his eyes (the scene being even more gruesome than that of Sophocles), Seneca's Oedipus declares, "now I have *done justice*, I have *paid the debt* I owed" (*iam iusta feci, debitas poenas tuli*, 976), indicating that the act has become a means of atoning for the crime instead of escaping the gazes of others. While Seneca's Iocasta recognizes the shame of incest (*natus es: natum pudet*, 1010), she also claims that "every decency of human law has been confounded and destroyed by" it (*omne confusum perit, / incesta, per te iuris humani decus*, 1025–26). At the same time as she acknowledges her and her son's crime, she also declares to Oedipus, "Fate's is that fault of thine: by fate no one is made guilty" (*Fati ista culpa est; nemo fit fato nocens*, 1019). This question of fate and guilt in the framework of law and justice will become the main framework for thinking about Oedipus and understanding the ethical problems that the play might pose.[209]

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[206] Translation Bury 1933.

[207] Although Sextus claims that Zeno is advocating incest with this example, it is more likely that Zeno is rather trying to downplay the shame and horror conventionally associated with sexual acts. As a Stoic philosopher influenced by the Cynics, Zeno likely held that no action is bad in itself. For when it comes to virtue, it is the condition of the soul that counts. (Hook 2005, 32–39.)

[208] Edmunds (2006, 60) notes that it is precisely Sophocles' version of the Oedipus myth that Seneca is working with.

[209] Rudnytsky (1987, 97) claims that the reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus* was "contaminated by extraneous features, above all the baleful example of Seneca" until the 1790s, when the German Romantics cleared Sophocles from this extraneous influence. (Ahl 1991, 1–3) claims that a latent influence of Seneca persists in the readings of the play until this day. While Ahl's claim about the persistence of Seneca's influence seems plausible, it should be noted that

Seneca was familiar with Sophocles' version of the Oedipus myth, but in the Middle Ages, the play was unknown[210] and wasn't rediscovered until the Renaissance. The first new Greek edition was published in Venice in 1502–1504.[211] The rediscovery influenced several new versions, such as Giovanni Andrea Anguillara's *Edippo* (performed in 1556 or 1560), which was twice as long as the original and covered the storylines of both *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women*. Although Anguillara interprets Oedipus' blinding as a means of fleeing his shame (*fuggir l'ignominia*), he also makes Oedipus into a *sinner*: the act of self-blinding is presented as a *penalty* (*pena*) that Oedipus must pay to "punish himself for his sin (*per punirsi da fe de' fuoi peccati*)."[212]

A century later, Pierre Corneille, working in the framework of French classicism, composed his version of Oedipus, which was performed in 1659. Corneille's version echoes Seneca's in that his Oedipus also sees himself as an innocent victim of fate and the gods. "My memory is full of nothing but noble deeds," he declares, before continuing, "The order of heavens attaches me to crimes (*aux crimes*) despite myself (*malgré moi*)"[213] The self-blinding is presented as a gesture to fight the "injustice of the gods."[214] Interestingly, Corneille also deemed Sophocles' version too shocking for the audience, and in his comments on the play, he explains that he chose not to bring the blinded Oedipus back onto the stage, as this "dangerous spectacle" might horrify the ladies.[215] Corneille's version thus ends up echoing the reaction of the chorus in Sophocles' play: Oedipus' horrific body, which has become a spectacle, must be hidden from sight.

Another classical example comes from Voltaire, who wrote his *Oedipus* a couple of decades after that of Corneille.[216] Voltaire's Oedipus is similarly innocent, lamenting that a powerful god led him to crime so that he is "blind

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Ahl's contention stems from his conviction that in the Sophoclean version, Oedipus is never proven to *actually* have committed parricide or incest.

[210] Although Sophocles' version was unavailable, the legend of Oedipus in general was known and reproduced in different forms during the Middle Ages. Surprisingly, elements of the Oedipus myth often refigure in medieval stories on the life of Judas Iscariot (Hahn 1980; Edmunds 2006, 64–79). What links Oedipus and Judas in medieval versions is that they both have sinned in extreme ways. According to Hahn, a "feature common to all the medieval versions of the Oedipus story is a sense of guilt." He notes that, "In this the medieval versions differ from the Greek portrayals, for modern classical scholars [Dodds] seem to agree that while Oedipus may be shamed in the eyes of his fellow citizens, he does not, and should not, feel guilt" (Hahn 1980, 228–29).

[211] Edmunds 2006, 83.

[212] Translation quoted from Fabrizio 1995, 187; Anguillara, *Edippo*, Act IV, Sc. 1.

[213] "Mon souvenir n'est plein que d'exploits généreux…Aux crimes malgré moi l'ordre du ciel m'attache" (Corneille, *Œdipe*, 1820–25 = Corneille 1987, 86–87).

[214] Corneille, *Œdipe*, 1900 = Corneille 1987, 89.

[215] Corneille "Lettre au lecteur." Quoted from Edmunds 2006, 90–93. Although Corneille left the mutilated Oedipus offstage, his play was met with contempt. Abbé d'Aubignac wrote a diatribe against Corneille's *Oedipus*, saying that the French stage "is not the place where one should exhibit the great misfortunes of royal families, when they are mingled with detestable and shameful actions." (Quoted from Edmunds 2006, 93.)

[216] As Jory (2001, 36–42) notes, when Voltaire was writing at the beginning of the eighteenth century, all scholarly discussion around Oedipus was primarily concerned with the question of his guilt and innocence.

despite himself"[217] If there is shame in Voltaire's version, it is not found among the humans, for they are victims, but rather falls to the *gods* who have made the crimes possible. As Iocasta declares in the final two lines of the play, "...in the midst of the horrors of the destiny which oppresses me / *I have made the gods blush who forced me to crime* (*J'ai fait rougir les dieux qui m'ont force au crime*)."[218] The two figures see themselves as innocent instruments of the gods and not guilty of their alleged crimes. Thus, the thought implicit in Iocasta's lines is that shame cannot get a hold of her or Oedipus.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there is an intensification in philosophical interest in the figure of Oedipus (understood, again, as the figure of Sophocles' play)[219] among the German idealists.[220] In his lectures on aesthetics delivered between 1800 and 1806,[221] Friedrich von Schelling takes Oedipus to be a paradigmatic figure of "the tragic." Seeing Oedipus, again, as a plaything of fate, Schelling suggests that although Oedipus' crimes were unavoidable and unfree, the act of self-blinding, by contrast, demonstrates "the greatest victory of freedom." This is to "atone voluntarily for this guilt (*Schuld freiwillig büssen*) — guilt imposed by fate itself," and to "voluntarily to bear the punishment for an unavoidable transgression (*willig auch die Strafe für ein unvermeidliches Verbrechen*)" (Schelling 1989 [1859], 254). For Schelling, the play is all about the tension between (factual) guiltlessness and *free* acceptance of (moral) guilt. The act of self-blinding — a self-chosen punishment for something one is ultimately innocent of — manifests Oedipus' fundamental freedom. In Schelling's words,

> That a guiltless person (*Schuldloser*) unavoidably becomes increasingly guilty (*schuldig*) through fate itself [...] is the greatest conceivable misfortune. But that this guiltless guilty person (*schuldlose Schuldige*) accepts punishment (*Strafe*) voluntarily — this is the sublimity of tragedy; thereby alone does freedom transfigure itself into the highest identity with necessity (Schelling 1989 [1859], 255).

In Schelling the aspect of shame gives way to the language of guilt, and the Oedipus of the *Tyrannus* to the one at Colonus. For in the latter play, the old hero declares that even if he has acted unwillingly (*akôn*), he has "*endured* evil (*enegkon kakotat'*) [...] by his own will (*hekôn*)" (*OC* 521).

Writing along similar lines with Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel cites Oedipus as an example of an "ethical consciousness" that "cannot deny the crime or his guilt (*kann das Verbrechen und seine Schuld nicht verleugnen*)" even when he has

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[217] "Un dieu plus fort que moi m'entraînait vers le crime, / Sous mes pas fugitifs il creusait un abîme, / Et j'étais malgré moi dans mon aveuglement, / D'un pouvoir inconnu l'escleave et l'instrument." Voltaire 2001 [1717], 249 = Acte V, Scène IV, 161–64.

[218] Emphasis mine. "Ne plaignez que mon fils, puisq'il respire encore, / Prêtes, et vous Thébains, qui fûtes mes sujets, / Honorez mon bûcher, et songez à jamais, / Qu'au milieu de horreurs du destin qui m'opprime, / J'ai fait rougir les dieux qui m'ont force au crime" Voltaire 2001 [1717], 254 = Acte V, Scène VI, 226–30.

[219] Edmunds 2006, 100–105.

[220] On tragedy and German idealism, see Billings 2014; Goldhill 2014.

[221] But published only in 1859.

unknowingly set in motion the sequence of events (Hegel 1977 [1807], 283, §469). Hegel suggests that where his contemporaries might argue that one cannot be judged guilty of a deed one committed unknowingly, the Greek consciousness was different:

> But the Greek, with his plasticity of consciousness, takes responsibility (*steht ein für*) for what he has done as an individual and does not cut his purely subjective self-consciousness apart from what is objectively the case" (Hegel 1975 [1835], 1214).

Thus, in a paradoxical move, Oedipus becomes simultaneously guiltless and guilty. That is, shame does not surface in the interpretations of Schelling or Hegel, which instead center on Oedipus' guilt and, consequently, his individual responsibility.

The most influential reading of the Oedipus myth in the twentieth century is undoubtedly that of Sigmund Freud. Although Freud believed that the Oedipus myth represented a universal model of the complex of the same name, he built his interpretation specifically around Sophocles' version of the story. In the structure of Sophocles' play, which he describes as a "process of *revealing*, with cunning delays, and ever-mounting excitement" (Freud 1958 [1900], 261–62), Freud finds the model for both the unconscious and the psychoanalytical method. In Freud's theory of child development, the Oedipus complex is introduced as an essential stage in the development of *morality*. Put briefly, according to Freud's theory, all young boys undergo an Oedipus complex, which consists of a desire for the mother and aggressive impulses toward the father. These impulses, Freud suggests, give rise to feelings of *guilt* and are resolved through the development of the super-ego. The super-ego, in turn, "represents the ethical standards of mankind" and is the "vehicle for the phenomenon we call conscience"(Freud 1959 [1926], 223).[222]

The progression from Zeno to Freud marks the popular reception of the play—it is also one that seeks to avoid confronting shame. Either by denying, hiding, or dislocating the emotion: Zeno says that there is "nothing shameful" in Oedipus' crimes, Corneille does not wish to expose the body of Oedipus to his audience, and Voltaire's Iocasta sees that the shame belongs to the gods. Or, by turning the play into a *trial* and emphasizing the themes of guilt, justice, and law over those of shame and pollution—in the manner of Seneca, Schelling, and

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[222] Freud notes also that in neurotic people, the Oedipus complex does not undergo a normal transformation, and therefore, "Their super-ego still confronts their ego as a strict father confronts a child; and their morality operates in primitive fashion in that the ego gets itself punished by the super-ego. Illness is employed as an instrument for this 'self-punishment,' and neurotics have to behave as though they were governed by a sense of guilt which, in order to be satisfied, needs to be punished by illness" (Freud 1959 [1926], 223). Freud has been criticized within the field of psychoanalysis for concentrating on the feeling of guilt rather than shame when developing the Oedipus complex (Kilborne 2003; Emde and Oppenheim 1995).

Freud. These interpretations have ensured that the reception of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is, to this day, preoccupied with the guilt of the hero.[223]

This tradition is echoed in the scholarship on the play from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The discussions on Oedipus have circled, for instance, around the existential themes of fate and free will, speculations regarding the legal implications of Oedipus' actions from the perspective of Athenian law, or reading *Oedipus Tyrannus* as a kind of a detective story in which Oedipus might or might not be the murderer of Laius (maybe it was the Sphinx? or the chorus!).[224]

Reading the reception in this light raises questions: Why the emphasis on guilt over shame?[225] Are the horrors and catastrophes of Oedipus somehow easier to handle if they are set within a framework of law and trial, which can, in theory, be resolved? Does bearing witness to Oedipus, to the pollution, dirt, and shame, force the readers to look away in shame?

1.3.2 Shame and guilt

While the question of guilt has been the persistent framework in which the play is read, it seems that in the discussions and interpretations surveyed here, the

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[223] Dodds, for instance, argues that Oedipus is "great" because "he accepts the responsibility for *all* his acts" even though he is innocent (Dodds 1966, 46). This gives rise to feelings of guilt, for "[i]n the objective order it is acts that count, not intentions. A man who has violated that order may well *feel a sense of guilt*, however blameless" his intentions are (Dodds 1966, 42, my emphasis). Thomas Gould, in response to Dodds, notes that "It is often *the feeling of guilt* that most puzzles us" for, while Oedipus is innocent, "it never occurs to him that he is freed by this fact from the uncleanness of the guilty man" (Gould 2007 [1966], 45, my emphasis).

[224] On *legal perspective*: see Harris (2010), who argues that the Athenian audience, informed by Athenian homicide law, would have found Oedipus guilty of murder after hearing his report at 798–813, and Sommerstein (2011), who argues that from the same legal perspective, Oedipus is *not* guilty. *Fate and free will*: see Dodds 1966; Vernant 1990 [1972]; Gould 2007 [1966]. The question of free will is wholly tied to the question of whether Oedipus can be held responsible (i.e., guilty) for his crime. *Detective story*: see Maiullari 2012 and Ahl 1991 (and Griffith 1993 for criticism of Ahl). Vellacot (1990) argues for an interpretation in which Oedipus is guilty and *knows* that he is guilty. Rene Girard (2005 [1972]) concentrates on reading Oedipus as a model for a trans-historical phenomenon of scapegoating, but he, too, suggests that the 'real murderer' was someone else. One imaginative interpretation is that of Frederick Ahl, who suggests that Oedipus is altogether innocent of incest and parricide. He argues that "in this play, no conclusive evidence is presented that Oedipus killed his father and married his mother," (Ahl 1991, x) that is, he was *not* the son of Laius and Iocasta. However, Ahl also claims that "Oedipus' sense of *personal guilt* allows him to take on the responsibility for the guilt of the community as a whole" (Ahl 1991, 262, my emphasis).

[225] Some scholars have also acknowledged and commented on the role of shame in the play. Thalia Howe reads Oedipus' wish to hide as a shame reaction, writing that "[n]o man could bear a greater load of shame than the Sophoclean Oedipus" – noting also that "regardless of his emotional reaction, Oedipus is not guilty, as he himself fully recognizes" (Howe 1962, 134). Cairns also interprets Oedipus' self-blinding as a shame reaction: "Oedipus' self-blinding is […] a consequence of his inability to face others […]; this is indication enough that he is experiencing a classic *aidôs*- or shame-reaction" (Cairns 1993, 217). However, on the very next page, Cairns swiftly seems to reverse his interpretation, writing, "If Oedipus' reaction, then, is one of *aidôs*, it is clearly based on a subjective awareness of the horror of what he has done; this being so, his reaction is also compatible with the emotion which we, in ordinary usage, call guilt" (Cairns 1993, 218). This is to say that Cairn takes Oedipus' *aidôs*-reaction as indicative of both shame *and* guilt.

meaning of guilt itself fluctuates. To be precise, I suggest that we can detect two different—yet interconnected—main uses of guilt in the discussions. On the one hand, there is the issue of *causal and legal guilt*. That is to say, the fact or the verdict that one is guilty of a homicide, being the cause of or one legally responsible for a death. On the other hand, there is the *emotion of guilt*—often connected to the experience of *moral guilt*, the experience of having done something wrong and accepting a punishment. While factual guilt can be investigated by following a causal chain from an effect (death) to its origin or cause (a lethal blow), the feeling or experience of guilt is more elusive. For example, causal–legal and emotional–moral guilt may be in conflict, so that in the interpretations, Oedipus can be declared *legally* guiltless while simultaneously claimed to be *experiencing* himself as guilty.

It is often noted that the ancient Greeks lacked a specific word for the *emotion* of guilt. As per Williams (1993, 88), the Greeks had "no direct equivalent" for it. David Konstan suggests that "Like many other cultures, Greece and Rome did not have distinct terms for what we call shame and guilt, and they seem to have made do with one concept where we recognize two" (Konstan 2003, 1032). Here, we are clearly dealing with emotional–moral guilt, for the Greeks did, indeed, have the vocabulary for legal–factual guilt: the noun *aitia*, meaning guilt, responsibility or cause, and the adjective *aitios*, meaning guilty, responsible or culpable.[226] It is namely the emotion that the Greeks 'fail' to recognize, articulate, or distinguish from shame, not the legal category. I shall soon return to the legal concept of guilt, but let us first consider the emotional and moral experience.

As noted in the introduction, for some classicists the assumption that either the word for or even the very experience of guilt is missing from Greek antiquity would serve as an indication of what they claim to be the *moral underdevelopment* of the Greeks. This view is based on a persistent assumption that guilt is somehow a 'higher' moral emotion than shame. The most violent attack against Greek ethics is found in A. W. H. Adkins's *Merit and Responsibility* (1960), in which he argued that the Greeks were driven solely by the desire to win fame and the fear of losing face. According to Adkins, the society followed values of shame, which he characterizes as competitive, egoistic, and heteronomous. Adkins concludes that because the Greeks did not attend to the experience of guilt, they failed to follow their inner convictions or conscience. The assumption here is that true morality rests on an internal, autonomous, obligating, and absolute standard (which Adkins identifies with Kant's moral law), and thus the very fact that we tend to feel shame before the other makes it a non-moral sentiment.

This attack on the Greek ethical system seems difficult to refute *if* we accept, first, that true morality requires an experience like that of moral guilt and, second, that the Greeks did not have such an experience. Different strategies may be adopted in confronting this problem. One approach is to claim that the Greeks did, in fact, have an experience parallel to guilt. This is the solution offered by

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[226] See Frede 1980; Pearson 1952.

Cairns and Williams. The other approach is to claim that *ethics* does *not* require an experience of moral guilt. This will be my argument.

Let us first examine Cairns' and Williams' solutions. To shield the moral dignity of the Greeks against Adkins's attack, Williams and Cairns have argued for the ethical or moral importance of the *aidôs/aischunê* (which they understand as coincident). However, in doing this, they both resort to a view that appears to dismiss the specific nature of shame, as they both argue that the experience that the Greeks name *aidôs/aischunê* also encompasses the feeling of guilt. Calling into question the modern distinction between the two emotions, Williams notes that "The mere fact that we have the two words does not, in itself, imply that there is any great psychological difference between shame and guilt" (Williams 1993, 89). Thus, Williams notes that even our *current* distinction between the two emotions might not be very clear-cut. Cairns, on the other hand, insists that if we apply our modern distinctions between the two emotions to antiquity, then we notice that "*aidôs* is, in these terms, quite often closer to guilt than shame" (Cairns 1993, 26). For him, Greek *aidôs* is an umbrella concept that encompasses both feelings.

Thus, in their *defense* of Greek shame, Cairns and Williams both arrive at the same conclusion: that "*aidôs* must be something like guilt as well" (Williams 1993, 90; Cairns 1993, 26). This is a peculiar thing to say about a feeling that the Greeks *consistently* describe in terms of being seen, a bad reputation, and the opinions of others. To better understand why Cairns and Williams argue for including guilt in the experience of *aidôs/aischunê*, I will briefly look at how shame and guilt are typically differentiated in the philosophical and psychological discussions on moral emotions, which both Cairns and Williams rely on.

In studies on self-conscious, or so-called moral emotions, guilt and shame often appear as a pair, as if one of the emotions could only be defined through the exclusion of the other.[227] Consequently, several recent studies in both philosophy and psychology have attempted to draw lines between the two. The most common and most prevalent distinctions in recent literature can be pinned down to five main ones:[228]

1. *Guilt is a private emotion, whereas shame is a social one.* Shame is said to be fundamentally social because, in shame, one feels oneself in relation to the perspectives of others. Guilt, by contrast, is considered a private and personal experience of having transgressed one's own moral code. This distinction is sometimes expressed with reference to sanctions, as Dodds does: in shame, the sanctions are external; in guilt, internal.[229]

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[227] On the difference between shame and guilt, see, for example, Teroni and Deonna 2008; Steinbock 2014; Taylor 1985; Tangney and Dearing 2003; Fuchs 2002; Lewis 1971.

[228] The first four have been mapped out in Teroni and Deonna (2008) "Differentiating shame and guilt."

[229] According to Cairns, "guilt relies on the internal sanctions provided by the individual conscience, one's own disapproval of oneself, and shame is caused by the fear of external sanctions, specifically the disapproval of others." (Cairns 1993, 15). Konstan (2003, 1031): "shame, the argument goes, responds to the judgments of others and is indifferent to ethical principles in themselves, whereas guilt is an inner sensibility and corresponds to the morally autonomous self of modern man."

2. *Guilt is felt for some specific deed, while shame concerns the entire self.* This influential distinction was introduced by Helen Block Lewis, who suggests that guilt is experienced for something that one has *done* while shame is felt over what one *is*. That is, the object of shame is the self as a whole, while the object of guilt is some punishable deed (Lewis 1971, 30).[230] Consequently, guilt—rather than shame—is associated with voluntary action and causality, since we tend to think we are more responsible for our actions than for our being.

3. *Guilt is connected to the transgression of a norm, shame to failure to reach an ideal.* This distinction is based on Freud's differentiation between the ego-ideal and super-ego. Guilt is connected to the super-ego, which stands for inhibitions and internalized moral code, and shame, on the other hand, is related to the ego-ideal, which is the locus of the conceived ideal self. Thereby guilt is a transgression of the code of super-ego whereas shame arises from a failure to reach the ideals harbored by ego-ideal – I am not quite what I aspired to be (Piers and Singer 1953, 11). The transgression in guilt might concern for example a social norm or a moral law (Steinbock 2014, 109; Williams 1993, 220) and the ideal failed in shame might be that of one's own, but also that of one's parents, that of one's community, and so on.

4. *The after-effects of guilt are claimed to be other-oriented and reparative, whereas in shame, they are said to be self-oriented and destructive.* Recent psychological studies have suggested that excessive shame often leads to self-destructive behavior (compare suicide and self-mutilation in tragedy). Because the failure experienced in shame considers the self rather than a deed, the self also serves as an outlet for negative feelings and violence. Guilt, on the other hand, is often associated with atonement and a willingness to make reparations to the victim(s) of one's crime or to repay the deed (Taylor 1985, 90).[231]

5. *Shame is associated with vision, guilt with voice.* Based on the basic phenomenology of the emotion, shame and sight form a well-known experiential pair. On the other hand, both psychoanalytic and phenomenological studies have suggested that guilt and hearing would form a similar pair. In guilt, one feels as if being called or summoned by an authoritative voice: in guilt, "one has to answer to 'call' or 'voice' [of conscience] just as to the courts" (Fuchs 2002, 233).[232]

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[230] Steinbock (2014, 131): "[W]hereas shame is experienced predominantly in terms of who I am and as a disorientation, guilt is given at the outset in terms of an accomplishment that is mine and as a transgression."

[231] As Williams (1993, 222) writes: "The viewer's gaze draws the subject's attention not to the viewer, but to the subject himself; the victim's anger, on the other hand, draws attention to the victim." Steinbock (2014, 131): "Whereas shame seems directly to issue a possible reparation of Myself, guilt seems to open the way more immediately for reparation of the relation with others."

[232] So, too, Heidegger's famous conception of conscience is understood as a call, "the conscience's call of 'Guilty!'" Thus, for Heidegger, "All experiences and interpretations of the conscience are at one in that they make the 'voice' of conscience speak somehow of 'guilt'." (Heidegger 2001 [1926], 324-5). Taylor (1985, 85) writes: "To feel guilty [one] must accept only that he has done something which is forbidden, he must accept also that it is forbidden,

To reiterate, the divide follows five lines: 1) public shame/private guilt, 2) whole self in shame/deed in guilt, 3) failure of reaching an ideal in shame/transgression of a norm in guilt, 4) self-destructive shame/reparative guilt, and 5) visual shame/auditory guilt.[233]

If we accept this division between the two emotions, how would the differences map to the experience of Oedipus? That is, if we consider the *emotional–moral* guilt in *Oedipus Tyrannus* in the light of these differences, can Oedipus be said to feel guilty? First, on the public-private axis, Oedipus' experience is indisputably public, for it is the gazes of others that Oedipus tries to escape, while his interiority remains a sweet place to dwell in. Second, in distinguishing between the deed and the self, Oedipus' pain seems to be connected to his self as much as to his deeds, for his main concern is whether his deeds reveal that his self has always been marked by the festering stigma – "I am found to be evil and of evil birth." (1395–97).[234] Third, it is perhaps difficult to determine whether Oedipus' experience is about a norm or an ideal because both seem plausible: on the one hand, Oedipus has transgressed the essential laws of his society, and, on the other hand, he has certainly failed to fulfill his ideal as the all-capable king. Fourth, considering the after-effects, Oedipus' actions are definitely self-oriented—self-mutilation—and not other-oriented—for he makes no gestures toward reparation. Finally, when it comes to the phenomenological difference between gaze and voice, it is quite evidently the gaze that is at issue and not the auditory guilt. Thus, if we accept these divisions, then Oedipus' experience indeed resembles shame more than guilt.

1.3.3 Private feelings

Of these lines of demarcation, it is the first one that has played the most decisive role in the discussion on the Greek shame culture—that is, the division between public and private or between the external and the internal. This difference is also at the heart of Williams' and Cairns' suggestions that *aidôs/aischunê* covers some of the features that are usually regarded as characterizing guilt rather than shame.[235] They both argue that the idea that shame is public (and thus not

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and thereby accept the authority of whoever of whatever forbids it. […] So the authority becomes the voice of conscience."

[233] These are the *usual and common* ways of distinguishing between the two emotions or experiences. I shall not suggest that these represent the final truth about the two feelings.

[234] οἶον ἄρά με / κάλλος κακῶν ὕπουλον ἐξεθρέψατε: / νῦν γὰρ κακὸς τ᾽ ὢν κἀκ κακῶν εὑρίσκομαι.

[235] David Konstan, who argues that at least in Aristotle's *Rhetoric, aischunê* seems to function like guilt. For in his discussion on *aischunê*, Aristotle lists a list of specific deeds that people tend to feel ashamed of – such as illicit sexual relations or escaping from a battle (Ar. *Rh.* 1383b18–22.). As Konstan notes (2003, 1043) these "are limited acts, and do not necessarily entail an annihilation of one's sense of self. At this level, Aristotle's discussion encompasses the modern idea of guilt." Cairns (1993, 26) makes a similar point: "if guilt involves reference to specific actions of the self as agent rather than the whole self, the *aidôs* is, in these terms, quite often closer to guilt than to shame." However, and this is not lost on Konstan, Aristotle thinks these deeds shameful or shame-inducing because they reveal a shameful trait in one's character, such as cowardice or licentiousness. While Konstan sees that, "With this schema,

internal) does not hold true when it comes to the Greek *aidôs/aischunê*, nor with shame in general. The main point of their argument is that shame, too, is private—for shame can be felt in privacy, without any actual spectators. Both Cairns and Williams seek to *internalize* shame and argue that because both emotions are internal, they are not necessarily different emotions.

Recall Sartre's story about someone peeping through a keyhole. As the person peeping hears a sudden voice behind her back, she becomes conscious of herself and feels shame. Sartre notes, however, that the peeper might experience shame even when no one was actually looking, for example, when the startling sound was simply the house creaking. The mere *imagining* of someone looking was enough to give rise to shame (Sartre 2003, 299ff.). Similarly, Williams and Cairns suggest that the other might always be just an imagined other. There is no need, both maintain, for an actual exposure to an outside view. Rather, Cairns writes, "One can be one's own audience" (1993, 18). Here the self is a sufficient witness for one's failures and therefore shame becomes private in being confined to the subject. However, the question of whether or not an actual other and a moment of exposure are needed seems to be irrelevant, for the 'public' nature of shame speaks not to whether the other must be present in flesh and blood but to its intersubjective structure. Even though the other need not be present, it is always assumed, and the audience, in a sense, is always there.

Williams attempts to argue for an internalized shame while preserving the place of the other in the emotion. Williams suggests that the "imagined other" in shame represents a perspective of someone that is essentially "other than me" (and thus, it is not simply myself serving as my audience as in Cairns). In Greek literature the internalized other, Williams argues, is not simply *anybody* (a representative of some common public opinion), but someone one would respect. Thus, Williams holds that ethically praiseworthy shame does not "merely follow public opinion" but rather "expresse[s] inner conviction" (Williams 1993, 95). Now, it appears that Williams is bound to contradict himself when trying to maintain both that the imagined other is truly another subject and not just myself and that, at the same time, the other is somehow representative of the subject's interiority. For, according to Williams, this inner shame is "at a much deeper level" than the shame that follows public opinion, and the internalized other is a "locus of some genuine social expectations" but also represents the subject's "genuine autonomy" (Williams 1993, 98).

Williams, then, like Cairns, calls into question the public/private division of shame and guilt and suggests that shame is also private, internal, and autonomous. Although Williams does not explicitly say it, his vocabulary of inwardness and genuineness seems to point in the same direction as Cairns does. For, if we ask *why* it is so important to these scholars to emphasize the overlap between *aidôs* and guilt, we find an answer from Cairns, who states, "Any acculturated human being will possess internalized standards, and anyone who

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Aristotle seems to bridge the difference that modern investigators suppose exists between shame and guilt…" (Konstan 2003, 1042), Aristotle's theory of shame appears to grow from a framework of action that does not necessarily see a gap between the deed and the doer: one's deeds cannot be separated from the character that gives rise to them.

possesses internalized standards possess a conscience" (Cairns 1993, 42). Without references to internality or autonomy there is no moral conscience, and if shame is public, external, and heteronomous rather than private, internal, and autonomous, it does not appear to map neatly onto the demands of conscience. This becomes a problem if moral conscience is regarded as crucial to morality in general. However, the inferential leaps that Cairns makes from indications of adopted standards or inwardness to moral conscience are substantial—especially when we note that the whole idea of moral conscience is itself also a historically changing conception.[236]

It seems to me that both Cairns and Williams ultimately reiterate Adkins' argument regarding the moral susceptibility of shame when they emphasize the internal aspects of the emotion. In defending the moral value of shame with theories that make shame look very much like guilt, they seem to imply that shame cannot be defended in its own right. The question of whether shame can function as a "moral emotion" seems to depend on its ability to serve as *an internal check*. Either prohibiting certain actions in advance or condemning them afterward. This is exactly the function of the innate, law-abiding guilt that serves as a guarantee of "inner convictions," "genuine autonomy," and so on. Thus, one explanation as to why guilt has acquired the status of a higher moral emotion is that it serves as an easy answer to the problem of private wrongdoing, a problem that was discussed already in antiquity.

An elegant example of this problematic is the story of the ancestor of the Lydian king Gyges, familiar from the second book of Plato's Republic (358e–362c). In discussing why people refrain from violence or injustice even when it would benefit them, the sophist Thrasymachus claims that the thing that keeps people from murdering one another is simply public condemnation. Another interlocutor, Glaucon, continues by telling the story of an ancestor of Gyges. The ancestor was a poor shepherd who one day found a magical ring that could make its wearer invisible. With the magic ring, the shepherd realizes, he could do whatever he pleases and get away with it—for there is no public condemnation to keep him in check. Without hesitating, the shepherd makes his way into the palace of the Lydian king, seduces the queen, kills the king, and becomes the new ruler of the kingdom. Without an internal check, the moral of the story goes, the invisible wrong-does can kill the king and marry the queen—just like Oedipus—because he does not have to fear public opinion, external punishment, or ill repute.

Here, shame is at disadvantage. If shame relies on condemnation meted out by external others, then it will not work when one can be sure that one will never be found out. When no one is looking, then public esteem is not threatened. Conversely, guilt, with its internal and all-invasive sanctions, would tie even the hands of the invisible shepherd—like a magic spell.[237]

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[236] On the concept of conscience in ancient Greece, see Bosman (2003), Ojakangas (2013), Sorabji (2014).

[237] Here, we can compare the two senses related to these two emotions, sight and hearing. Generally, we have more control over looking than hearing; we can simply close our eyes or move away from sight. It is considerably more difficult to control hearing; voices can appear

1.3.4 Legal and causal guilt

As noted, peculiar to guilt is that besides naming an emotion, it is also a legal concept.[238] The two resemble each other in many aspects: in the central roles of transgression, responsibility, punishment, and reparation, for instance. However, the affinity has also served as grounds for calling into question the *ethical* value of guilt. This is Giorgio Agamben's argument (1999): according to Agamben, the idea of moral guilt is a "confusion between ethical categories and legal categories" and therefore secular ethics has, in fact, "raised juridical categories to the status of supreme ethical categories" (Agamben 1999, 24).[239] For Agamben, guilt is a thoroughly legal concept and, therefore, fundamentally *foreign to ethics*. He claims that "Responsibility and guilt…express simply two aspects of legal imputability; only later were they *interiorized* and moved outside the law" (Agamben 1999, 22, emphasis mine).[240]

Indeed, if we consider all the features of the emotion of guilt mentioned above, we can see how most descriptions of the emotion also fit a customary understanding of the legal concept. In describing emotional guilt, the themes of accountability, accusation, punishment, and reparation become pivotal—which they are, of course, when defining legal guilt. Let us consider again the differences between shame and guilt. It was said that the feeling of guilt is felt for a *specific deed*—rather than for the whole self. Emotional guilt was described as arising from a *transgression of a norm or law*. A person who feels guilt, it is claimed, tries *to repair or pay a penalty* for their deed and violation, and the phenomenological description of guilt links the emotion with *voice* or to the experience of being called upon. As it stands, the criteria do not merely describe the emotion; they are also the fundamental features of *a trial*.

Indeed, when the commentators of *Oedipus Tyrannus* turn their focus toward the issue of Oedipus' guilt, it seems that they are suddenly in a court of law. This is echoed in the vocabularies of the interpretations. Seneca speaks of the *culpa* of Oedipus and his Oedipus declares that he has "done justice" and "paid the debt" (*iam iusta feci, debitas poenas tuli*, 976); in Anguillara, we learn that self-blinding is a *pena,* punishment; Corneille's Oedipus calls his fate an "injustice

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as though from nowhere and pass through distances and obstacles, such as walls or hands covering the ears. Voices are, then, more invasive than gazes: "And it is more difficult to escape from voices than it is from faces" (Emde and Oppenheim 1995, 412).

[238] As Gabriele Taylor notes, "[g]uilt, unlike shame, is a legal concept" (Taylor 1985, 85, my emphasis). Cf. Steinbock (2014, 103): "guilt as a judgement by oneself or others, and guilt as a moral and religious experience before others. Moreover, while guilt can be a legal concept, it is also a moral one."

[239] Agamben's reluctance to see any ethical value in guilt stems from the difference between ethics and morality discussed in the introduction. Whereas ethics deals with happiness and the possibility of a good life, morality is in the sphere of obligation, punishment, and law. This also explains Agamben's dismissal of guilt: "But ethics is the sphere that recognizes neither guilt nor responsibility; it is, as Spinoza knew, the doctrine of the *happy life*. To assume guilt and responsibility – which can, at times, be necessary – is to leave the territory of ethics and enter that of law" (Agamben 1999, 24). Throughout his philosophical work, Agamben has repeatedly contrasted shame with guilt to the benefit of shame.

[240] Agamben does not elaborate a timeline for this tendency here. See, e.g., Agamben (2020) for further discussion.

of the gods," and Schelling refers to "the punishment for an unavoidable transgression" (Schelling 1989 [1859], 254). The guilt—and the subsequent culpability, innocence, responsibility, fate, free will, and so on—of Oedipus is shifted to center stage. But at what point exactly, we might ask, did the play become a staging of a trial?

Now, although there is no term for the experience of emotional or moral guilt in classical Greek, there is, of course, a terminology of legal guilt and culpability. This legal guilt that is pronounced in a trial is expressed using the adjective *aitios*, meaning "guilty," "responsible" or "culpable," that is, for example, the criminal. The cognate noun is *aitia*, which means "accusation" or "complaint" in a technical legal sense or "guilt," "blame," and "responsibility" in a more general sense, but also "cause" or "reason"—for instance, it could refer to the cause of an ailment in Hippocratic texts.[241]

In the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *aitia/aitios* and their cognates are mentioned four times, but none of these instances refers to Oedipus or his guilt in any straightforward manner. First, at 109, Oedipus initiates the search for the cause or the origin of the plague, calling it an "old, hard-to-find guilt" or "ancient murky cause" (109).[242] Here, the *aitia* may refer to both criminal guilt and a simple cause—that is, both to the crime of murder *and* to the original cause of the plague. The two subsequent instances of *aitia*-related words are used to mean blaming. As Oedipus charges Creon of treason, he asks Oedipus not to accuse (*aitiô*) him without evidence (608) and the chorus affirms that one should never blame (*aitiô*) a friend without clear proof (656). The final instance of *aitia* occurs in relation to Iocasta's suicide, as the chorus asks how Iocasta's death came about (*tis tinos pot' aitias*, who was the cause of her death, 1236), and the messenger answers that it she herself was the cause (*autê pros autês*).[243]

By encompassing the meanings of both guilt and causality, the concept of *aitia* gestures toward an inner connection between the two. Guilt seems to require and presuppose some idea of causality in both its senses. Legal guilt requires a causal chain between the doer and the deed—that is, the crime and the criminal—whereas moral or emotional guilt includes a sense of responsibility.[244] Finding

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[241] *Aitia* in *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. See also Pearson 1952, 205; Frede 1980, 129. Williams (1993, 58) writes: "The word *aition* is, from the Hippocratic writings on, a standard word for 'cause', and its relative *aitia* kept connections with both kinds of sense: it meant a complaint or an accusation, but already by the time of Herodotus's book it can mean simply 'cause' or 'explanation'."

[242] παλαιᾶς δυστέκμαρτον αἰτίας. Commenting on this line, Williams (1993, 58) writes, "*Aitia* indeed refers to a crime, but in its role as a cause, not as something complained of; there has been no complaint, and that is itself at the root of the city's problems. *Aitia* means 'cause,' and the word here belongs to the language of diagnosis and of rational inquiry, a language with which the play is filled." Frede (1980) argues that the original meaning is more connected to blame and accusation and that the meaning of rational inquiry only follows later.

[243] All these instances are causal and potentially legal; they are used in contexts that include a search for either someone who can be accused, a culpable one or a cause. Iocasta is both the *reason* for her death (her hands set up the rope) and the *guilty* party in the crime of suicide.

[244] While emotional or moral guilt might be felt for things one cannot be responsible for, it is often argued that a belief or impression of one's responsibility is required in guilt. See Taylor 1985, 91–92.

the *aitia* or the *aitios* in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a project concerned with tracing the *causal chain* back to the murky ancient guilt.

However, the *aitia–aitios* words do not appear directly in relation to Oedipus—for example, at the moment of Oedipus' self-blinding. Although we should not read too much into these kinds of lacks, it is notable that the terminology of this kind of factual–legal guilt was, in fact, available to Sophocles. The *aitia*-terminology appears in this sense for example in the *Antigone*, where, at the end of the play, we see Creon who realizes that his actions have culminated in a situation wherein his wife, son, and niece are now all dead. Creon's reaction is to declare, "Ah this guilt can never be fastened onto any other mortal so as to remove my own!" (1317–18).[245] Such acknowledgement of one's legal guilt is missing from the *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

1.3.5   Internal space

The later Oedipus play is different in this regard. Although in *Oedipus at Colonus*, too, an acknowledgement that Oedipus would be *aitios* for his crimes is suppressed,[246] the theme of legal guilt and, more importantly, innocence is central to the play. Oedipus' central claim throughout the play is that *despite* the shame, in the legal framework, he is innocent—that is, "according to the law I am clean! (*nomô…katharos*)" (*OC* 548). As a final testament to his crimes, Oedipus maintains that he always acted in good faith, not knowingly, and despite himself.

For, even though some kind of causality functions as the basis of guilt, simply a mechanical sequence *alone* does not appear to be a sufficient condition for legal guilt. Aristotle offers a classical example, noting that if someone grabs my arm and uses it to hit a third person, this, although it is a causal chain, would not serve as a basis for convicting *me* of the assault. (Ar. *EN* III, 1–2). In the same vein Oedipus holds that his actions consisted in fact "in suffering rather than doing" (*OC* 266-7), so that the "killings and marriages and disasters which he endured unwittingly" were perhaps simply a "pleasure of the gods" who wished to revenge his family (*OC* 962-4).

Although the name varies (Schelling and Hegel speak of will, Aristotle of *proairesis*, a modern term would be intentionality), there is a shared understanding that to determine guilt in either the moral or legal sense, some interior, mental, or psychological step is necessary; something that lies between actor and act. The problem with Oedipus' guilt has been the opacity of the internal space, his apparent *lack of intention*. As Oedipus acknowledges over and over again in the *Colonus* play, he acted unknowingly (*OC* 273, 525, 548, 976, 985) and unwillingly (*OC* 964, 977, 987). "None of these things" he declares "was my own choice!" (*toutôn d'authaireton ouden, OC* 523). The *lack* of choosing the act *as that act* introduces a gap in the cause-and-effect relationship—the link is

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[245] ὤμοι μοι, τάδ᾽ οὐκ ἐπ᾽ ἄλλον βροτῶν / ἐμᾶς ἁρμόσει ποτ᾽ ἐξ αἰτίας.

[246] The vocabularity of *aitia* surfaces twice in the play. First, when Oedipus claims that he killed his father only because the old man had struck him first. Would not anyone, he asks, strike the *aitios* when confronted (995)? The second instance takes place in Polynices' speech when he says that their father's Erinys is guilty of the sons' quarrel (1299).

missing.[247] Determining guilt centers on the subject's black box of consciousness, and thus the subject also becomes *defined* in terms of interiority.

If we consider the criteria used to distinguish between shame and guilt, the only feature of guilt that does not exactly match a juridical process is the claim that, unlike social shame, guilt is *private*. Now, *this* characteristic of the emotion of guilt is, of course, not an inherent feature of a trial. Rather, it is here that we see an experience that includes a robust process of internalization; the emotion of guilt appears to be an internalized version of a trial. The problem of factual guilt belongs to a courtroom, but with emotional guilt, *the courtroom is transported into the consciousness of the subject*.

However, Oedipus' internal space does not—neither in *Oedipus at Colonus* nor in the *Tyrannus* play—harbor intentions or guilty conscience but rather a 'sweet' place beyond the reach of evils (*OT* 1390). There is no evil in his nature, *phusis*, Oedipus maintains even at Colonus (*OC* 270-2): "In myself you could not find any fault to reproach me with (*ouk an exeurois eme / hamartias oneidos ouden*)" (966-7). The internal space of the incestuous parricide remains, then, untouched by evil.

Although the question of Oedipus' legal guilt might be settled once and for all, it does not mean that the *emotion* of guilt or the *experience of moral* guilt should follow.[248] The similarity between legal guilt and the emotion gives rise to a

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[247] Williams 1993, 52–62 discusses responsibility in Greek discourse, arguing against some earlier writers that Greeks did have a concept of responsibility (it is sometimes argued that they did not) and observing that any concept of responsibility comprises four elements: "We might label these four elements cause [someone bringing about a state of affairs], intention, state [normal or abnormal state of mind], and response [making up for the consequence]. These are the basic elements of responsibility," of which the first, cause, is primary (1993, 55–57). However, the concept of causality and responsibility in Greek tragedy or legal parlance can sometimes work in a highly unintuitive fashion, precisely because it sometimes appears to overlook the importance of the internal space. Meaning that sometimes, intention does not appear to play a decisive role in determining where the guilt lies (i.e., what the *aitia* is and who can be deemed *aitios*). A classic example of the foreignness of Greek discourse in relation to culpability may be found in the legal speeches of Antiphon. In the speeches titled as the *Tetralogy* (which were not actually delivered in the court but intended as examples and theoretical studies), Antiphon introduces a case wherein a man has killed a young boy by throwing him with his javelin at the gymnasium. The plaintiff argues that although the man who threw the javelin did not intend to harm anyone and killed the boy by mistake, he was nevertheless the cause (*aitia*) of the death and should therefore be punished. That is, by following the material chain of cause and effect, the cause of the death was the act of throwing the javelin, all intentions aside. The defendant, on the contrary, argues that the reason (*aitia*) for the death was not the act of javelin-throwing *but the dead boy*. The boy, the reasoning goes, caused his own death by running into the throwing area. That is—again, following the material chain of events—the cause of death lies with the boy who was running where he should not have been. What Antiphon demonstrates with his thought experiment is that the causal chains explaining any action may be drawn in many different ways. Intention, at least in this case, does not appear to be a decisive part of determining guilt or causation. In Antiphon's imagined case, the use of *aitia* may strike us as strange because it does not align precisely with the semantic fields of legal guilt or responsibility. The plaintiff says that he knows the killing was unintentional (*hekôn men ouk apekteinen*, 3.3.6) but yet, despite any intention, this boy is now dead, and the *cause* of his death was the act of throwing the javelin.

[248] In the Colonus play, Oedipus insists on his innocence according to the law and when it comes to the emotions the old hero expresses, self-pity seems to be the most obvious one—for example, in Oedipus' lamentations that he is "for ever a slave to the sufferings to any

question about the place and meaning of the emotion. For, when we are in possession of the concept of legal guilt, what is the *meaning* or *function* of emotional guilt? What would be the surplus value that the *emotion* of guilt brings into its legal equivalent? It may be that the Greeks simply did not recognize the need for the supervening emotional supplement—for the emotion of guilt is not necessary for determining culpability. It appears that the experience of emotional guilt has only a small gap to fill, precisely that which lies between the guilty verdict voiced by the judge and the emotional response of the accused.

1.3.6 Two subjects

To conclude, we can now take note of the two types of subjectivities that are at work in shame and guilt respectively. First, unlike guilt, shame does not rely on a causal chain—it does not require intention nor any conception of the internal space. Oedipus' shame is somewhat unrelated to his responsibility, guilt, or innocence, for shame does not *require* responsibility in the same way that guilt appears to. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that while things are *more* shameful when one is the *aitios* for shameful things (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a13–15), one can, however, be ashamed of being a victim of violence and of the deeds of one's parents and ancestors (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a17–20, 1385a1–3). That is, while one can feel shame for something for which one is responsible, one can equally feel shame for things one is *not* responsible for. And while guilt is distributed through causal relations and responsibility, shame need not be thus distributed. Rather, it is distributed through proximities and intimacies, like an infection or *miasma*. It may be based on a judgment that the self is somehow unworthy, but it can also be affective in a way that has very little to do with judgments: consider the shame of the shepherd whose only crime was to share his knowledge of the secret shame.

The difference in seeing the subject as a part of a causal chain or as something that may be affected through proximities relates to the second difference in subjectivities of shame and guilt, the division between the internal and external. The subject of guilt is defined through its interiority, private thoughts, and intentions (which are usually required for the establishment of causality and responsibility). Guilt assumes a subject that is built around an idea of interiority *because* the internal space is the very thing that is on trial. For this reason, guilt is assumed to be private: it sees the subject not as connected to others but as contained. Again, shame differs in this respect. Rather than focusing on the subject's internal condition, it works on the level of surfaces—on the levels of the subject that are public, visible, and connected to others; on the bodily surfaces, on the face, and so on. The internal space that might be present within a subject is simply secondary in comparison to the surface—to the ways in which a person is perceived, talked about, treated by, known, or related to by others.

When critics attack shame or ancient 'shame culture,' they find fault precisely in these features of shame: that it lacks a necessary correlation with the

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man!" (*OC* 104-5) and pleads that the gods "take pity on the miserable ghost of the man Oedipus" (*OC* 109).

idea of responsibility and because its subject does not center on the internal space. Thus, as Williams and Cairns emphasize the possibility of an internal space in shame, they too are referring to the surplus effect of trial and thus to guilt. Now, an unfailing internal judge condemning our crimes in the form of a guilty conscience would indeed be a formidable guardian against evil. As it stands, however, Oedipus never harbored this kind of internal space.

The fact that guilt correlates with responsibility and shame need not necessarily lead one to conclude that shame is also, to a point, *unjust*. There is, indeed, a perceived *injustice* at play in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and in the shame of Oedipus. It is true that shame does not have much to do with justice—but it does not *need* to be an ethically relevant emotion. However, the fact that shame can be unjust speaks to the idea that that the phenomena of shame and guilt point to two distinct types of ethical considerations: one that emphasizes justice in morality and another that recognizes that ethics concerns our life *with* and *among others*. Although shame might be 'skin deep' in some sense, it is not the case that these skin-deep aspects of subjectivity are ethically irrelevant. If we take *ethics* to mean something more than deciding on personal responsibility, culpability, and guilt, then there can be no reason to exclude shame from its scope.

PHILOCTETES: AESTHETICS OF SHAME

Ancient textual sources mention several artworks depicting Philoctetes that no longer survive. Plutarch writes of a painting by Aristophon (c. fifth century BCE) in his discussion of artworks depicting ugly (*aischron*) subjects, which are pleasing to the viewer despite their unpleasant contents. "We avoid a diseased and ulcerous (*hypoulon*) person as an unpleasant sight," Plutarch writes, "but take delight in seeing Aristophon's Philoctetes" (Plut. *Mor*. 18c).[249] Pliny the Elder, on the other hand, describes a bronze sculpture by Pythagoras of Rhegium (*fl*. 475–450 BCE) portraying a lame man, identified as Philoctetes. According to Pliny, the statue of the lame man "actually makes people looking at it feel a pain from his ulcer *in their own leg*" (Pliny, *Nat*. 34.19.59; emphasis mine).[250]

These brief descriptions of ancient visual representations also capture the defining features of the figure of Philoctetes as he appears in the eponymous play by Sophocles. Sophocles portrays Philoctetes as an ailing man at the edge of his strength, suffering from severe pain from a wound in his foot that is eating away his flesh.[251] It is an uncurable, smelling, and rotting lesion resulting from a bite of a holy snake—indeed "an unpleasant sight." The wound is so striking that other characters on the stage appear to feel the very pain it causes when looking at it. For Sophocles' Philoctetes (as his Oedipus) is also a sight to behold, almost like a work of art himself—and witnesses derive something like mixed pleasure from looking at him. At the same time, he is an object of sympathy—onlookers suffer, or think they suffer, with his suffering.

Sophocles' play stages not only the suffering of the Philoctetes figure that we recognize from descriptions of visual artworks but also the very *interplay between the artwork and its audience*. This interplay takes place between two central characters of the play: the sick Philoctetes, who is to be looked at, and a young man, Neoptolemus, who witnesses him with mixed feelings of disgust, horror,

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[249] Translation Babbitt 1986.
[250] Translation Rackham 1952.
[251] In the play, the wound is one of the most characteristic aspects of Philoctetes' person – literally so, for Philoctetes calls his wound a "*charagma*," meaning a serpents' mark (S. *Ph*. 267) but the term is also at the root of the word character.

empathy, pity, pain, and—most notably for our purposes—shame. The plot follows, in effect, the shifts and changes of Neoptolemus' mind and moods as he beholds the artwork that is Philoctetes. In other words, Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is very much a drama of the spectator.[252]

The central questions running through the play concern the ugly (*aischron*) and the beautiful (*kalon*). Is a repulsive wound ugly, and if so, is it uglier than lying or betrayal? Is inhumanity always ugly, and can beauty achieved in an ugly manner be truly beautiful? In a decisive moment (the *peripeteia*) of the drama, the positions of the observed and the observer begin to shift. The spectator, the young Neoptolemus, finds himself as the object of Philoctetes' gaze and understands at once that his actions have been shameful: "I will look ugly," he laments (*aischros phanoumai*, 906). My reading of the *Philoctetes* concentrates, then, on the instances in which aesthetic turns into ethic and ethic into aesthetic within the play and how shame and the shameful surface in these instances.

In this chapter, I shall continue with the theme of perceiving and being perceived introduced in the previous chapter, but whereas with Oedipus, I focused on the intersubjective *experience* of mutual looking, here I shall shift the perspective to *perceived qualities*, especially as they turn into *values*. Thus, my main questions in the chapter are as follows: 1) What is shameful—or ugly, which is denoted by the same word in Greek? 2) How is it recognized? and 3) What are the reasons for avoiding it? The interaction between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, interpreted through the analogy of interaction between a spectator and a work of art, will allow me to study the connection between shame and different values and, ultimately, the ethical significance of *aesthetic* experience.

Two specifications are in place concerning the concept of aesthetics and its use in this chapter. The first specification is that by 'aesthetic,' I do not mean to refer to the limited sphere of 'arts' but to aesthetic experience in general. By appealing to the aesthetic, I wish to evoke the sphere that is the proper object of perception, *aisthêsis*—the visible, audible, tactile, olfactory, and also those modes of sense perception that have not acquired specific names—to which we can apply the categories of beautiful and ugly.[253] The scope of the perceptible is wide indeed if we recall Aristotle's assertion that people have an *aisthêsis* of "good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like" (Ar. *Pol.* 1253a16–18).[254] Meanwhile, the association with arts might serve as a reminder of the fact that I shall discuss the phenomenon of 'aesthetic' ethics within a text that is, indeed, a work of art. It is

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[252] Scholars have noted that Neoptolemus serves as a kind of an internal audience in the play: Seale (1982, 29) writes of the opening scene: "The total picture is one which invites the audience to which Neoptolemus' reaction, to observe him observe." Allen-Hornblower (2016, 250) notes that Neoptolemus on stage is an agent-turned-spectator or an "internal spectator."

[253] Here my approach dovetails with Jacques Rancière's definition of the aesthetic. He uses the term to refer to the sphere of the "sensible" taken as a whole. In his own theory concerning aesthetics and ethics, Rancière suggests that art has a very concrete capacity to change how we perceive the world and what becomes sensible in the first place. In his words, art can "contribute to changing the cartography of the sensible and the thinkable" (Rancière 2010, 143).

[254] τὸ μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἴσθησιν ἔχειν. Translation Jowett 1988.

noteworthy that when speaking about the aesthetic qualities of artworks, terms such as 'beautiful' and 'ugly' have different scopes when used of sculptures and paintings, or of music and dance, or drama. This speaks to the rather wide-ranging scope of both beauty and ugliness.

The second specification is more complex. While one way of approaching the shame-ugliness nexus in the play would be to read it as an intersection between the two distinct domains—of ethical and aesthetic—I will maintain that in Greek literature these are not, in fact, separable. A division between types of strictly identifiable values—ethical on the one hand and aesthetic on the other—is not found in the tragedies but is, rather, a modern projection. Thus reliance on a strict distinction would be anachronistic when discussing ancient value formation. Methodologically, this means that to discuss the meanings of *aischron* and *kalon* in tragedy, we should attempt a 'bracketing'[255] of the modern assumption that the ethical and the aesthetic constitute two separate orders of evaluation. In my reading, I approach this problem by following especially the lead of what would seem to us to be the aesthetic dimensions of the *Philoctetes* without reducing them to more familiar ethical explanations—in other words, to read the play *as though* its central problem was an aesthetic one.

2.1   How things look

Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is set in the time of the Trojan war, and centers on three characters: the ailing Philoctetes, the young Neoptolemus, and Neoptolemus' superior, the scheming and treacherous Odysseus. The play takes place on the island of Lemnos, the otherwise uninhabited home of Philoctetes, where Odysseus and Neoptolemus have arrived in order to bring Philoctetes' divine bow (or Philoctetes himself, the play is not altogether clear on this point) to Troy with them. For it has been prophesied that Troy cannot be taken without the help of this semi-divine weapon that Philoctetes originally received from Heracles. The problem, however, is that Philoctetes has ended up living alone on the island because Odysseus himself had abandoned him there ten years earlier: his crew could not stand the horrible stench of Philoctetes' wound nor the ominous cries of the bitten hero (7–11). After the ten-year-long exile, Philoctetes would hardly be *persuaded* to come to Odysseus' aid.

The play opens with Odysseus and Neoptolemus having arrived at "the shore of the seagirt" and uninhabited Lemnos (1–2), where Neoptolemus is to execute Odysseus' plan to "rob the soul" (55) of Philoctetes. Odysseus, who for the first half of the drama acts as a director in the staging of his plot, speaks first, giving his account of Philoctetes' situation and the events that led to Philoctetes'

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[255] Classical phenomenology utilizes the method of bracketing. This means, at its barest, an attempt to refrain from making assumptions on the nature and reality of the world outside our very sense experience. The method aims not to deny the existence of certain features of the outside world but simply to refrain from making judgments about its existence (see e.g., Moran 2004, 146–52). I shall read the play by "bracketing" the area that we would call ethical.

abandonment ten years prior. In doing this, Odysseus directs Neoptolemus' attention toward Philoctetes' way of life—quite concretely, as the opening scene was likely orchestrated in an unusual way (Seale 1982, 26–28). The actor portraying Odysseus would have stood down in the orchestra pit, while the actor portraying Neoptolemus would have climbed up to the *skênê* to observe the dwelling of Philoctetes, serving as the 'eyes' of Odysseus. For instance, Odysseus gives a description of the cave in which Philoctetes lives—a cave with two mouths—and Neoptolemus duly responds, "I think I see a cave such as you have told me of" (27). This is the initial composition of the characters: Odysseus as a virtual playwright overseeing the perceptions of his audience; Neoptolemus as an internal spectator as well as an actor in Odysseus' play; and Philoctetes as the artwork observed.

After the initial inspection of the scene—an empty cave, a bed of leaves therein, rough woodwork, and horrifying rags filled with pus from a "heavy sickness" that cause Neoptolemus to cry out in disgust: *iou iou!* (38)[256]—Neoptolemus wants to know why he has been brought to Lemnos, and Odysseus sets to explain his plot. He begins by noting first that, in his plot, Neoptolemus "must be…noble (*gennaios*), and not *only* in his body" (50–51),[257] a detail that also establishes one of the play's main themes—that of nobility and its problematic relationship to being and appearance. Odysseus instructs Neoptolemus to try and find Philoctetes, introduce himself as the son of Achilles (which he is), and establish a friendship based on a performance of a shared hatred of Odysseus, and "thus become the thief of the invincible weapon" (77–78).[258]

However, Odysseus immediately recognizes that this kind of secret scheming is not 'natural' for Neoptolemus:

> I know well, my son, that by nature (*phusei*) you have not been born to speak these kinds of things nor to contrive evils. But – for it is a pleasure to obtain the possession of victory – take courage! In another time we will appear just (*dikaioi…ekphainoumetha*). Now, give yourself to me for a brief part of a day for shamelessness (*eis anaides*), and for the remaining time be called the most pious of all mortals (*keklêso…eusebestatos*). (79–85)[259]

Odysseus, then, tries to persuade Neoptolemus by saying that even though the boy's nature, *phusis*, is not inclined toward deception, a brief moment of shamelessness would mean glory in the future.[260] The lure of appearing good is emphasized by repetition: Odysseus promises that Neoptolemus will both *appear*

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[256] "Ah, ah! Here is something else, rags drying in the sun, stained with matter from some heavy sickness!" (ἰοὺ ἰού. καὶ ταῦτά γ᾽ ἄλλα θάλεται / ῥάκη, βαρείας τον νοσηλείας πλέα, 38)
[257] δεῖ σ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἐλήλυθας / γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι.
[258] κλοπεὺς / ὅπως γενήσει τῶν ἀνικήτων ὅπλων.
[259] ἔξοιδα, παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα / τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσται κακά. / ἀλλ᾽ ἡδὺ γάρ τι κτῆμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν, / τόλμα. δίκαιοι δ᾽ αὖθις ἐκφαινούμεθα. / νῦν δ᾽εἰς ἀναιδὲς ἡμέρας βραχὺ / δός μοι σεαυτόν, κἆιτα τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον / κέκλησο πάντων εὐσεβέστατος βροτῶν. For the translation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, I have used Lloyd-Jones 1994.
[260] On the much-discussed topic of Neoptolemus' *phusis*, see e.g., Allen-Hornblower 2016, 294–96; Konstan 2006, 108; Cairns 1993, 251–63; Blundell 1988; de Romilly 2007, 85–87.

just and *be called* pious. In Odysseus' plan, visible beauty and glory are bought with a secret ugliness.

Odysseus, then, promises Neoptolemus a beautiful appearance, and Neoptolemus' response is equally aesthetic. Neoptolemus answers by asking: "Do you not think that is ugly (*aischron*) to tell lies?" (108),[261] and adds, "With what kind of face (*pôs oun blepôn*) is one able to utter such things?" (110).[262] Lying is difficult for him, because, on the one hand, it is ugly and, on the other hand, it gives rise to shame and disgrace. Rather than using deception (*dolos*), he wishes to take Philoctetes "beautifully" (*kalôs*, 94)—that is "by force" (*pros bian*, 90). The beauty in this might have an odd clang in the ear of a modern reader, for Neoptolemus reasons that it is not difficult for a group of men to overpower a sick man.

As a central background for understanding the aspirations of the play's characters serves the Greek ideal of *kalos kagathos*: a man who is both beautiful *and* good.[263] This is a noble and good man or soldier, a man who exhibits the beauty of bodily strength and might. Neoptolemus' dilemma is precisely that by disobeying Odysseus, he might risk being called a traitor (93–94), which would diminish or revoke the future glory of the aspiring *kaloskagathos*, yet obeying would amount to ugly lying.

Indeed, this dilemma of *kalokagathia* summarizes the drama of the play: Neoptolemus first falsely befriends Philoctetes, lies that he would take the sick man home, acquires the possession of the divine bow—only to realize his actions are ugly and, after many twists and turns, finally retract his actions. Finally, only a *deus ex machina* and a promise of a life of glory will persuade Philoctetes to sail to Troy. In converging the beautiful and the good, the idea of *kalokagathia* pins down the question of aestheticizing ethics of classical Greece: is the ancient Greek ethic somehow fundamentally 'aesthetic,' and if so, what does this mean?

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the intersections of ethics and aesthetics—either when discussing the ethical dimension of art or when interpreting the aestheticizing vocabulary of the classical texts—requires that *aesthetics* be taken seriously. The claim that ancient Greek ethics is an aestheticizing one is familiar from the scholarship, and commentators have not failed to notice the aesthetic aspects of *to kalon* in Plato and Aristotle. [264] However, perhaps because the discussion has centered on the *kalon* in the theories of Plato and Aristotle, these aesthetic aspects have been seen precisely as such; as aspects, accidental qualities, or embellishments—whereas the ethical meaning of *to kalon* has been appreciated as the underlying, essential

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[261] οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγεῖ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν;
[262] πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν;
[263] In the play Odysseus, twists the idiomatic Attic expression of *kalos te kagathos* into the more sophistic "*sofos te…kagathos*," 119.
[264] See, e.g., Kraut 2013; Kosman 2010; Barney 2010; Lear 2010.

core of the concept.[265] Here I am advocating a more pervasive rethinking of the ethical and aesthetic with the help of the tragedies. Accordingly, my hypothesis will be a contrary one: that the aesthetic sense of the central terms (*aischron* and *kalon*) will prove to be constituent to the ancient ethical logic as such.

One helpful point of reference for the problematic relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic in ancient Greece is the discussion around Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. According to Foucault's famous claim, ethical practices in classical Athens were committed to and aimed toward what he calls "an aesthetics of existence" (Foucault 1990, 89; 92). This attitude finds its ultimate end in the attempt to "make [one's] life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic criteria" (Foucault 1990, 10–11).[266] In this ethical order, Foucault suggests, an ethical individual is one who conducts one's life according to aesthetic principles, aiming for virtue that is simultaneously both good *and* beautiful.[267]

The notion that an outward, visible, and aesthetic orientation is an indistinguishable aspect of ancient ethical practices is not, in any case, a controversial claim. However, what makes Foucault's analysis intriguing is that he does not see this aesthetic dimension as a mere surplus of a more important moral baseline but as the objective of ancient ethics itself. "The *principal* aim […] of this kind of ethics" Foucault suggests, "was an aesthetic one" (Foucault 1984, 341, emphasis mine).

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[265] The discussion of the aesthetic aspects of Greek ethics has centered around *kalon* rather than *aischron*, and dealt mostly with the ethical doctrines of Plato and Aristotle. The main question has been whether *kalon* in Plato and Aristotle really refers to perceivable beauty (aesthetic) or if it is some other kind of (ethical) good: noble, fine, admirable, exemplary, and so on. The term has customarily been translated as 'fine' when it occurs in the works of Plato and Aristotle (e.g., Woodruff 1982, 110 argues for this translation in the Platonic *Hippias Major*). In recent scholarship, there is a tendency to allow a more aesthetic dimensions to the term. For discussion on the *kalon* in Plato, see Fine (2016) and Riegel (2014), who argue for an aestheticized reading, and Milliken (2006) who suggests that in Aristotle's theory concerning *to kalon* "[t]he kinds of actions we would call 'morally right' are simply a species of the genus of beauty" (2006, 330). In contrast, Barney (2010) defines Platonic *kalon* as appropriate and an object of admiration (also Lear 2006a; Moss 2012). For the discussion of *kalon* in Aristotle, see Kraut (2013) and Sachs (2002, xxi–xxv), who advocate for translating *kalon* as beautiful (at least in most cases); and Irwin (2010), for a more traditional interpretation of *kalon* as fine and "deserving admiration." Kosman (2010) covers both Plato and Aristotle.
[266] In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault finds in the instructional (philosophical, medical) literature a set of "practices of the self," according to which the Athenian elites could manage their life in areas of sex, love, dietetics, medicine, economics, and so on. Living a good life would have meant adopting and following different aesthetic and stylistic criteria—for example, those of order, moderation, and beauty in all the important areas of one's life. In other words, it was a question of "stylization" of one's subjectivity. This is arguably a way of life that is limited to a particular historical context and specific groups of Athenian male citizens. Thus, it is not straightforwardly applicable to the interpretation of tragedies. For one, the dietetic problems we encounter in the *Philoctetes* are of a very different kind (Philoctetes has lived without cultivated human food for a decade and would starve to death without his bow).
[267] The term aesthetic has two sides in Foucault's analysis. First, the objectives and values of human life were aesthetic: Foucault claims that the aim of ethics was to reach virtue and fame, "brilliance of beauty that was revealed to those able to behold it or keep its memory present in mind" (Foucault 1990, 89). Second, the practice of ethics was, Foucault maintains, an art in itself, a technê of living. For detailed account of Foucault's aesthetic ethics, see O'Leary 2002.

It is precisely because of such statements that Foucault has been criticized as promoting an 'immoral' aestheticization of ethics, in which the focus is not on a deed's moral goodness or badness but on the style in which each deed is conducted.[268] "Morality is converted to a matter of style, pleasure and intuition" as Eagleton (1990, 368) puts it. In the criticism, this is understood as adversary. Aryeh Kosman crystallizes the underlying attitude driving the criticism in writing: "goodness must precede beauty and neither arise as a consequence of it nor be defined teleologically as a means to its accomplishment. *We ought not* to set out to fashion our lives and their moments as if they were primarily works of art" (Kosman 2010, 343, emphasis mine). According to Kosman, the sense of goodness invariably precedes the sense of beauty in the ancient use of *kalon*, and this *must be so*—for morality's sake. However, we might ask where this "must," this sense of urgency, comes from. *Why* is it that morality cannot be converted into a matter of style, pleasure, and intuition?

Despite—or perhaps because of—the critique, I maintain that following the intuition on the importance of the aesthetic can help in understanding the sometimes very foreign underlying logic of tragic ethical patterns. Paying attention to the aesthetic aspect that underlies much of Greek ethics will help us to analyze the vocabulary of *kalon* and *aischron* as well as the ideal of *kalokagathia* in relation to the wish to save face or exemplify virtuous behavior, which is central to the *Philoctetes*. It is not the objective of this study to decide whether Greek ethical thinking *in general* is fundamentally aesthetic. It is, however, quite clear that *shame is*.

Foucault's analysis is helpful, furthermore, in its distinction between two different aspects of ethics or morality.[269] On the one hand, there is what he calls the moral code—the rules and values that inform ethical considerations. On the other hand, there is the ethical subject—more precisely, the *relationship between the subject and these codes and values*, and the very process of becoming an ethical subject.[270] The first area, Foucault says, refers to "a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various

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[268] See Eagleton (1990, 384–395), who holds that ethics cannot be reduced to style (how one conducts one's acts) because some acts simply are "inherently vicious" (Eagleton 1990, 394); Hadot (1989, 267) fears that Foucault is introducing a twentieth-century version of "dandyism" into antiquity. Bennett (1996) discusses the criticism of Foucault's aestheticism, noting, however, that much of the critique is based on a very limited conception of aesthetics. If we take aesthetics to refer broadly to the sphere of the sensible, then the criticism that aesthetics of existence is only about 'looking good' seems, indeed, limited in its conception of both beauty and *aisthêsis*. Nussbaum (1985) criticizes Foucault for historical inaccuracy and a lack of expertise in the field of ancient studies (see also Nussbaum 1994, 5–6). While Foucault's *History of Sexuality* is not the most exhaustive study of the historical landscape of sexual relations and practices, this does not diminish the usefulness of his diagnosis of the aesthetics of existence.

[269] In fact, Foucault himself speaks of morality (*morale*), but for a more concise vocabulary, I shall use 'ethics' as an umbrella term.

[270] To be precise, Foucault's distinction consists of *three* different parts: 1) the code, 2) *the actual behaviors of people*, and 3) the self-relation. Only the first and last parts are relevant to my analysis.

prescriptive agencies" (Foucault 1990, 25).[271] The second refers to how individuals and groups conduct themselves in relation to the code and especially the *manner* in which this conduct is carried out, that is, how one "form[s] oneself as an ethical subject" (Foucault 1990, 26). This relates both to what aspects of the subject are understood to be ethically relevant (e.g., deeds, thoughts, soul, body, and so on) and how the subject relates to the code or the set of values. That is, besides the codes of conduct, ethical considerations include questions of *who, how,* and *for what reasons*. In the *Philoctetes*, we see how aesthetic phenomena inform both domains: on the level of the aesthetic–ethical values of *kalon* and *aischron* and on the level of how the characters conceive themselves as ethical subjects, precisely, in their desire to be beautiful and good.

Foucault holds that the ancient Greek approach to ethical issues emphasized the subject-formation over the code—the formation of ethical subjectivity was more acute a question than the precise codification of actions. As Deleuze helpfully clarifies, for Foucault, ancient ethics was "a matter of *optional rules* that make existence a work of art, rules at once ethical and aesthetic that constitute ways of existing or styles of life" (1995, 98, emphasis in the original). The criticism that Foucault is aestheticizing ethics seems, then, to stem from a particular understanding of what ethics or morality is (or should be). That is, from a conviction that morality is 'really' about the code or law, and furthermore that the only relationship between the subject and the code or value is based on obligation.

In this, the critique of Foucault resembles Adkins' attacks against the assumed immorality of shame culture. Both share an underlying commitment to what I have called the "juridical" model of morality.[272] In this framework the idea that one might *choose* to exhibit virtues—not because one is morally obliged to do so but because one wishes to make one's life beautiful—does not count as properly moral. However, where Foucault concentrates mainly on the self-help patterns of the Athenian elites in their quest to shape their lives into beautiful compositions, my focus here is on the other end of the aesthetic spectrum—that is, on ugliness.

2.1.2 *Aischron*

The first place in which we might seek support for the claim that the *Philoctetes'* ethical dilemma is an aesthetic one, is the etymological relationship between shame and ugliness in ancient Greek. The central term, *aischron,* may be translated (as I have above) simply as 'ugly.' This straightforwardly aesthetic sense of the term is evident, for example, in the assertion that Socrates is as ugly

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[271] As I suggest in the introduction, modern moral philosophy is characterized by an inclination to approach ethics primarily as a set of rules – what I call morality - whereby the task of moral philosophy is to clarify the logics within the code: what is allowed, what forbidden, and in which circumstances.

[272] Foucault differentiates between "ethics-oriented" and "code-oriented" moralities (Foucault 1990, 30).

as "the ugliest (*aischistos*) of satyrs" (Xen. *Symp.* 4.19).[273] However, the more common meaning of *aischron* is 'shameful'—or sometimes something like 'reproachable' or 'base.'

In its simplest sense, *aischron* is something over which one feels (or should feel) *aischunê* or *aidôs*. Aristotle defines the matter economically when he notes that "we are ashamed of shameful things (*ta gar aischra aischunontai*)," a statement in which *aischron* serves as an internal object of the verb *aischunomai*. He also adds that shamefulness or ugliness of which we are ashamed might present itself "in words, acts, or intentions" (Ar. *Rh.* 1367a7–8).[274] The ancient feelings of shame—*aidôs* and *aischunê*—are, in effect, emotional responses to the *aischron*, to the ugly–shameful. As Euripides' Andromache puts it, "Shameful things entail shame" (*ta g' aischra…aischunên echei*, E. *Andr.* 244).[275] Again, in Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus notes that shame is felt for shameful things (i.e., *ta aischra*). He also notes that the value of *aischron* and the feeling of *aischunê* are symmetrically opposed to the values of *kalon*—beautiful, fine, or noble—and the feeling of love of honor: "shame over shameful deeds (*epi aischrois aischunê*) and pride for beautiful deeds (*epi tois kalois philotimian*)" (Pl. *Smp.* 178d1).[276]

What, then, counts as *aischron*? In tragedy, for instance, dying an inglorious death is *aischron* (A. *Pers.* 444)[277] and so is "shameful deception (*aischras apatas*)" (S. *Phil.* 1136, 1228). An insult is "an ugly stain (*aischron…klêdona*)" (E. *Alc.* 315), and it is *aischron* "for a man to wish to live a long life when he cannot escape evils" (S. *Aj.* 473).[278] The term's semantic field, which, to a modern reader, might seem twofold, encompasses both the simple, physical *aesthetic* ugliness and the ugliness related to deeds or characters, what we might call *ethical* ugliness. The aesthetic nature of ethics seems, then, to be indicated already on the level of vocabulary

To better understand how the aesthetic and the ethical coincide in these terms, we may consider what is perhaps the best-known ancient discussion on the aesthetic–ethical value of the *kalon* (for it is more useful to consider an instance of the *kalon* here, given that the *aischron* rarely receives the same kind of attention in the literature). This is the discussion on the nature of *kalon* in Plato's *Symposium* and Plato's allegory of the so-called ladder of love. Plato's argument (which is attributed to Diotima) is that the one and the same beauty, *to kalon*, can

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[273] *Aischron* in the sense of physically ugly also in Xen. *Symp.* 5.7; Her. 1.196; *Il.* 2.216.
[274] The aesthetic value of the term *aischron* is also clear in Aristotle's usage: he uses *aischron* to denote purely aesthetic ugliness or deformity (e.g., he says that no one would blame someone for being ugly by birth, Ar. *EN* 1114a24). However, he also uses the term in broader contexts, for example in claiming that lying is *aischron* (Ar. *EN* 1127b5–6) and so is loss of honor and reproach (Ar. *EN* 1116a29).
[275] τὰ γ᾽ αἰσχρὰ…αἰσχύνην ἔχει.
[276] My translation. Phaedrus calls the opposite of shame *philotimia*, love of fame, whereas in Aristotle, the counterpart is named the love of the noble/beautiful, *philokalia*. Aristotle discusses both, for example, in *EN* book 10, section 9, where he writes that for ethical education, both are needed, the sense of shame (*aidôs*) with respect to the *aischron* and the love of the *kalon* (Ar. *EN* 1179b7–13).
[277] τεθνᾶσιν αἰσχρῶς δυσκλεεστάτῳ μόρῳ.
[278] Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρῄζειν βίου, / κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται. For a more comprehensive discussion of the semantic field of *aischron*, see the Appendix.

be encountered in very different objects and define very different phenomena that are, moreover, in a hierarchical relation to one another.

Starting from an obvious place, Diotima notes that young boys are beautiful. While admiring beautiful boys is not ethically relevant *per se*, the argument goes, recognizing beauty in one area can also help one to recognize it in other, higher levels. Thus, Diotima continues, after recognizing beauty in the bodies of young boys, we can begin to see it in the skills and actions of good men, then in wise thoughts, and finally, in the idea of beauty itself (Pl. *Smp*. 210a–d). The ethical significance of the concept is clear, as Diotima relates that it is *only* in this beauty that a person can "give birth to true virtue" (Pl. *Smp*. 212a5–6). Notably, she also defines this beauty as something that has absolutely no ugly (*aischron*) aspects in it (Pl. *Smp.* 211a2–5).

Here, Plato is constructing a hierarchy of different types of beautiful objects, but what is important from our perspective is that the Greek *kalon* lends itself to the description of a vast variety of things—from good-looking people to thinking itself. Another example of the versatility of *kalon* is found in Sappho's famous poem, in which she claims that beauty is found in whatever someone loves (fr. 16 Voigt). The poem suggests that potential objects of beauty would include Helen of Troy—whose beauty surpasses all other mortals—but also a cavalry of horsemen or the lovely gait of the poet's beloved. What this reflection on the many manifestations of beauty indicates is that it is not a confined but an extensive quality. Inversely, this would also be the case of *aischron*. Therefore, we should note that compared with the thick *kalon* and *aischron* of the Greek, the conceptual scopes of the English 'beauty' and 'ugliness' seem rather limited.[279]

2.1.3 Being and appearance

To return to Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, recall how Odysseus has promised Neoptolemus an appearance of goodness if the young man gives in for a few hours of shamelessness—even if deception is not in line with his *phusis*. Indeed, in Neoptolemus' initial refusal of the plan, he affirms that his *phusis* is nondeceptive:

> Whatever words cause me pain (*algô*) when hearing them, son of Laertes, I at least hate putting into practice. For I was not born to do anything by evil contrivance, and neither was he who—so it is said—begot me. (86–89.)[280]

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[279] I am not a native speaker of English and thus may not grasp all the limitations in the usage of terms such as 'beauty' or 'beautiful': for example, I do not always understand the reluctance of some commentators to attribute beauty to praiseworthy deeds or wisdom or other things that are called *kala* in the ancient texts. The Finnish (my native language) word for 'beautiful' is *kaunis*, and while it is not a direct equivalent of *kalos* (as no word in any other language is), I have no problem calling either generosity or mathematics *kaunis*. The same is true for 'ugly' (*ruma*).

[280] ἐγὼ μὲν οὓς ἂν τῶν λογῶν ἀλγῶ κλύων, / Λαεστίου παῖ, τούδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ. / ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πάσσειν κακῆς, / οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸς οὔθ᾽, ὥς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ.

In evoking Neoptolemus' *phusis*, both Odysseus and Neoptolemus himself conceive it as unfit for lying or scheming. This is because, as both note, Neoptolemus' *phusis*—his nature or disposition—is inborn (*pephukota*), inherited from Achilles, who sired (*ekphusas*) him.[281] The problem is, however, whether he can live up to the legacy of his father, who in the play "is said to be best (*êkou arista*)" man among the Greeks (1312–13). Is he truly able to actualize the *phusis* that awaits as a dormant potentiality of his disposition?[282]

Commentators have unanimously recognized the tension between the values of Achilles and those of Odysseus in the play.[283] Unlike the plotting and scheming Odysseus, for whom the conflation of seeming with being poses no problem, Achilles represents a more transparent nobility in Greek literary tradition. In Plato's *Hippias Minor*, Achilles is called the most straightforward and honest man: "Achilles is truthful and simple, and Odysseus is complex (*polutropos*) and false (*pseudês*)" (Pl. *Hp. Mi.* 365b3–4). We have, then, an opposition between two ethical but also aesthetic preferences: true versus false; simplicity versus complexity; and, perhaps, being versus seeming.

The aspect of seeming and appearing is never far removed from those of Neoptolemus' deliberations that we might call ethical. For, right after his initial refusal to join Odysseus' plot, he changes his mind as Odysseus promises him future glory. One approach to reading Neoptolemus' desire to win fame would be to dismiss his reasoning as that of a superficial youth, one who wishes only to *look* good, not to *be* good. At the outset, he looks like an obverse figure to a "simple and noble" man, who, Plato recalls Aeschylus saying, "doesn't want to seem to be good but to be so" (Pl. *Rep.* 361b7–8).[284] However, the play does not suggest a strict distinction between being and appearance. Rather, it takes part in an ancient discussion around the problems of an aesthetic-ethical logic that works with the criteria of *aischron* and *kalon*. It is a logic in which the beauty or fineness of one's character is thought to "shine through (*dialampei to kalon*)" one's actions, even in apparent misfortune (Ar. *EN* 1100b30–31)—thus, concern for one's appearance and fame is not out of place.

When thinking the problem of aesthetic appearance or 'surface,' the simplest thing is to say that that which appears beautiful *is* beautiful. The act of taking a man by force is beautiful because it is straightforward and transparent, in the Achillean sense. In this naïve sense of the visible surface's immediacy and decipherability, a character is what it looks like. Here, we may consider the art of physiognomy. Several lines in Euripides' *Ion* succinctly illustrate the simplistic version of this attitude:

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[281] Neoptolemus' inheritance and lineage are a point of focus throughout the play: he is repeatedly called noble (*gennaios* or *eugenês*) by Odysseus and Philoctetes (50–51; 475–76; 799–801; 874; 1068–69).

[282] See Blundell 1988.

[283] E.g., Blundell 1988; Lada-Richards 1997.

[284] ἄνδρα ἁπλοῦν καὶ γενναῖον, κατ' Αἰσχύλον οὐ δοκεῖν ἀλλ' εἶναι ἀγαθὸν ἐθέλοντα. Translation modified.

You are noble, and there is a sure sign of your disposition in your appearance, whoever you are, lady. For the most part someone can tell by a person's appearance whether he is well born. (E. *Ion*, 237–40.)[285]

In the *Ion*, however, recognition of a character is (of course) not so immediate and the lines are permeated with tragic irony. The person to whom these words are addressed is indeed highborn—this is taken for granted—but she is also the mother of the speaker, unbeknownst to both.[286]

The ancient audiences are quick to recognize that an aesthetic surface can mislead the onlooker: that beauty can gloss over violence or ugliness. This is also Neoptolemus' initial problem: the problem of lying lies in its capacity to gloss over (with words) other layers of reality. An ancient scholiast on the *Philoctetes* (1.94) notes the similarity between Neoptolemus' reply to Odysseus (that he rather acts beautifully than with *dolos*) and Achilles' famous lines in the *Iliad*, where he states, "I hate that man like the gates of Hades who *hides one thing in his mind and says another*" (*Il.* 9.312–13).[287] By "that man," Achilles is—perhaps not uncoincidentally—referring to Odysseus. For whereas transparency is clearly an aesthetic preference for Neoptolemus, it is not so for Odysseus, neither in the *Philoctetes* nor in epic. He is a complex figure with a fondness for opacity, false speech, and disguises (we may recall, for example, his homecoming in the *Odyssey*, transformed into an old slave man by Athena).[288]

The dangers in the discrepancies of character are a recurring theme for lament in tragedies.[289] In Euripides' *Medea*, when the eponymous character reproaches Jason for his betrayal, she famously says that people should be stamped like coins so that we might know whether they are genuine:

O Zeus, why, when you gave to men sure signs of gold that is counterfeit, is there no mark on the human body by which one could identify base men? (E. *Med*. 516–19)[290]

Medea wishes that base people could be branded with a *charaktêr*, an engraved sign on their body—like Philoctetes' body is marked with the *charagma* of his wound. However, it is notable that here the site of difference is not between being and seeming, but rather, the difference is located entirely in the sphere of *aisthêsis*,

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[285] γενναιότης σοι, καὶ τρόπων τεκμήριον / τὸ σχῆμ᾽ ἔχεις τόδ᾽, ἥτις εἶ ποτ᾽, ὦ γύναι. / γνοίη δ᾽ ἂν ὡς τὰ πολλά γ᾽ ἀνθρώπου πέρι / τὸ σχῆμ᾽ ἰδών τις εἰ πέφυκεν εὐγενής. Translation Kovacs 1999, modified.

[286] The simplistic assumption that the logic of *kalokagathia* suggests a straightforward and unquestionable correspondence between good looks and good character resembles a straw man fallacy.

[287] ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν / ὅς χ᾽ ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ.

[288] The complexity of Odysseus means that he does not *exclusively* tell lies. A man who always lied would be easier to decipher. Odysseus mixed truth and lies in unanticipated ways.

[289] See Kosak 2006 on this theme.

[290] ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ χρυσοῦ μὲν ὃς κίβδηλος ἦ / τεκμήρι᾽ ἀνθρώποισιν ὤπασας σαφῆ, / ἀνδρῶν δ᾽ ὅτῳ χρὴ τὸν κακὸν διειδέναι / οὐδεὶς χαρακτὴρ ἐμπέφυκε σώματι; Translation Kovacs 2001.

between one appearance and another. It is a difference between a false appearance and a true one.

When faced with Odysseus' orders, the evaluative tools available to Neoptolemus are also aesthetic. Thus, he must choose between different sets of aesthetic values: Is transparency necessary property of a *kalon* act? Is opacity always or necessarily also *aischron*? What sort of action will secure his 'looking good' in the future? Will his *kalokagathia* or noble lineage be necessarily stained by ugly speech?

As the play ensues, Neoptolemus is first persuaded by the promise of glory and sets to execute Odysseus' plot. But as he encounters Philoctetes and witnesses his agony, something in him shifts so that, in the end, he is no longer willing to betray the hero. His emerging feelings of shame, pity, and sympathy (in the sense of shared pain) prevent him from following Odysseus' orders. Neoptolemus' *metanoia* has presented something of an enigma for commentators, but the consensus is that this change of heart is a direct reaction to his witnessing of Philoctetes.[291]

2.2 What shame teaches

To recapitulate, upon hearing Odysseus' plan, Neoptolemus' initial reaction was pain (*algô*), a physical reaction to "hearing such words." This affective reaction was soon followed by another feeling and another kind of sense-perception: shame and a sense of ugliness. When Odysseus refuted his suggestion that Philoctetes could be overpowered with beautiful violence and explained that lying (or *dolos*) is the only means of obtaining Philoctetes' bow, Neoptolemus' aesthetic judgment followed almost as intuitively as the previous pain—he deems it *ugly* (*aischron*) to lie (108).[292] In a language that reminds us of the theme of the vision and the eyes from *Oedipus Tyrannus*, he continued, "With what face (*pôs blepôn*) will one be able to utter such words?" (110).[293]

Neoptolemus' reaction to Odysseus' ugly plan is one of shame. In this respect, Neoptolemus' reaction resembles the workings of the specific kind of guiding or prohibiting *aidôs*. Even though Neoptolemus does not name the emotion,[294] the fact that (as we have already seen) Oedipus has only a few lines earlier advised Neoptolemus to abandon his sense of *aidôs*—literally, to be *anaidês* (83)—serves as a clue, and it is evident that the young man is hindered by his uneasiness at the prospect of doing ugly things or being seen doing them ("with what face?").

However, if Neoptolemus does indeed feel *aidôs* or sense its demands for beauty, he is also quick to second-guess his initial reaction. It seems to be

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[291] See, e.g., Allen-Hornblower 2017; 2016; Fulkerson 2006; Prauscello 2010; Austin 2011, 137ff.; Nussbaum 1976; Cairns 1993.
[292] Οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγῇ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν;
[293] Πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν;
[294] Cairns notes the lack of the word in the play (Cairns 1993, 250).

precisely his inclination to avoid shame and win fame that causes him to do so. To persuade Neoptolemus to follow his plan, Odysseus uses two validations of lying: profit and fame. First, he holds that it is not shameful to lie, for "when you are doing something to gain advantage, it is wrong to hesitate" (111).[295] Thus, according to Odysseus, the end will justify the means. Next, Odysseus promises Neoptolemus "two prizes" (117) if he complies. Neoptolemus is intrigued by this:

> Ne. What prizes? If you tell me, I shall not refuse to act.
> Od. You would be called once a clever and a good man (*sofos t' kagathos*).
> Ne. Let it be! I will do it, casting off all shame (*pasan aischunên afeis*)! (118–20)[296]

Twisting the Attic idiom of *kalos te kagathos* into *sofos t'...kagathos*, Odysseus promises Neoptolemus fame: that he will be talked of, that he will appear clever and good in the eyes of others. With this promise, Neoptolemus is at once ready to cast away his feelings of shame.

It is noteworthy that, for Odysseus, shame and fame are not exclusive notions: a shameful deed might bring honor in the end. Then again, Sophocles presents Odysseus as a figure who has an unconventional relationship with shame: he can be immune to it, and he already has a questionable reputation. He is a man of whom one "hears shameful and disgraceful (*aischra kai lôbêt' epê*) things" (607–8)[297] and who can advise Neoptolemus to say, "whatever you want of me, even the foulest of foul things (*eschat' eschatôn kaka*)" because "it won't give me any pain (*ouden m'alguneis*)" (64–66).[298] Wavering Neoptolemus is different in this regard. For him, the ugliness of a deed does matter, and thus he must "cast off" or "get rid of" the shame he feels or anticipates.

In a very short sequence, then, Neoptolemus recognizes the shamefulness of lying, perceives something inhibiting him from acting, and finally casts off all shame. He is, precisely as Odysseus planned, surrendering himself to a few hours of *anaideia*. But what exactly is this emotional stance of *anaideia*, of shamelessness? If Odysseus himself is a representative of this attitude of *anaideia*, it seems that it is not an inability to recognize the ugliness of one's deeds. Rather, it is a sort of immunity (perhaps against the shame that circulates according to the model of contagion) against things that are recognized as ugly. In Odysseus' words, the *anaidês* might do and be seen doing disgraceful things, but *this will not cause him any pain*.

In its problematics of shamelessness, the *Philoctetes* is situated at the preamble of the philosophical discussion on the relationship between the subject and ethics. More specifically, it is a problematization of the subject's relationship with the aesthetic–ethical realm *per se*: of how the subject becomes ethical in the first place, of how to establish a 'proper' relationship between the subject and the

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[295] Ὅταν τι δρᾷς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.
[296] ΝΕ. Ποίω; μαθὼν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν. / ΟΔ. Σοφός τ᾽ ἂν αὐτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλῇ᾽ ἅμα./ ΝΕ. Ἴτω · ποήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς.
[297] ὁ πάντ᾽ ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ καὶ λωβήτ᾽ ἔπη / δόλιος Ὀδυσσεύς.
[298] λέγων ὅσ᾽ ἂν / θέλῃς καθ᾽ ἡμῶν ἔσχατ᾽ ἐσχάτων κακά. / τούτῳ γὰρ οὐδέν μ᾽ ἀλγυνεῖς.

ugly, of why to avoid ugliness if it does not give one any pain. For while there is a system of values that establish the aesthetic–ethical realm (i.e., what is ugly, what should not be done, and so on), this realm of values, however, *does not contain the subject's relation to them*. An invisible Gyges might be able to overlook society's rules and values because his relation to the aesthetic ethic is founded on the fear of punishment and disgrace, which he can evade with invisibility. Alternatively, Odysseus might know the values and rules within the aesthetic–ethical realm and yet refuse to comply with them because his relationship is one of indifference rather than a bind. Both are, by definition, shameless.

In a rather circular fashion, both in the *Philoctetes* as well as in ancient philosophical discourse, the cure against shamelessness has been, in fact, shame—*aidôs*. Shame seems to be a mediator—not only between different subjects—but also between the subject and the realm of the good-beautiful and shameful-ugly. To illustrate this idea, I shall now briefly turn to the philosophical discussions on the role of a "bridling" *aidôs*. Especially Aristotle's treatment of shame is the most extensive discussion on the topic. It also resonates in large parts with the shame of Neoptolemus depicted in the *Philoctetes*. Indeed, it is almost as though it were modeled after Neoptolemus.[299]

2.2.1 Bridling *aidôs*

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato conjures a myth comparing the human soul to a two-horse chariot. As a charioteer, there is the reasoning part of the soul (*to logistikon*), steering two horses—one good and one bad. The good and bad horses represent the spirited (*thumoeidês*) and desiring (*epithumêtikon*) parts of the soul, respectively.[300] The good horse (besides being "upright in frame and well-jointed," with "high neck and regal nose") is "a lover of honor with modesty (*times erastês meta sôphrosynês*) and shame (*aidôs*); companion to true glory, he needs no whip, and is guided by verbal commands alone" (Pl. *Phdr.* 253d6–e1).[301] The bad horse, meanwhile, is its opposite in every way: crooked, pug-nosed, and "companion to wild boasts and indecency (*hybreôs*)" (Pl. *Phdr.* 253e3)

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[299] Although Aristotle does not mention Sophocles' Neoptolemus in his discussions on shame *per se*, he mentions the character in his discussion on *akrasia* in the books 7.2. and 7.9. In the first passage, Aristotle says that Sophocles' Neoptolemus is an example of praiseworthy *akrasia*, because he will cease from lying in the middle of the play: "if unrestraint makes one stand aside from every opinion, being unrestrained could be something of serious worth, as in the case of Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*" (*EN* 1146a18–19). However, at 7.9. Aristotle says that Sophocles' Neoptolemus is *not* acratic even though he abandons his opinion. This is because he abandons his opinion for the sake of a *kalon* pleasure and not for an *aischron* pleasure (*EN* 1151b17–22).

[300] See Moss (2005) for a reading of the horse-simile in the *Phaedrus,* in relation to the functioning of shame in Plato's model of the tripartite soul. Moss argues that, in Plato's model the thumoeidic part of the soul helps the rational part to fight the urges of the appetites and that this help comes in the form of shame. Moss's argument lies on the recognition that in Plato pleasures (i.e., the proper objects of appetite) are essentially shameful. Cf. in the *Laws*, Plato writes that shame opposes itself to our most common pleasures (Pl. *Lg.* 647a).

[301] Translation modified.

When the soul sees something that it desires—say, a beloved boy—the two horses react in contrary ways. The good one refrains from "jumping on" the young boy (*Phdr*. 254a2–3) and is instead "controlled, then as always, by its sense of shame (*aidoi*)" (*Phdr*. 254a2). The bad horse, by contrast, pays no heed to commands: "it struggles, it neighs, it pulls them forward […] drops its head, straightens its tail, bites the bit, and pulls without any shame at all (*met' anaideias elkei*)" (*Phdr*. 254d6–7). A core difference between the good and the bad—or between virtuous and base—lies, then, in their relationship to shame. The virtuous has *aidôs* and feels *aischunê* (*Phdr*. 254c4), the base is characterized by *anaideia*. Whereas the charioteer can hold back the bad horse only with great struggle, the good horse does not require a bridle or reins: its shame is its bridle.

Echoes of this view may be found in Aristotle, who concludes the final book of *Nicomachean Ethics* by raising a question on the relationship between the subject and the ethical. His question is how people, now that they have been informed of what virtue and good life consist of, will *become* virtuous.[302] In line with Plato, Aristotle notes that even as people are told how to be virtuous, words alone (*hoi logoi*) do not possess "the power to turn the majority of people towards what is beautiful and good (*kalokagathia*)" (*EN* 1179b4–10).[303] This is because, Aristotle continues, most people

> are not naturally of the sort to be obedient *to sense of shame* (*aidoi*) *but to fear* (*fobô*), and not to refrain from base things because of their ugliness (*dia to aischron*) *but because of punishments*. (Ar. *EN* 1179b11–13)[304]

Here, Aristotle contrasts a fear of punishment, which he regards as ethically insufficient, with the sense of *aidôs* felt over the *aischron*. *Aidôs* functions as an instrument of refrain in a person who has the potential to become virtuous. In other words, it is a prerequisite for becoming virtuous.

The phrase that Aristotle uses here—*dia to aischron*, "because of ugliness"—resembles his more famous formulation, according to which virtuous deeds are done "for the sake of *kalon*" (*tou kalou heneka*, *EN* 1115b12–13), or "because of beauty" (*dia to kalon*, EN 1116b31). It is not so much the beautiful honor that would ensue but the (aesthetic) quality of the deed itself that motivates the virtuous person. Raymond (2017) argues that, in the same way, beneficial shame

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[302] For an overview on the discussion concerning the process of passing from non-virtuous to virtuous state in Aristotle's ethical theory, see Jimenez 2020, 18; 41–49. One apparent problem in Aristotle's theory arises from the principle that one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous deeds—like an *aulos*-player becomes so by playing the *aulos*. For, Aristotle also suggests that to perform virtuous deeds in the right way (which is, for the sake of the *kalon*), one must already be virtuous. Reasoning seems to be circular here: how could one become virtuous if this requires performing virtuous deeds and if, in addition, to perform virtuous deeds, one must already be virtuous? Jimenez suggests that shame seems to fill this gap in the theory, because shame is related to the sensitivity towards the *kalon* and the *aischron* (see below).
[303] Translation modified.
[304] Translation modified. Emphasis mine.

can prevent one from doing ugly deeds for the sake of their inherent ugliness—not because they result in a bad reputation.[305] That is, Aristotle treats *aidôs* as an emotional response to ugliness—and not necessarily only to disrepute—that enables one to refrain from base actions. It seems to be just this sense of *aidôs* that initially allows Neoptolemus to recognize the ugliness of lying, which he then casts off to join Odysseus' plan.

For Aristotle, the diagnosis according to which most people tend to listen more to fear than to shame leads to a situation in which most people are not considered to have the potential to become virtuous. A student of virtue, Aristotle suggests, must indeed possess a pre-existing sensitivity toward the ugly/shameful and the beautiful/fine.

> Before he acquires virtue, then, a person must in a way already possess a character akin to it, one that is attracted by the beautiful (*kalon*) and repulsed (*duscherainon*) by the shameful (*aischron*). (Ar. *EN* 1179b28–31)[306]

Thus, according to Aristotle, a student of virtue should always *already* be correctly disposed toward fine/beautiful and shameful/ugly. To benefit from discussions about ethics, one must both know what the *kalon* and the *aischron* are *and* be appropriately affected by them. This aversion to the shameful and attraction toward the beautiful is necessary for ethical learning. When words alone cannot force a young person who "lives by feeling (*ho kata pathos zôn*)" (*EN* 1179b27) to act in one way or another; there must be something more binding.

We find a similar assertion in Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates suggests that educating the young with music is beneficial because music makes one sensitive toward beauty and ugliness. Therefore, a young man educated in the arts

> has the right distastes (*orthôs duscherainôn*), he'll praise fine things, be pleased by them, receive them into his soul, and, being nurtured by them, become fine and good (*kalos te kagathos*). He'll rightly object to what is shameful (*ta aischra*), hating it while he's still young and unable to grasp the reason. (Pl. *Rep*. 401e3–402a2)

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[305] Aristotle expresses this idea more explicitly in his discussion of courage at *EN* 3.8., in which he also contrasts *to kalon* explicitly with *to aischron*. Aristotle states that a truly courageous person does not simply wish to gain fame or avoid public disgrace on the battlefield. Rather, he chooses to endure danger and stands firm in battle "because doing so is beautiful (*kalon*), or because not doing so is ugly (*aischron*)" (*EN* 1116a12, translation modified). See Jimenez (2020, chap. 3) on Aristotle's discussion of shame on the battlefield, with literature. Although Aristotle stresses the fine/beautiful and shameful/ugly, especially in relation to courage, this pairing of the fine and the shameful is probably somewhat integral to all actions of the virtuous person. As Sarah Broadie suggests, "every specific excellence…involves its own kind of sensitivity and concern for what is fine and disgraceful in its sphere" (Broadie 2002, 44).

[306] Translation modified.

For our purposes, it is notable that in both instances, the shameful gives rise to the feeling of *duschereia*, which may be translated as 'repulsion' or 'disgust.'[307] The repulsion toward the ugly is acquired before understanding the *logos* or *logoi* – either because this sensitivity is developed through a natural process, as in Aristotle, or through musical education, as in Plato's example. It seems that ugly things have the capacity to affect us in the same manner as disgusting things, such as corpses, bad smells, or pus from a rotting wound – that is, in a pre-reflective manner.[308] This specific distaste for the shameful is something we shall encounter again later in the play, when Neoptolemus says that he is *disgusted* by his shameful lies, using the same term as Aristotle here (*hapanta duschereia*, everything is disgusting, *Phil.* 902–3).[309]

The forcing or bridling aspect of *aidôs* is noted also in Book Four of *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which Aristotle raises the question of whether *aidôs* is a virtuous disposition, similar to courage, temperance, and magnanimity.[310] As noted in the introduction, divorcing himself from the traditional Greek perception of *aidôs* as a virtue, Aristotle denies it a status of a virtuous disposition—seeing it rather as a conditionally beneficial emotion, *pathos*. However, Aristotle recognizes that *aidôs* has a positive function when it comes to the *young*, writing "we praise those of the young who have a sense of shame (*tous aidêmonas*)" (*EN* 1128b18–19).[311] In highlighting the usefulness of shame for young people, Aristotle is adhering to Greek tradition. The same view is expressed in Plato's *Charmides*, where Plato says that a sense of shame (*to aischuntêlon*) is fitting for the young (Pl. *Chrm.* 158c6); and in the *Theognidea*, where one fragment reads: "You will heap up no better treasure for your

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[307] See also Pl. *Lg.* 654d1 as well as Pl. *Rep.* 439e–440a where Leontios feels shame and disgust for his wish to gaze at dead corpses (also Fine 2016, 168–69).
[308] Similarly, the *kalon* attracts the rightly disposed naturally; in other place Aristotle says that a god man enjoys the fine or beautiful things as the musician enjoys melodies (*EN* 1170a9). Lear (2006b, 130) notes that Aristotle seems to stress the eagerness with which the good character wants the fine: "The good person is extraordinarily eager for the fine (*spoudazoi*, 1168b25, 1169a7), takes it (*hairountai*, 1169a26, 1169a32), and keeps it for himself (*peripoioito*, 1168b27, 1169a21); he competes for it (*hamillômenôn*, 1169a8–9) and exerts himself to do the finest things (*diateinomenôn*, 1169a9)." It seems that, in Aristotle's account, the proper relationship to the values of *kalon* and *aischron* is affective and perhaps pre-reflective.
[309] Similarly, Neoptolemus' distaste for the ugly affects him in a physical way, as pain (906, 913). Both Neoptolemus and Odysseus locate the distaste in their inborn nature, *phusis*. However, Neoptolemus does not necessarily rely only on his innate *phusis* to recognize and hate the *aischron* in lying (lying is said to be shameful at 108, 120, 607, 906, 909, 1136, and 1228), for the ugliness of lying is a widely shared opinion. In tragedies, lying simply is ugly. For example, tragedies teach that "concocted stories are the most disgraceful plague" (νόσημα γὰρ / αἴσχιστον εἶναί φημι συνθέτους λόγους, A. *Prom.* 686); that it is shameful to contrive in secret (A. *Choe.* 494; S. *Trach.* 597); and that it is ugly merely to seem like a liar (S. *El.* 593; E. *IT* 683).
[310] Jimenez notes that Aristotle diverges from the earlier tradition that regards *aidôs* as a civic virtue—even if the tradition itself is an ambiguous one (Jimenez 2020, 162). To recall, *aidôs* cannot be a virtuous disposition in Aristotle's theory, because it is a *pathos*, which, in turn, is not a stable state but rather something that takes place in the body: as the frightened one becomes pale, the ashamed one becomes red.
[311] Cf. *EN* 3.6, 1115a13.

children, Kyrnos, than shame (*aidous*), which follows good men." (*Theog*. 409–10).[312] Thus, according to Aristotle,

> we think that young people should have a sense of shame (*aidêmonas einai*) because they live by emotion and so get many things wrong but are *held back by a sense of shame* (*hypo tês aidous kôlyesthai*). (*EN* 1128b15–18.)[313]

Turning to Neoptolemus' initial sense of shame in the *Philoctetes*, we can see that his reaction is very much in line with the depiction of Aristotle: a young man is setting out to do something ugly because he lives by his feelings (desiring fame and giving himself over to *anaideia*, an attitude of indifference toward the beautiful and ugly) but, as we shall see, is held back by his sense of shame, which manifests as his aesthetic–ethical distaste for the *aischron*.

2.2.2 Social determination of the shameful

Aidôs marks a sensitivity towards the ugly. Yet, the recognition of ugliness gives rise to another question: how does one determine the ugliness of an ugly deed? Aristotle's statement, according to which a young person must have an innate aversion to the shameful that can then become virtuous by habituation—just like soil nourishes a seed (*EN* 1179b26)—seems to imply that the shameful is somehow fixed in the nature of things; that there is a definite or 'objective' quality of *aischron*. This seems to be Plato's conviction too when it comes to aesthetic evaluation: some things are truly beautiful or ugly, and people can make mistakes in their aesthetic evaluations.[314] However, in discussing the scope of the *aischron* elsewhere, Aristotle introduces a more detailed understanding of how *aischron* might be bound to the opinions of others.

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[312] οὐδένα θησαυρὸν παισὶν κατανήσει ἀμείνω / αἰδοῦς, ἥτ᾽ ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι, Κύρν᾽, ἔπεται.
[313] Elizabeth Belfiore sees this as the source for shame's usefulness in ethical education. According to Belfiore, shame can help ethical growth *because* it is the feeling which connects us to the judgements of others: by being sensitive to shame we are also sensitive to the ethical demands of the surrounding community (Belfiore 1992, 216). Furthermore, Belfiore argues that tragedies in particular can teach shame, *aidôs*, to their audiences, and that shame is one of the emotions involved in the catharsis (Belfiore 1992, 189–225). In his commentary, Taylor suggests that "Aristotle's view that shame is a feeling appropriate only for young people reflects the fact that the term *aidôs* also connotes modesty, the attribute of someone who is restrained, who does not flaunt him or herself (in particular, sexually) and who acknowledges the superior status of other, especially older, people" (Taylor 2006, 235). See also Burnyeat (1980) and Curzer (2012) for discussions of the role of shame in Aristotle's theory of moral education.
[314] Plato maintains that most people do not apprehend or perceive the "truly beautiful" (see, e.g., Pl. *Rep*. 493d–494a), assumedly the "absolute" and "colourless" beauty only a philosopher will see after years of practice, as we are told in the *Symposium* (Pl. *Smp*. 211d–e). Whether there is an underlying assumption of true beauty and ugliness in the tragedies, we are not in the position to know for sure. However, the tragedies are usually polyphonic, allowing each character and the chorus a specific point of view. Therefore, they do not seem to suggest that one perspective is truer than another. Thus, I shall read the *Philoctetes* as a truly polyvalent play, in which no evaluation of beauty or ugliness is deemed "right": they are simply instances of different preferences.

In discussing *aidôs*, Aristotle includes a small clause, almost an afterthought, on *two different types* of *aischron*. He writes that "if some things are truly shameful (*kata alêtheian*), some only according to opinion (*kata doxan*), it makes no difference—one shouldn't do either sort" (*EN* 1128b23–24). The clause introduces a distinction between things that are *truly aischron* and those that are *aischron* (only) because people *think* they are. Aristotle does not elaborate on the difference here but assures the reader that the things that are shameful according to popular opinion should be avoided in the same way as those that are truly shameful. No one wants a bad reputation, even if it results from actions that are shameful only *kata doxan*.

A similar distinction between types of shameful appears in the *Rhetoric* (2.6), where Aristotle notes that people often feel shame on account of different things before different audiences:

> In a word, people are not ashamed either before those whose opinion in regard to the truth (*tês doxês alêtheuein*) they greatly despise—for instance, no one feels shame before children or animals—or of the same things before those who are known to them and those who are not (*tous gnôrimous kai tous agnôtas*); before the former, they are ashamed of things that appear truly disgraceful (*ta pros alêtheian dokounta*), before strangers, of those which are only condemned by convention (*ta pros ton nomon*). (Ar. *Rh.* 1384b22–26)

In other words, *people feel shame for different things before different people*. The subject position of the witness is crucial. Friends and strangers give rise to shame on account of different things, and both are distinguished from those that do not even count as subjects; children and animals.

A difference between the 'truly' shameful and the 'conventionally' shameful might persuade us to think that, in Aristotle's view, the truly shameful would be somehow *immune* to the opinions of others. However, this does not appear to be the case, as the truly shameful is also defined as something that one feels before the other—that is, before someone "whose opinion in regards to truth" one would respect.[315] While the brevity of these remarks does not permit any decisive conclusions, they seem to indicate that the scope of the shameful is not fixed—as opposed to the initial appearance to the contrary.[316] Rather, it depends on the witnesses and their opinions.

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[315] Similarly, the distinction between *kata aletheian* and *kata doxan* does not automatically mean that the truly shameful would not also rely on *some* opinions.

[316] Aristotle's stance toward the question of social determination of the shameful is finely drawn. For, while Aristotle defines shame as a fear of bad reputation, he also holds that shameful things should be avoided because they are ugly rather than because they bring a bad reputation. Therefore, he does not draw a straightforward line between shame and the social exposure here. However, in the *Eudemian Ethics*, when discussing *aidôs* as an emotional mean, Aristotle makes a threefold division, which complicates this issue. He says that a shameless person is someone who does not regard anyone's opinion; the bashful, by contrast, is someone who regards everyone's opinion. These are the undesired extremes. However, the one who fulfils the emotive mean and feels proper *aidôs* regards the opinions of those who are "manifestly good" (or those who appear good, τῶν φαινομένων ἐπιεικῶν, Ar. *EE* 3.7. 1233b26ff). A proper shame includes, then, sensitivity to the opinions of others. This is

112

This social aspect is emphasized throughout the analysis of shame in the *Rhetoric*. In line with his definition of shame as a fear of bad repute, Aristotle holds that we feel shame only with others in mind (because no one can fear bad repute without some concern for the witnesses to this reputation). Thus, he can maintain that

> shame is an impression of dishonor (*peri adoxias phantasia*), and that for its own sake and not for its results; and since *no one heeds the opinion of others except on account of those who hold it*, it follows that men feel shame before those whom they esteem (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a21–25).

Furthermore, Aristotle adds that "we are ashamed of all such misdeeds as seem to be disgraceful (*aischra dokei einai*), either for ourselves or *for those whom we care for (hôn frontizei)*" (Ar. *Rh.* 1383b16–18). The respected others are those who speak the truth, older people, and the educated (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a32–33).[317] Thus, for Aristotle, there may be differences between different ugly things, but all ugliness is nevertheless socially determined. The shameful is established on a shared ground, and therefore, it may vary depending on the people with whom this ground is shared.

In emphasizing the dependence of the shameful on the opinions of *respected* others, Aristotle seems to echo a sentiment that is often found in Plato's dialogues: we *should* feel more shame before the people we admire or appreciate. As Socrates asserts in the *Crito*, when it comes to the question of good/bad and beautiful/ugly, we should follow the opinion of the one who knows rather than those of "the many," and we "ought to feel shame and fear" before the wise one rather than before "all the others" (Pl. *Crit.* 47c11–d3).[318] This would, assumedly, point to the area of the truly shameful.

What, then, about of the area of the conventionally (*kata doxan/pros ton nomon*) shameful? If Aristotle is to be believed, it is the conventional that should interest us in relation to Neoptolemus' shame, as Aristotle notes that especially the young are prone to feel shame, "for they do not yet understand other instances of the beautiful as they have been educated solely by convention (*pepaideuntai hypo tou nomou monon*)" (Ar. *Rh.* 1389a28–29). One hint for the shameful founded on the *nomos* and *doxa* is found in Aristotle's claim that it is

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not to say that we are ashamed before the eyes of others but that the very content of the *aischron* is dependent on the opinions of others.

[317] While Aristotle emphasizes that the other before whom we feel shame is often someone we value, he also acknowledges that we might also feel shame before other kinds of people. Aristotle points out that people often feel shame before those who gossip, and thus people feel shame before slanderers, satirists and comic poets (Ar. *Rh.* 1384b9–11). These are probably not the people whose opinion one would respect in terms of truth, but perhaps they are among those before whom we might feel shame for the things condemned by convention.

[318] Aristotle also repeats this distinction when writing on friendship in the *Rhetoric*: "And [we have friendly feelings towards] those with whom we are on such terms that we do not feel shame before them for faults merely condemned by public opinion, provided that this is not due to contempt; and those before whom we do feel shame for faults that are really bad." (Ar. *Rh.* 1381b18–20, translation modified). See also Pl. *Smp.* 218d3–5; Pl. *Lg.* 2.656a2–5.

shameful to depart from the conventional or normative as such. According to Aristotle, it is shameful

> not to have a share (*mê metechein*) in the beautiful things (*tôn kalôn*) which all men, or all who resemble us, or the majority of them, have a share in. By those who resemble us I mean those of the same race, of the same city, of the same age, of the same family, and, generally speaking, those who are on an equality. (Ar. *Rh*. 1384a8–11)

It is shameful not to have a share (*metechein*) in the beautiful things that the majority share in. Here the shameful is not only that which the majority judge to be shameful, but simply to fail to achieve or have the beautiful things that the majority have. In other words, not to share the norm is shameful.

Aristotle has, then, two demarcations within the shameful. On the one hand, there is the truly shameful, distinguished from the conventionally shameful. On the other hand, there are the things that cause shame before those who are appreciated, loved, and wise, and the things one is ashamed of simply because they constitute a breach of the shared norm.[319] What is notable here is the general insight that different things are shameful in different contexts and that they vary in relation to who is—or is thought to be—witness to the shameful thing. The area of the shameful is, at least in Aristotle, *relative* to the perspectives of others. For although Aristotle hints at an innate ability to recognize the shameful, this is not necessarily in contrast with the definition or determination of the shameful with reference to witnesses. The potentially virtuous might have an inborn sensitivity for recognizing what good people deem shameful.

If shame, as an emotion, can bring subjects to recognize and align themselves appropriately with the *aischron*, and if the *aischron* is at some point determined through shared convictions of what is ugly, then we can see how shame easily fits into the heart of civic life. Recall the views voiced in the texts of Homer, Hesiod, Plato, and Sophocles, according to which shame is a central, indispensable factor in the ethical life taking place in the *polis*—the Zeus of Plato's *Protagoras* ordains execution or expulsion to those who lack *aidôs*.[320] Shame, as a bridling force, is the emotion through which the subject is thought to be tied to the shared conventions and perceptions of the ugly.

Therefore, the *shameless* one is someone who renounces their place as a member of a community. In fact, the shameless might be seen as having renounced their place as *a human being,* properly speaking. Compare how the animality of, for example, Achilles is evoked already in the *Iliad*. When Achilles debases the body of the dead Hector in the final book (*Il*. 24.44–45), he is said to have lost the sense of shame (*aidôs*) and pity (*eleos*). The loss of the sense of shame

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[319] These two ways of subdividing the contents of the shameful might overlap (so that the truly shameful would be that which is shameful before the admired and the conventionally shameful that which results from breaching a norm), but based on the reading of Aristotle's text, we are not in a position to conclude this definitively.

[320] E.g., *Il*. 24.44–45; Hes. *Erg*. 200–1; S. *Aj*. 1073–1083; Pl. *Prt*. 322c–d; Pl. *Lg*. 647b3–7; Ar. *NE* IV, 9.

amounts to a lessening of Achilles' humanity: he is more like a beast, a lion, than a civilized being. For within Achilles' breast,

> there are no feelings of justice (*enaisimoi*), nor can his mind be bent, but his purposes are fierce, like a lion who when he has given way to his own great strength and his haughty spirit, goes among the flocks of men, to devour them. So Achilleus has destroyed pity, and *there is not in him any shame* (*Il.* 24.39–45)[321]

The one who fails to share in the things in which people usually share—that is, someone falling outside the normative—ends up in a position of shame. Accordingly, the one who completely lacks shame is in danger of falling outside the contours of society, like an animal. Shame and shamefulness, as border phenomena, mark the limits of human society.

2.3   Aesthetic evaluation of Philoctetes

In Sophocles' play, Philoctetes is likened to an animal like his friend Achilles, but this likening has a very different tone. Whereas Achilles' animality is a sign of his shamelessness, Philoctetes' bestiality seems rather to mark the shameful condition of his life.[322] In his lonely life on Lemnos, Philoctetes is not a lion full of strength but a potential prey for the animals he hunts on the island (957–58). Slipping into the liminal space between humans and animals, Philoctetes is depicted as not-quite-human: he is wild (*apagriomai* 226, 1321), with wild sickness (*nosei men noson agrian*, 173, *agriai nosôi katpthinonta* 265–266) eats animal grub (*bora* or *forbê*) instead of human food (*bora* 274, 308; *forbê* 43, 162, 700, 706, 711, 1107); he crawls like an animal (290) with his "feet full of beasts" (*enthêrou podos* 698).[323] As Neoptolemus says, he has "become wild" (*êgriôsai*, 1321). If Philoctetes is not-quite-human, is this animality also a mark of a distorted relationship with shame?

We may recall that Neoptolemus has declared his intention to thrust off his sense of shame and follow Odysseus' scheme. In what follows, he proceeds to meet with the hero himself. Encountering the wild hero and witnessing his sufferings establish a tragedy within a tragedy, in which there is, on the one hand,

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[321] ὧι οὔτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὔτε νόημα / γναμπτὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, λέων δ᾽ ὣς ἄγρια οἶδεν, / ὅς τ᾽ ἐπεὶ ἄρ μεγάληι τε βίηι καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῶι / εἴξας εἶσ᾽ ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν, ἵνα δαῖτα λάβησιν. / ὣς Ἀχιλεὺς ἔλεον μὲν ἀπώλεσεν, οὐδέ οἱ αἰδὼς γίγνεται. Tr. Lattimore 1951.
[322] It should be noted that animal similes and metaphors are common literary devices in ancient Greek literature, including Homeric epic and tragedy, and they can, of course, signify plenty of other things besides shame.
[323] In addition, at 755, Neoptolemus says of Philoctetes' situation that the "burden of his sickness is grievous" (Δεινόν γε τοὐπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος), using for the burden the word *episagma*, which refers to the packsaddle and load carried by mules. Philoctetes' animality is noted by many commentators and analyzed at length in, e.g., Korhonen and Ruonakoski (2017, 127–35), even as they claim that Philoctetes is not clearly compared with animals at all), and Thumiger 2019.

the artistic representation—Philoctetes—and on the other hand, the audience, comprising the chorus and Neoptolemus.[324] Owing to this nesting of dramas, we are afforded a glimpse not only of the aesthetics of staging a play but also of the aesthetic response to this staging. Philoctetes' life-turned-to-work-of-art affects those in its vicinity and the unsettling artistic depiction affects Neoptolemus profoundly. The prevailing question regarding Neoptolemus is whether he, as a young person who is expected to be properly guided by the sense of *aidôs*, has the required sensitivity for perceiving and reacting to beauty and (in this case) ugliness.

Moreover, Neoptolemus comes face to face not with a painting or a statue, which itself could make the audience "feel its very pain," but with a strikingly multisensory performance. While vision has been recognized as the privileged outlet of ancient drama, the *Philoctetes* stands out by its utilization of almost all the senses: vision, hearing, touch, and smell are all presented as ways of perceiving Philoctetes on the stage.[325] Furthermore, the sense perceptions are markedly intense: he sounds horrible and smells bad, and touching him causes something to the effect of an "electric shock."[326] The unsettling nature of his presence centers, first, around the *disgust* caused by the malodorous wound and, second, around Philoctetes' *outsider status*—both of which have a special relationship with the *aischron,* as noted above.[327]

2.3.1 *Duschereia* of a living corpse

As soon as Philoctetes arrives on stage, he is markedly conscious of the effect his presence has on the onlookers.[328] Addressing the chorus and Neoptolemus, he pleads, "do not shrink from me in fear and *be repelled* by my wild state" (225–26).[329] However, it seems that the chorus and Neoptolemus have indeed been struck (*ekplagentes*) by his wild state. Philoctetes has to ask them to speak to him and then, as the men remain silent, repeats his request with growing anxiety: "But answer me!" (230).

The most immediately disgusting aspect of Philoctetes is his smell. Philoctetes speaks of evil smell (*dusosmia* 876; *kakê osmê* 890–91) and stinking (*dusôdês* 1032). This emphasis on the olfactory quality is remarkable, because in

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[324] On Neoptolemus as 'internal audience,' see Allen-Hornblower 2016, 250; Seale 1982, 29.
[325] On the privileging of vision in ancient drama and the hierarchy of the senses, see Worman 2020.
[326] The term 'electric shock' is adopted from Kaimio 1988, 24.
[327] For an analysis of disgust and outsider-status, see, for example, Worman 2000; Thumiger 2019; Allen-Hornblower 2017; Kosak 2006.
[328] Even before Philoctetes appears on stage, his presence is felt, and it is disturbing. When the chorus first hear him approaching, they yell in fear: "It strikes me, it strikes me, the true voice of one who treads his path under constraint" (βάλλει, βάλλει μ' ἐτύμα / φθογγά του στίβον κατ' ἀνάγκαν / ἕρποντος… 205). Using synesthetic vocabulary, they claim that the voice (*phthongê*, often used of animal sounds) of the hero strikes them and that "the shout is visible from afar" (216). The chorus also notes that these sounds do not resemble the "melody of the shepherd's pipe," but on the contrary "His cry is fearsome!" they wail (προβοᾷ γὰρ δεινον 218). Recall here also Neoptolemus' disgusted cries (iou iou) upon seeing Philoctetes' pus-heavy rags in the cave (38).
[329] καὶ μή μ' ὄκνῳ / δείσαντες ἐκπλαγῆτ' ἀπηγριωμένον.

tragedy, things rarely smell, let alone stink.[330] Besides smell, disgust or distaste is intimately associated with another sensory experience – namely, taste. In the *Philoctetes*, we are invited to envisage how the sickness *eats* away at Philoctetes' flesh: Philoctetes' sickness is "eating through his foot dripping with sore" (7);[331] he is "feeding a gluttonous disease" (313);[332] and during a violent fit of pain, the hero shouts, "*I am being eaten*, my son! Papai!" (745)[333]—here using the vulgar word *brykô*, which typically denotes noisy eating or gobbling.[334]

Philoctetes is markedly conscious of how he affects his fellow people. He pleads others to help him, *even though* he is disgusting: "The disgust (*duschereia*) of this cargo [i.e., Philoctetes' body] is great, I know" (473–74),[335] he assures and urges the men to "dare" (*tolmaô*, 481) to sail with him on board.[336] Even when Neoptolemus has (falsely) promised to take him home, Philoctetes cannot shake the fear that the "disgust of the sickness" (900) would prove too great for his helpers.[337]

Besides being afflicted by a disgusting sickness, Philoctetes is also disturbing in other ways. His life appears not to be that of a human being.[338] Besides being a bestial figure, Philoctetes is likened also to several other figures that haunt the limits of civilized life.[339] The hero's living conditions are perhaps best summarized in a choral ode in which the chorus recounts the hero's misfortunes:

> …he was his own neighbor, without the power to walk, without anyone living in the land as his fellow, besides whom he could have cried out his flesh-eating and bloody groans – and be answered; without anyone to lull to sleep the burning hot gush of blood oozing from the ulcers of his beast-infested foot, with gentle herbs taken from the nurturing earth, if a spasm should come over him. And he crept this way or that, crawling like a child without a loving nurse, to wherever there might be an ease of resource, whenever the mind-devouring plague would let him loose. (691–705)[340]

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[330] See Worman (2020, 45 n. 50) for instances of stink in tragedy.
[331] νόσῳ καταστάζοντα διαβόρῳ πόδα.
[332] βόσκων τὴν ἀδηφάγον νόσον.
[333] βρύκομαι, τέκνον: παπαῖ.
[334] The threat of being eaten is not merely metaphorical: as Philoctetes notes, without his bow, his body would become food for those he now hunts (956–8).
[335] δυσχέρεια μέν, / ἔξοιδα, πολλὴ τοῦδε τοῦ φορήματος
[336] Translation Schein 2013, 203.
[337] And indeed, as we shall later see, Neoptolemus tries to avoid touching Philoctetes and his "foot in pus" (*empuon basin*, 1378).
[338] The chorus also suggests that Philoctetes' wild life has affected his very *phusis*, nature (164–65). Schein (2013, 154) notes that here the reference to *phusis* "suggests that [Philoctetes'] misfortune has become ingrained in his nature and that his way of life, which really is the result of his treatment by other men, is now 'natural', like that of the wild beasts he hunts, rather than social and civilized." At 184–85, he is living μετὰθηρῶν, with/among the wild beasts. Mauduit (1995, 347) writes that "the animals of the island, like his (physical) sufferings and hunger, have in a way taken the place of a neighbour by his side."
[339] He is also a vagabond, a primitive, an enslaved man, and a cripple. Thumiger (2019) provides a concise list and analysis of these attributes.
[340] ἵν᾿ αὐτὸς ἦν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν / οὐδέ τιν᾿ ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα, / παρ᾿ ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον / τὸν βαρυβρῶτ᾿ ἀποκλαύ- / σειεν αἱματηρόν: / οὐδ᾿ ὃς τὰν θερμοτάταν

The chorus ensures that the impressions of the sickness eating away Philoctetes' flesh and mind, or of the spasms of blood from the suppurating foot are not lost on the audience. In addition, they highlight another disturbing feature of his living condition: that he is entirely alone. Philoctetes is his "own neighbor," with no one to talk to, no one to heal him, no one to take care of him, like a child "without a loving nurse" (702). Indeed, it is difficult to say which disturbs the chorus more, the suppurating wound or the total isolation of the hero who is "always alone" (*monos aei* 172).[341]

The chorus' assessment of Philoctetes' life is confirmed by the hero, who declares to be: "friendless, deserted, cityless, *a corpse among the living*" (*en zôsin nekron* 1018).[342] His exclusion from the community is not only lamentable but seems to call into question his very position as a subject. Excluded from the ranks of citizens, of free men, of the noble-born, of adults, of humans, he is like the Aristotelian beast (or god) living outside the community of humans.[343] Indeed, as Philoctetes keeps repeating, he is no longer strictly a living being but "a corpse, a shadow of smoke, a ghost" (946–47),[344] lying in Hades (861).

While neither Philoctetes nor his sickness is explicitly called *aischron* in the play, shamefulness touches the hero on two fronts: through his exclusion and through the disgust that he provokes. Recall how, in the texts of Plato and Aristotle, *aischron* gives rise to the feeling of disgust, *duschereia* (Pl. *Rep*. 401e; Ar. *EN* 1179b28–31) and how, for Aristotle, it is shameful not to share in the beauty that others share in (Ar. *Rh*. 1384a8–11). That Philoctetes is unable to reach the norm—to share in the beautiful things most men share in—is also noticed by the audience. As the chorus puts it, Philoctetes is "without a share of anything in life" (182).[345]

Indeed, the threat of shame and the shameful seems to haunt Philoctetes. When first recounting his story to Neoptolemus, Philoctetes says that Odysseus

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/ αἱμάδα κηκιομέναν ἑλκέων / ἐνθήρου ποδὸς ἠπίοισι φύλλοις / κατευνάσειεν, εἴ τις ἐμπέσοι, / φορβάδος ἐκ γαίας ἑλών: / εἶρπε γὰρ ἄλλοτ᾽ ἀλλαχᾷ / τότ᾽ ἂν εἰλυόμενος / παῖς ἄτερ ὡς φίλας τιθήνας / ὅθεν εὐμάρει᾽ ὑπάρχοι / πόρου, ἀνίκ᾽ ἐξανείη / δακέθυμος ἄτα:

[341] From the beginning, the chorus has declared their pity for Philoctetes' lack of anyone to help him, his inability to look into "the face of someone sharing his livelihood" (μηδὲ ξύντροφον ὄμμ᾽ ἔχων, 169–172). Because he lives alone, Philoctetes must do without any normal elements of civilization, such as farming and wine (709; 718). Underscoring the hero's utter desolation, the chorus note that he has only the Echo to speak to (189).

[342] ἄφιλον, ἔρημον, ἄπολιν, ἐν ζῶσιν νεκρόν. Earlies he has described himself: "lonely, desolate, friendless and afflicted" (μόνον, / ἔρημον ὧδε κἄφιλον κακούμενον, 228), having no companion but his pain (οὐδὲν πλὴν ἀνιᾶσθαι παρόν, 283). See also 265, 269, 471, 487, 1070.

[343] *Pol*. 1253a27–29. On the scale moving from beast to human and then to god, Philoctetes' life is reminiscent of both ends of the scale. On the one hand, he lives without a community, hunting his food, with only the animals as his companions, as though he were a part of the animal kingdom. On the other hand, with the divine bow of Heracles, he lives among the animals as superior and self-sufficient, like a god. In Aristotle's definition, the one resembling a beast or a god has freely chosen life outside the community, but in Sophocles' play, a wild and rough environment and animal-like life can mold one into a wild, non-human being.

[344] νεκρόν, ἢ καπνοῦ σκιάν, / εἴδωλον ἄλλως·

[345] πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίῳ.

"cast him off shamefully" (*errhipsan aischrôs*, 265) when leaving him to Lemnos.[346] Yet, shame is not so easily tied to the offender; rather, Philoctetes is plagued by the humiliating image of his enemies laughing behind his back (*gela mou* 1125; 259; 1023). He is dishonored (*atimon*, 1028), calling himself a *lôbatos* (1102), someone who is "spitefully treated" or "dishonored."[347] Because of his loss of honor, Philoctetes is unable to see how he could ever re-enter the society from which he has been cast out. Using formulaic expressions, he laments the prospect of coming "to (public) light" and, addressing his eyes, asks, "how can you, eyes that have seen everything happening around me, put up with this?" (1353–55).[348]

Philoctetes' words are in line with the general attitude found in ancient Greek texts, according to which it is shameful to be maltreated—that is, it is shameful to *suffer*.[349] According to Theognis (fr. 649–50), poverty and deficiency put to shame (*kataischuneis*) both body and mind. In Plato's *Laws*, sufferings (*pathêmata*) are said to be "most shameful" (*aischista*) and wounds to cause shame to their bearers (Pl. *Lg.* 860b, 878c).[350] Aristotle writes that a victim of violence or wrongdoing often comes to feel shame, despite not being the one at fault (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a17–20).[351] That is, while shame can follow from suffering that one brings upon oneself, it is not necessarily tied to any fault. Simply, there is something shameful or *ugly* in suffering, perhaps because it marks a breach from the normative standards of beauty: wealth, health, and power.

It is precisely this aspect of Philoctetes' misfortunes that gives rise to an uneasiness in the chorus: as they point out, he has not done anything to deserve his disgusting and disgraceful life. They claim never having seen or heard of another mortal who would have "met with a more hateful destiny" than Philoctetes, who "having done nothing to anyone, done no murder" and "being equal among equal men" is "perishing undeservingly" (681–86).[352] The play indeed suggests that Philoctetes might not have done anything to deserve his destiny as an outcast and that he is the one who has been maltreated. He is ugly

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[346] Philoctetes' language here refers to the act of expelling someone from a community. Compare Ajax's expulsion from the community at S. *Aj.* 830, in which it is also a mark of his shame.

[347] *LSJ* s.v. λώβη. We can compare this to lines 607–8, where Odysseus is called a man of whom "shameful and disgraceful (*lôbêt'*) things are said" (ὁ πάντ᾽ ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ καὶ λωβήτ᾽ ἔπη / δόλιος Ὀδυσσεύς, 607–8). Cf. *Il*. 18.225.

[348] Schein (2013, 326) writes that "Philoctetes' overriding consideration is shame though he does not use the word," and that the main worry of the hero is "how I can expose myself as so powerless?"

[349] However, Kosak (1999) argues that while in tragedy, sick men are *usually* portrayed as feminine or emasculated – implying, therefore, shamefulness – Philoctetes is atypical in this respect because of his self-sufficiency and self-control.

[350] In the Hippocratic text *The Sacred Disease*, the writer reports that people suffering from epileptic fits seek to cover themselves when they feel the fit approaching, because they are ashamed of their sickness (*The Sacred Disease*, XV).

[351] To be sure, Aristotle says that ugly things are *more* shameful if they originate from a fault within oneself (Ar. *Rh.* 1384a13–15).

[352] ἄλλον δ᾽ οὔτιν᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ οἶδα κλύων οὐδ᾽ ἐσιδὼν μοίρᾳ / τοῦδ᾽ ἐχθίονι συντυχόντα / θνατῶν, ὃς οὔτ᾽ ἔρξας τιν᾽ οὔ τι νοσφίσας, / ἀλλ᾽ ἴσος ὢν ἴσοις ἀνήρ, / ὤλλυθ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἀναξίως.

but is not the one at fault. Innocence, however, does not seem to save him from ugliness, shame, or the humiliation of being a evil-smelling, living corpse.[353]

In occupying the outsider position of a beast-child-corpse, Philoctetes is in no way *without* a relationship to the community from which he is excluded. Rather, his situation places him on the outskirts, on the border between the outside and the inside of a community, in a liminal position. In her study of the dog and its semiotics in Greek antiquity, Cristiana Franco (2014) has shown in detail how occupying a liminal position in society can render a person—or an animal—precarious in relation to shame. Studying the dog, at once the most privileged of non-human species *and* the lowest member of the human community, Franco notes its special relationship to shame. Dogs were "at the bottom of the hierarchy of honor and power" (Franco 2014, 81). They were considered to exhibit shameless and shameful behavior, and calling someone a 'dog' served as a popular insult—recall the dog-face from the *Iliad*.

In its relation to shame, the dog differs from other animals. Wild animals, such as wolves, were not expected to feel shame, nor are their behaviors considered shameful—even when they participated in the very activities for which the dog was shamed, such as eating raw meat, garbage, even human cadavers; raging in animal fury; copulating in public, and so on. Franco suggests that this is precisely because the dog is a part of the community, sharing food and abode, yet not a human being (Franco 2014, 162). That is, shame does not extend to those who are truly beyond the limits of the community. Its point of culmination is at the border between inside and outside, in the figures that mark the limits of the group. It is in this borderland that the human-animal, man-beast, adult-child, living corpse of the shadow-Philoctetes is encountered.[354]

2.3.2 The reversal

According to Aristotle, a tragedy is divided into two parts: the movements before and after the reversal, *peripeteia*. In the *Philoctetes,* the reversal takes place right in the middle of the play. For the first half of the drama, Philoctetes serves as the multisensory object of perception, a piece of art perceived and evaluated, while Neoptolemus is the looking, smelling, hearing, tasting, and (soon) touching observer. Moreover, up to this point, Neoptolemus (and the chorus) have followed Odysseus' plot: lying to the unsuspecting hero, promising to take him

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[353] Jennifer Kosak notes Sophocles' interrogation of the idea of *kalokagathia* in the play. According to Kosak, Philoctetes is a hero "whose bad exterior fails to reflect his good interior," and that with this discrepancy, Sophocles "continues a tradition which questions the common link between ethical and aesthetic norms" (Kosak 2006, 62). Philoctetes might be ugly "on the outside," but in the play, it is evident that he is not ugly throughout—Kosak speaks of a good or beautiful interiority. While I do recognize that Sophocles discusses the problematics of appearance in the play, I wish to suggest that the demarcating lines do not align with the assumed differences between the aesthetic and the ethical. Rather, in my reading, the scope of the aesthetic extends considerably wider than that of the visible beauty of a heroic body.

[354] This is a point that Giorgio Agamben (1999) formulates in his discussion on shame and one to which I shall return in the final chapter.

home, pretending to be his friends, expressing their alleged pity for the unlucky man, and so on.[355]

The drama's turning point is peculiar: the *peripeteia* is not an action or revelation as in other tragedies but a change of mind. The plot shifts when Neoptolemus decides to abandon Odysseus' plot and disclose it to Philoctetes—because, as Neoptolemus later says, deception is *aischron* (1228; 1234).[356] There appears to be an emotional turmoil within Neoptolemus, who experiences a mix of shame, pity, pain, and distress, which prevent him from following along with Odysseus' plan—just as the bridling *aidôs* holds back the honor-oriented horse. Because the reversal takes place in Neoptolemus' mind, it is also remarkably opaque.[357] It is, therefore, not clear how, why, or when these emotions arise: from where does Neoptolemus' shame spring? For up to the reversal, Neoptolemus has seemed entirely unmoved by Philoctetes' afflictions.

Instead of granting a view into the interiority of the young hero, the central scenes stage some highly complicated dramatic choreography between the characters (involving exchange of the bow, touches, and expressions) as well as Philoctetes' violent fit of pain, unparalleled in the surviving dramas—an ultimate tragic performance. In my interpretation of the reversal, I shall continue to trace the aesthetic realm (art, perception, evaluation), asking how an aestheticizing evaluation can arise, shift, or change with and alongside shame.

The complex scene leading into the reversal, which centers around a sudden paroxysm attacking Philoctetes, is worth examining in detail. Neoptolemus has by now won Philoctetes' trust, promising to take him home (that is, kidnapping him to Troy).[358] However, just as the two are ready to leave, Neoptolemus notices that Philoctetes "fell silent as if struck numb" (730–31).[359] The hero is gripped with pain. When asked what is wrong, Philoctetes says that it is "nothing terrible" (*ouden deinon*), but his speech is on the verge of breaking. He laments "*a, a, a, a*" (732), "*iô theoi*" (735), and again "*a, a, a, a*" (739) before his words give way to moaning and screaming:

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[355] According to Neoptolemus' story, he hates Odysseus, who has robbed him of Achilles' arms.

[356] It is also remarkable that Neoptolemus can change his mind. Typically, the characters in tragedy are driven to their destruction owing to their inability to yield or change.

[357] This opacity has perplexed commentators, and scholars have commented extensively on the potential emotive states that Neoptolemus undergoes, ranging from pity, compassion and empathy to bad conscience, guilt, self-disgust, and shame. Nussbaum (1976) and Prauscello (2010) suggest *pity*, Fulkerson (2013) *remorse*, Allen-Hornblower (2016; 2017) moral *self-disgust* or *empathy*. Easterling 1978, 32; Cairns 1993, 257–63; Konstan 2006, 109; Austin 2011, 137ff. speak of Neoptolemus' *moral conscience*. Of these, the interpretations of pity, remorse, and self-disgust are supported by the text: Neoptolemus affirms that he has been struck by "an awful pity" (ἐμοὶ μὲν οἶκτος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ τις, 965), that he wishes to "undo" the shameful things he has done, which is taken to be an indicator of remorse (1224, 1248–49), and that "everything is disgusting" when a person acts in a way foreign to his self (902). While I recognize that the play refers to different emotive states (at least to pity and disgust besides shame), I shall focus on shame. I also wish to draw attention to the fact that on the level of discourse, the vocabulary is predominantly that of shame.

[358] To complicate matters, in the course of the play, Neoptolemus has learned that it is not enough to steal the bow but that he must kidnap Philoctetes as well.

[359] σιωπᾷς κἀπόπληκτος ὧδ' ἔχῃ;

I am lost, my son, and I shall not be able to conceal my pain from you. Ah! It goes through me; it goes through me! O misery, unhappy as I am! I am lost, my son! I am devoured, my son! *Papai*! *Apappapappai, pappapappapappapai*! (742–45)[360]

These are the longest laments in extant tragedies, an intensification of a tragic performance.[361] The sickness is "horrible and ineffable" (*deinon gar oude rhêton*, 756), causing Philoctetes to moan and groan like someone who is *alogos*, without language.[362]

It is here, in the face of the loud, violent, and unutterable pain, that Neoptolemus first exhibits signs of hesitation. "What should I do?" (757), he asks—a question to which he will return multiple times during the remainder of the play (895, 908, 974, 1393). Disoriented, it is his turn to cry out, "*Iô, iô*, unhappy you!" (759) as though echoing the disgusted *iou iou* (38) that Neoptolemus uttered on seeing Philoctetes' rags—the first aesthetic judgment voiced in the play. However, the disgusting object has been transformed from a repelling force into something that fascinates Neoptolemus: "Do you wish me to hold you and *to touch you*?" (759–61) he inquires from the hero in pain.[363]

The subsequent scene is, indeed, filled with touching (and fuss about touching). Physical contact between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes is significant if we consider Jennifer Kosak's (1999) argument that in tragedy, male characters do not touch each other unless they are either trying to harm one another, or related by blood. It seems that every instance of physical touching contributes to Neoptolemus' change of mind.[364] All in all, there are three instances of physical contact between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes: The first instance takes place through a proxy—the bow. Seized by his pain, Philoctetes knows that he will soon lose consciousness and hands the bow to Neoptolemus for safekeeping and "kissing." (776). However, as soon as the bow changes hands, Neoptolemus falls silent. The roles have switched: now it is Philoctetes who inquires why the other is silent (805)[365] and Neoptolemus who *claims to be in pain*. "Your moaning for

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[360] Ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοὐ δυνήσομαι κακὸν / κρύψαι παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀτταταῖ· διέρχεται, / διέρχεται. Δύστηνος, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ. / Ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον· βρύκομαι, τέκνον· παπαῖ, / ἀπαππαπαππαῖ, παππαπαππαπαππαπαῖ. Translation modified.

[361] Few lines after and crying out in pain, Philoctetes pleads with Neoptolemus to cut off his foot (747–8), again returning to "*pappapappapai*" (754). Philoctetes will continue his feverish laments throughout the scene: "this oozing dark blood again is dripping from depths"; "it's getting close, it's getting closer!"; "O Death, Death!" and so on (στάζει γὰρ αὖ μοι φοίνιον τόδ' ἐκ βυθοῦ / κηκῖον αἷμα, 783–4; προσέρπει, / προσέρχεται τόδ' ἐγγύς, 787–8; ὦ Θάνατε Θάνατε, 797.)

[362] As Schein (2013, 237) points out, "his exclamations of self-pity and unarticulated cries of pain convey a degree of physical suffering beyond ordinary human endurance, which more formal language could not express."

[363] βούλει λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου; Worman reads the *Philoctetes* through the Kristevan notion of the abject, noting that the abject both repels *and* fascinates: here, Neoptolemus *wants* to touch Philoctetes (Worman 2000, 761).

[364] The significance of touch in the play has been analyzed in detail by Taplin (1971), Kaimio (1988), and Kosak (1999). The scene in which Neoptolemus helps Philoctetes to get up at 893–94—which Kosak names "therapeutic," as the touch is meant to be soothing and not harming—is particularly exceptional.

[365] Cf. Philoctetes' silence at 730–31 and 740–41.

evils has caused me pain for a while now" (806),[366] he says, as though Philoctetes' pain might have been transmitted to Neoptolemus via the bow.[367]

The second instance of physical contact follows immediately, in the form of a handshake. Wishing to ensure that Neoptolemus will not leave with the bow, Philoctetes demands to hold his hand as a pledge (813)—a gesture typical of a suppliant—and the hero loses consciousness while they are still holding hands.[368] Again, something is shifting within Neoptolemus. Now that Philoctetes is asleep, the chorus urges Neoptolemus to leave him behind—he already has the bow, and "the time is right" (836). However, Neoptolemus is reluctant to leave.[369] Arguing that to fulfill the prophecy they need to take Philoctetes with them, Neoptolemus declares that leaving a plan half-finished would be "a shameful disgrace" (*aischron oneidon*, 842). The terminology of shame has re-entered Neoptolemus' vocabulary.

The third instance of physical contact is the most intense. It takes place immediately after Philoctetes regains consciousness. Surprised to see Neoptolemus still there after his seizure, Philoctetes bursts into overtly grateful praise: "Your *phusis* is noble, and from noble parents, my son," he exults Neoptolemus: "[because of it] you have endured all this with grace, though afflicted by my cries and by my evil smell" (873–75).[370] Philoctetes' speech includes a play on words: Neoptolemus can endure (*eu-cherein*) the disgust (*dus-chereia*) the wound arouses because of his noble *phusis*. Moreover, the term *eucherês* can be used also in another kind of sense: it can refer to someone indifferent toward performing evil deeds. As Emily Allen-Hornblower (2017, 76) suggests, "Those who are εὐχερής are 'tolerant of or indifferent to evil': they are capable of moral infractions because of a lack of feeling, almost a numbness of sorts on their part." Odysseus, who is said to be "someone whose *tongue* touches all the ugly things" (407–8), seems to be *eucherês* in precisely this way.[371]

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[366] Ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τἀπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά. Other translations interpret the words as an indication of sympathy. For example, Jebb (1898) translates, "My heart has long been aching for your load of pain." But this is not what Neoptolemus says. In the clause Ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τἀπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά the cause of Neoptolemus' pain is given in the partitive genitive; it is Philoctetes' unbearable *groaning* that causes pain, not the evils he suffers (which again are reason for the groaning). Compare line 86, where hearing Odysseus' plan of deception pains Neoptolemus: "hearing the plan pains me" (…τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων). It is also noteworthy that Philoctetes himself does not hear empathy in Neoptolemus' words. Philoctetes thinks it is a reaction of disgust and discomfort upon having to listen to him screaming: "Take courage, my son," he implores, "do not leave me alone" (806–7).
[367] According to Mueller (2015, 38): "The prop instantly synchronizes Neoptolemus' affect with that of Philoctetes, causing the former to feel for the first time what the latter has long suffered, as if that feeling had been his all along."
[368] According to Kaimio, the handshake triggers something in Philoctetes' unconscious—"as if the lie inherent in Neoptolemus' promise were transmitted to Philoctetes through their physical contact" (Kaimio 1988, 24).
[369] It is notable that here the chorus urges Neoptolemus to leave the man behind, even though up to this point, they have repeatedly expressed their pity for Philoctetes' condition (cf. 169, 317, 507). Their pity, it seems, either was not genuine or does not lead to action in line with feeling. Prauscello (2010) divides pity into two classes: one that incites action and another that does not.
[370] Ἀλλ'—εὐγενὴς γὰρ ἡ φύσις κἀξ εὐγενῶν, / ὦ τέκνον, ἡ σή, —πάντα ταῦτ' ἐν εὐχερεῖ / ἔθου, βοῆς τε καὶ δυσοσμίας γέμων.
[371] παντὸς ἂν λόγου κακοῦ / γλώσσῃ θιγόντα.

Similarly, Neoptolemus' earlier dismissal of *aidôs* seems precisely a kind of numbness towards the ugliness of lying and deception.

After the exaltation, Philoctetes asks Neoptolemus to lift him from the ground (878–79), Neoptolemus is at first reluctant to touch him (perhaps he is not enduring the disgust with such grace after all).[372] Following a short negotiation, Neoptolemus complies: "It shall be so! Stand up and hold on to me" (893).[373] As the protagonists touch one another for the second time, Neoptolemus reacts to the physical contact as though to an electric shock.[374] "*Papai*," he immediately cries: "what am I to do next?" (895).[375] The next thing that we read in the dialogue is Neoptolemus' retrieval of his shame, as though "catalyzed" by this touch.[376]

2.3.3 Neoptolemus will look ugly

If we are to believe the philosophers, as a young man Neoptolemus should have a special relationship to *aidôs* (at least if he wants to grow to be a virtuous person). Still in the process of cultivating a proper relation to the ugly and the beautiful, his sense of shame should make him prone to feeling disgust on confronting the ugly. Does Neoptolemus, then, recognize and know the ugly/shameful? Does he exhibit proper aversion toward it? Does the ugly raise the almost pre-reflective reaction of *duschereia* in its perceiver?

We have seen that, in the first scene of the play, Neoptolemus makes two aesthetic evaluations: there is the disgusted "*iou iou*" (38) on seeing Philoctetes' rags and the reiteration of the conventional judgment that "lying is ugly" (108). The wound and its horrible smell guarantee that the aspect of disgust is never far removed. The latter evaluation, however, was put on hold—casting off all the shame, giving oneself over to a brief moment of shamelessness (*anaideia*). Now, however, as Philoctetes leans on Neoptolemus' body, shame once again takes center stage. As seen above, as the two protagonists touch, Neoptolemus is violently affected: he cries out and complains that he does not know what to do (he is *aporos*, 896–97).[377] Again, Philoctetes believes that it is the proximity of his body that bothers Neoptolemus (he is still unaware of the planned kidnapping).

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[372] Neoptolemus tells him either to get up himself or ask help from one of his men (886–87). Philoctetes does not give up but tells him again to lift him (889) and not to force others to endure his stench (890–91).

[373] ἔσται τάδ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἴστω τε καὐτὸς ἀντέχου. There is no consensus among scholars as to whether this second instance of physical touch actually takes place on the stage. For Philoctetes replies immediately after, "Take courage! My ingrained habit will help me up" (θάρσει· τό τοι σύνηθες ὀρθώσει μ᾽ ἔθος, 894). Taplin (1971, 27) and Kaimio (1988, 24), hold that there is physical contact, indicated by Neoptolemus' line at 893. Webster (1974, 125) interpretates Philoctetes' answer at the following line as indicating that he gets up by himself. Kosak (1999, 128–29) argues that there is probably touch but that it is likely not to be an embrace—leaning on another man would be a gesture of weakness on Philoctetes' part. I take line 893 to indicate that contact does occur; furthermore, contact would also explain Neoptolemus' sudden reaction in the subsequent lines.

[374] Term "electric shock" adopted from Kaimio (1988, 24).

[375] Παπαῖ· τί δῆτ᾽ ἄ<ν> δρῷμ᾽ ἐγὼ τοὐνθένδε γε;

[376] Recall the contamination model of shame recognized in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*: here, too, the proximity to the wounded and disgusting other will trigger a feeling of shame.

[377] Here, Neoptolemus adopts Philoctetes' language—previously he had used that of Odysseus (Worman 2000).

But something else is hurting Neoptolemus. I shall quote the decisive passage at length:

> Ph. Surely the thought of how disgusting my sickness is (*duschereia tou nosêmatos*) has not come home to you, so that you are no longer taking me on board?
>
> Ne. Everything is disgusting (*hapanta duschereia*) when a man has abandoned his nature (*hautou phusin*) and is doing what is unlike him!
>
> Ph. But you are not doing or saying anything unlike your father, in helping a noble man!
>
> Ne. I will be *revealed ugly* (*aischros phanoumai*), and it has been paining me (*aniômai*) for a while already.
>
> Ph.   Not on account of your actions, but your words frighten me!
>
> Ne. Oh Zeus, what am I to do? Should I be caught being base a second time, both hiding what should not be hidden and saying the most shameful words (*aischist' epôn*)? (900-909.)[378]

Adopting Philoctetes' vocabulary of disgust and pain, Neoptolemus revisits the aesthetic–emotional judgments of the first scene. This time, however, it is not only the pus that appears disgusting, but "everything" (*hapanta*), and it is not only lying that is ugly, but Neoptolemus himself (or, at least he *will* be if his involvement in the plot comes to light).[379] This time, however, the recognition of the ugliness has very different consequences. It causes Neoptolemus to call into question Odysseus' plan with the repetition of "what shall I do?" (895, 969) and it arises with a pain that mirrors that of Philoctetes: "I have been in pain for a while" (906, 913).[380] Even as *aischunê* is not explicitly named here, the pain felt over looking ugly would seem to point to its direction.

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[378] ΦΙ. Οὐ δή σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος / ἔπεισεν ὥστε μή μ' ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι; / ΝΕ. Ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν / ὅταν λιπών τις δρᾷ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα. / ΦΙ. Ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔξω τοῦ φυτεύσαντος σύ γε / δρᾷς οὐδὲ φωνεῖς, ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρ' ἐπωφελῶν. / ΝΕ. Αἰσχρὸς φανοῦμαι· τοῦτ' ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι. / ΦΙ. Οὔκουν ἐν οἷς γε δρᾷς· ἐν οἷς δ' αὐδᾷς ὀκνῶ. / ΝΕ. Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δράσω; δεύτερον ληφθῶ κακός, / κρύπτων θ' ἃ μὴ δεῖ καὶ λέγων αἴσχιστ' ἐπῶν; Translation modified.

[379] Allen-Hornblower reads Neoptolemus' emotional response as "moral disgust," mirroring the disgust he feels at first in relation to Philoctetes' wound. According to her, Neoptolemus is overwhelmed by a "sudden psychophysical experience of moral disgust" (Allen-Hornblower 2017, 77) that is directed toward his own self and which Allen-Hornblower sees as going hand in hand with the feeling of pity (2017, 78). The reading is compelling, in that Allen-Hornblower notes that Neoptolemus' emotions and reactions seem to be as involuntary and somatic as physical disgust often is (2017, 79). According to her, Sophocles creates a parallel between Philoctetes' and Neoptolemus' disease. Both try to avert "from the self what is perceived as potentially harmful and contagious." (2017, 82.) In another context (Allen-Hornblower 2016, 285–99), she reads the reaction in terms of empathy by interpreting the change of heart as an effect of bearing witness to the suffering of another.

[380] Cairns (1993, 262–63) interprets Neoptolemus' pain and shame as indications that he violates his own moral standards. Cairns reads Neoptolemus' line on "abandoning his *phusis*" at 902 as a way of expressing that he has abandoned his standards, suggesting that the *phusis* here is a bearer of Neoptolemus' ethical standards. Claiming that these standards are not those shared by society but arise out of Neoptolemus' "private" *phusis*, Cairns goes on to argue that the *phusis* here represents something like a "moral conscience" (Cairns 1993, 257). While Cairns maintains that Neoptolemus' emotional reaction is one of *aidôs*, he

The passage also returns to the question of Neoptolemus' *phusis*. As we saw earlier, the play juxtaposes (at least) two different kinds of *phuseis*: those of Achilles and Odysseus. The first is affiliated with simplicity and verisimilitude, while the second represents complexity and opacity. Neoptolemus' attempt to combine these two different aesthetic preferences has reached an impasse. He cannot at once be unambiguously *kalon* (as he assumes his father was) and try to gloss over the ugliness of lying (so that he might attain the glory of *sofos kagathos* as Odysseus had promised him). That is, he can no longer lie and deceive and remain good and beautiful (*kalos*). Rather, as Philoctetes later warns the young man, by acting in accordance with those whose nature (*phusis*) is evil, he would appear to have a similar nature (*doxois homoios tois kakois pephukenai*, 1371–72).[381] This is precisely what causes pain to Neoptolemus: that his *phusis* will appear ugly.

At the beginning of the play, we saw also the *anaidês* Odysseus, to whom ugliness "does not give any pain" (66), but here, Neoptolemus is found to be different. His pain arises from the realization that ugly and shameful deeds threaten to brand his nature, his self, with their ugliness—as the wound brands Philoctetes' body.[382] This is a prospect with which Neoptolemus finds himself unable to live. Consequently, Neoptolemus can no longer contain the secret plan. He discloses that he is plotting to take Philoctetes to Troy instead of his home— noting that "justice" (*endikon*, 926) and a "powerful necessity" (*anankê*, 922) compels him to obey his superiors (even as he still conceals the fact that Odysseus is behind the plan).[383]

On hearing this, Philoctetes hangs onto Neoptolemus' assumed feelings of shame. He at once asks whether Neoptolemus is "not even ashamed (*epaischunê*) to look upon the suppliant who turned to you, you wretch!" (929–30).[384] Yet this

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suggests that, in the play, we encounter a "clear and unambiguous representation of *aidôs* as a subjective awareness that a given course of action is against the agent's own principles, regardless of…the opinions of others." This interpretation, however, has two major problems: First, the *phusis* of Neoptolemus is never said to be somehow private to Neoptolemus; rather, it is fundamentally inherited and malleable (1369–72). It represents precisely the external expectations placed on Neoptolemus as a son of his father (79–80, 1310–13, 475–76, 874), and it must be made visible for it to actualize (1310–13; see Blundell 1988 for an analysis of the *phusis* in the play). Second, the suggestion that *aidôs* in the play would be somehow independent of the opinions of others is simply mistaken; as we have seen, all characters are very much invested with their 'outward' fame and appearance.

[381] κοὺ κακοὺς ἐπωφελῶν / δόξεις ὁμοῖος τοῖς κακοῖς πεφυκέναι.

[382] However, because shame can proceed by contagion—through association, through lines of vision, through proximities—the demarcation between the ugly that does or does not concern the self is difficult.

[383] It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the play, Neoptolemus wins Philoctetes' trust by appealing to their allegedly mutual hatred of Odysseus. Neoptolemus tells a story in which Odysseus had demanded the possession of Achilles' armory when Neoptolemus, as the son of the deceased would have had a rightful claim to them. This is a lie that is never corrected in the play.

[384] οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνῃ μ' ὁρῶν / τὸν προστρόπαιον, τὸν ἱκέτην, ὦ σχέτλιε; In the scene, Philoctetes makes himself a suppliant before Neoptolemus, following a traditional and highly ritualized figurative speech (468–70, 484, 501; Belfiore 1994, 120). The gestures of the suppliant also speak to the theme of shame in the play. For the act of supplication is an open acknowledgement of one's lack of power and subjection to the benevolence of the supplicated other. In this, supplication is not a neutral act. On the contrary, it is an

is precisely what Neoptolemus' gestures indicate. As Philoctetes notes: "He does not even answer me anymore but like someone who will never give up *looks away*" (935–36).[385] Moreover, Philoctetes claims that stealing the bow would make Neoptolemus "an object of reproach (*oneidos*) to people" (968),[386] calling his actions ugly/shameful (*aischra* 972) and reminding him of the shame of Odysseus' old betrayal (1135; 1137). Finally, he inquires whether Neoptolemus does not feel shame before the gods (1382)[387]—as though his final tactic of persuasion would be to *shame* Neoptolemus into abandoning his plans.[388]

The axis of *aischron–duschereia* has shifted: now, it is not Philoctetes but Neoptolemus who is ugly and causing disgust. The roles of the perceived and the perceiver, the work of art and the observer, have also changed: Neoptolemus understands that *he* is the one to be looked at and that *he* will look ugly. As Philoctetes makes evident, his aesthetic evaluation of the young man is not flattering: "You fire, you total horror," he shouts, "you hateful *masterpiece* (*technêm'*) of dire villainy" (927–28).[389]

Indeed, as shame has taken center stage, it will guide the decision-making throughout the rest of the play and its many plot twists.[390] For although the course of Neoptolemus' actions and words appears to oscillate between the expectations and wishes of Philoctetes and Odysseus, the discursive marker of *aischron* emerges in decisive moments. Thus, Neoptolemus wishes to undo his "*hamartia*" because he "overcame a man with *ugly* (*aischrais*) tricks and deceit" (1224, 1228).[391] He repeats himself by declaring, "I acquired it *shamefully* (*aischrôs*)

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emotionally charged procedure, one that Cairns calls "ritual humiliation" (Cairns 1993, 276) and John Gould "ritualised act of self-humiliation" (Gould 1973, 89). According to Gould, the "great imbalance of status and honour" in the situation is likely to evoke shame, so much so that "the suppliant has in a sense lost his or her honour and status as well as their shame" (Gould 1973, 88) and, like Philoctetes, the suppliant is an "outsider who does not fit within the categories of social existence and who thus stands…outside the order of things" (Gould 1973, 90). However, in supplication, the suppliant not only humiliates themselves but often also demands a sense of shame from the supplicated. Gould notes that in the supplication scenes of tragedy, "the adjective *aidoios* is commonly used in contexts where 'displaying *aidôs* (oneself)' seems [right]" but that it is also in places "where 'appealing to, causing, activating *aidôs* (in another) seems more natural," and suggests that this "reciprocity of usage implies reciprocity of behaviour and attitude in the situation" (Gould 1973, 87). The shame of the suppliant demands to be matched with the shame of the supplicated. See, e.g., Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 359ff.

[385] Emphasis mine. ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ᾽ ἔτι, /ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μεθήσων μήποθ᾽, ὧδ᾽ ὁρᾷ πάλιν. Like Oedipus at the end of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Neoptolemus actively tries to evade the gaze of the other. Reciprocal gaze is also highlighted several lines later, when Odysseus returns to the stage and tries to compel Neoptolemus *not* to look at Philoctetes ("Do not look at him, even though you are highborn" μὴ πρόσλευσσε, γενναῖός περ ὤν, 1068).

[386] Schein (2013, 267) calls the language of the scene "characteristic of 'shame-culture' depicted in the Homeric epic," cf. *oneidos* in *Il.* 16.498–99; 17.556–57.

[387] οὐ καταισχύνῃ θεούς;

[388] As already noted, Aristotle claims that "no one feels shame before animals or children" (Ar. *Rh.* 1384b23–24). It is not clear whether Neoptolemus does or *can* feel shame before the animal-like Philoctetes.

[389] ὦ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δεῖμα καὶ πανουργίας / δεινῆς τέχνημ᾽ ἔχθιστον

[390] In the latter part of the play, Odysseus re-enters the stage and Philoctetes attempts suicide. He is held back with force, and Odysseus tells Neoptolemus to come with him. They exit the stage with the bow, leaving Philoctetes "naked" on the island—just so that Neoptolemus can return with the bow after some time and return it to its owner.

[391] Ἀπάταισιν αἰσχραῖς ἄνδρα καὶ δόλοις ἑλών.

and not justly (*kou dikê*)," (1234),[392] and again, "the *hamartia* I did was *ugly* (*hamartian aischran hamartôn*), and I shall try to undo it!" (1248–49).[393]

In other words, the reason given for the change in his actions is the shamefulness of the committed (and planned) actions, including lying, betrayal, the theft of the bow, and abandoning Philoctetes. In Neoptolemus' reasoning, the aesthetic unpleasantness of his deeds is reason enough to abandon the intended course of action.[394] The brief moment of shamelessness (*anaideia*) has, it seems, run its course—even when Neoptolemus had escaped the bridles of prospective *aidôs*, the feeling of painful *aischunê* reached him in the end.

2.3.4 A model for aesthetic–ethical evaluation

In the latter part of the play, shame fulfills two main functions: one is epistemic, the other is motivational. This is to say, shame affects the way in which Neoptolemus *evaluates* and *understands* his actions, and it helps him to *change* them. In both aspects, its function is best explained with a reference to the aesthetic: the knowledge gained with the help of shame resembles aesthetic judgment and the motivational force included in shame aligns with the motivational force that might accompany an aesthetic evaluation.

Beginning with the epistemic function of shame, it is noteworthy that Neoptolemus has known from the start that lying is ugly. This means that his aesthetic–ethical evaluations *do not change* during the play. Instead, there is a change in the *way* in which he knows this. The *general*, culturally shared knowledge that lying is in most cases regarded as ugly and shameful gives way to a more acute knowledge of the ugliness of this *specific deed* in this *specific situation*. The shift between these two types of knowledge is achieved with the help of the violent eruption of shame: it is knowledge attained through an intimate encounter with the ugly and disgusting.

In this, the knowledge-formation of the play resembles aesthetic experience. For it is one thing to know that a statue of Silenus is ugly and another to see a vulgar and disgusting one eye to eye. A reader of Pliny might imagine the wounded statue by Pythagoras of Rhegium, but only the one who witnesses it will be able to "feel the very pain of his wound." Analogously, a young man might recognize the ugliness of lying in general, but the true force of ugliness strikes only when it comes into intimate contact with such conduct—particularly if one is revealed to be the liar oneself.

The change of mind we witness on the stage does not, then, arise simply from a process of reflection. We do not see Neoptolemus calculating the consequences of his actions—for himself or for Philoctetes—nor reconsidering the principles underlying his actions. Rather, the inference that this very thing is shameful follows from the *emotive and affective encounter* with Philoctetes. The

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[392] Αἰσχρῶς γὰρ αὐτὰ κοὐ δίκῃ λαβὼν ἔχω.
[393] Τὴν ἁμαρτίαν / αἰσχρὰν ἁμαρτὼν ἀναλαβεῖν πειράσομαι.
[394] Note that Neoptolemus' feeling of shame is accompanied also by his "awful pity" (οἶκτος δεινὸς, 966), which he is "too full of" (1074).

acute feeling of shame, then, has an epistemic function in the play: now, Neoptolemus knows that lying really is shameful/ugly for him.

Besides influencing the epistemic process, shame also has a motivational force in the play. For even as the shamefulness of lying is recognized and named already at the beginning of the play, the ensuing *actions do not align with this knowledge*. *Aidôs* has not been activated. Indeed, we might ask why would a person—for example, someone like Odysseus—wish to align their actions with the values of beauty and ugliness in the first place. Even if one knew and recognized things that are thought to be beautiful or ugly, what incentives are there to take these as guiding principles of one's life? Recall that Odysseus promises Neoptolemus cleverness in place of beauty, *sofia* instead of *kalon*. As long as they stay clear of *aidôs*, Odysseus and Neoptolemus need not worry too much about the plan's ugliness if it ensures future glory.

This is, again, a peculiarity of aesthetic evaluation. A deed might be judged beautiful or ugly, a word unseemly or laudable, but *the evaluation does not bind to any specific action*. A judgment that something is ugly does not in itself carry an obligating power compelling everyone to fit their actions with this judgment. In this, an aesthetic evaluation is different from what we usually understand as moral judgments. According to a common modern understanding, moral judgment is not descriptive (as an aesthetic one might be) but prescriptive. Thus, any moral claim is by definition a statement that commands or forbids—the exhortative, imperative mode, the "ought," is what defines a moral judgment and distinguishes it from other types of judgment.[395] For Neoptolemus, it is a question of which types of ugliness one is ready and capable of enduring (handle with *euchereia*) and which types will prove to be too disgusting to handle (*duscherainein*).

While one can add to an aesthetic evaluation an exhortative clause—for example, that we should strive for beauty or avoid ugliness—this is not a *constitutive* element in the aesthetic evaluation itself: obligation is not an inherent quality or factor in aesthetic evaluation. On the contrary, someone might deny that the thing really is ugly; or they might pursue the ugly, pay no heed to the ugly, relativize the ugliness, or gloss it over with beauty—someone like the *polutropos* Odysseus or the young Neoptolemus living by his feeling. The task of

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[395] A thorough discussion of the role of obligation in the play or in Greek ethics more generally is outside the scope of this dissertation, but a few things may be noted. In modern ethics, obligation is understood as integral to moral judgments (see Korsgaard 1996; Williams 1981, 193ff). The premise is that morally wrong things ought not be done, simply because they are wrong: we need no further reasons to abstain from them. Moral judgments, by definition, contain an idea of their obligatory nature, and this is what distinguishes them from other kinds of judgments, like those of aesthetic taste or material advantage. The ingrained obligation also means that moral judgments or laws are compulsive, not optional. Kant is the paradigmatic example, again, of moral thought that relies on obligation and duty: only actions done from the *duty* to moral law are morally good (see Kant 2015, 5:84). This underlying framework also informs the ethical theories of Husserl, Nancy, Levinas, and Derrida. However, obligation does not belong solely to deontological morality, for also within utilitarianism, those actions that produce the best consequences are *demanded* from agents. To read the Neoptolemus' judgement as aesthetic instead of moral is to introduce a process of evaluation that does not include an integral obligation.

making one's life into that of a *kalos kagathos* is not a universal moral obligation but a call for a commendable yet ultimately optional effort.

This open-endedness of aesthetical evaluation, however, causes anxiety. If the aesthetic judgment has no power to obligate—neither judgments nor action—this creates room for hazards. In the *Philoctetes*, these culminate in the figure of Odysseus, who is ready to touch every ugly thing with his tongue. This is where shame steps in: the *Philoctetes* suggests—as Plato and Aristotle will also suggest later—that *aidôs* and *aischunê* can force a subject into aligning their actions with beauty and ugliness.

If the aesthetic evaluation does not form an obligation or a duty to act in a certain way, it does something else. Rather than obligation, the aesthetic includes *an affective immediacy*. In coming face to face with the rags of Philoctetes, Neoptolemus' reaction is that of a disgusted "*iou iou.*" Similarly, witnessing the tragic performance of pain gives rise to a different kind of exclamation, "*iô iô!*" The disgusting and the ugly, the disturbing and the wild, or the disgraceful and base have the capacity to trigger an immediate reaction, which precedes reflection and violently forces the subject to change the course of their actions.[396]

When the acute feeling of *aischunê* arises in the middle of the play, things change. Now, Neoptolemus can no longer *not care* about the ugliness that characterizes both his actions and possibly his own self. The prospect of looking ugly compels him to reconsider his actions and the aesthetic values that people would attach to them. As in Plato's *Phaedrus*, here, shame bridles Neoptolemus. This is reflected in the fact that only after the activation of shame does a sense of urgency enter Neoptolemus' speech: he realizes that he has been "hiding things that *ought* not to be hidden" (909),[397] and his question of "what to do" follows in a modified form: "What *must* I do?" (949).[398] Shame functions as a force that binds the subject to the aesthetic values: it is the mediator between the value and the subject.[399]

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[396] Recall how, in the passages of Plato and Aristotle, encountering the *aischron* causes an intimate and pre-reflective reaction of *duschereia*, disgust.

[397] κρύπτων θ᾽ ἃ μὴ δεῖ.

[398] τί χρή με δρᾶν; Up to this point, Neoptolemus' use of the vocabulary of necessity and obligation has echoed the language used by Odysseus. Odysseus uses words to denote obligation when trying to convince Neoptolemus that Philoctetes' bow *must* be stolen and the man *must* be deceived. For Odysseus' language of necessity, see Rose 1976.

[399] In most cases, commentators wish to suggest that there is something more than the mere shifting and changing of aesthetic judgment, and usually, this something is an ethical or moral coming to senses: moral consciousness, moral disgust, or pity that forces Neoptolemus to abandon Odysseus' plot (Prauscello 2010; Fulkerson 2006; 2013; Allen-Hornblower 2017; Cairns 1993, 257–63; Austin 2011, 137ff). While this might be so, we simply cannot know for certain: the play is silent on the issue. As Jacqueline de Romilly notes, the play seems to deliberately leave the audience ignorant on the important changes that happen in Neoptolemus' mind. For example, when Neoptolemus makes the first reference to his shame, he also states ambiguously that he has felt it "for some time now." He does not say that shame and pain arrive at once, but precisely, "I will be revealed ugly and that has been paining me for a while now" (αἰσχρὸς φανοῦμαι: τοῦτ᾽ ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι, 906). The word *palai* can mean both 'long ago' as well as 'just now' (*LSJ* sv. Πάλαι), and it is not entirely clear in which sense Neoptolemus uses the word here. In fact, de Romilly (2007, 89–92) notes that the opacity of Neoptolemus' interior shifts and changes seems to resemble the way tragic violence always takes place: out of sight. Instead of being hidden behind the closed doors of the *skênê*, here the decisive dramatic movement takes place within the closed-off space of

2.3.5 Works of art

To close this chapter, I wish to return to the theme of the artwork: to the ways in which the characters of the *Philoctetes* are depicted as works of art. Throughout the play, we have followed men who wish to exhibit beauty, valor, strength, and honor, to be *kaloi kagathoi*. While Neoptolemus can re-establish his beauty by reversing the ugly plot, Philoctetes' ugliness is more enduring. So much so that, just before the final plot twist of the concluding scene, the play seems to have reached an impasse.

Even as Neoptolemus has changed his mind, handed back the bow, threatened Odysseus with his sword (but also stopped Philoctetes from shooting Odysseus because "it would not be *kalon*," 1304), and proved to Philoctetes that his *phusis* is, after all, like his father's and that he has not become the "most hated" son of the "most noble father" (*aristou patros*, 1284),[400] the hero refuses to come with him to Troy. Even when promised that he would "be judged the single best man among the Greeks" (1344–5) and "gain the highest fame," (*kleos hupertaton labein*, 1347) Philoctetes cannot but imagine the humiliation of returning "to the light," (i.e., to the public, *es fôs*, 1353) after having suffered what he has suffered: "It is not the pains of the past that sting me," he claims, "but those that I yet have to suffer from the part of those men [i.e. Achaeans]" (1358–59). Thus, for a while, it seems that the two would set sail to Philoctetes' home island (which the audience knows cannot happen because Philoctetes and Neoptolemus *will* sack Troy together).

In the end, only a *deus ex machina*—the only one in Sophocles' surviving corpus—can restore the situation. Just as Philoctetes and Neoptolemus are leaving Lemnos for home, Heracles appears on the top of the cave to prevent them from setting sail. His argument is simple. Invoking the labors that he "endured to go through to win eternal glory (*athanaton aretên*), *as you can see* (*hôs paresth' horan*)" (1418–20),[401] Heracles promises Philoctetes that "for you too, know it for sure, destiny is the same, *after these sufferings to make your life glorious* (*euklea thesthai bion*)" (1421–22).[402] Philoctetes consents at once. Neoptolemus and Philoctetes set sail to Troy, and the play ends happily. What Heracles promises Philoctetes is that his life can be remodeled into another kind of work of art: one that is no more a tragic performance of pain and sickness, but a spectacle of glory. If indeed there is beauty sufficient for glossing over the ugliness of the humiliation and the disgusting sickness, it is the "eternal glory" of "*making one's life glorious.*"

As is well known, Foucault adopted his idea of making one's life into a work of art from Nietzsche. In the passage of *Gay Science* to which Foucault refers,

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Neoptolemus' interiority. They are both out of view—even as Neoptolemus has been on the stage for almost the entire length of the play.

[400] ἀρίστου πατρὸς ἔχθιστος γεγώς.

[401] σοι τὰς ἐμὰς λέξω τύχας, / ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξελθὼν πόνους / ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ᾽ ὁρᾶν.

[402] Emphasis mine. καὶ σοί, σαφ᾽ ἴσθι, τοῦτ᾽ ὀφείλεται παθεῖν, / ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ᾽ εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον.

Nietzsche famously writes that there is an acute need to "'give style' to one's character," which is "a great and rare art." For Nietzsche, this is a question of fitting one's life "into an artistic plan" according to a "force of single taste" (Nietzsche 2001 [1882], para. 290). In striving for beauty and attempting to make one's life that of a *kalos kagathos*, the management of ugliness becomes a core task, as we have seen with Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, and Odysseus.

All three have different ways of managing the discrepancy between being and appearance. The cunning (*polutropos*) Odysseus' solution to the problem of ugliness is to gloss it over with the beauty of a deceptive performance. Neoptolemus, on the other hand, must reconsider his actions when stricken with the pain of shame. In Philoctetes' case, however, ugliness poses a different kind of problem, because it is his self that is ugly—and as the chorus noted earlier, it does not seem fair that he must suffer (because of) his shameful condition.

In her discussion of *kalokagathia* in the *Philoctetes*, Jennifer Kosak narrows the problem down to Philoctetes' condition. He looks ugly while "being good." This is, furthermore, a core problem for a shame culture (or for an ethics of shame), which seems to unfairly leave the sick, the maltreated, and the ugly for their devices, and celebrate the beauty of (deceptive) surfaces. As Kosak notes, the same problematics of discrepancy between "bad exterior" and "good interior" is later echoed in Plato. For example, how could Socrates be good if goodness entails beauty and he is, as we might recall, "as ugly as the ugliest of satyrs."? Plato could, of course, claim that this ugliness is not real or true, but mere appearance. However, when he touches on the issue in the *Symposium*, his solution is to treat Socrates' ugliness as a kind of outer layer.

Recall the famous encounter between ugly Socrates and the young Alcibiades at the end of the dialogue. As Alcibiades affirms, Socrates is indeed ugly ("Look at him!" 215b). In his ugliness, Alcibiades says, Socrates resembles the little Silenus statues, which "you can find in any shop in town." These statues depict the ugly satyr, but are hollow: when split in half, one would find that inside they are filled with "tiny statues of the gods." In the same manner, Socrates' outer appearance is only the ugly surface layer of the satyr, while the truth is hidden inside. Thus, if one could see—as Alcibiades claims he has seen—what lies *within* Socrates, one would immediately recognize the man's exceptional beauty. Alcibiades states, "I once caught him when he was open like Silenus' statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they seemed to me so godlike and bright, beautiful and amazing" (216e–217a).[403] In answering the dilemma of ugly surface, Plato introduces a model in which one layer of appearance conceals yet another layer of appearance—the true appearance that is concealed between the false one.

The *Philoctetes* does not so much demonstrate that an ugly surface may conceal a beautiful interior but that the surface contains many things. The scopes of beautiful and ugly are wide and manifold. Fame is beautiful, and so too is helping a friend. A suppurating foot is ugly, as is leaving a helpless man to die. In the play, ugliness cannot be glossed over, for it is there for everyone to see.

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[403] Translation modified.

However, the disturbing, disgusting, and wild Philoctetes is also marked with beautiful traits: friendliness, trust, and generosity. In a work of art, such as a tragic performance or a statue, different aesthetic qualities may exist side by side, and they can be perceived simultaneously. Some things are simply ugly to someone (or to most people), and sometimes it does not seem just. Justice, however, is another matter.

In the *Symposium*, the encounter with the ugly–beautiful Socrates-turned-to-statue affects Alcibiades so forcefully that he reacts with an emotion with which he claims to be unfamiliar: he says that Socrates causes him to feel shame. Similarly, witnessing Philoctetes' ugly (and, perhaps, somehow beautiful) and tragic performance of pain has an immediate and emotive effect on Neoptolemus. He feels the pain of the injured hero and disgust for his own deeds and their ugliness. The affective immediacy that characterizes these encounters, perhaps unsurprisingly, also defines Plato's aesthetic theory, particularly his description of the affective powers of works of art.

For Plato, art's danger lies precisely in its capacity to affect its audience instantaneously by bypassing the reasoning part of the soul. Earlier in this chapter, I quoted from the *Republic* to illustrate Plato's view that music can educate people on beauty and ugliness. The passage began with a note on the powers of music, which is representative of Plato's psychology of art: "Aren't these the reasons, Glaucon, that education in music and poetry is most important? First, because rhythm and harmony *permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it most strongly*" (Pl. *Rep.* 401d5–8). Art in general—and tragedy in particular—has the power first to penetrate the souls of its audience and then to rule them.

Affective immediacy, however, does not mean that the ideas concerning beauty and ugliness would *not* be learned and adopted from the surrounding society. Nor does it mean that reactions to the beautiful and the ugly would not be filtered through different shared convictions regarding beauty and ugliness. Indeed, this is why tragedy is dangerous for Plato: it can impart to audiences its own convictions about aesthetic values. It is on these grounds that Plato later attacks tragedy again in the *Republic*: because it has too much emotive and affective power.[404] In Book X, Socrates states that "*the greatest* charge" (*to ge megiston katêgorêkamen*) against poetry is that it can corrupt (*lôbasthai*, that is, maltreat, mutilate, or bring to shame) even decent men (Pl. *Rep.* 605c). He says that this is because tragedy can affect the emotive part of the soul by bypassing reason and reflection and can thus hinder further deliberation (*Rep.* 604c). Witnessing a tragic performance may excite the emotions of the onlooker so that

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[404] Of course, Plato makes other charges against tragedy, the best known being the accusation that art is an imitation of reality and is therefore ontologically and epistemologically suspect. However, as Rubidge (1993), for example, has noted, the emotional component is central to Plato's critique of the arts, as the capacity to arouse emotion is what makes art harmful in the first place. Rubidge writes that, for Plato "Mimetic poetry is inherently vicious because its perfection and objective is to excite the audience's emotions — the finest poet is the one who arouses the most passion" (Rubidge 1993, 264).

even a decent man might succumb to grief, despite knowing very well that excessive weeping is shameful (*Rep.* 603e–604a).

> When even the best of us hear Homer or some other tragedian imitating one of the heroes sorrowing and making a long lamenting speech or singing and beating his breast, you know that we enjoy it, give ourselves up to following it, sympathize with the hero, take his sufferings seriously, and praise as a good poet the one who affects us most in this way. (Pl. *Rep.* 605c10–d5)

This description, which may perhaps capture the feelings of the audience on witnessing the central scenes of the *Philoctetes*, captures the dangers of tragedy. Keeping to the theme, Socrates suggests that this behavior of giving into emotion and pleasure is, above all, shameful. For, he says, pitying or even praising (*epainein kai eleein*) a man who grieves excessively (*akairôs penthei*) is ugly (*aischron*, *Rep.* 606b). He asks whether "it is a beautiful thing to look at someone behaving in a way we would consider unworthy and shameful, and to enjoy and praise it rather than feeling sickened by it?" (*Rep.* 605e4–6). The proper reaction to a tragic performance, Socrates says, would be that of disgust in the face of the ugly.

With its dramatic device of a play within a play, the *Philoctetes* stages this very phenomenon of affective contagion between the performer and the onlooker. In Plato's version, the grieving hero elicits pity and sympathy as well as a particular tragic pleasure in the audience, in place of the disgust that the onlookers should feel. In the *Philoctetes*, the emotion of pity is accompanied by the pain of shame rather than empathy. Some of the underlying structural elements, however, seem to be the same in the play and Plato's theory: a tragic performance works on the mind of the onlooker through an affective immediacy, which incites emotion rather than processes of reflection and deliberation. This emotive effect of the tragic performance itself can affect or challenge the very evaluations of what is shameful and ugly.

Thus, through its metatheatrical device, the *Philoctetes* becomes a study on the effects of coming face to face with the shameful. In the ultimate tragic performance of pain shame, and disgust are turned back onto their witnesses. The contagious feelings are transmitted through touch, proximity, and lines of vision and take hold of the one who was supposed to be only a member of the audience. In the play, the encounter causes Neoptolemus to feel disgust at the ugliness of his own actions and with his sense of shame; to retrace his steps and attempt to undo his deeds. However, this is only one possibility, for the aesthetic evaluation does not rely on necessities or obligatory laws. Some things or deeds have the power to give rise to the feeling of *duschereia*, and others may be more readily recognized as ugly than others, but there is no guarantee that everyone's reactions and evaluations will be the same. That is, the aesthetic ethics of the *Philoctetes* is one without a basis—one in which one aesthetic evaluation can replace another, but not necessarily.

We may wish to conclude that the ending of the *Philoctetes* is a happy one, that Neoptolemus' reaction of shame is a welcome reaction, and that his aesthetic evaluation is the right one. We might think that justice ultimately won out and that Neoptolemus did 'the right thing' by not abandoning a dying man on an isolated island.[405] However, the play's ending is deeply ambiguous. Aristotle informs us that it was Sophocles' innovation to add a third actor to tragedy's cast (Aeschylus only had two actors). This means that in the *Philoctetes*, one actor plays Neoptolemus, the second one plays Philoctetes, and the third all remaining characters. This means that, the character of Heracles in the final scene is played by the same actor who earlier played Odysseus—the very figure in Greek drama who is known for his use of disguises. Indeed, the emergence of Heracles in the final scene ensures that Odysseus' scheme will ultimately come to pass: Philoctetes is persuaded with words; Troy will be sacked according to the prophecy; fame and glory will ensue; and everything is fine and beautiful.

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[405] Neoptolemus admits that stealing the bow was done shamefully and "not with justice" and later argues that he has justice with him (1250). Then again, helping Philoctetes means disobeying his superiors and abandoning his 'place' in the society, which is interpreted as a breach of justice (compare 921–22, 925–26).

HELEN: AN EMBODIED *DOXA*

One persistent accusation towards shame is that it is essentially narcissistic or egoistic in its desire to avoid ugly repute, and especially in the accompanying desire to make one's life glorious; to receive social affirmation (e.g., Adkins 1960; Morrison 1989; Nussbaum 2004; Westerlund 2022). In shame, one is, in the end, concerned about *one's own* appearance: "We often fear our reputation (*doxa*), as when we assume that we seem bad to others (*doxazesthai kakoi*) [and] we and everyone else call this shame (*aischunên*)" (Pl. *Lg*. 646e10–647a2).[406] While modern critics say that the potential narcissism of the care for self-image undermines shame's ethical potential, the ancient criticism, posed by Plato's Socrates is different. Socrates maintains that one *should not care* what other people think (e.g., Pl. *Cr*. 44c; *Theaet*. 176b) because reputation, the *doxa* feared in shame, is not strictly *real*.[407] The criticism targeted against the egoism of shame and the unreality of the *doxa*, however, overlooks all those for whom a bad reputation poses an imminent threat, those who are in dire need of social affirmation. This contention will be the point of departure of this chapter, in which I will read the *Helen* of Euripides for a depiction of the peculiar phenomenon of victim shame.

The *Helen* is, in effect, a story about a shameful *doxa* that is "not real," but nevertheless has tangible, real, and catastrophic consequences. Helen in the ancient literary tradition proves to be a figure for whom the bad *doxa* is indeed a defining problem. She is both a character preoccupied with her own reputation and a character who defines herself through her shame.[408] As Gorgias writes, "The fame of her name has become a token of misfortune" (Gorg. *Hel*. 1.2.). There is no Helen without the stories and testimonies of her infamous beauty that circulate throughout Hellas and down throughout the centuries. This is also the premise of Euripides' version of her story, but his *Helen* is, ultimately, an attempt to clear Helen's reputation.

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[406] Also Ar. *EN* 1128b11–12.

[407] In the *Apology*, Socrates declares that when inspecting people, he found that "those who had the highest reputation were nearly the most deficient, while those who were thought to be inferior were more knowledgeable" (Pl. *Ap*. 22a).

[408] Cf. Worman 2001; Zeitlin 2010.

In the *Helen*, Euripides plays with the literary tradition by complicating the story of Helen. For there is, alongside the popular tale of the *Iliad*, in which Helen either elopes or is raped and carried off Troy, another version of her story. In the alternative plotline, attributed to poet Stesichorus, Helen never travels to Troy but goes to Egypt, while a phantom (*eidôlon*) is sent to Troy in her stead.[409] This is the version of the story on which Euripides builds his *Helen*. The play is set in Egypt where Helen has been living under the protection of King Proteus for the past years. Here too, there is an *eidôlon* of Helen: a breathing image, a copy or a substitute of Helen (586), a "living body" (*bleponton sôma*, 583) that Hera fashions from the clouds and situates in Troy to deceive the Greeks. It is this phantom double of Troy to whom all the shameful qualities of Helen are attributed, whereas the 'real' Helen in Egypt is portrayed as a wholly innocent, chaste, and virtuous wife.[410]

Both the *eidôlon* and the *doxa* refer to appearances, projections, and images—that is, to entities that, in themselves, are somewhat insubstantial: elsewhere, Plato contests the notion that *doxai* partake fully in being, and in the *Helen*, the flimsy ontological status of the *eidôlon* is underlined by the fact that it is fashioned from a cloud. Like the bad *doxa* of the shame-fearing person, the *eidôlon* of Helen at once contains the perceptions and ideas that others have of her, remains somehow distinct from her actual self, and brings a very palpable shame upon her.[411] The shame that the *eidôlon* or *doxa* produces is tangible; this shame affects the body, bringing about concrete consequences and violence, and it comes to define the relationship between one's self and one's body.

Although the body has served as a backdrop in both preceding chapters—as the condition of intersubjectivity and as a medium of evaluation—this chapter will address directly the intersections of shame and embodiment. Like Philoctetes' body, Helen's occupies an ambiguous space between the confines of beauty and ugliness. As in Euripides' *Hecuba*: "with her beautiful eyes she, in the ugliest way (*aischista*), ruined the happy Troy!" (442–43).[412] On the one hand, she is the most beautiful woman in the world; on the other, she is marked with shame. Choosing Helen as a key figure in an analysis of embodied shame is also in line with the Western tradition of interpreting female or feminine bodies as somehow more embodied than the 'neutral' body of a (free, citizen, adult) male.

For a body on the dramatic stage is never *just* a body. It is always already marked with qualities—being old, beautiful, sick, angry, a slave, a man, a woman, a king, a foreigner, or a child. In Greek drama, this potentiality to bear qualities is emphasized by the fact that the actor's "real" body is hidden behind a mask and a robe. The dramatic dress serves as a surface onto which the qualities

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[409] Stesichorus' version of the story is found in Plato's *Phaedrus* (243a2–243b3). According to the myth, after having told a traditional story of Helen, Stesichorus lost his sight as a punishment for slandering Helen. To retrieve his sight, he immediately created a *palinode*: "This story is not true / you did not embark the well-benched ships / you did not go to the citadel of Troy." See also Pl. *R.* 9.586b–c. Herodotus also reports that Helen could not have been in Troy but must have travelled to Egypt.

[410] Cf. Holmberg 1995.

[411] The language of *doxa* is common in the *Helen*, see 54, 119, 611.

[412] διὰ καλῶν γὰρ ὀμμάτων / αἴσχιστα Τροίαν εἷλε τὴν εὐδαίμονα.

can imprint themselves, as an imaginary object. Similarly, in the theatrical space of a community too (in, say, a city), bodies are encountered as perceivable—and *all* are perceived mostly as surfaces. In particular, in feminist theorizing of the body, the recognition that the body (or, rather, different *bodies*) is seen and encountered, as well as lived, in qualitatively differentiated ways, has led to the insight that *no body* is just a body. Bodies are always already invested with different meanings, qualities, and differences.

My focus in this chapter is thus twofold. On the one hand, I am interested in the shameful *doxa*—how a body becomes *seen as* some kind of body. On the other hand, I shall focus on how the materiality of the body becomes a source of shame, particularly in relation to the several instances of sexual violence alluded to in the play. I shall discuss the theme of shame in the play in the light of two contemporary accounts of emotion and shame. First, I shall use Sara Ahmed's notion of the stickiness of the affective signs to understand how Helen becomes defined through her *doxa/eidôlon* as a shameful and shamed female, and second, I will see how Giorgio Agamben's ontological analysis of shame opens a window onto how shame is an emotion intimately connected to embodiment in Euripides' play.

In her *Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Ahmed explores the question of why some objects, particularly some bodies, come to acquire certain affective values. For instance, what renders some bodies lovable and some bodies frightening or disgusting to the extent that these qualities seem to be inherent in the bodies themselves and the affective responses to them unmediated and necessary? As her starting point, Ahmed maintains that there is nothing that is essentially shameful, hateful, or disgusting—that is, things and bodies do not have innate affective qualities. Instead, these affective qualities are produced historically, through the process of circulation, repetition, and accumulation of affective signs. This circulation leads to situations in which some bodies are left "stuck" with some qualities (Ahmed 2004, 8–13; 89–92).

In the case of Helen (or, in the case of the different Helen*s* from the *Iliad* onwards), we can see this process at work. As the topic of various circulating stories, she is invested with intense affective value: as an innocent victim and a treacherous adulteress, she comes to be seen as hateful, shameful, desired, dangerous, pitied, and even disgusting.[413] I shall focus on how the stories about Helen render her shameful or as having a shameful *doxa*, how this shame(fulness) attaches and sticks to her and her family, and how she, too, comes to see herself through the lens of this shame. Ahmed's notion of stickiness helps to resolve an apparent puzzle in the play, which is that although Helen of the play is wholly innocent, she nevertheless feels shame for her *eidôlon*. The accumulation of

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[413] Cf. Suzuki 1989, 18–56. As an outstandingly elusive figure, she poses a challenge to an outside perspective, as she obstructs the truth about her character. On various depictions of Helen in Greek literature as an elusive and stylized figure, see Worman (2002), who writes that "By the classical period…Helen has become a fabricated item, the emblem of specious or changeable beauty that distracts audiences from the truth about her type. In this she stands for all women, as Pandora does in Hesiod" (Worman 2002, 113).

affective value makes it possible to think about the transmission of emotion without the need to decide on Helen's innocence or responsibility.

Agamben's approach to shame and emotion is rather different. In his book, *The Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999), Agamben constructs an ontological analysis of shame, suggesting that shame is linked to the very structure of subjectivity. To put it simply, there is, according to Agamben, an impassable fracture between the speaking subject and the body as a material thing, and this fracturing is both the source and the structure of shame. I take two insights from Agamben's analysis: first, the definition according to which shame is "to be consigned to what cannot be assumed" — that is, to be bound to one's self, being, and physical body without the possibility of fleeing (Agamben 1999a, 107). Second, I shall consider Agamben's claim that, in shame, one is affected by one's own (bodily) passivity (Agamben 1999a, 128).

Agamben's definitions are particularly useful for exploring the intimate connection between shame and embodiment in *Helen*. The connection between female shame and the passivity of the body is highlighted in particular by the recurring allusions to sexual violence or rape in the play, especially so in the cases where sexual violence is accompanied by a metamorphosis of the female victim. I shall argue that the female metamorphoses before or after sexual violence — in Euripides' play as well as in Greek mythology in general — may be read as indications of victim shame. Based on Agamben's analysis, I shall suggest that the shame of the victims of sexual violence originates from the very nature of the crime itself: from the experience of the body's abject passivity.

In dealing with the themes of shame, embodiment, and passivity, it is worth keeping in mind the feminist critique pointing out the persistent tendency to draw equations between women, femininity, passivity, and materiality in the history of Western philosophy and literature. The tradition of conceiving women *by nature* as more passive than men is well attested in the feminist critique, beginning with Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray.[414] The core diagnosis of this critique has been, as Elisabeth Grosz puts it, that patriarchal thought conceives of women as "somehow *more* biological, *more* corporeal, and *more* natural than men" (1994, 14). The other side of the sexist leanings of Western thought is its prevalent somatophobia. That is, not only is there the insistence on the naturality and passivity of female embodiment but also a tendency to see the condition of embodiment itself as oppressive and weighing down on the freedom of the (male) subject's transcendence. If shame is an intimate experience of being embodied, is it also a feminine or feminizing feeling?

I will start the chapter by demonstrating that Euripides' *Helen* is built around the theme of (bad) repute, both as a question of an "image" and a "name." I will study how the repute builds in a process of circulation and accumulation. Second, I will show how despite the unreality of the image-name, the consequences are undeniably tangible, paying special attention to the gendered forms of shaming. For the last part of the chapter, I will study in detail the

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414 See, e.g., de Beauvoir 2011 [1949], 21–48; Irigaray 1985 [1974], 13–25; Butler 1993, 4, 31ff.; Grosz 1994, 202–10.

underlying theme of sexual violence in the play and argue that the shame of Helen is connected to the produced passivity of the body.

3.1 The *doxa*

Euripides' *Helen* is, in essence, an escape drama. It opens with a distressed Helen supplicating at the tomb of Proteus, the former king of Egypt, under whose protection Helen has been living for the duration of the Trojan war. Now, however, the former king has died, and his son Theoclymenus is threatening to "marry [Helen] by force" (833), and Helen is running out of hope that she might escape his grasp. Meanwhile, Helen's husband Menelaus has fought the war in Troy and won back his "wife," the phantom copy. On their way home, Menalaus' ship suffers a wreck – right on the Egyptian shore. When Helen and Menelaus are then reunited, they do not at first recognize each other. Menelaus does not accept Helen's identity until the *eidôlon* finally disappears, dissolving into the air. After their reunion, Helen and Menelaus need to find a way to escape from the hostile new king of Egypt. They decide that the best way is to deceive Theoclymenus with an elaborate plot, pretending that Menelaus is dead and grieving Helen ready to marry the king. The ending of the play is considered happy. Helen and Menelaus' plot is successful; their men slaughter some Egyptians, and all sail home.

In her opening monologue, Helen provides her account of the Trojan War as well as of her own part in it. The war, Helen says, was not fought over her but over the *eidôlon*, and tells the origin story of the apparition:

> But Hera, annoyed that she did not defeat the other goddesses, made [Paris'] union with me as vain as the wind: she gave to king Priam's son not me but a breathing image (*eidôlon empnoun*) she fashioned from the heavens to resemble me (*homoiôssas' emoi*). He imagines – vain imagination (*kenên dokêsin*) – that he holds me, though he does not. Joined to these woes were further woes in turn, the plan of Zeus. He brought war upon the Greeks and the poor Trojans to relieve the Mother Earth of the throng and press of humankind and also make plain who is the most valiant man in Greece. And for the fight against the Trojans my name (*to d'onoma toumon*) – though not *me* (*egô men ou*) – was put forward as a prize of war. (31–43)[415]

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[415] Ἥρα δὲ μεμφθεῖσ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ οὐ νικᾷ θεάς, / ἐξηνέμωσε τἄμ᾽ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ λέχη, / δίδωσι δ᾽ οὐκ ἔμ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὁμοιώσασ᾽ ἐμοὶ / εἴδωλον ἔμπνουν οὐρανοῦ ξυνθεῖσ᾽ ἄπο, / Πριάμου τυράννου παιδί· καὶ δοκεῖ μ᾽ ἔχειν — / κενὴν δόκησιν, οὐκ ἔχων. τὰ δ᾽ αὖ Διὸς / βουλεύματ᾽ ἄλλα τοῖσδε συμβαίνει κακοῖς· / πόλεμον γὰρ εἰσήνεγκεν Ἑλλήνων χθονὶ / καὶ Φρυξὶ δυστήνοισιν, ὡς ὄχλου βροτῶν / πλήθους τε κουφίσειε μητέρα χθόνα / γνωτόν τε θείη τὸν κράτιστον Ἑλλάδος. / Φρυγῶν δ᾽ ἐς ἀλκὴν προυτέθην ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ, / τὸ δ᾽ ὄνομα τοὐμόν, ἆθλον Ἕλλησιν δορός. Translation slightly modified. For the translations of Euripides' *Helen*, I have used Kovacs 2002.

What is this *eidôlon*? In the play, the *eidôlon* is a copy that merely resembles the real Helen (*homoisas' emoi*), an artistic creation of Hera, a 'breathing image' made from the sky, air, or wind.[416] However, it is only an empty (*kenos*) imitation. The ephemeral quality of the *eidôlon* is referred to throughout the play. It is called a night-vision (*nyktiphantos*, 570), a painting or a statue (*agalma*, 1219); it is made of ether (584) or cloud (705–6). In relation to the real Helen, it is merely a substitute or a supplement (*diallagma*, 586)[417] and an empty bride (*kenon lechos*, 590). Yet, it has a body of its own (583).

Despite its un-realness, the *eidôlon* has tricked Paris—as well as all other Trojans and Greeks, Menelaus included—into believing that Helen is in Troy. Helen states that it *seems* to Paris that he has her (*dokei m'echein*), while in reality he has not (*ouk echôn*). Euripides also makes use of a technical term, *dokêsis* (36, also at 119, 121). In a word, the *eidôlon* is an apparition. Helen also notes that alongside the *eidôlon*, her *name* also played a part in bringing the war into being, for her name was offered as the price of war—her name, as she notes, but not her self (*egô men ou, to d'onoma toumon*). Here, her name is something different from the 'I' of Helen.

As an (ethereal) embodiment of a bad *doxa*, the *eidôlon* helps us to understand how outward appearance relates to the subject: What connects one to her repute? How is one perceived by others? How does shame attach to the subject? How do some bodies become perceived as shameful or ugly more than others?

3.1.1 The image

As noted, the use of the *eidôlon* to replace Helen is not an innovation on Euripides' part but may be traced back to Stesichorus.[418] Yet, already in the Homeric depictions of Helen, she is often portrayed as a bright and brilliant image, *almost* like an apparition.[419] With the *eidôlon*, the play is constructed around the problematics of mimesis. The model of the *eidôlon* given in the opening speech serves also as an outline for a mimetic model, in which the real and original Helen is contrasted with the unreal and fictive *eidôlon*. This model foreshadows the tradition of thinking about mimesis, often tracked back to Plato. Like the *eidôlon* of Helen, the mimetic object is, for Plato, something that lacks both in being and in truth. Compare, for example, one definition given in the *Republic* X:

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[416] Zeitlin (2010, 266–74) discusses the different levels on which the *eidôlon* works, and recognizes three: first, as a ghost, the *eidôlon* relates to the dichotomy between being and non-being; second, as a deception, it is related to the problematic of seeming and being; and third, as an artistic creation, it can be read to relate to the model of the original and the copy.

[417] On the supplementary nature of the *eidôlon*, see Pucci 1997.

[418] Plato's *Phaedrus* (243a–b) makes no mention of the *eidôlon*, but a Hellenistic fragment attributes the story of the *eidôlon* to Stesichorus (*P. Oxy.* 2506 fr. 26, col. 1).

[419] Worman (2002, 133): "it is tempting to reconsider Homer's depiction of Helen in the *Iliad* as a uniquely bright but elusive presence and to recognize that even there she resembles a luminous phantasm." Suzuki (1989, 35) commenting on the *Iliad*: "The Greeks have not seen Helen for twenty years, and consequently, for them, she has become an abstraction, almost a phantom."

Socrates: Then consider this very point: What does painting do in each case? Does it imitate that which is as it is, or does it imitate that which appears as it appears? Is it an imitation of appearances or of truth?

Glaukon: Of appearances.

Socrates: Then imitation is far removed from the truth, for it touches only a small part of each thing and a part that is itself only an *eidôlon*. (Pl. *R*. 598b1–8.)

In Plato's model, a mimetic object is not an imitation of a being but only that of an appearance. Thus, it is *far from* reality and truth, touching only a small part of reality. Because of this, mimetic art stands in a similar relationship to truth and knowledge as *doxa*, opinion, and seeming.

In Helen's speech, this kind of original-copy model is pinned down to the difference between, on the one hand, the *eidôlon* and Helen's name and, on the other hand, her body. Helen notes that even if her name is reviled among the Greeks, her *body* will not be subjected to shame in Egypt (66–67).[420] Later, she states that a name can "be in many places, but the *body* cannot" (588)[421] and that Aphrodite "handed down *my name*, not *my body*, to barbarians" (1100).[422] While the *eidôlon* and name are fiction, Helen's body seems to be utilized to mark reality in these cases. It is as though the physicality of Helen's body might ground its realness and fix the difference between a mimetic copy and the original—but, as we shall see, the body consistently fails to stand in for the reality and truth.[423] It is because the two are threatening to mix and blend that she must *try* to keep them separate.

The fixity of the categories of (physical) reality and appearance crumble already in the following scene. After the opening monologue, Helen encounters Teucer, a warrior of the Trojan War, who has come to Egypt to hear a prophecy regarding his future home. Teucer does not recognize Helen as the 'original' Helen but marks the resemblance between her and the ghost-image. As soon as he sees her, Teucer exclaims,

Ah! O gods, what sight (*opsin*) do I see? I see the deadly image (*eikô phonion*) of the most hateful woman who destroyed me and all the Achaeans. Let the gods spit you out (*apoptueisan*), for having such resemblance of Helen (*mimêm' echais Helenês*). (71–75)[424]

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[420] ὡς, εἰ καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ ὄνομα δυσκλεὲς φέρω, / μή μοι τὸ σῶμά γ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ αἰσχύνην ὄφλῃ.

[421] τοὔνομα γένοιτ᾽ ἂν πολλαχοῦ, τὸ σῶμα δ᾽ οὔ.

[422] τοὔνομα παρασχοῦσ᾽, οὐ τὸ σῶμ᾽, ἐν βαρβάροις.

[423] Allan 2008 and Holmberg 1995 note that the clear-cut differentiation between original and copy is constantly called into question in the play.

[424] ἔα: / ὦ θεοί, τίν᾽ εἶδον ὄψιν; ἐχθίστην ὁρῶ / γυναικὸς εἰκὼ φόνιον, ἥ μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν / πάντας τ᾽ Ἀχαιούς. θεοί σ᾽, ὅσον μίμημ᾽ ἔχεις / Ἑλένης, ἀποπτύσειαν. My translation.

The use of terms of vision and image is remarkable. Helen is described as a vision (*opsis*)[425] and a likeness or an image (*eikôn*), and, most notably, she is said to have a *mimêsis* of Helen.

Which, then, is the imitation of the other, Helen or the *eidôlon*? On the level of the narrative, Teucer is not calling into question the reality of the Egyptian Helen but is rather innocently mistaking the original for a copy. Owing to the resemblance, the sight of Helen arouses an affective response in Teucer, who experiences surprise, anger, and disgust upon seeing her. Teucer's language mirrors his emotions: there is the surprised exclamation (*ea*!), the angry accusation of her being hateful and bloody, and the fascinating image of disgust: the gods *spitting out* Helen's body. The disgust response materializes as Teucer turns away from Helen in avoidance (78). The intensity and apparent immediacy of Teucer's affective reaction are notable. The encounter is depicted such that the source of Teucer's reactions is located in the body of Helen, which, through its resemblance to another body, becomes hateful and disgusting—an emotional response that reminds of Neoptolemus' reaction when at the moment of shame "everything becomes disgusting" (S. *Ph*. 902).

Helen tries to warn Teucer about his mistake: what seems real to Teucer might be a *dokêsis* from the gods (119).[426] Teucer's confusion between Helen and the copy is not resolved and when they part ways, Teucer assures Helen that although she resembles Helen *in body* (*sôma*), her heart or mind (*phrenes*) is completely different (160–61).[427] Here, the body is not the demarcating factor but the locus of resemblance. What marks the line here between two visible, image-bearing bodies is something inside a body, the *frênês*. While the air-like *eidôlon* is the most obvious locus of images in the play, we can see that Helen's body is also a bearer of images as well. The body, after all, in its very materiality, is a visible thing for others to see. In its visibility, it also offers a surface for projected images.

Here, I think, what Sara Ahmed calls the stickiness of affective signs may be used to explain what happens in the play.[428] With the notion of stickiness, Ahmed demonstrates how certain affective qualities come to define certain subjects, how "the work of emotion involves the 'sticking' signs on bodies"(Ahmed 2004, 13). We can see how the body of Helen, which she tries to separate from her name and image, is stuck with the sign that is her name, a sign of shame. By virtue of its resemblance to the *eidôlon*, Helen's body serves as a kind of sign as well (Worman 2001, 149). How is it, then, that Helen has come to be seen as the shameful female or stamped with shame—as well as with hate, disgust, and other affective qualities?

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[425] Menelaus repeats this vocabulary when he sees Helen for the first time (557).

[426] σκοπεῖτε μὴ δόκησιν εἴχετ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν.

[427] Ἑλένη δ᾽ ὅμοιον σῶμ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ οὐ τὰς φρένας / ἔχεις ὁμοίας, ἀλλὰ διαφόρους πολύ. Here, the body is not the demarcating factor but the locus of resemblance. What marks the line here between two visible, image-bearing bodies is something inside a body, the *frênês*.

[428] Ahmed's own examples of this are the way in which some "collective bodies," for instance asylum seekers in the discourse of white nationalism, are produced as "hateful" though the repetition of signs. This repetition "materializes" these bodies of the hated people and sticks to them as though the quality of hatefulness were an inherent condition of some bodies (Ahmed 2004, 46–54).

Ahmed's point is to show that affects or emotions are not personal (they are not 'up to me' or do not belong to me) but that they are discursively produced. This is particularly relevant for reading *Helen* because Ahmed allows us to think about emotions originating and gaining force *precisely* in the 'mimetic' plane of stories, names, and images. This, then, would also be a theory of how an *aesthetic* value comes attached to a body. That is, if recognizing the ugly becomes possible through habituation—as in Aristotle—then, we can see a similar repetitiveness in the *production* of some bodies as having some aesthetic-emotional-affective qualities. In the plane of affective qualities, then signs and bodies cannot be neatly separated.

3.1.2 Words

Whereas Teucer encounters Helen as an image, in a scene that follows soon after, Menelaus encounters Helen "in words."[429] After being washed up on the Egyptian shore with his ghost-wife, Menelaus arrives at the palace to seek help, Helen and the chorus of captive Argive women have left the stage, and instead, he meets an inhospitable Old Woman. When Menelaus inquiries about the people living in the palace, to his surprise, the woman informs Menelaus that a Spartan woman called Helen, who is said to be the daughter of either Zeus or Tyndareus, is living in the palace (470–74). Menelaus cannot comprehend her words; instead, he tries to rationalize his shock.

In the ensuing monologue, Menelaus reasons that there must be "another woman, with the same name (*onoma de tauton*) as my wife, living in this house" (487–88).[430] But if there is another woman called Helen, maybe there is also an Egyptian Zeus (490–91), Menelaus continues, but quickly abandons the idea of plural Zeus[431] and adds that surely Sparta is found only near the banks of the Eurotas, 90–93.[432] Anxious, he realizes that his words are failing him (496),[433] and goes on to argue that names are not fixed to their referents: "Many men in the wide earth, it seems (*hôs eixasin*), have the same names (*onomata taut' echousin*) as other men, and the same is true of women and cities. So there is nothing to wonder at" (497–99).[434] Menelaus' solution foreshadows Helen's remark concerning names; that names can be in many places while bodies cannot (588).[435] Names can attach to different referents, to different bodies. In this case, the name Helen is attached both to Helen's body and to the 'body' (583) of the breathing and living *eidôlon*.

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[429] While *eidôlon* is used only four times in the play, the word *onoma*, meaning a name or a word, recurs twenty times.
[430] ὄνομα δὲ ταὐτὸν τῆς ἐμῆς ἔχουσά τις / δάμαρτος ἄλλη τοισίδ᾽ ἐνναίει δόμοις
[431] This statement is dubious. In Greek religion, the Egyptian Ammon, being the king of other gods, was considered an equivalent of Zeus. Herodotus thought that the Egyptians worshipped the same gods as the Greeks but called them by different names.
[432] Here, too, it is a tangible thing that is offered as a pledge of reality—here, the tangible things are the geographical landmarks.
[433] ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω τί χρὴ λέγειν.
[434] πολλοὶ γάρ, ὡς εἴξασιν, ἐν πολλῆι χθονὶ / ὀνόματα ταῦτ᾽ ἔχουσι καὶ πόλις πόλει / γυνὴ γυναικί τ᾽· οὐδὲν οὖν θαυμαστέον.
[435] τοὔνομα γένοιτ᾽ ἂν πολλαχοῦ, τὸ σῶμα δ᾽ οὔ.

The name Helen, referring both to the Helen on stage and to the other in Troy, connects the original and the copy.[436] As signs loaded with meaning, names function in strange ways. Although Menelaus, with his sophistic maneuvering, establishes a formal distinction between proper names and the beings to which they refer (persons, bodies, places), immediately after this, he seems to contradict himself, boasting, "No man has so uncivilized a heart that he will not give me food once he has heard *my name*" (*onom…toumon*, 501–502).[437] Menelaus thus treats his name as a unique and unfailing sign—of his fame, his nobility, his *doxa*—that is interchangeable with his own person.[438]

Helen's name has come to signify quite the opposite. "And my name (*ton emon onoma*)," she confirms "beside the streams of Simois, has a false reputation (*mapsidion echei fatin*)" (250–51).[439] The chorus calls her bad reputation 'troubles in words', or troubles produced with words (*logosin*) (716–21) and takes up the reputation again in the first stasimon, where they sing that although Helen is the daughter of Zeus, "yet you were proclaimed throughout Greece a betrayer, faithless, lawless, godless" (1147–48).[440] Helen herself says that she was "ill-starred and cursed (*kakopotmon araian*) by men for leaving (though I did not leave) […] your house and your bed for marriage of shame (*ep' aischrois gamois*)" (694–97).[441]

The sign that is Helen's name circulates Greece and gains a reputation (*fatis*). The stories' falseness or emptiness (*mapsidios*) do not negate the effects that they have on Helen, who becomes an object of the hatred generated by the *eidôlon* connected to her through homonymity and resemblance. This connection is at the center of Helen's troubles. In the general narrative known 'throughout Hellas,' she is seen as a shameful woman. The reviled name is *attached* to Helen—when she introduces herself, Helen does not say that her name is Helen but, in passive voice, says "I am called Helen" (*Helenê d'eklêthên*, 22)—as it is attached to the *eidôlon*. If one layer of mimesis in the play is constituted by the images and visions, the names function as the second layer of mimesis.[442]

To return to Ahmed, bodies are produced as having certain affective qualities through a historical process of accumulation. As she puts it, "…signs become sticky through repetition; if a word is used in a certain way, again and again, then that 'use' becomes intrinsic; it becomes a form of signing" (Ahmed 2004, 91). The sign 'Helen' circulates throughout Greece and acquires affective force, as a sign of adultery, of a female out of place, of a woman too visible, who

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[436] However, Helen's name is said to have been given or loaned to the gods as a tool to bring about the Trojan war (1099–100, 1653). Does this mean that the name belongs more properly to the Egyptian Helen, if it is her name that has been borrowed by the *eidôlon*-Helen?
[437] ἀνὴρ γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὧδε βάρβαρος φρένας, / ὃς ὄνομ᾽ ἀκούσας τοὐμὸν οὐ δώσει βοράν.
[438] Cf. when Menelaus appears on stage for the first time and recalls his family history (386ff), a gesture that seems to imply that his own identity is grounded in the names of his ancestors.
[439] τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὸν ὄνομα / παρὰ Σιμουντίοις ῥοαῖσι / μαψίδιον ἔχει φάτιν.
[440] κἄιτ᾽ ἰαχήθης καθ᾽ Ἑλλανίαν / προδότις ἄπιστος ἄδικος ἄθεος.
[441] ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἄπο κακόποτμον ἀραίαν / ἔβαλε θεὸς ἀπό τε πόλεος ἀπό τε σέθεν, / ὅτε μέλαθρα λέχεά τ᾽ ἔλιπον — οὐ λιποῦσ᾽ / ἐπ᾽ αἰσχροῖς γάμοις.
[442] Like the image, words are associated with deception and falsity, for, as the chorus of Greek slave women remind Helen, even things clearly said can turn out to be false (πόλλ᾽ ἂν λέγοιτο καὶ διὰ ψευδῶν σαφῆ, 309).

should be ashamed of herself. In sticking to Helen's body, her name also sticks these affective qualities to her, as though she herself really was intrinsically shameful and hateful.

This process of accumulation and the circulation of signs may be seen taking place in the rumors told about Helen, as is evident in the chorus' comment that "a *rumor* travels through cities, my queen, that *hands you over* to a barbarian bed" (223–25).[443] The rumor (*baxis*) functions here as the subject of the sentence. It is the rumor as the process of the circulation of the sign 'Helen' that 'hands her over' to the barbarian bed—that is, relates her to the shame of adultery. It also enables the process "of historical articulation," which "allows the sign to accumulate value" (Ahmed 2004, 92). The sign 'Helen' accumulates value not as an isolated sign but as a name that is related to other signs and bodies. On the one hand, the name 'Helen' carries with it references to adultery, to fantasies of female treacherousness, and to the history of misogyny. On the other hand, the sign 'Helen' becomes shameful and reviled through the contact between bodies, that is, through the prohibited, sexually marked proximity to the hated barbarian body. As an endpoint of this history of circulation, there are the affective attitudes of other people toward the 'Helen' – "Everyone in Hellas hates the daughter of Zeus" (81)—and the emotional reaction of Teucer, filled with hate, disgust, and disbelief, when he encounters Helen.

Reaching beyond Euripides' text, we can see how as a wife and bride of several husbands, Helen herself circulates in the economy of exchange of women (Worman 2001, 150). Or, how the sign 'Helen' also circulates in other texts, gaining value and histories. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, she is called an Erinys who makes marriage bitter (*gamou pikron teleutas*, A. *Ag.* 745–49). In Euripides' *Orestes*, she is said to deserve the hatred of all women for she has "disgraced her sex" (*katêschunen genos*, E. *Or*. 1153–54). In the *Helen*, her shameful *doxa* comes to haunt her in the form of the *eidôlon*. Indeed, as *the* adulterous wife, Helen comes to be, in fact, the paradigm of the shameful, hateful, and dangerous female in classical literature.[444]

3.1.3   Realities: Shame and death

While Helen's repute and shame are generated and circulate on the plane of *mimesis* and *doxa*, and although they would "touch only a small part of the reality," they, however, touch *some* part of it. For while the image and name have an ambiguous ontological status, flickering on the border of being and non-being or truth and falsity, they bring about very real and very tangible consequences. Indeed, the question of the realness or unreality of signs, images, or words becomes secondary—and arbitrary—when we follow the far-reaching outcomes that touch those connected to her.[445]

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[443] διὰ δὲ πόλεας ἔρχεται / βάξις, ἅ σε βαρβάροισι, / πότνια, παραδίδωσι λέχεσιν.
[444] In Sappho's poem, she leaves her husband and child without hesitation. Sappho fr. 16.
[445] As numerous commentators have pointed out, the distinction between Helen's self or body and the double is impossible to maintain (Lush 2017; Gumpert 2001, 52–54; Pucci 1997).

The most undeniable consequence of the shameful stories is the death of Helen's mother. The death of Leda is first reported by Teucer in response to Helen's inquiries: "You speak of Leda? She is dead and gone" (134). Helen's reaction is immediate: "What? Destroyed by Helen's shameful fame (*aischron…kleos*)?" (135).[446] Teucer affirms this by noting that it is what "they say" (136)[447] and accordingly, the play keeps coming back to the assertion that Leda's suicide is a result of Helen's shame (199–202; 219–25; 986–87). Helen herself recognizes the connection to her alleged marriage: "My mother is no more: she tied a noose to her neck for *shame at my evil marriage (dusgamê aischunan)*" (687–88)[448] and: "I left your halls and bed—though I did not leave—for a *marriage of shame*" (696–97).[449]

The death of her mother is, for Helen, the most irreparable consequence of the shame.[450] Besides her mother's death, some consequences affect Helen directly. Because of her reputation, Helen is in danger of being killed because of her appearance. In the scene with Teucer, he says that he can hardly refrain from killing Helen, because she resembles so greatly that other 'Helen' (76–77). Furthermore, her name prevents her from returning to her homeland (222, 273–76). That is, the shame attached to her name limits the space in which her body can move freely.

But *whose* shame is this? Is it solely the shame of Helen in Troy or also the shame of the Helen in Egypt? At least the Egyptian Helen herself seems increasingly to assume the shame of her name. Having heard the news from Teucer, Helen sings a lament with the chorus. In her song, the source of the shame is not fixed:

> The ruins of Troy are consumed by hostile flame because of me (*di' eme*), murderer of many (*poluktonon*), because of my name (*di' emon onoma*) of many woes. Leda has perished, hanging herself from pain at my disgrace (*aischunas emas hyp' algeôn*). (196–202)[451]

Helen's lamentation song is striking; she says that Leda has hanged herself because of the pain caused by *her* shame. The emphasis on the possessive pronoun (*aischunas emas*) seems to suggest that this shame is no longer that of the *eidôlon*. Later in the play, Helen refers a couple of times to her shame—again, we

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[446] οὔ πού νιν Ἑλένης αἰσχρὸν ὤλεσεν κλέος;
[447] Helen's brothers are also reported to have committed suicide "because of their sister" (*adelfês houneka*, 142)—but this report proves to be false.
[448] οὐκ ἔστι μάτηρ· ἀγχόνιον δὲ βρόχον / δι᾽ ἐμὰν κατεδήσατο δυσγάμου αἰσχύναν.
[449] (…μέλαθρα λέχεά τ᾽ ἔλιπον — οὐ λιποῦσ᾽ / ἐπ᾽ αἰσχροῖς γάμοις.
[450] Interestingly, some scholars have argued that there are no real consequences of the false story for Helen and that, accordingly, her story is not a tragic one (Juffras 1993; Allan 2008, 66–72). It is true that Leda does not appear as a character on the stage and that we learn of her fate only through report. Nonetheless, she is dead, and her death is mentioned several times during the play. The downplaying of her importance by commentators makes one wonder why the death of an aged woman and a loss of a mother does not count as truly tragic.
[451] Ἰλίου κατασκαφαὶ / πυρὶ μέλουσι δαΐῳ / δι᾽ ἐμὲ τὰν πολυκτόνον, / δι᾽ ἐμὸν ὄνομα πολύπονον. / Λήδα δ᾽ ἐν ἀγχόναις / θάνατον ἔλαβεν αἰσχύ- / νας ἐμᾶς ὑπ᾽ ἀλγέων.

hear that her mother has killed herself because of *her* shameful marriage (688) and that she is ill-starred and cursed because *she* left for a shameful marriage (694–97)—recognizing that the origin of the shame is in her "marriage," that is, in adultery or rape. In general, different forms of sexual proximities (voluntary or coerced) are a common source of shame for *any* woman in Greek literature.[452]

Thus, while we have seen that there is an insistence on distinguishing the real Helen from the fictitious or false image, the *feeling* becomes real, and therefore the boundary between Helen and the shame generated by the false rumors and images begins to dissolve. The affect has the power to cause real pain and distress—even if the disgrace at their origin was a 'false' one. Leda is said to have committed suicide because of her *pain* at her daughter's shame. Similarly, Helen is hated by everyone, and this causes her suffering (53–56).

Notably, the affect and pain can originate from words: words and stories have the power to move people and cause them suffering. One example of the affective power of words is presented in the scene in which Helen and Menelaus finally meet. When Helen is asked to recount her journey and time in Egypt, she laments that it is a bitter (*pikron*) story (661–62).[453] The story is so bitter or distasteful that Helen expresses disgust at telling it, saying, "I spit out this story I am about to tell" (664).[454] When Helen asks Menelaus in turn to narrate to her the things that took place in Troy, Menelaus does not wish to recall the horrors of war. Rather, he tells Helen that relating the misfortunes would be as if he had to "suffer them once again" (*kak' algoiên eti*, 769–71).[455] Re-telling a story (*muthos*) is as *painful as* the original experience.[456] The narration of an experience would make it, literally, "two times suffered" (771).[457]

There seems to be no difference between the experience and (mimetic) telling of a story on the affective level: they *feel* the same. The idea of the painfulness and affectivity of storytelling is not limited to this play but can be traced through various instances in ancient literature. In the *Odyssey*, this affective quality of mimesis is a constant anxiety. It is, also, this affectivity of mimesis that makes it so dangerous for Plato (e.g., Pl. *R.* 607a). Through its affective power, shame pulls together the plane of mimesis and the tangible world. In the case of Leda, there is a succession beginning from the unreal sky-image, proceeding to the words and stories, which in turn give rise to an unbearably painful shame and, ultimately, an act of violence. The fictionality of the stories told about Helen and the falseness of the marriage do not necessarily diminish the shame they incur.

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[452] Cf. Cairns 1993, 125–6; 185–8. If rape or sexual relations mark the paradigm of female shame, the paradigmatic example of masculine shame might be defeat and 'ugly' death in battle. These, too, mark the vulnerability and objecthood of the body.

[453] ἒ ἔ: πικρὰς ἐς ἀρχὰς βαίνεις, / ἒ ἔ: πικρὰν δ᾽ ἐρευνᾷς φάτιν.

[454] ἀπέπτυσα μὲν λόγον, οἷον ἐσοίσομαι.

[455] εἰ γὰρ ἐμπλήσαιμί σε / μύθοις, λέγων τ᾽ ἄν σοι κάκ᾽ ἀλγοίην ἔτι / πάσχων τ᾽ ἔκαμνον· δὶς δὲ λυπηθεῖμεν ἄν.

[456] This may be interpreted as a depiction of the functioning of a trauma: recalling a traumatic experience can reactivate the past trauma. However, it should be noted that Menelaus appears to contradict what he said earlier at 665—that it is pleasurable to hear of past evils.

[457] This is what Teucer also says at 143.

3.1.4 Production of shameful woman

One effect of the public and widespread shaming of Helen is that she comes to identify herself with the shame—despite her innocence of the things she is accused of.[458] Helen confirms this: "[T]hough I am innocent (*ouk ous' adikos*), I have an evil reputation (*eimi dusklês*): to be reviled for wrongs one has not done is worse than if the charges were true" (255–57).[459] If being falsely accused and shamed is worse than being accused of something one did, then the knowledge of one's innocence does not ward off the feeling of shame. Although Helen's *doxa* is not real in the basic sense that it is based on falsehoods, and although Helen is not guilty, the *doxa* nevertheless comes to determine Helen's identity.

The play includes an interesting formulation of the felt consequence of this public shaming. After Helen and Menelaus have successfully reunited and the *eidôlon* has already disappeared into thin air, Helen prays to Hera and Aphrodite to secure her and Menelaus' escape. In appealing to Aphrodite, Helen says,

> You, who won the prize of beauty at the price of my marriage, Aphrodite, daughter of Dione, do not destroy me. Enough of the *dirt* (*lumês*)[460] with which you have stained me (*m' elumênô*) already by handing over my name (*tounoma*), though not my body (*ou to sôm'*), to the barbarians. (1097–1100)[461]

Helen describes herself as stained by Aphrodite and by the circulation of her name. The term used to denote dirt (*lymê*, *lymainomai*) is repeated twice, emphasizing the effect. Helen feels the rumors and insults as dirt on her skin. Although she again insists on the difference between the name and the body, the words come back to stain the body, making her into a shameful woman through the repetition of her shameful story. As Ahmed notes, there are no pre-given qualities: any body can be attributed (or stuck) with any qualities whatsoever (2004, 8-12). Thus, the shamefulness of Helen's body (or the body of the adulteress, or the female body, which is always *potentially* adulterous)[462] must be produced in language. It is a projection, an *eidôlon*.[463]

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[458] Holmberg argues that Helen's lack of control over the reputation of the *eidôlon* is merely an elaborated version of Helen's situation in the epic: "how much difference is there between a woman who is blamed for something she may not be able to control…and a woman whose ghostly image is the cause of blame but to whose person blame nevertheless attaches?" (Holmberg 1995, 26).

[459] μὲν οὐκ οὖσ᾽ ἄδικος, εἰμὶ δυσκλεής· / καὶ τοῦτο μεῖζον τῆς ἀληθείας κακόν, / ὅστις τὰ μὴ προσόντα κέκτηται κακά. Cf. the *eidôlon* is reported to speak and say that "the ill-starred daughter of Tyndareus has been falsely vilified" and that Helen is not to blame (614–15).

[460] *Lumê* refers to a metaphorical or moral soiling, from the term *luma*, dirt: see Chantraine sv. λύμη.

[461] σὺ θ᾽, ἢ 'πὶ τώμῷι κάλλος ἐκτήσω γάμῳ, / κόρη Διώνης Κύπρι, μή μ᾽ ἐξεργάσηι. / ἅλις δὲ λύμης ἥν μ᾽ ἐλυμήνω πάρος / τοὔνομα παρασχοῦσ᾽, οὐ τὸ σῶμ᾽, ἐν βαρβάροις.

[462] Cf. Worman 2002, 150.

[463] This means that, like Helen's shamefulness, her beauty is also a projection, an imagined quality.

If, then, Helen is imagined and produced as a shameful *object*, as a shamed woman and as a stained body, how could she *not* feel this shame on her skin?[464] As Ahmed notes, when discussing the effects of hate speech, "The hated body becomes hated, not just for the one who hates, but for the one who is hated" (Ahmed 2004, 57). Similarly, a shamed body becomes dirty for the one who is shamed. In Helen's case, the interval between being shamed and being ashamed seems almost nonexistent: as we have seen, Helen says that Troy has been burned "because of me" and, simultaneously, "because of my name" (198–99), she refers to "*my* shame," the "shame of *my* evil marriage," and "*my* marriage" (202, 688–89, 690), and most strikingly, she declares: "my mother is dead, and I am the murderer" (280).[465]

As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003, 37; 61–65) recognizes, shame is at once isolating and—owing to this isolation—identity-forming. Shame can be destructive, but it also offers a site for negotiating one's identity. In the *Iliad*, Helen is preoccupied with her reputation, how she is seen by other people, and the fear that her reception is condemning (Worman 2002, 47–56). The Helen of the *Iliad* says that she is being shamed by her in-laws (*Il.* 24.767–72), she is afraid of inviting blame from her family as well as from people around her (*Il.* 3.242; 3.410–12) and puts on a performance of self-shaming (i.e., calling herself dog-faced and a dog in *Il.* 3.180, 6.344, 6.356). Notably, in Homer, it is Helen who debases herself more than anyone else.[466] In presenting herself through her shame, Helen seems to *identify* with the shame. As Helen is produced as a shameful woman, she is rejected by the community around her. Consequently, her identity is bound to form around this rejection: she is who she is *because* she is othered from the community.

The story of Helen—in Euripides' version as well as in the *Iliad*—serves as a demonstration of how women's bodies in general gain affective and aesthetic qualities in antiquity (or in patriarchy). When we consider what counts as shameful in tragedies, one significant recurring theme is shame related to women (women in public, women in the wrong places, being like a woman, and so on, see Appendix); another is a wide area of shame related to subordination. Thus, as long as women are women and as long as they are seen as subordinate to men, there will always be a looming *ugliness* to womanhood and a balancing *aidôs*.

That *aidôs* as an emotional disposition is particularly suited to or required from women (as it is suited to the young), is supported by the references to the relationship between femininity and *aidôs*:[467] in epic, there are the recurring images of a modest girl (*aidoiê parthenikos*, *Il.* 2.514; *Op.* 71; Thgn. 572) and of a

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[464] In discussing stickiness and bodies, Ahmed is writing more about groups of people (collective bodies, bodies of categories of people, defined by such things as 'race'), than of individuals. Sticking affective qualities to bodies is a public and wide discursive process. I think that this is still relevant to the case of Helen if she is read as a metonym for a wider category of people. Helen may be seen as a metonymic sign representing categories, such as the female, the adulterer, or the rape victim.

[465] Cf. *Hel.* 109, 364, 695.

[466] *Hel.* 54.

[467] On femininity and *aidôs*, see Ferrari 2002, 73–81. Compare how Ajax is emasculated (*ethêlunthên*) by shame caused by the words of his concubine (S. *Aj.* 650–52).

modest (*aidoiê*) wife (*Il*. 6.250; *Od*. 3.381, 10.11; 19.336). While *aidôs* in tragedy is not sexed in any unambiguous way, it is clearly demanded from women to a greater extent than it is from men. We might consider the orchestration of Iphigenia's *aidôs* in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Clytemnestra enquires from Achilles whether Iphigenia should come out of a tent into the public space and, instead of *aidôs*, have "a free eye" (994).[468] The shared sentiment is that they should not risk the "reproach of the vulgar" (999)[469] and that Iphigenia should remain indoors.

Plato gives one reason for the appropriateness of *aidôs* in women, relating it not so much to sex *per se*, but to the imbalance of power (which, of course, comes back to sex in the form of subordination of women in patriarchy):

> Now the superiors of bad men are the good, and of the young their elders (usually)—which means that parents are the superiors of their offspring, men are (of course) the superiors of women and children, and rulers of their subjects. All these people in positions of authority deserve the *aidôs* from our part (*aidesthai pâsin pantas prepon*). (Pl. *Lg*. 917a4–7)

If, as suggested by both psychoanalysis and recent psychological literature,[470] shame is felt for a failure to live up to some ideal, there is, however, only a limited space in which one can choose this ideal for oneself, and it is mostly inherited and learned. In Euripides' play, the ideal for Helen would be the figure of a chaste, loyal Greek wife, and it is the *eidôlon* that diverges from this ideal—as a sexual, adulterous, and adventurous wife. It is the 'real' Helen herself who appears to be the image of this ideal wife.[471]

Like any ideal, it too must in the end be only a fantasy, and so we can see in the play how this ideal dissolves as the plot advances. In her reading of the play, Froma Zeitlin (2010, 272) observes the peculiar point, that after the *eidôlon*-Helen disappears in the play, the Helen on the stage appears to acquire some of her counterpart's traits. When plotting how to escape Egypt, Helen becomes deceptive and seductive: she lies that Menelaus is dead and that she will marry the king instead. She appears, so to speak, to impersonate the more traditional depictions of Helen of Troy. I shall read this kind of metamorphosis as the only

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[468] δι᾽ αἰδοῦς ὄμμ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἐλεύθερον. Cf. Euripides' *Phoenician Women* in which Antigone declares that she is not concerned if she is seen crying and blushing—she will not veil herself, nor feel *aidôs* (οὐ προκαλυπτομένα βοτρυχώδεος / ἁβρὰ παρηίδος οὐδ᾽ ὑπὸ παρθενί- / ας τὸν ὑπὸ βλεφάροις φοίνικ᾽, ἐρύθημα προσώπου, / αἰδομένα, Ε. *Ph*. 1485–89).

[469] μήτ᾽ εἰς ὄνειδος ἀμαθὲς ἔλθωμεν.

[470] See Introduction 44-47.

[471] Ahmed (2004, 106–7) notes that in contemporary society, queer bodies may be seen as failing to live up to the heterosexual ideal and thus become affected by shame. However, to feel shame for breaching this (or some other) ideal can also show that one was committed to this ideal in the first place. We can also see this play out in the *Helen*, in which the body afflicted by shame is the queer body of its time—that is, a body that is involved in a transgression of the prevalent sexual norms (the adulte*ress*). While the *eidôlon* stands for the un-normative body, the play depicts the real Helen as very much committed to the normative values of sexual conduct (i.e., "my body is not put to shame here" by entering the bed of Theoclymenus). Holmberg (1995) notes that Euripides' Helen is depicted as an "essentially conservative" wife devoted to her husband and their *oikos* and to "reaffirming unambiguously" the traditional social roles.

option available to women by which they might escape from shame: a way of forming one's identity *on* the shame and shamefulness with which one's group is associated in society.

3.2 The body

Having read the play in conjunction with Ahmed's theory of how some bodies come to be defined by certain affective qualities, I now turn to consider a different theoretical approach to the question of shame and embodiment. According to theorists like Max Scheler or Giorgio Agamben, shame and body do not coincide purely accidentally (through a contingent process of making-ugly) but shame is fundamentally embodied, and that, perhaps, embodiment is inherently shameful. In this part of the chapter, I shall focus on embodiment as a source of shame and on the underlying theme of sexual violence in the *Helen*.

Theories building on the connection of shame and the body often emphasize the experience of vulnerability, which is taken to be a defining condition of any embodied being. One of the most paradigmatic examples of this kind of shame is the exposure of one's naked body. In *Helen*, there is a scene that is a variation of the exposure theme, but the one in shame is not Helen but Menelaus. When we first encounter Menelaus in the play, he has just been shipwrecked on the shores of Egypt. His clothes are torn, and he is almost naked. He admits that he feels shame before the crowds of people (*ochlon gar empesein êschunomên*, 415)[472] and that he has hidden himself and his poor clothing out of his shame (*aidous*) for his misfortunes (417).[473] He later says more about his clothing – namely, that he has none about his skin (420–21).[474] Menelaus is exposed, in a wretched state, and vulnerable; hence, his shame and his desire to hide himself.

As already noted, the desire to escape from exposure and hide one's body is one of the most prevalent responses to shame in tragedy. While every body has a visible surface, it is, however, only for some bodies that this visibility becomes highlighted. Not all bodies are equally vulnerable to shame. In the case of *Helen*, I wish to suggest that the fact that Helen is a woman makes her shame even more pressing. Before examining the specific case of female bodies, I wish to try to understand the intimate connection between shame and bodies.

3.2.1 Shame rooted in the embodied condition

Porphyry begins his biography of Plotinus with a straightforward claim: "Plotinus, the philosopher of our times, seemed ashamed (*aischunomenô*) of being

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[472] Literally, he is ashamed of falling into a crowd.
[473] τὰς ἐμὰς δυσχλαινίας / κρύπτων ὑπ᾽ αἰδοῦς τῆς τύχης.
[474] οὔτε γὰρ σῖτος πάρα / οὔτ᾽ ἀμφὶ χρῶτ᾽ ἐσθῆτες.

in the body" (Porph. *Plot.* 1).[475] Perhaps we may observe here an early antecedent to the line of thought in which embodiment itself is perceived as a source of ontological shame. In the twentieth century, Max Scheler's essay "On Shame and the Feelings of Modesty" (1913) constitutes a defining text in the theorization of shame as a bodily condition.

To formulate Scheler's point very simply, shame is made possible by the divide between mind and body in the human being or, as Scheler words it, because the human being exists "between the divine and animality" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 3). According to Scheler, "It is only because the human essence is tied up with a 'lived body' that we can get in the position where we *must* feel shame" (Scheler 1987 [1913], 5). Thus, shame is interpreted as the *necessary* result of the structure of subjectivity that is perceived as a combination of a lived "animal" body and "divine" consciousness (e.g., Scheler 1987 [1913], 6).[476] Although, as we saw in the first chapter, Sartre emphasizes the intersubjectivity of shame, his analysis echoes Scheler in claiming that pure shame is a feeling of being an "object"—more precisely, a "degraded, fixed, and dependent" object—and that "the body symbolizes […] our defenseless state as objects" (Sartre 2003, 288–89).

Gilles Deleuze makes similar remarks on bodily shame in his brief essay on T. E. Lawrence, shame, and glory. However, rather than seeing the body as a universal condition of shame, Deleuze notes that shame tied to embodiment "implies a very particular conception of the body" (Deleuze 1998, 123). The conception that Deleuze construes from Lawrence rings familiar: Deleuze writes that Lawrence "has shame because he thinks the mind, though distinct, is inseparable from the body; the two are irremediably linked." However, Deleuze notes that this distinction that simultaneously requires connection is not an active mind linked to an unliving body but to a body that is conceived as having some *autonomy* in relation to the mind—perhaps we might envisage an 'automatism' of an apparition-like body that is at once both foreign and familiar, in the manner of an *eidôlon*.[477]

However, perhaps the most elegant analysis of embodied shame for us is Giorgio Agamben's (1999) account of shame as the paradigmatic feeling of being a subject. Beginning his analysis with Emmanuel Levinas' remarks on shame in his early essay, *On Escape* (1935), Agamben locates shame in what he calls the most intimate difference within subjectivity. According to Levinas, shame *does not* stem from a recognition of a defect in our self, and thus it has very little to do with the kind of morality that is based on counting our errors. Rather, shame is rooted in the self's *inescapability* from the self:

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[475] Πλωτῖνος ὁ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς γεγονὼς φιλόσοφος ἐῴκει μὲν αἰσχυνομένῳ ὅτι ἐν σώματι εἴη. Translation Armstrong 1969.

[476] Scheler further distinguishes between bodily shame and psychic shame (Scheler 1987, 27), but both depend on the basic division between body and consciousness (Scheler 1987, 83).

[477] The mind depends on the body; shame would be nothing without this dependency, this attraction for the abject, this voyeurism of the body. Which means that the mind is ashamed *of* the body in a very special manner; in fact, it is ashamed *for* the body. (Deleuze 1998, 123.)

What appears in shame is therefore precisely the fact of being chained to oneself, the radical impossibility of fleeing oneself, to hide oneself from oneself, the intolerable presence of the self to self. […] What is shameful is our intimacy, that is, our presence to ourselves. (Quoted from Agamben 1999, 105)[478]

Taking a cue from Levinas, Agamben proposes his definition of shame: "to be ashamed means to be consigned to something that cannot be assumed [i.e., adopted as part of the self]" (Agamben 1999a, 105). For Agamben, as for Levinas, the thing that cannot be assumed or escaped in shame is always something peculiar and intimate to ourselves, such as the physiological body and its passivity.

As in Scheler, we find in Agamben, too, a disjunction between these two poles of subjectivity that can never coincide or become identical. Despite this fracture, this "irreducible disjunction between … living being's becoming a speaking being and the speaking being's sensation of itself as living" the two poles are nevertheless always consigned to each other in an "absolute intimacy"—an inescapable proximity that always retains a distance (Agamben 1999a, 111; 125). For Agamben, this intimate fracture marks the structure of both shame and subjectivity, which he takes as being structured around a dissonance that results from the fact that the human being is both a *living* and a *speaking* being. That is, it is an Aristotelian *zoon logon echôn*, a living being defined based on its possession of language. Shame, as tied to something that cannot be wholly assimilated to the self, is thus "nothing else than the fundamental sentiment of being *a subject*" (Agamben 1999a, 128; 107). In shame, my subjectivity as the inconsumable combination of a body and a speaking being is called into question.

The gap within subjectivity facilitates an auto-affective relation in the subject. Indeed, according to Agamben, shame occurs when a subject is "affected by its own receptivity" (Agamben 1999a, 110). As an example of this, Agamben offers the example of sexual violence, asserting that the shame experienced by a victim of sexual violence is triggered by her being affected by her own passivity.[479] For Agamben, the experience of one's own passivity is structured around two poles: first, there is the subject as purely passive, and second, there is the subject as experiencing or witnessing its own passivity,[480] in other words, the body (as the living organism and the receptive material which make up a human being) and the subject as a speaking being, as a discursive self.

All the aforementioned accounts locate an original, ontological, and subject-forming shame in a fracture within the subject—be it the gap between animal and divine as in Scheler, between the object-body and freedom as in Sartre, between the living being and the speaking being as in Agamben, or simply between body and mind, as in the Deleuzean Lawrence. Agamben's insight concerning shame's

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[478] The translation in *On Escape* (Levinas 2003, 64–65) is slightly different.
[479] Agamben disturbingly equates the victim's being moved by her passivity to her taking pleasure in her suffering violence.
[480] As Knudsen (2018) points out, this is just another way of expressing the fracture between Agamben's notions of *zoe* and *bios*.

intimacy is useful for considering the proximities that are at play in the *Helen*: the proximity between her self and her image, between Helen in flesh and her name, and between the subject and her body. On the stage, we see a Helen for whom it is impossible to assume her body, her name, her appearance, and her beauty, insofar as these connect her to her shame. These are all somehow her own, connected to her subjectivity by an inescapable proximity; in other words, she is connected to that which cannot be assumed. It is precisely in this way that the *eidôlon* can serve as a metaphor for the simultaneous differences and proximities that are at play in every subjectivity.

It is worth noting, however, with Deleuze that this body-based shame depends on "a very specific conception of the body" (Deleuze 1998, 123). For often the idea of an ontological shame rooted in a body is based on implicit (or even explicit) somatophobia. Scheler and Sartre see the body as representing the animality or nature embedded in a human being, as opposed to the transcendence and freedom of the consciousness. In Sartre's account, the body is degraded, fixed, and a burden (Sartre 2003, 288; for criticism, see Heinämaa 2020). Scheler, on the other hand, explicitly continues the long philosophical tradition of linking somatophobia with sexism, reiterating the old claims that the female body is even more embodied, more primitive, and more natural than the male body (Scheler 1987, 12 considers the difference between male and female living organisms to be analogous to the difference between animals and plants).

Furthermore, the traditional view of the body does not merely regard femininity and embodiment as coextensive but, more precisely, connects women to *passive* material. This is true also in the Greek male imagination, in which the female body is perceived as more material, more vulnerable, more porous, and more passive than the male body.[481] A *locus classicus* of this view may be found in Aristotle's zoological treatises. In explaining the biology of procreation, Aristotle reiterates the claim that the male partner provides the active semen, whereas the female partner provides a passive, receptive material, writing

> If, then, the male stands for the effective and active (*kinoun kai poioun*), and the female for the passive (*pathêtikon*), it follows that what the female would contribute to the semen of the male would not be semen but material (*hulên*) (*GA* 729a28–31).[482]

Feminine passivity (and male activity) is taken as given: "the female, as female, is passive, and the male, as male, is active, and the principle of the movement

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[481] Holmes (2010, 185–88) suggests that in the ancient medical texts, the female body was understood as being an exaggeration of the troubling aspects of physical body. Zeitlin (1996, 350) notes, "…when a male finds himself in a condition of weakness, he too becomes acutely aware that he has a body. Then, at the limits of pain, is when he perceives himself to be most like a woman."

[482] εἰ οὖν τὸ ἄρρεν ἐστὶν ὡς κινοῦν καὶ ποιοῦν, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ [ᾗ θῆλυ] ὡς παθητικόν, εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἄρρενος γονὴν τὸ θῆλυ ἂν συμβάλλοιτο οὐ γονὴν ἀλλ᾽ ὕλην. Translations of *GA* by A. Platt in Barnes 1991.

comes from him" (*GA* 729b12–14),[483] and it seems that the for-grantedness of feminine passivity and receptivity continues to persist as an implicit bias.[484]

Bearing this in mind, we may consider the potential shortcomings of Agamben's account. For, although ostensibly less somatophobic (the living being is not in a hierarchical relation to the capacity to speak), Agamben is indebted to this tradition. For, in claiming that shame is to be affected by bodily passivity, Agamben appears to take the passivity of the body as a given. As with all claims that the body simply 'is' of a certain kind, this too, I think, should be taken with reservation. Rather than simply *being* passive, the body harbors different possibilities: among others, the possibilities of being active or passive to different degrees. Thus, we should consider *how* passivity, which is but one possibility inscribed in the body, is produced. For this reason, I shall now turn to the theme of sexual violence in the play. As we shall see, this is one way in which a body may be *made* passive, receptive, and, indeed, ugly.

3.2.2 The theme of sexual violence

The connections between shame and body become increasingly evident when we turn to the play's underlying theme of sexual violence and rape. The theme is implied already in Helen's initial situation, as she fears that she will be "married by force" to Theoclymenus (833), a union that would put her body to shame in the bed of the Egyptian king (67). However, it is also visible in the many textual allusions to mythological cases of sexual violence that surface especially in the choral passages.

It should be noted that several problems arise in thinking about rape in antiquity from a contemporary perspective. For example, in classical Greece, rape was considered less an offense against the female victim than it was an offense against the victim's male patron.[485] In addition, the line between voluntary adultery and rape is often glossed over in ancient texts or legal practice.[486] This attitude is also confirmed in the play. When Helen says that, should Menelaus be killed, she would be "married by force" to Theoclymenus (833),[487] Menelaus' reply seems harsh: "You would be a traitor. Your talk of force is only an excuse"

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[483] ἀλλὰ μὴν τό γε θῆλυ ᾗ θῆλυ παθητικόν, τὸ δ᾽ ἄρρεν ᾗ ἄρρεν ποιητικὸν καὶ ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως.

[484] For discussion of Aristotle's account of procreation, matter, and femininity, see Bianchi 2014; Zeitlin 1996, 107–12; Tuana 1994. Mayhew (2004, 28–53) criticizes these readings, arguing that Aristotle should not be seen as misogynistic. The point is not that Aristotle is a misogynist but that his texts reimburse the implicit bias of his culture.

[485] Omitowoju (1997), looking at court speeches, notes that for an offense to be understood as a (heterosexual) rape, it must violate the consent of a girl's male patron (*kyrios*), while consent of the girl or woman seems to be a secondary issue. Cf. *Helen* 785.

[486] It is somewhat difficult to distinguish between voluntary adultery and rape in the ancient legislation (Ogden 1997, 31), and thus we may imagine that the punishments against adulteresses in Solon's law, which were intended to shame an adulteress so that her life might become unbearable, may in some cases have been applied to women who were not participating willingly in the sexual act (see Aeschines, 1.183). My intuition is that in patriarchal society, it is very convenient to get rid of the crime of rape by *calling* it adultery.

[487] γαμοῦμαι δ᾽ ἡ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ βίᾳ.

(834).[488] At least for Menelaus, the difference between coercion and consent bears no significance.

In fifth-century Athens, to fall victim to rape was considered a disgrace and shameful for the victim.[489] Compare, for example, Lysias' speeches in which sexual assault is called "shaming by force" (*aischunein biai*, Lys. 1.32). Although the practice of victim shaming is symptomatic of patriarchy, I argue that following Agamben's definition of shame as being affected by one's passivity, we can see how the experience of shame might be rooted in the nature of the crime itself.[490] This is especially the case with the many metamorphoses of the violated bodies, which we encounter in the *Helen* and in Greek mythology more generally, where victims of sexual violence turn into animals, beasts, plants, and geographical formations.[491]

Of the allusions to these mythological victims, the most frequently referred to is also the paradigmatic rape victim of antiquity—that is, Persephone. The parallel between Helen and Persephone is maintained through the play, culminating in the third stasimon, in which the chorus sings about Demeter trying to find her daughter (1301–68).[492] The connection is suggested already in the way Helen came to Egypt in the first place. In relating the story of how she ended up in Egypt, Helen tells that she was "snatched" by Hermes, while she was plucking flowers in a field (244–9).[493] The abduction of Persephone by Hades is practically the same story: she too was "snatched" by a god from a flowery field (1312-14).[494] Both the used verb, *harpazô* (which refers either to a violent abduction of a woman or to wild beasts snatching their prey), and the locus of the flowery field are typical for the topos.[495]

The chorus compares Helen, besides Persephone, also to other rape victims. When the chorus first appears on stage, they sing that they have come to see who is wailing at the tomb, for, to their ears, Helen's cries sound alarming:

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[488] προδὸτις ἂν εἴης· τὴν βίαν σκήψασ᾽ ἔχεις.
[489] Cole 1984, 111. Cf. Cairns 1993, 307–308 on the shame of Creusa at her rape in the *Ion*: E. *Ion* 392–400; 934–45.
[490] Thus, although I find Ann Cahill's philosophically motivated study on sexual violence illuminating, I diverge from her reading of the connection between sexual violence and shame. Cahill writes that, "The shame and guilt that many rape victims experience are a direct reflection of society's tendency to blame them for their assault" (Cahill 2001, 127, my emphasis). While it is true that shaming the victim can endorse shame feelings, it is hardly the sole reason for the victim's shame. This kind of straightforward explanation misrepresents the victims' complex experiences.
[491] On the theme of bestial rape, see Robson 1997.
[492] The apparent irrelevance of this stasimon has puzzled commentators: see Allan on *Hel.* 1301–68 for literature. However, if we pay attention to the theme of sexual violence, the allusion to Persephone seems to comment on a main theme in the tragedy. On the parallels between Helen and Persephone and the appropriateness of the Demeter ode, see Swift 2010, 193; 229–38.
[493] "As I gathered fresh within my garments folds / petals of roses to go to Athena, / her of the Brazen House, / he swooped me up and took me through the heavens / to this unblest land" (ὅς με χλοερὰ δρεπομέναν ἔσω πέπλων / ῥόδεα πέταλα Χαλκίοικον / ὡς Ἀθάναν μόλοιμ᾽ / ἀναρπάσας δι᾽ αἰθέρος / τάνδε γαῖαν εἰς ἄνολβον / ἔριν ἔριν τάλαιναν ἔθετο / Πριαμίδαισιν Ἑλλάδος. 244–9). Compare the "snatching" of Persephone at 1312.
[494] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter,* 1–32. Persephone is first mentioned by the chorus at 175.
[495] For the field topos, see, e.g., *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 117ff, Mosch. *Europa*.

There I heard a pitiable noise,
an elegy without a lyre,
that some bride shouted, mournful wailing,
such as a Naiad in flight
sent forth over the hills, a mournful strain.
Under the rocky hollows with echoing cries,
she shouts: Pan rapes me (184–190.)[496]

To the chorus, Helen sounds like a violated woman: her lamentations echo the far-ringing screams of a nymph being raped.[497] In Greek mythology, nymphs are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence because of living in the sea or in the wilderness, that is, because of the unrestricted movement of their bodies (Larson 2010, 42). Already in her opening speech, Helen mentions another nymph, Psamathe (7), who was the wife of Proteus. The little we know of Psamathe is that she was once pursued by Zeus' son Aeacus and, according to Apollodorus' *Library*, she "turned herself into a seal because she did not want to have intercourse with him, and then bore him a son, Phokos [i.e., Seal]" (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.12.6).[498]

In a lyrical exchange between Helen and the chorus, Helen brings up two other instances of metamorphosis. Lamenting her life, and threatening suicide, Helen sings of the "blessing" of metamorphosis:

O happy maiden Callisto once in Arcadia, who left the bed of Zeus with four-footed limbs, how much happier is your lot than mine. In the form of shaggy-limbed beast you expelled the burden of pain. And you, happy maiden, who Artemis expelled from her dances as a golden-horned deer, the Titan-daughter of Merops, because of your beauty. Yet my form has ruined Troy's citadel and the Greeks, doomed to death. (375–85)[499]

Helen likens and compares herself to two mythological female characters: first, there is Callisto, who is raped by Zeus and leaves his bed with her body

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[496] ἔνθεν οἰκτρὸν ὅμαδον ἔκλυον, / ἄλυρον ἔλεγον, ὅτι ποτ' ἔλακεν / < ‒ ‒ ˘ > αἰάγμα- / σι στένουσα νύμφα τις / οἷα Ναὶς ὄρεσι φυγάδα / νόμον ἱεῖσα γοερόν, ὑπὸ δὲ / πέτρινα γύαλα κλαγγαῖσι / Πανὸς ἀναβοᾶι γάμους.

[497] Juffras (1993), who analyzes the theme of rape in this play, points out that Helen is not, after all, herself raped in the play and only suffers the threat of sexual violence. I would, however, like to suggest a reading that takes seriously the possibility that Helen herself has been violated. For she *sounds* like a victim, and the ways in which her body has become unbearable for her point to the possible violation. On the lyrical exchange between Helen and the chorus, see Ford 2010.

[498] εἰς φώκην ἠλλαγμένη διὰ τὸ μὴ βούλεσθαι συνελθεῖν, καὶ τεκνοῖ παῖδα Φῶκον. Hes. *Th.* 1003–5 also mentions a son called Phokos (Larson 2010, 71).

[499] ὦ μάκαρ Ἀρκαδίαι ποτὲ παρθένε / Καλλιστοῖ, Διὸς ἃ λεχέων ἀπέ- / βας τετραβάμοσι γυίοις, / ὡς πολὺ κηρὸς ἐμᾶς ἔλαχες πλέον, / ἁ μορφᾶι θηρῶν λαχνογυίων / ὄμματι λάβρωι σχῆμα λεαίνης] / ἐξαλλάξασ' ἄχθεα λύπας · / ἄν τέ ποτ' Ἄρτεμις ἐξεχορεύσατο / χρυσοκέρατ' ἔλαφον Μέροπος Τιτανίδα κούραν / καλλοσύνας ἕνεκεν · τὸ δ' ἐμὸν δέμας / ὤλεσεν ὤλεσε πέργαμα Δαρδανίας / ὀλομένους τ' Ἀχαιούς.

transformed into a four-footed animal, a bear.[500] Although Callisto becomes a 'beast' and 'shaggy-limbed', her gruesome transformation is, according to Helen, a blessing. Second, there is the daughter of Merops, (presumably) Cos, who becomes a deer. As this is the only extant mention of her, we do not know if she is also a victim of rape, but the fact that she is a maiden in Artemis' dances and that she is expelled because of her beauty seems to indicate that she might very well be.[501] Both Callisto and Cos are imagined as thoroughly mimetic, malleable, and subject to change.[502]

Some lines earlier (at 256–57), Helen alludes to the story of her "other mother," who, too, undergoes a metamorphosis. While in this play, Helen's parents are said to be Leda and Zeus, in some other contexts, she is the daughter of Nemesis and Zeus.[503] This is the case in Helen's birth story as related in the *Cypria* (10), in which Zeus pursues and hunts the reluctant Nemesis. Tormented by "shame and indignation" (*aidoi kai nemesei*), Nemesis tries to escape from Zeus, first taking the form of a fish and subsequently many different forms of animals living on the land. In the end, he takes her by "violent compulsion" (*kraterês hyp' anankês*).

One further allusion to mythological female metamorphosis is found in the play's first stasimon, where the chorus evokes the nightingale to sing and lament with them. The nightingale is known in literature as the ever-crying bird (the chorus calls her "tearful singer," 1110),[504] and her story is particularly gruesome. Before metamorphosing, the nightingale was a woman called Procne whose husband, Tereus, fell in love with her sister, Philomela. Tereus kidnapped Philomela and, after assaulting her, cut off her tongue. When Procne discovered her husband's crime, she rescued Philomela and the two sisters killed Procne's and Tereus' son—feeding his body to Tereus. Afterward, when Tereus tried to kill them, they were metamorphosed into a nightingale and a swallow (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.14.8).

I suggest that all these metamorphoses—of Psamathe, Callisto, Cos, Nemesis, Procne, and Philomela—should be read as stories about female shame in the face of sexual violence. If the most usual reaction to the feeling of shame is the desire to conceal oneself, a metamorphosis may be read as a fantasy of escaping from the exposure in shame: Callisto's body, which becomes unbearable

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[500] Apollodorus writes of Callisto: "She was a companion of Artemis in the chase, wore the same garb, and swore to her to remain a maid. Now Zeus loved her and, having assumed the likeness, as some say, of Artemis, or, as others say, of Apollo, he shared her bed against her will, and wishing to escape the notice of Hera, he turned her into a bear. But Hera persuaded Artemis to shoot her down as a wild beast. Some say, however, that Artemis shot her down because she did not keep her maidenhood. When Callisto perished, Zeus snatched the babe, named it Arcas, and gave it to Maia to bring up in Arcadia; and Callisto he turned into a star and called it the Bear" (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.8.2. Translation Frazer 1921). On Callisto's different stories, see Henrichs 1987.

[501] Cf. *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* in which we have one case of an abducted female companion of Artemis.

[502] Allan (2008, 149) claims in his notes that in metamorphoses, "one name is applied to many bodies"– but isn't it just the opposite? In metamorphoses, one body is given several different names and nouns: virgin, bear, girl, deer, and so on.

[503] See Forbes Irving 1990, 187–91 on the story.

[504] See also A. *Ag*. 1142–5; S. *El*. 148–49.

in her maiden form, is concealed and secured within the shaggy limbs of a bear. This is why Helen says that Callisto was able to "expel the burden of pain" (380). In metamorphosis, a subject can escape the body *within* the body.[505] Furthermore, metamorphosis may be the only imaginable way to escape for a female whose body is an object of restrictions and control. There are no concrete physical places to flee to: Where could Nemesis or Callisto escape to in a world governed by Zeus—or by patriarchy? Where would Helen go?[506]

3.2.3 Producing passivity

What, then, is at issue in sexual violence? In her philosophical study of sexual violence, Ann Cahill (2001) argues that, as a crime, rape is at once a violation of the victim's sexual, bodily, and intersubjective integrity. In this, Cahill suggests, it differs from other kinds of physical violence in being sexually coded. Its subject and object positions are sexually determined—so sexual violence is *mostly* violence imposed on feminine bodies by men.[507] This is particularly evident in the threat of sexual violence which, as a looming ever-present possibility, comes to organize the scope of free movement of women or feminine bodies (Cahill 2001, 159).[508] Compare how in Greek myth the free movement of young girls outside the domestic sphere is often coded with a threat of either rape or seduction.

Sexual violence can be understood, Cahill argues furthermore, as an attack on the victim's embodied condition (2001, 109ff.). The act is particularly violent in rendering the body of the victim into a site of crime. As Cahill writes, it is "exploitation of the vulnerabilities that an embodied intersubjectivity necessarily entails," imposing "utter dominance," and resulting in "the virtually total passivity of the rape victim" (Cahill 2001, 132–33; 136). In sexual violence, the body of the victim becomes essentially a *thing* for the other to use. The Western history of philosophy and literature has been dominated by a preconception that connects femininity with passive materiality. Here we can see a social practice that actually *produces* the female body as passive matter with violence. In rape,

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[505] Levinas' account, to which Agamben refers, echoes a similar experience. For him, shame stems above all from the impossibility of escaping one's self, and this inescapability is revealed in a moment of exposure: "If shame is present, it means that we cannot hide what we should like to hide" (Levinas 2003, 64).

[506] Cf. Euripides' *Trojan Women*, in which Helen cannot escape Troy, because her body is all too visible (951–58) and because she has nowhere to go to (910).

[507] In the context of Greek mythology, literature, and culture it is important to note that the threat is specifically targeted against young women *and* young, feminine/feminized boys.

[508] "The fact that women are constantly subjected to the threat and possibility of rape is itself an integral part of any experience of rape" (Cahill 2001, 121). The capacity to affect people as sexed in this way, Cahill holds, is decisive in the crime, as she argues that, "Rape as a social phenomenon affects men and women in distinctly different ways, ways that not only depend on sexual difference but actually *produce experiences and subjects that are differentiated by sex*. Rape here can be understood [...] as a society-wide means of producing and perpetuating a system of oppression that privileges men and dominates women." (Cahill 2001, 125–26; emphasis mine.) Cahill studies women's experiences in the twentieth century, but we can see how the rape narratives of Greek myth may have served as a persistent reminder of the threats to women's free movement.

the victim's body is reduced to an object-like status: it is made passive and (literally) receptive.

Respectively, in the *Helen*, the body becomes an object. In an exchange between the chorus and Helen, she likens her body to a statue or painting, that is, to an inanimate object. Lamenting her misfortunes, Helen declares:

> My mother bore me as a monstrosity (*teras*) to people: No woman in Hellas or among barbarians has given birth to a white chick's egg, in which Leda is said to have borne me to Zeus. My life and everything related to me are a monstrosity (*teras*), because of Hera, because of my beauty (*to kallos aition*). Would that I had been wiped clean like a statue (*hôs agalm'*), so that I might get an uglier form instead of a beautiful one (*aiskhion eidos…anti tou kalou*), and that the Greeks had forgotten the evil fate I now have and remembered what is good, just as they now remember what is ill! (256–66)[509]

Although the imagery of animals is missing, this, too, is a wish for metamorphosis. Helen wants to make her own body unrecognizable, like the bodies of transformed nymphs. She wishes that, like a painting or statue, she could be wiped clean, so that she might leave behind her previous beauty acquiring an uglier form (*aischion eidos*) in its stead. Thus, her wish appears to address the paradox of her beauty: Helen's visual beauty is susceptible to inviting shame and blame from others (a disfigurement and defilement *in words*), whereas a visual ugliness would offer protection or escape.

Helen's body, as it is depicted here, has an uncanny quality. The story of Helen's birth from a swan's egg marks her body as an anomaly right from birth. She asserts that her birth as well as her life and deeds are all *monstrosity* (*teras*) – to emphasize, the word is repeated twice within the short passage.[510] The uncanny impression is highlighted also in Helen's likening herself to an *agalma*, a statue or painting. She wishes that her body would "be wiped clean" (*exaleftheisa* in passive) from colors as a painting or statue could—that is, disfigured and mutilated. With the image, she renders her body as an inanimate *thing*. That is, here the body acquires an object-like status, a malleable thing in the hands of other people.

In her analysis, Cahill recognizes the shame of the victims that accompanies sexual violence. She states simply that the "shame and guilt that many rape victims experience are a direct reflection of society's tendency to blame them for

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[509] ἆρ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσά μ᾽ ἔτεκεν ἀνθρώποις τέρας; / γυνὴ γὰρ οὔθ᾽ Ἑλληνὶς οὔτε βάρβαρος / τεῦχος νεοσσῶν λευκὸν ἐκλοχεύεται, / ἐν ᾧ με Λήδαν φασὶν ἐκ Διὸς τεκεῖν. / τέρας γὰρ ὁ βίος καὶ τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐστί μου, / τὰ μὲν δι᾽ Ἥραν, τὰ δὲ τὸ κάλλος αἴτιον. / εἴθ᾽ ἐξαλειφθεῖσ᾽ ὡς ἄγαλμ᾽ αὖθις πάλιν / αἴσχιον εἶδος ἔλαβον ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ, / καὶ τὰς τύχας μὲν τὰς κακὰς ἃς νῦν ἔχω / Ἕλληνες ἐπελάθοντο, τὰς δὲ μὴ κακὰς / ἔσωιζον ὥσπερ τὰς κακὰς σώιζουσί μου.

[510] The aura of monstrosity follows Helen in other places of Greek literature as well. As Worman notes, "If the figure of Helen evokes the visual and tactile pleasures of the luxury item, she just as quickly brings on a monstrous, deadly terror" (Worman 2002, 114), citing the third choral ode of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in which Helen is both an *agalma* of wealth and an Erinys for brides (A. *Ag.* 740, 749).

their own assault" (Cahill 2001, 127).[511] While it is true that society-wide victim-blaming is, indeed, shame-inducing, I wish to suggest another source for the feeling, one that originates from the very structure of embodied shame. Following Agamben's analysis, victim shame could be seen as connected to the experience of passivity and objectification in violence. As noted above, Agamben defines shame as arising from the tension between the speaking being and the living being and as the experience of being affected by one's own passivity. As the malleability of Helen's own body implies (as well as that of the bodies of the metamorphosing victims), the violated body is indeed depicted as malleable and material in its malleability. In the cases of mythological metamorphosis, the body is revealed in its potential to be reduced to mere materiality, which can take any shape whatsoever: Callisto is said to take the *morphê*, the shape, of a bear (378).

The rendering passive material of the body is at once also an event of severing the mythological victims from intersubjective relations.[512] In becoming animals such as deer, bears, fish, and birds, the women are also excluded from the *human* society.[513] This is reflected by the fact that as animals, the victims also lose their *ability to speak*—they are no longer *speaking beings* in Agamben's sense.[514] The loss of meaningful speech is highlighted in the chorus' invocation of the Nereid being violated by Pan. They hear "a pitiable noise (*oiktiron homadon*)," an "unlyrical lament (*aluron elagon*)," "screaming (*elaken*)," "lamenting (*aiagmasi*)" and "echoing cries (*klaggaisi*)" (184-190). Similarly, Procne is evoked as a singer whose song consists of the thrilling sound of *eleleu* (1111). While these victims are confined to meaningless cries, others have been sentenced to other types of silence: Philomela is missing a tongue, and Persephone is the "unsayable" (*arrhêton* 1307) daughter. In these examples, Agamben's distinction between the two poles of subjectivity—the speaking subject and the potentially passive body—becomes painfully manifest. Thus, following Agamben's definition, we might say that to be affected by sexual violence *is* to be affected by one's own passivity and receptivity—which manifests as shame.

The material and passive nature of the body is not only an inescapable condition but also a terrifying condition. When Helen gives her reasons for her wish to avoid forced marriage with Theoclymenus, she says, "but when a woman has a distasteful (*pikros*) husband, her body is distasteful (*pikros*) as well" (296–97). The chosen term, *pikros* (bitter, distasteful), recalls another word used by

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[511] She also suggests that shame arises from the sexual nature of the crime: "It is rape's sexuality that is socially interpreted as embarrassing, shameful, and inappropriate as a topic of civil conversation" (Cahill 2001, 119).

[512] Cahill suggests that in rendering its victims into mere things, sexual violence also deny their intersubjectivity (2011, 132): "Rape, in its total denial of the victim's agency, will, and personhood, can be understood as a denial of intersubjectivity itself. Here in a radical way, only the person (the assailant) is acting, and one person (the victim) is wholly acted on. This imbalance, in its total nature, renders the victim incapable of being truly engaged intersubjectively. The self is at once denied and, by the totality of this denial, stilled, silenced, overcome." (Cahill 2001, 132)

[513] In other mythical cases of rape, the girl might transform into a river or a tree.

[514] Similarly, in some sources, Thetis is said to have remained totally silent during her "forced marriage" to Peleus (Larson 2010, 72).

both Helen and Teucer in the play—*apoptuô*, to spit out (75, 664). Teucer claims that the gods should *spit* her out for "having such a resemblance of Helen" (75).[515] But unlike a story or a likeness that reminds one of death, one's own body cannot be spat out in disgust. Because of this, Helen continues, "It is best to die" (297–98). That is, the body becomes distasteful and, perhaps, also repulsive for the shamed person: as an object, the body becomes an abject.[516]

According to Julia Kristeva's account of the abject, the horrible and the disgusting are something that threatens the *thinkable*. Therefore, the human body understood as mere matter is an abject because matter—as the outside of language, as a 'thing in itself'—invariably poses a threat to what is thinkable in the first place (Butler 1993, 27–31).[517] In *Helen* and Greek myth, this materiality is so unbearable for the female victims of rape and for Helen herself that a horrifying metamorphosis seems a preferable fate to living on with the body that has become an object in shame or a scene of crime. The object-like, mute materiality of the body that is revealed in violence threatens, then, the very conditions of subjectivity.

Thus, while there is a tendency to shame the victims—Helen in her many literary guises is just one example of this phenomenon—it is also possible that additional shaming is not necessarily required for sexual violence to give rise to shame in its victim. It is possible that subjugation itself may be experienced as shameful, and not *necessarily* so because it is coded as such in society. The body turned into passive and receptive flesh, threatening subjectivity itself, is an abject for the experiencing subject. This is what it ultimately means to be consigned to what cannot be escaped (at least while alive).

3.2.4 Embodying shame

By likening herself to an *agalma*, Helen makes herself into a virtual *eidôlon*—later calling the *eidôlon* an *agalma* as well (1219). Earlier, we saw that Helen tried to elude the shame of her *eidôlon* by appealing to the difference between her body and the image. Here the body is again revealed to be an image and a sort of *eidôlon* and a source of shame and distress. In this juxtaposition, the *eidôlon* theme becomes a metaphor for the inescapable visibility of any embodied subject. The body is a visible thing, an image. It is perceived by others, never *as such* but always as something or as *someone*. Hence, Helen's wish is to change her

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[515] Besides disust, Helen's body seems to invoke horror as well. In the *Iliad*, Helen claims that everyone shudders when they see her (*Il.* 24.775).

[516] In her analysis, Julia Kristeva conceives an abject as something that is at once part of me and foreign to me, something that threatens my being and yet fascinates my imagination. The human body is an object that matches this definition. In its materiality and passivity, the body borders on becoming a corpse—being a corpse, in turn, is a possibility that is always already inscribed on one's body. The corpse, according to Kristeva, haunts the living subject in the form of an abject: "[C]orpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being" (Kristeva 1982, 3).

[517] Kristeva (1982, 1) notes that abjection is "ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable."

appearance *so that* the people around her might form a new picture, or a new *doxa*, of her, "forgetting all the evils they now remember."

Indeed, following the *peripeteia* of the play, something shifts in the protagonist, and she does, in the end, acquire "an uglier form in stead of her beauty". At the decisive point in the play, Menelaus realizes that Helen indeed is Helen, and the *eidôlon* vanishes into thin air. From this point onwards, it is as though Helen herself has transformed into another character: her wish of metamorphosis seems to materialize, as she begins to adopt traits for which she has been shamed in the literature. We see a transformation of the previous chaste, pure, and innocent model of a wife into a scheming, lying, seductive, and dangerous figure.

After the *eidôlon* has vanished and the confusion of identities settled (at least for a while), it is time to escape Egypt. Menelaus has neither ship nor army with which to fight the Egyptians—nor has he, as it turns out, any strategic skills. Thus, it is Helen, with her "feminine devices" (*gynê..sofon* 1049; *gynaikeiais technaisin* 1621), who devises an escape plot. Her plan is to give a false report to Theoclymenus that Menelaus has died in the sea, and that, consequently, Helen is willing to marry Theoclymenus after a proper funeral. Menelaus himself is to play a messenger who brings the report of his death.

To deceive Theoclymenus Helen must transform her body and impersonate a mourning widow: "I will go to the house and cut my hair, change my white robe to a black one, and strike the skin of my cheeks with bloodying nails" (1087–89).[518] Although not an intraspecies metamorphosis, this points to a change in Helen's bodily comportment and surface (as Theoclymenus recaps at 1186–90).[519] Helen, indeed, adopts an uglier form (263). By changing her clothes and hair and mutilating her cheeks, Helen embodies a traditional portrait of a widow. Adopting a traditional suppliant posture and grasping Theoclymenus' knees (1237–38), she begs him to let her bury her husband before the wedding.

Moreover, after her transformation (1184 onwards), Helen adopts a different mode of speaking, namely, lying. To recall, as we saw with the *Philoctetes*, lying is consistently labeled as *aischron* in tragedy.[520] Helen informs Theoclymenus that Menelaus has drowned (1196), that she has heard the news from an eyewitness (1203, who is, in fact, Menelaus), and that she is willing to marry Theoclymenus (1231). The deceit in her bodily comportment—her short hair, her suppliant kneeling—is, then, doubled in her deceitful words. Helen says that she wishes to bury her dead husband according to a Greek tradition—which, historically speaking, did not exist—according to which those deceased at sea have an "empty" funeral (1243). She and Menelaus then request sacrificial

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[518] ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐς οἴκους βᾶσα βοστρύχους τεμῶ / πέπλων τε λευκῶν μέλανας ἀνταλλάξομαι / παρῇδί τ᾽ ὄνυχα φόνιον ἐμβαλῶ χροός.

[519] A foreshadowing of this metamorphosis occurs in the early song of the chorus, where they describe the mourning of the anthropomorphic Greece: "Howling, howling, Greece cried aloud, broke into wailing. She struck her hands to her head, and with the bloody blows of her nails drenched her soft-skinned cheek." (βοὰν βοὰν δ᾽ Ἑλλὰς <αἶ᾽> / ἐκελάδησεν ἀνοτότυξεν, / ἐπὶ δὲ κρατὶ χέρας ἔθηκεν, / ὄνυχι δ᾽ ἁπαλόχροα γένυν / ἔδευσεν φοινίαισι πλαγαῖς, 370–74).

[520] See Appendix.

animals and food as well as arms and a ship—with which they will eventually escape Egypt. That is, the adoption of an "uglier form" takes place in words as well as on the physical surface.

The body's perceivability, which is at the center of Helen's shame (as well as Oedipus' and Neoptolemus'), conversely facilitates the manipulation of its visual properties: acting, impersonating, masking, and deceiving. While Helen's body is vulnerable in its mingling with false images, it can also *produce* these false images. Helen's ability to produce images herself grants her body a space in which she can move freely. Indeed, Helen's act is a success, and in the end, she and Menelaus sail home. It has been argued that the play has a happy ending.[521] For instance, in the end, Helen does not die. However, because she does *not* die, she must instead find ways of living with the memory of her shame stamped onto her body.[522]

In the *Helen*, then, metamorphosis is a necessity for survival. Becoming ugly or becoming animal is preferable to living within the body that has revealed its potential for passivity or become the scene of a crime. In the process of disfigurement as well as in the monstrous metamorphoses, women seem to assume and embody the shame that has been imposed on them. However, by making themselves monstrous, the female figures make shame work to protect them; like a cover that shelters the self from the hurtful world, it helps to "change the burden of pain" (380).

For, besides pain and destruction, shame also points to survival, in that shame presupposes love. This basic recognition also lies behind the accusations of the narcissism and egoism of the emotion. Despite the pain associated with the experience or its sometimes disastrous consequences, the feeling of shame is possible only if there has been a previous experience that is fundamentally positive.[523] We have seen this in all the studied cases: Oedipus' shame of the defiled self presupposes the love of the proper and clean self; Neoptolemus' fear

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[521] Based on this happy outcome, it has been argued that Euripides' *Helen* is not a true tragedy (Allan 2008). According to Juffras (1993, 56–57) Helen "turns out not to have suffered very much at all." It is true that in the play, after being separated for 17 years, Helen and Menelaus finally reunite, and manage to escape Egypt, and there are admittedly some truly comic moments. Stavrinou (2015) points out the comical characteristics of Helen, for example the character of the Old Woman who, during their dialogue, is probably physically shoving Menelaus. Moreover, almost no one dies within the play (apart from some Egyptian soldiers, Helen's mother, and those who fought in Troy). However, I agree with Allan (2008), who notes that the depiction of suffering and not death is what makes a tragedy tragic—and there is suffering in the *Helen*. Helen's own suffering is brought on by her situation, the threat of sexual violence, her shameful *eidôlon*.

[522] Cahill raises a phenomenon related to trauma: often, the traumatized victims of sexual violence have an experience of being re-created after the trauma (130–31): "the self that emerges from the process of healing will always be qualitatively different from the self that existed prior to the assault" (2001, 133).

[523] The connection is widely recognized in modern literature. Scheler writes that "In general genuine shame is built upon a feeling of a positive value of the self" (Scheler 1987, 37). Tomkins connects shame not to self-love but to interest and joy: "The innate activator of shame is the incomplete reduction of interest or joy" (Tomkins 2008 [1963], 353). According to Steinbock's (2014, 77) definition, shame is not possible without "a genuine self-love," for "It is by virtue of the positive value of Myself that an act or event giving rise to shame can be weighted as negative."

of being revealed as ugly stems from a place in which the self is expected to be beautiful; and Helen's shame of being defamed by falsehoods is based on a conviction that her self is not the same as her *eidôlon*. Furthermore, *only if* one has previously taken pleasure in her active and expressive embodiment can she feel the deprivation of this pleasure in shame, in being affected by the sudden passivity of her body. For this reason, Gabriele Taylor can call shame an "emotion of self-protection" (Taylor 1985, 81). Shame also points to a wish to protect the self and the body—by hiding, by seeking shelter.

To take up one final distinction between shame and guilt, I wish to consider the basic underlying desire involved in each emotion. Both emotions, it seems, are arranged around a drive or a wish. In guilt, this is, at the bottom, the desire to be penalized (perhaps because one believes it is *right* that they be punished or because one wishes to atone for their misdeeds, nevertheless, the driving desire of guilt-feelings is a desire that the self be punished or corrected).[524] The bottom-line desire in shame is almost diametrically the opposite: for shame presupposes a desire to be loved. This desire may manifest in many different forms: as a desire to be admired, to be accepted into a group, to be cared for, to be seen, to be seen as beautiful, and so on.

As noted, it is this desire that has been the reason that shame has been critiqued as an egotistical emotion feeding into our primitive narcissism. However, we might ask, what is gained by defining the wish to belong as egotistic—or as shameful? Is admitting that one wants to be loved so shameful that it must be banished from the ranks of 'moral emotions' and defined as narcissistic and primitive? Another possible way of approaching the desire to be loved is to recognize that the self *needs* to be loved (or if not loved, then invested at least with *some* positive value) to survive. The basic premise remains the same: one does not feel shame for a self that is felt to be *completely* unlovable. Rather, it is our very care and love for the self that renders us vulnerable to shame in the first place.

This love, I wish to suggest, is found at the heart of the female metamorphoses, in the wish to secure and protect the self, even if it means assuming an uglier form. In the *Helen*, we find a clear pronouncement of the connection between shame and self-love. The thought is expressed through the mouth of one more female figure in the play, Theonoe, the daughter of Psamathe. Theonoe explains that she wishes to avoid disgrace (*duskleia*) in her actions. The reason she gives for this wish is, first, simply, "I love my self (*filô t'emautên*)," and then more ambiguously, "There is a great temple of justice in my *phusis* [that] I try to save" (999–1004).[525] The loved self emerges as something that precedes shame, as an object of care and love. The fantastic strategy of metamorphosing

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[524] Freud (1961a [1928]; 1961b [1924]) suggests as much. Taylor (1985, 89–90) does not speak of desire but the feeling that punishment is "due": "if a person feels guilty she thinks she has put herself into a position where punishment is due," or "If I have done wrong then there is some way in which I can 'make up' for it, if only by suffering a punishment." For a more recent psychological perspective, see Nelissen and Zeelenberg (2009) on the pathological wish to be punished in guilt.

[525] ἔνεστι δ᾿ ἱερὸν τῆς δίκης ἐμοὶ μέγα / ἐν τῇ φύσει.

the shamed self is then, perhaps, a dream of protecting and healing the loved self *in* and *with* shame.

CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I have traced the tracks of an ancient shame. My contention has been that there are other ethical rationalities besides the morality of guilt, one of them being the ethics of shame. By tracing the internal logic of shame in three case studies, I have analyzed those aspects of shame that make it, in Phaedra's words, both a possible ruin for a house, as well as a positive element in a community, even a pleasure. I have shown that while ancient shame is an emotion that reveals one's ties to other people, intersubjective shame can also traverse inter subjects and affect with the logic of contagion and dirt. On the other hand, I have demonstrated that shame is a response to the aesthetic values of beauty and ugliness and that it can explain why these values have any value for the subject in the first place. Yet it also haunts those who fail to fulfill the confines of conventional beauty. Finally, I have argued that shame is based on love for the self, a wish to keep the self safe – and, at the same time, it can make life unbearable for those who are already hurt.

The dissertation opened with a reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* in which I discussed the intersubjective and social aspects of shame, focusing particularly on the play's themes of gaze and reciprocal vision and Oedipus' act of self-blinding. Reading these themes in parallel with Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenological analysis of the phenomenon, I argued that Oedipus' shame is his experience of witnessing himself being witnessed. Even when all shame lies on an intersubjective foundation, there is one subject for whom this intersubjectivity poses a specific threat. This is the sovereign subject of the tyrannical Oedipus (looming still in the background of psychological models of shame indebted to psychoanalysis). However, in Sophocles' play, the social aspect of shame did not manifest exclusively in Oedipus' intersubjectively built subjectivity but also in how the emotion could cross subjective boundaries. By analyzing the reactions of the chorus on witnessing Oedipus' shame, I argued that the emotion spreads following a model of contamination, just as the disease spreads throughout Thebes.

Recognition of the social and intersubjective aspects guided the discussion on the differences between shame and guilt. I identified the difference as a

disparity between two types of subject, a solitary individual of guilt and an other-bound subject of shame. In my analysis, I demonstrated that the phenomenon of guilt is heavily connected to the juridical model of morality, and if we take ethics to extend beyond a semi-juridical discourse, then there are no reasons to consider guilt any more profound an ethical phenomenon than shame.

In the second chapter, I offered a reading of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and a study of the evaluative aspects of shame, focusing on the relationship between shame and the shameful. I approached the theme through the lens of aesthetic evaluation, calling attention both to the aesthetic dimensions of *aischron* as well as to the structure of the play within a play in the *Philoctetes*. Taking up Michel Foucault's idea of the aesthetics of existence, I explored how ethical and aesthetic evaluation coincide in the play. With the central figures of Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, I highlighted two sides of ethical–aesthetic evaluation in shame: the beneficial and the destructive. I argued that Neoptolemus exemplifies the idea found in Greek literature, summarized by Aristotle, that shame should teach the young about beauty and ugliness. Philoctetes, on the other hand, represents the reverse side of the beneficial *aidôs*, those who fall outside the margins of beauty. However, I suggested that although aesthetic evaluation might value beauty and abhor ugliness, the notions of beauty and ugliness themselves are negotiable. Shame that follows the lines of beauty and ugliness is not necessarily merely superficial; it is also fundamentally malleable in its evaluations.

With Euripides' *Helen*, I examined the workings of embodiment in shame from two perspectives. First, I explored how Helen is perceived by others (in other words, her *doxa*) in Attic tragedy and how this perception brands her body as shameful and ugly. Utilizing Sara Ahmed's writing on emotive signs, I suggested that the perceptions of others become attached to Helen's bodily surface, producing it as an inescapably shameful object through the circulation of signs. Second, I explored the discrepancy between Helen's self and her material body in light of the claim made by Giorgio Agamben (among others) that it is the body in its very materiality and passivity that makes shame possible in the first place. In my reading of the play, I emphasized how shame is constructed around the body's visibility and vulnerability, suggesting that the play's *eidôlon* theme serves as an embodied metaphor for the experience of shame. I have also argued that the relationship between Helen and her *eidôlon* sheds light on the discrepancy between the lived body and the body as a thing perceived by others. In Helen's experience, the *eidôlon* is non-coincident with her self, and yet the ways in which others perceive this cloud image affect her body and life. In the play, the tragedy of consignment is reinforced by the stories of metamorphoses of female victims of sexual violence, suggesting that both shame and the body might be escaped only through the transformation of the self.

Throughout the dissertation, I have refrained from assigning shame a fixed definition besides Aristoteles' general remark that shame is the fear of a bad reputation. Rather, I have identified multiple different yet related factors within the confines of a feeling. Under the labels of intersubjectivity, evaluation, and embodiment, I have discussed exposure, ugliness, and vulnerability as well as

doxai, rumors and slander, positions of power and subordination, aesthetic judgments of bodies, persons and deeds, pride and *hybris*, self-protection and narcissism, abjection and disgust, and ritualized step-marks for feeling and for performing feeling. Together, these elements produce various, painful tangles of shame.

This means to say that shame is a transversal. It cuts through the subject: the bodily, the social, the visible, the intimate, the public, the ineffable, the abject… In all the tragedies studied in detail in this dissertation, shame shares in an interplay of beauty and disgust. In the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, we encounter an all-beautiful and godlike Oedipus who harbors a "rotting wound beneath the beautiful surface." In the *Philoctetes* Neoptolemus' wish to become a *kalos kagathos* is obstructed by his base actions, which make "everything disgusting" as they do not align with his *phusis*. In *Helen*, both the slander and the threat of sexual violence turn Helen's beauty to work against her: instead of being a joy, it makes her life a *teras*, a monstrosity. In all the tragedies, the tension between beauty and disgust gives rise to shame.

A major thread running through the dissertation has been the question of the subject: Who is the subject of shame? How does shame reflect subjectivity? This problem also mirrors the discussion with which I began the dissertation—that is, whether or not classical Greek society constituted a so-called shame culture. My contention has been that the subjectivity of shame (or the subjectivity peculiar to a shame culture) differs from the subjectivity involved in the experience and logic of guilt (and thus the logic of any deontological, duty-oriented, or legalistic morality). It is a subjectivity in which the external aspects are not overruled by internal ones and in which the cause-and-effect model of responsibility does not dominate other modes of relating to actions or to others—consider, again, how shame may be felt for a relative or a fellow citizen, or for an accident in a way in which guilt cannot.

The final line of demarcation is the relationship between surface and depth. If in the logic of morality of guilt, the surface is what deceives and the true beauty is found in the hidden depths of internal space, in shame the relationship is different. It is the overt, the outward showing surface that bears the beauty – if there, indeed, is beauty to be found – but the hidden poses a threat. It is the hidden, that which is separated from the visible surface and the social person, the *prosopon*, that poses a threat and hides a possible source of disgust. Shame's subject is visible, connected, embodied, and vulnerable rather than accountable. My claim has been that even if shame were to be thus unhinged from responsibility, it does not necessarily follow that it would be un*ethical*.

As noted in the Introduction, the objections against the ethical (or moral) importance of shame rest on accusations that shame is a primitive, egotistic, infantile, and narcissistic emotion. These also appear to mark the subject of shame—a paradigmatic example being Oedipus the king—a powerful, hubristic, self-assured (male) subject who wants to be admired and loved by everyone (especially, as a psychoanalytical writer might add, by his mother). The shame of this infantile and narcissistic subject results from the realization of the limits of

the childish fantasy of omnipotence as much as from the withdrawal of love. However, when some aspects of the shame-subject are highlighted, others will inevitably remain overlooked. Oedipus is not the sole subject of shame. The primitive, narcissistic, and infantile wish to be loved has a reverse side to it: it is also a need for love, a need for affirmation, a need to belong to a community. Rather than condemning self-love and the need for affirmation as ethical *defects*, we may take the primitive wish to be loved as a reminder of the fact that external care is a non-negotiable condition for living and surviving. This is the basic vulnerability of a human being that shame is so apt to reveal.

Thus, I wish to conclude my study by drawing attention specifically to this aspect of shame: the wish to be included in the intersubjective community, to belong. This desire becomes particularly pronounced when we explore the shame of the violated, humiliated, and subjected—that of a Helen, a Philoctetes, or a Phaedra. All have been barred from a community: animal-like Philoctetes fears the laughter of his enemies on a lonely island; Helen, isolated in a fantastic Egypt, is so hated by everyone that her body becomes a monstrosity among human beings; Phaedra's violation against the norms of womanhood leads her to believe that she belongs in Hades. However, Oedipus and Neoptolemus also stand on the fringes of the community: one fallen from the position of power, a scapegoat occupying an internally excluded position in his city; the other just entering the community of adult citizens, in the liminal position of not-yet and not-anymore.

The shame of the outsider or the ostracized, too, is egoistic, revealing the need for love in the moment when love is denied. It is precisely with those who *do not* receive external affirmation that the need for love becomes vital. These, too, are the subjects of shame. In exploring the outsiders or the not-quite and not-yet members of the community, my study reveals the utmost place of shame: the feeling resides at the junction between belonging and exclusion. In a sense, my study has also outlined another, potential community: this is the community of the ugly, of the incestuous parricide, an almost-animal man, a clueless youth, and a woman of a questionable repute (and a seal, a deer, a bear, and some birds). These border figures draw attention to how a community polices its borders: one way of policing is through shame.

I am still wary of endorsing the narrative of a historically locatable Greek shame culture. However, I do wish to note that there may be something that we can define as "cultures of shame." These differ considerably from the Homeric battlegrounds on which shameful submission is sometimes more deplorable than death. On the contrary, the cultures of shame would be those cultures-within-cultures that are inhabited by outsiders—women, the poor, the disabled. Perhaps, I suggest, some of us have never left these cultures of shame in the first place—not because of a tyrant's infantile need for external recognition but rather because of a position of exclusion, subjection, and vulnerability in a culture whose ideals one does not, and *cannot*, fulfill.

I suggest that we tend to believe that some of the figures discussed in this dissertation *ought* to feel shame, and that some *ought not* feel it—that there is both

justified and unjustified shame. I have attempted throughout this dissertation to avoid the mode of thought that I call moral (as distinct from ethics). Even now, therefore, I maintain that it is unnecessary to distinguish an ethically valuable shame from an ethically deficient one. Shame is simply a *pathos*, affecting its targets, unconcerned as to whether it has the right to do so or not. Rather, I suggest that if in the heart of shame, one finds a desire to be loved, to be seen as beautiful, or to be accepted into a community, this desire has consequences for the ethicality of the emotion. For, is not this desire precisely a desire for ethics— a desire for love, beauty, and belonging? Then, it seems, shame is ethical to the core.

APPENDIX: THE SHAMEFUL

This Appendix constitutes my examination of all instances of *aischron* and its cognates in the surviving Greek tragedies, which allowed me to outline a picture of what are, at least typically, "shameful things [that] entail shame"—as Euripides puts it (E. *Andr.* 244)—in the context of tragedy. My criterion has been to choose those things that are *explicitly* said to be shameful in the tragedies, and I hypothesize that this explicit labeling will indicate that most of these things are shameful according to opinion or convention—that is, an audience member would likely agree as to the shamefulness of these instances.

In the broadest sense, *anything* that someone is willing to reproach can become a source of shame. Thus, the scope of the shameful may potentially be very large. However, if we look more closely at the instances of things called shameful or shame-inducing in the tragedies, we may observe several recurring themes, which are often related to shame. In analyzing all instances of *aischron* and its cognate terms in the extant tragedies, we may detect some typical instances of shameful behavior or traits. I shall not claim that these are all the possible shameful things or that the following classification might serve as a final truth about the things that are possibly shameful. Rather, I think that we can identify some tendencies in terms of what is typically—or conventionally—considered shameful. I have chosen to class the instances into six different groups, as follows: 1) Submission; 2) Abuse; 3) Shameful speech (lying, deceit, reproach, slander); 4) Sexuality and shame related to women and femininity; 5) Taboos; and 6) Willingness to live without honor or under excessive hardship. These different clusters of "shameful" things do overlap with each other in places, but, more importantly, they also appear to contradict one another at times. Next, let us examine these sets of shameful things more closely.

1) The most usual and evident source of shame may be broadly defined as *submission*.[527] The basic disvalues included in this group are weakness, vulnerability, and loss of esteem, money, status, and so on. The shameful lack of power is most frequently related to, or revealed in, the context of war and combat—that is, shameful weakness can involve suffering, defeat, and death in the hands of a less powerful enemy (A. *Sept.* 683; Aesch, *Pers.* 332; E. *Heracl.* 450).[528] As a messenger reports in the *Persians*, "They died shamefully by a most inglorious fate" (τεθνᾶσιν αἰσχρῶς δυσκλεεστάτῳ μόρῳ. A. *Pers.* 444). Consequently, it is possible to "cover [one's enemies] in shame" by killing them (E. *Supp.* 530; E. *Hec.* 443). An often-recurring sentiment is that cowardice is one of the most shameful things, as is flight from battle, which is taken as an indication of cowardice (A. *Sept.* 409–411; S. OC 1422; E. *Heracl.* 700; E. *Bacch.* 798;

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[527] This comes close to Williams' definition of shame as "loss of power" (2008 [1993], 219). However, while Williams considers the loss of power to be definitive of shame in general, I shall argue that it does not capture all instances of shameful conditions or behaviors.
[528] Dying is shameful also at S. *Aj.* 1059; E. *Andr.* 927; E. *Her.* 1384 (perhaps also at E. *Tro.* 1177); and at E. *Bacch.* 1307, wherein it must be assumed that it would be particularly shameful to die at the hands of one's own mother.

E. *Heracl.* 700; E. *Her.* 293; E. *Ion* 854; E. *Ph.* 999; E. *Tro.* 401). The shameful lack of power can also manifest itself as the lack of means to help oneself or one's friends (E. *Supp.* 767–8; E. *Hercl.*840; E. *El.* 336; E. *Hec.* 311; E. *Hip.* 1332; E. *IT* 606). Shame also colors physical weakness as well as lack of self-control (E. *Bacch.* 365; E. *Or.* 10). Furthermore, we also find references to the shame that someone might feel when subjected to slavery or servitude or being of low birth (S. *Aj.* 505; S. *El.* 989; S. *OT* 1079). Servitude is particularly shameful when one has *lost* status—that is, being a slave is shameful, but it is even more shameful to *become* one (S. *Aj.* 505; S. *El.* 989; E. *Hec.* 822). Furthermore, it is also shameful to be a suppliant (E. *Supp.* 164) or a victim of abuse (E. *Hec.* 374). All of these instances indicate situations wherein one has no power, has lost power, is helpless, is of a low status, is serving others, and is unable to help oneself or others. Thus, the lack of power is understood in both physical and social terms.[529] Furthermore, the very fact that someone errs may be shameful: in the *Prometheus*, we hear that it is shameful for a wise man to err (σοφῷ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν ἐξαμαρτάνειν. A. *Prom.* 1039)

In these situations, it seems, there is no difference between *being* and *seeming* powerless. Thus, *seeming* like a coward is often said to be as shameful as actually being one (E. *Ph.* 999). Moreover, it is even *more* shameful for a brave man to be mistaken for a coward. In the same vein, in Euripides' *Ion*, a character claims that there is nothing shameful in *being* a slave: only the *name* is shameful (E. Ion 854; ἐν γὰρ τι τοῖς δούλοισιν αἰσχύνην φέρει,). According to this view, there is nothing inherently shameful in slavery, but the shame follows only from *what people say*. From the perspective of shame and the shameful, the boundary between being and appearing pales into insignificance.

2) While submission is a ubiquitous and prevalent source of shame in the tragedies, its opposite—the *abuse of others*—is regarded as a source of shame. This is clearest when it comes to the norms regulating supplication: the tragedies highlight that it is shameful and ugly *not to help* suppliants (i.e., S. OC 929; E. *Andr.* 576; E. *Heracl.* 223, 242, 255; E. *Hec.* 806), both when one is unable to help suppliants because of lack of means (i.e., E. *Heracl.* 285, 568) and when one refuses to help owing to greed or wickedness. One poignant example of this kind of abuse may be found in Euripides' *Hecuba*, in which Hecuba, fearing for her son's life, sends him to the house of a guest-friend, who, violating the norms of friendship, kills the boy for money (δράσαντι δ' αἰσχρὰ δεινὰ τἀπιτίμια, E. *Hec.* 1086; 1248; also in E. *Tro.* 1191). Such shame also concerns those who are somehow in an advantageous position compared with other people—for example, it is shameful to have mantic powers while not using this power for good (αἰσχρὸν τὰ μέν σε θεῖα πάντ' ἐξειδέναι, / τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα, E. *Hel.* 922). The position of a husband in relation to his wife can also be shameful because of the power it permits him over the wife (E. *Med.* 501). It also seems that *hybris* and arrogance are shameful because they point to the subject's imagining

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[529] In the *Rhesus* (of disputed authorship), the theme of the lack of power is also prevalent: in the play, shameful things include defeat (E. *Rhes.* 82, 810), the inability to avenge injustice (E. *Rhes.* 102, 589), powerlessness (E. *Rhes.* 489), and dying without glory (E. *Rhes.* 757).

that they have unmatched power over others (A. *Ag*. 222).[530] That is, there is something inherently shameful in an uneven distribution of power—both for the person suffering *and* for the person in the position of power.[531] The uneven distribution of power also affects the relationship between the gods and mortals, so that in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, the son of Heracles claims, on witnessing the death of his father, that the suffering of humans is shameful for the gods (τὰ δὲ νῦν ἑστῶτ᾽ οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν, / αἰσχρὰ δ᾽ ἐκείνοις, S. *Trach*. 1272).[532]

3) Ugly speech forms one cluster of the shameful. On the one hand, there is shameful *lying and deception*, and on the other hand, *reproach or slander*, which are understood to be a source of shame for the reproached but are also often claimed to be "shameful speech" in themselves. First, concerning lying and deception, the shamefulness of lying is evident. For instance, in *Prometheus Bound*, we are told that "concocted stories are the most disgraceful plague" (νόσημα γὰρ / αἴσχιστον εἶναί φημι συνθέτους λόγους, A. *Prom*. 686). [533] This is also a central question in the *Philoctetes*: "Is it not shameful to speak falsehoods?" Neoptolemus asks repeatedly (Οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγῇ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν; S. *Phil*. 108, 120, 607, 906, 909). Besides shameful lying, we encounter "shameful deception" (αἰσχρὰς ἀπάτας, S. *Phil*. 1136, 1228) and shameful contriving in secret (A. *Choe*. 494; S. *Trach*. 597). Again, pertaining to the indifference between being and seeming, we hear that it is shameful to seem like a liar or traitor (S. *El*. 593; E. *IT* 683). These instances of shameful lying may be counted under the umbrella of abuse of power—deceiving people appears to be shameful precisely because it is based on an uneven distribution of information. However, I choose to treat it here as a separate category of shamefulness because it seems that the shame of deception is also linked simply to the *lack of opacity*. The mere act of withholding information or keeping a secret is also shameful in itself (E. *Alc*. 1037; E. *Ion* 395), and, for instance, in Euripides' *Suppliants*, we are told that it is shameful "to hide good counsel from friends" (αἰσχρόν γ᾽ ἔλεξας, χρήστ᾽ ἔπη κρύπτειν φίλοις. E. *Supp*. 296). While it is common to wish for a shameful thing to remain secret, here, the order seems to be reversed: something may acquire a shameful hue simply by virtue of its being secret.

In addition to lying, there is another cluster of shameful or ugly speech, namely *aischrologia*: insults, reproaches, rumors, attempts at humiliation, and so on. These speech acts are often defined as shameful in themselves (i.e., αἰσχίστους λόγους, S. *Aj*. 1320; αἰσχρὰ…λέγεις, E. *Andr*. 648)—an insult is called "an ugly stain" (αἰσχρὰν προσβαλοῦσα κληδόνα, E. *Alc*. 315). In most cases, the

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[530] *Hybris* may also be at issue in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in which boasting of untrue things is shameful (τοιόσδ᾽ ὁ κόμπος, τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων, / οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν. 613–614)

[531] This will become an important theme in the *Philoctetes*, to which I shall return in the next subchapter. There, shameful things include taking advantage of others' helplessness (S. *Phil*. 265, 1234) and not helping the disadvantaged (S. *Phil*. 476) and seeming reluctant to help (S. *Phil*. 524, Ἀλλ᾽ αἰσχρὰ μέντοι σοῦ γέ μ᾽ ἐνδεέστερον / ξένῳ φανῆναι πρὸς τὸ καίριον πονεῖν).

[532] Among this group, I also count the accusations of shameful pursuit of gain and shameful greed, *aischrokerdia* (E. *Andr*. 451; S. *Ant*. 1056, also at 299, 313, 1047), as in these cases, the accusations seem to center on profiting from one's unfair advantage.

[533] Translation Sommerstein 2009.

things on account of which someone is reproached fall under the six identified clusters of the shameful: that is, shameful speech may be an accusation of cowardice (αἰσχρὸν γ᾽ εἶπας, E. *El*. 275) or of unjust murder (A. *Eum*. 95–99); or there may be a shameful rumor about adultery (E. *Hip*. 692; E. *IA* 1031) or insult to one's family members (S. *El*. 615–6). Here, the difference between seeming and being is again insignificant, and thus it is shameful to be *called* bad, irrespective of whether one is or is not bad (E. *Supp*. 912: αἰσχύνεται δὲ τἀγάθ᾽ ἀσκήσας ἀνὴρ / κακὸς γενέσθαι πᾶς τις). The mere fact that one is targeted by insults or rumors is shameful, perhaps because one has little power over what is being said: thus, in the *Ajax*, the chorus says that a "great rumor" is the source of their shame (ὦ μεγάλα φάτις, ὦ / μᾶτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς, S. *Aj*. 174; see also E. *Tro*. 172).

4) The next cluster of the shameful is arranged around the *theme of sex*: on the one hand, shame is linked to sexual acts, such as adultery as well as to sexual violence, and on the other hand, shame appears to govern the relations between the sexes. Beginning with sex, the most common way in which sex appears in tragedy is in the form of adultery, which is seen as intrinsically shameful to the extent that it is called "shaming the marriage bed" (αἰσχύνειν λέχη, E. *Hip*. 408; A. *Ag*. 1626). Indeed, adultery is shameful, particularly (or exclusively) when it is the *wife* who is involved in an adulterous relationship; the paradigmatic examples here are Clytemnestra and Helen (E. *El*. 916; E. *Hel*. 135, 687, 697; E. *Or*. 98; E. *Tro*. 1114). Adultery is shameful for both the adulterous woman (S. *El*. 586; E. *Hip*. 411) and the cuckolded husband owing to the violation of his honor (A. *Choe*. 990; E. *Med*. 695). The shamefulness of adultery refers to the idea that women are their husbands' possessions and thus violation of the wife also amounts to violating the 'honor' of the husband. Furthermore, in the area of sex, incest is, unsurprisingly, shameful (S. *OT* 367, 1408—here incest and parricide) but so is being in love with one's stepson (E. *Hip*. 246, 331, 404, 511, 719, 721), and so too is insatiable lust—at least for women (E. *Andr*. 220; E. *Bacch*. 1062).[534] Even speaking of sexual relations or reproduction might also be shameful (E. *Andr*. 238, 662). Besides these, sexual violence and rape are crimes that invite shame for all participants. It is shameful for a woman to be a victim of sexual violence and rape (E. *Hel*. 67; E. *Ion* 288),[535] but it is also shameful for the rapist (E. *Hip*. 957) and for the husband or father of the raped woman (αἰσχύναντ᾽ ἐμέ; E. *Hip*. 1172).[536]

Besides the shamefulness of sex, there are different values of shame *that govern the relations between men and women*. I shall call this female shame or woman-related shame. The most paradigmatic instance of this type of shame is "women in public"—we hear repeatedly that it is shameful for a woman to be seen walking or speaking outside her house (A. *Suppl*. 996, 1008; S. *El*. 518; E.

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[534] We could compare this to the comedies that often depict the excessive lust of men. There, the desire also seems to be shameful but in a different tonality. Whereas the desiring women are shameful in a tragic sense, the lustful males of comedy are shameful in the sense of being laughable.

[535] Perhaps also at E. *Hec*. 374.

[536] At E. *Ion* 1526, it is shameful to have had children outside marriage (καὶ τοὐμὸν αἰσχρὸν ἀποφυγεῖν πειρωμένη).

Andr. 877; E. *Ph.* 1276, 1691).[537] It is shameful for a woman to be seen in the company of young men, but this is also shameful for the men (E. *El.* 344; E. *IA* 830). It is also said that women's disobedience is shameful—but it is not clear whether this is shameful for the disobedient woman, for the man or men whom they disobey, or for the community (A. *Sept.* 1028–29; E. *El.* 1051; E. *Tro.* 73). In Euripides' *Electra*, this woman-related shame is linked explicitly to the power relations between the sexes, as we hear that it is shameful for a wife to *rule* over her husband—that is, it is shameful if the conventional power relationship is inverted (E. *El.* 932). In the same manner, in *Antigone,* it is said to be shameful for a man to submit to a woman (S. *Ant.* 747). Some characters voice the opinion that the Trojan War was shameful because it was fought over a woman (E. *Cyc.* 283; E. *Tro.* 773). In the *Hippolytus*, Phaedra suggests that the shame of a woman also shames her husband and children (E. *Hip.* 420: ὡς μήποτ᾽ ἄνδρα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰσχύνασ᾽ ἀλῶ, / μὴ παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτον). Thus, shame appears to govern the (power) relations between the sexes, and it is particularly important for women to act as guardians of *aidôs*.[538]

5) The next cluster of the shameful that I have identified in the tragedies is, appropriately to the genre, *the violation of taboos*. This includes murder of family members—a parent, sibling, or a child—and incest. Crimes of this nature are repeatedly said to be the *most shameful* things there are. In the tragedies, we encounter the shameful murder of one's husband (S. *El.* 487, 559; E. *Or.* 499), of one's wife and one's children (E. *Her.* 1423; E. *Med.* 1346)—be it son (E. *Hip.* 1291) or daughter (E. *IA* 1187; E. *IT* 365)—and the "most shameful" murder of one's brother (E. *Med.* 167; E. *Ph.* 1220, 1369). Furthermore, in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, of course, we have the parricide. This and incest are "The most shameful deeds for a human being" (αἴσχιστ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔργα, S. *OT* 1408).

6) Finally, in addition to the shame related to submission, abuse, shameful speech, sex, women, and taboos, there are also several curious instances in which shame is associated with the willingness to *live*. While this sentiment is most often voiced in situations wherein someone has lost their honor or all control over their life, it is not completely about the lack of power. There is a sense that it is shameful to love life too much and to want to live on under any condition whatsoever. Simply put, it is better to die than to live in shame (συμβούλου δέ μοι / θανεῖν πρὶν αἰσχρῶν μὴ κατ᾽ ἀξίαν τυχεῖν, E. *Hec.* 374; 498, 552). Thus, Sophocles' Ajax says, "It is shameful for a man to wish to live a long life when he cannot escape evils" (Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρῄζειν βίου, / κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται. S. *Aj.* 473). This is repeated in the *Alcestis*: "…living is shameful for one, who must die" (Ἰδοῦ τὸν αἰσχρῶς ζῶνθ᾽, ὃς οὐκ ἔτλη θανεῖν, E. *Alc.* 955). In the *Children of Heracles*, Iolaus says that "In the eyes of good men a sense of shame is more precious than life" (ἡ γὰρ αἰσχύνη <πάρος> / τοῦ ζῆν παρ᾽ ἐσθλοῖς ἀνδράσιν νομίζεται. E. *Heracl.* 200).[539] Related to this, we may note

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[537] At E. *IA* 188, Iphigenia exhibits a sense of modesty when in public (αἰσχύνᾳ νεοθαλεῖ).
[538] I explored this theme in the last chapter of the dissertation in which I analyzed the shame of Helen.
[539] In *Iphigenia among Taurians*: "It is shameful for me to look at the light when you are dead" (αἰσχρὸν θανόντος σοῦ βλέπειν ἡμᾶς φάος · E. *IT* 674, cf. *IT* 593).

that while it may be shameful to die at the hands of one's enemies (E. *Heracl.* 450), it is not shameful to die for one's country—for a glorious death is better than living as a coward (E. *Ph.* 1013).[540] The desire for life that is no longer 'worth living,' an attachment to mere existence without honor or pleasure is a source of shame. According to this view endorsed in the tragedies, the value of *life* is not a given, and the disvalue of shame can override the mere fact of being alive.

These six recurring groups of things that are called shameful—submission, abuse, shameful speech, sexuality and women, taboos, and life without honor—are the most typical instances of the shameful in tragedy; they are issues in relation to which accusations of shamefulness are most often made. These are all called shameful or ugly, and they are said to bring shame to the doer, to the subject, or to the surrounding people.[541]

The surveyed uses of the term *aischron* and its derivatives in the extant tragedies indicate two things. First, although there are paradigmatic examples of the shameful, its sphere is not fixed, and the term may be used flexibly.[542] Second, however, we can see that although there is no single definition of the shameful, the shameful things are not entirely random. Most of the examples appear to share a reference to the imbalances of power. This aspect is clear, especially in the instances of submission and abuse. In the cases of submission, we can see either submission to the power of others—for example, being defeated by an enemy or falling victim to violence—or lacking power because of poverty or sickness. In the cases of shameful abuse, it appears that there is often a question of abusing one's position of power: being *too* powerful in relation to another,

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[540] The complicated relationship between death and shame is also echoed in the problems of burials: leaving someone unburied is a source of shame for both the dead and for the living (S. *Aj.* 1304–7).

[541] There are also claims about shameful things in general—for instance, that shameful deeds are learned from shameful examples (S. *El.* 621; S. *Phil.* 971–972). There are also discussions as to whether shame is universal or whether there are different standards for shamefulness. In Euripides' *Andromache*, we encounter a suggestion that what is shameful 'here' is also shameful in other cultures (κἀκεῖ τά γ' αἰσχρὰ κἀνθάδ' αἰσχύνην ἔχει. E. *Andr.* 244), and thus somewhat universal. However, in Euripides' *Hecuba*, there appear to be different standards of shameful for the good and for the base (οἶδεν τό γ' αἰσχρόν, κανόνι τοῦ καλοῦ μαθών, E. *Hec.* 602), suggesting that shamefulness is relative. In Sophocles *Antigone*, there is a dispute over whether it is always shameful to think differently from the rest of the community (S. *Ant.* 510–11).

[542] There are also instances that do not appear to straightforwardly fit any of these usual clusters of shame (and I do not suggest that every instance of shame needs to fit the aforementioned types, but that these types are recurring and seem to be widely shared). These instances include, for example, the claim that it is shameful to negotiate with enemies when one can use violence (S. Aj. 1159–61)—perhaps an example in which violence represents power and language the lack of physical power. It is also said to be shameful not to know how one's family fares (S. *Trach.* 66), to boast of things that one has not yet accomplished (S. *Phil.* 842), to be feasted as a guest in a house that has recently faced death (E. *Alc.* 542), *not* to try to gain fame (E. *Alc.* 1033), to fail in carrying a task to its end (E. *Hec.* 1241), and to let servants perform funeral offering of one's family (E. *Or.* 106). There are also claims that something is *not* shameful: we hear that it is *not* shameful to help friends (S. *Phil.* 1383) even if they are weak and sick (E. *Or.* 802), or to learn new things from one's juniors (S. *Ant.* 711), or to fall in love (S. *Trach.* 448). In addition, the term *aischron* is used a couple of times to refer to physical ugliness (E. *Cyc.* 670, E. *Hel.* 263). There are also a few instances in which the source of shame is either not clear or not voiced at all (S. *El.* 1084; S. *OT* 1284; S. *Phil.* 1138; E. *Bacch.* 488; S. *Ant.* 5; A. *Pers.* 774–75).

which is evident in the cases of supplication. Thus, both shameful submission and shameful abuse appear to be linked to an imbalance in power relations: either there is too little or there is too much.

However, this also appears to be important in the shameful speech category. To have a secret or to conceal information is to hold some epistemic power over others, and public reproach is also a means of gaining power over the reproached party. This power imbalance is also manifest in sexual violence: there, the shame is related to the victim's lack of power and the offender's abuse of power. In cases of adultery, there is a sense that the husband's authority has been violated. Moreover, concerning the shame related to women, it appears that the shamefulness may be related in part to the fact that women in public spaces defy the conventional power relations between the sexes by venturing into areas reserved for men. This may also have something to do with murdering one's family members, as by killing one's kin, the murderer undermines the family's power and capacity to function. Finally, when it comes to the shameful life, it seems that taking one's own life serves as an example of demonstrating power. The willingness to go on living without honor or means of helping oneself gestures toward a position of servitude in relation to life itself. That is, it is possible to see that in every case, shame is linked to the different discrepancies in power relations. However, it is important to note that it is not only a lack of power but also its *excess* that is considered shameful.

SUMMARY IN FINNISH

Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee häpeän (kr. *aidôs*/*aiskhynê*) tunteen eettistä merkitystä antiikin kreikkalaisessa tragediakirjallisuudessa, erityisesti Sofokleen ja Euripideen näytelmissä. Kolmen näytelmän – Sofokleen *Kuningas Oidipus* ja *Filoktetes* sekä Euripideen *Helena* – lähilukuun pohjaten työ kartoittaa häpeän tunteen ilmenemismuotoja ja funktioita, tunteeseen liittyviä arvoja sekä sen implikoimaa subjektiviteettia. Työssä häpeä lähestytään kolmesta, toisiaan täydentävästä näkökulmasta. Yhtäältä häpeää tarkastellaan intersubjektiivisena kokemuksena, jossa toinen on aina osa ensimmäisen persoonan kokemusta. Toiseksi työssä tunnistetaan häpeään liittyvät arvostelmat ja etenkin niiden esteettinen painotus. Kolmanneksi työ lähestyy häpeä ruumiillisena ja ruumiillisuudesta nousevana kokemuksena.

Työ jatkaa osaltaan 50-luvulla käynnistynyttä keskustelua niin sanotuista häpeä- ja syyllisyyskulttuureista. E. R. Doddsin vaikutusvaltaisen teesin mukaan homeerinen maailma edusti häpeäkulttuuria, jossa korkeinta eettistä hyvää edusti oikeudenmukaisuuden sijaan maine ja kunnia: kauniilta näyttäminen oli tärkeämpää kuin puhdas omatunto. Doddsia kommentoiden A. W. H. Adkins on esittänyt, että tämän vuoksi kreikkalainen kulttuuri (Homeroksen eepoksista klassiselle ajalla saakka) ei tiukasti ottaen ollut *moraalista*. Vaikka tässä tutkimuksessa ei sitouduta Doddsin ja Adkinsin suurnarratiiveihin homogeenisista kulttuureista, jotka voitaisiin ongelmattomasti hahmottaa yhden affektin kautta, työn premissinä on, että häpeä ja syyllisyys viittaavat toisistaan poikkeaviin eettisiin logiikoihin tai kielioppeihin. Tämä huomio mahdollistaa myös niiden modernissa filosofiassa esitettyjen väitteiden kriittisen arvioinnin, joiden mukaan häpeää ei tulisi pitää moraalitunteena – toisin kuin syyllisyyttä.

Työn premissinä on, että nykyistä länsimaista moraalifilosofiaa määrittää on syyllisyydelle ominainen juridinen viitekehys, joka painottaa vastuuta, oikeuksia, velvollisuutta ja moraalin lakiluonnetta. Tätä juridista viitekehystä kutsutaan *moraaliksi*, erotettuna *etiikasta*, joka puolestaan ymmärretään laajemmaksi, hyvää elämää koskevaksi kattokäsitteeksi. Työn johtoajatuksena on, että häpeä, toisin kuin syyllisyys, ei ole moraalista vaan eettistä. Vastuun ja velvollisuuden sijaan häpeälle keskeistä on kanssa-oleminen, esteettisyys ja subjektin perustava ruumiillisuus. Tarkastellessaan antiikin käsitystä häpeästä, työ sitoutuu ajatukseen, että juridisen moraalikieliopin lisäksi on olemassa myös muita eettisiä rationaalisuuksia, joista yksi on häpeän etiikka. Työn tavoitteena on kartoittaa häpeän tunteen omaa sisäistä logiikkaa ja sen omaa etiikkaa.

Työ jakautuu kolmeen päälukuun. Ensimmäinen luku käsittelee häpeän tunteen intersubjektiivisuutta Sofokleen *Kuningas Oidipuksessa*. Näytelmän analyysi keskittyy silmien, vastavuoroisen katseen ja näkemisen teemoihin, kiinnittäen erityistä huomiota Oidipuksen itsesokeutukseen, jota luetaan nimenomaan yrityksenä paeta häpeää. Luvussa *Kuningas Oidipusta* luetaan rinnakkain modernin fenomenologian intersubjektiivisuuden analyysin kanssa, erityisesti suhteessa Jean-Paul Sartren vaikutusvaltaiseen häpeän analyysiin. Kuten Sartren analyysissa myös Sofokleen Oidipuksessa häpeä on tunne, jossa subjektista tulee

oman nähdyksi tulemisensa silminnäkijä, ja häpeän intersubjektiivisuus kielii kaiken olemisen kanssa-luonteesta. Oidipus (kuten myös Sartren kuvailema subjekti) on kuitenkin subjekti, jolle sen oma intersubjektiivisuus merkitsee uhkaa. Oidipus on tällaisen suvereenin, itseriittoisen ja tyrannimaisen subjektin esi- ja varjokuva, joka edelleen kummittelee psykoanalyyttisissä ja psykologisissa häpeää koskevissa teorioissa ja malleissa.

Sofokleen näytelmässä häpeän intersubjektiivisuus ilmenee myös siinä, kuinka tunne kykenee ylittämään subjektin rajoja. Näytelmässä häpeä näyttäytyy voimana, joka voi levitä näköyhteyden välityksellä. Tämä häpeän ominaisuus näkyy erityisesti näytelmän kuoron ja sivuhenkilöiden reaktioissa suhteessa Oidipuksen salaisuuteen, joka vertautuu näytelmässä sairauteen, likaan ja saasteeseen. Tähän perustuen luvun keskeinen johtopäätös on, että häpeä leviää tartuntataudin logiikkaa seuraten.

Häpeän intersubjektiivisen ja sosiaalisen rakenteen tunnistaminen tarjoaa pohjan häpeän ja syyllisyyden erojen tarkastelulle. Sofokleen *Kuningas Oidipusta* on perinteisesti luettu erityisesti traagisen syyllisyyden kuvauksena, mutta käsillä oleva työ argumentoi, että syyllisyysluenta on myöhemmin (erityisesti Senecan versioinnin jälkeen) syntynyt tulkintakehys. Työ argumentoi, että syyllisyyden ja häpeän keskeinen ero tarkentuu tunteiden implikoiman subjektin ominaisuuksiin: syyllisyys olettaa yksilöityneen, eristettävissä olevan, kausaalisuhteiden määrittämän ja sisäisen tilan varaan rakentuneen subjektin siinä, missä häpeän subjekti on näkymisen ja sosiaalisen sekoittuneisuuden määrittämä. Tutkimus osoittaa, että syyllisyys liittyy kiinteästi juridismoraaliseen viitekehykseen ja argumentoi, että mikäli etiikka ymmärretään tätä viitekehystä laajemmaksi ilmiöksi, ei ole syytä pitää syyllisyyttä häpeä tärkeämpänä eettisenä tunteena.

Toinen pääluku keskittyy Sofokleen *Filoktetes*-näytelmään, jossa häpeän tunne ja häpeällisyys/rumuus saavat merkittävät eettiset funktiot. Pohjaten huomioon, että kreikassa samaa sanaa, *aischron*, käytetään ilmaisemaan sekä häpeällisyyttä että esteettistä rumuutta, luku tarkastelee näytelmän häpeällisyyttä koskevia arvostelmia erityisesti *esteettisestä* näkökulmasta. Luvussa tarkastellaan Michel Foucault'n "olemassaolon estetiikan" valossa, kuinka eettinen ja esteettinen käyvät yhteen *Filokteteessa*. Näytelmässä häpeään liittyvillä eettis-esteettisillä arvostelmilla on kahtalainen luonne. Yhtäältä käsitys valehtelun rumuudesta saa näytelmän nuoren päähenkilön, Neoptolemoksen luopumaan aikeistaan pettää Filokteteen luottamus, sillä hän ei halua saada rumaa luonnetta. Toisaalta sairaalle, likaiselle ja villiintyneelle Filokteteelle hänen kyvyttömyytensä täyttää kauniin ja hyvän miehen (*kalos kagathos*) normia aiheuttaa sekä kärsimystä että asettaa hänen henkensä vaaraan. Vaikka kauneuden ja rumuuden vaatimukset voivat aiheuttaa kärsimystä niille, jotka eivät saavuta kauneuden ideaaleja, luku esittää, että nämä eettis-esteettiset arvostelmat ovat itsessään neuvoteltavissa.

Kun Neoptolemoksen hahmoa luetaan suhteessa Platonin ja Aristoteleen kirjoituksia, nähdään kuinka kreikkalaisessa kirjallisuudessa häpeän tunne (erityisesti *aidôs*) toimii eräänlaisina suitsina, jotka hillitsevät erityisesti nuoria ihmisiä toimimasta häpeällisinä pidetyillä tavoilla. Häpeän keskeinen tehtävä on yhtäältä kouluttaa tuntijaansa tunnistamaan kaunis ja ruma, ja toisaalta toimia

sidoksena subjektin ja eettis-esteettisten arvojen välillä. Luvun keskeinen argumentti on, että *aidôs* takaa, että eettis-esteettisillä arvoilla ylipäätään on väliä subjektille.

Työn kolmas pääluku käsittelee Euripideen *Helenaa* teemanaan häpeän ja rumiin intiimi suhde. Yhtäältä luku tarkastelee, kuinka maine (*doksa*, jota näytelmässä käsitellään kaksoisolentoteeman avulla) ruumiillistuu kuvien ja sanojen toiston avulla: Helenan ruumiista tulee häpeällinen hänen mainettaan koskevien kiertävien huhujen ja juorujen vuoksi. Sara Ahmedin merkkien affektiivisuutta koskevien huomioiden pohjalta luvussa esitetään, että sanojen ja kuvien kiertävät merkit tarttuvat Helenan ruumiiseen tehden siitä sekä häpeällisen että abjektin, ja että tämä ruumiin häpeälliseksi-tuleminen koskee kreikkalaisessa kirjallisuudessa erityisesti naisruumiita.

Toiseksi luku tarkastelee häpeän suhdetta subjektin ruumiillisuuteen, erityisesti Giorgio Agambenin teoretisoinnin pohjalta. Agamben esittää, että ruumis on häpeän tunteen mahdollisuusehto, siten että häpeä kumpuaa subjektin välttämättömästä kahtalaisuudesta: subjekti on sekä puhuva minä että biologinen elävä ruumis. Erityisesti ruumiiden materiaalisuuteen koodattu kyky passiivisuuteen on häpeän tunteen juurisyy. Agambenin väite suhteutetaan luvussa *Helenan* seksuaalisen väkivallan tematiikkaan, joka määrittää etenkin näytelmän kuoro-osuuksia. Analyysissä kiinnitetään erityistä huomiota mytologisiin seksuaalisen väkivallan kuvauksiin usein liittyviin metamorfooseihin. Pohjaten yhtäältä Agambenin analyysiin ja toisaalta huomioon, että kreikkalaisessa antiikissa seksuaalinen väkivalta nähtiin häpeän aiheena nimenomaan uhrille, luvussa ehdotetaan, että tämän häpeän pohjalla ei ole vain patriarkaalisen kulttuurin taipumus häpäistä feminiinisiä väkivallan uhreja vaan myös seksuaalisen väkivallan kyky tuottaa passiivisia ruumiita. Luvun päättävä argumentti on, että vaikka häpeä on tuhoavaa, se kielii aina myös itseä kohtaan tunnetusta rakkaudesta ja halusta saada hoivaa.

Yhteenvetona voidaan todeta, että tutkimuksessa tarkastelluissa draamoissa häpeän tunne viittaa sellaiseen eettiseen subjektiivisuuteen, joka elää yhdessä muiden kanssa, on sensitiivinen kaunista ja rumaa koskeville arvostelmille ja on aina olemassaan ruumiina ja ruumiissa. Tämä on häpeän etiikan eettinen subjekti.

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