

On the Intentionality of Shame and Pride¹

Sobre la intencionalidad de la vergüenza y el orgullo

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Abstract: This paper argues against the widely held view according to which the main difference between shame and pride, and the rest of our emotions – such as fear, hate, surprise, joy or jealousy – is that the former are necessarily directed at the self as the intentional object of the emotion while the latter are typically oriented towards objects in the world other than the self. I examine three arguments in favour of this view and claim that further arguments should be provided in order to show that shame and pride are necessarily directed at oneself – *the doer* – rather than at an object different from the self – *the deed*.

Keywords: subject, object, evaluative properties, attention.

Resumen: Este artículo cuestiona la concepción ampliamente aceptada según la cual la principal diferencia entre la vergüenza y el orgullo, y el resto de nuestras emociones — miedo, odio, sorpresa, alegría o celos— es que las primeras se dirigen necesariamente al yo como objeto intencional de la emoción, mientras que las segundas se encuentran típicamente orientadas hacia objetos del mundo distintos del yo. Examinó tres argumentos a favor de esta concepción y sostengo que el defensor de la misma debería aportar nuevos argumentos que muestren que la vergüenza y el orgullo se dirigen necesariamente a uno mismo —*el agente*— y no a un objeto distinto del yo —*el acto*.

Palabras clave: sujeto, objeto, propiedades evaluativas, atención.

One of the most common assumptions among philosophers working on emotions is that there seems to be an important difference between shame and pride, and the rest of our emotions. According to a widely held view, shame and pride can be distinguished from the rest of our emotions by virtue of their specific intentionality, in particular *by their*

Recibido: 25/03/2022. Aceptado: 23/06/2022.

¹ This work has been supported by the research projects PID2019-106420GA-I00 and PID2020-119588GB-I00 and by the grant BES-2017-081537 funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and “ESF Investing in your future”.

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being necessarily oriented towards the subject of the emotion (Helm 2001, Zinck 2008, Deonna and Teroni 2012, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni 2012, Teroni 2016 and Tietjen 2020). This is to be contrasted with emotions such as fear, hate, surprise, jealousy, anger, joy or pity, which are typically oriented towards objects, people, states of affairs and events in the world other than the self. While this is a view that has become quite widespread among philosophers working on emotions, I will argue that the way of understanding the reflexivity of shame and pride it proposes seems problematic. Moreover, I will claim that such view is exclusively based on deviated forms of shame and pride, which prevents reflection on paradigmatic normative cases.

In section 1, I will introduce the view according to which shame and pride are necessarily directed at the subject of the emotion in contrast with the rest of our emotions. In section 2, I will examine “The Correctness Argument” and argue that the criteria that we use to assess our emotional responses do not allow us to establish that the subject rather than an object different from the subject is necessarily the intentional object of shame and pride. In section 3, I will review “The Phenomenological Argument” and argue that subject-focused cases of shame and pride are not a manifestation of their characteristic reflexivity but rather deviations from object-focused cases of such emotions. In section 4, I will address “The Grammatical Argument” and argue that feeling an emotion towards one’s features is not necessarily equivalent to feeling an emotion towards *oneself*. In section 5, I will conclude that further arguments should be provided in order to show that shame and pride are necessarily directed at oneself – *the doer* – rather than at an object different from the self – *the deed*. In addition, I will suggest that a plausible account of the reflexivity of shame and pride should be able to explain paradigmatic normative cases of such emotions, which are object-focused rather than subject-focused.

1. The Distinction

Philosophers working on emotions tend to think that there is an important distinction to be drawn between *reflexive and non-reflexive emotions*. “In the former class we find emotions such as guilt, shame, pride, embarrassment, and the like. The idea here is that these emotions are distinctive in virtue of the fact that the subject has an attitude towards herself when undergoing the emotion” (Deonna and Teroni 2012, 18). While there is an ongoing debate regarding how best to account for the reflexivity of the different emotions that are usually classified as reflexive – for instance, on the basis of criteria such as

responsibility, agency, accountability, self-ascription, etc. –, there is a broad consensus with respect to the idea that *shame and pride* are reflexive emotions in virtue of their *being necessarily directed at the self as the intentional object of the emotion*³. Although each of these emotions is related to the self from a different evaluative perspective – in shame, I see myself as unworthy or shameful; in pride, I see myself as praiseworthy – it would seem that, in either case, “the subject and intentional object of the emotion are identical” (Zinck 2008, 497. See also Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni 2012, Teroni 2016 and Tietjen 2020)⁴. While non-reflexive emotions – such as fear, hate, surprise, jealousy, anger, joy or pity – are typically oriented towards objects in the world other than the self, shame and pride would seem to be always directed at the subject who undergoes the emotion:

Non-reflexive felt evaluations are those emotions and desires whose targets are things in the world (...) By contrast, reflexive felt evaluations are those emotions and desires that focus on one’s being a certain kind of person (...) *pride*, in the sense I intend it here, is a positive evaluation of oneself or one’s character in light of one’s sense of the kind of person one ought to be. *Shame* or, more strongly, *mortification*, is a negative evaluation of oneself for not living up to one’s sense of who one ought to be (Helm 2001, 103-4, emphasis in the original).

The idea here is that I am the intentional object of shame not just when I am ashamed of my big nose, for instance, but also when I feel ashamed due to the lie I have told a friend of mine. The thing I am *ashamed of*, in both cases, is *myself*. Likewise, I am the intentional object of pride not only when I am proud of being a good mother to my children, for instance, but also when I proudly contemplate my business. The thing I am proud of, that is, the object that I represent as *something worthy of pride* is, in both cases, *myself*. This is to be contrasted, as we said, with emotions such as fear, hate, surprise, jealousy, anger, joy, or pity, which are typically directed at objects that are different from the self. The

³ This way of understanding the reflexivity of shame and pride is different from the way in which the reflexivity of guilt or remorse, for instance, is usually understood. Since the latter emotions cannot intelligibly be oriented towards oneself (I cannot feel guilt/remorse of or for myself), philosophers tend to account for their reflexivity in alternative ways. Since I will only be concerned here with the widespread view that explains the reflexivity of shame and pride in terms of the subject necessarily being the intentional object of such emotions, I will not get into the different ways in which we can understand the reflexivity of other emotions that are also thought to be reflexive.

⁴ Tietjen claims that “we may define self-reflexive emotions not just with reference to their material object [oneself] but also with regard to the concerns involved in them” because “theories that one-sidedly focus on the material object of self-reflexive emotions without reflecting on the concerns involved in them might be badly incomplete” (2020: 311). In any case, Tietjen assumes that, although this might not be the whole story, shame and pride *are directed at oneself as the intentional object of the emotion*. Since this is the idea that I will be questioning, it will be enough for our purposes that she agrees with the central claim of the view we will be discussing.

shared thought seems to be that the self is not distinctively implicated in these emotions, or, in other words, that such emotions “do not critically involve the self” (Tracy and Robins 2007, 7).

One could certainly reply that some of these emotions can also be reflexive on some occasions: I may fear *the dog* in front of me (non-reflexive fear) but I may also fear *myself* because of my impulsive behaviour (reflexive fear), I may hate *my annoying neighbour* (non-reflexive hatred) but I may also hate *myself* for how insecure I am (reflexive hatred), I may be surprised by *a piece of news* (non-reflexive surprise) but I may also be surprised by *my ability* to quickly pick up a language (reflexive surprise), etc. However, as advocates of the reflexive/non-reflexive distinction claim, this sort of reflexivity – in which the self or one of its features is the intentional object of a typically non-reflexive emotion – seems to be of a *contingent* kind: it is constitutive of these emotions that they *can* have the self as their intentional object, but in the case of shame and pride, the self is the *only* intentional object that they can have. Emotions like fear, hate or surprise are not necessarily about the self: they tend to be directed at people, other living creatures, physical objects, events or states of affairs that surround us – in which case, they would seem to free us from preoccupation with the self⁵.

In what follows, I briefly review the need for some arguments in favour of this idea (Teroni 2016) and argue that the suggested way of distinguishing shame and pride from the rest of our emotions is subject to some important problems. If the objections I develop in the coming sections are plausible, the idea that the reflexivity of shame and pride has to do with the fact that they are necessarily directed at oneself will be in need of further justification.

⁵ One could also reply that, just as fear, hate or surprise can be directed at the self or at an object different from the self, shame and pride might also be oriented towards the self on some occasions – as when I am ashamed of my nose or proud of being a good mother – while on others, such emotions might be oriented towards objects that are *different from the self*. Perhaps, the thought goes, I can be ashamed *of the lie* I have told my friend or proud *of the business* I have built, and not necessarily ashamed or proud of myself. Although we can intuitively accept that shame and pride are directed at myself when I am ashamed of my nose or proud of being a good mother (the same way my reflexive fear or reflexive hatred are oriented towards myself), it is not obvious that this is so when the shame I feel has to do with the lie I have told my friend or the pride I feel has to do with the business I have built. That is, it does not seem obvious that, in the latter cases, *what I am ashamed of or proud of is myself*. This is roughly the view I will argue for through the arguments that I develop in the following sections, against the idea that shame and pride are necessarily directed at the self.

2. The Correctness Argument (CA)

According to Teroni (2016), shame and pride are necessarily directed at the subject of the emotion because, in their case, the subject *must* exemplify the relevant evaluative property – shameful or praiseworthy – in order for the emotion to be correct. We will hereby refer to such argument as the Correctness Argument (CA)⁶.

A reflexive emotion takes the subject who undergoes it as its particular object, and is correct if and only if the subject exemplifies the evaluative property that constitutes the formal object of the emotion. A non-reflexive emotion does not abide by the same requirement: its correctness conditions require that a particular object, distinct from the subject who undergoes it, exemplify the relevant formal object (Teroni 2016, 5)⁷.

CA seems to be based on the idea that the identification of the object of an emotion is linked to the criteria of correctness that allow us to evaluate an emotional response as correct or incorrect. According to this idea, the object of an emotion is what sets the criterion for evaluating the subject's emotional response: my fear of the dark is a correct or proportional response if *the dark* merits fear, therefore, the dark is the object of my fear. In more standard terms, the object of the emotion is what exemplifies (or not, if the emotion is inadequate) the evaluative property that corresponds to the type of emotion in question. We can therefore reformulate CA as follows: *if the criterion of correctness of an emotion is provided by the subject and her features, we are dealing with a reflexive emotion; the correctness criteria for shame and pride are provided by the subject and her features, and thus they are reflexive emotions*⁸.

It seems clear that CA's treatment of reflexive emotions easily applies to those cases where we have already assumed that the subject's emotion is directed at herself: my shame for my big nose is correct or proportional *if my nose is big* (which is a shameful thing) and the pride I feel for being a good mother is correct *if I am, in fact, a good mother* (which is something praiseworthy). Similarly, my fear of my impulsive behaviour is correct *if I am an impulsive person* (which makes me dangerous), my hatred of my

⁶ The labels "The Correctness Argument" (CA) (s. 2.), "The Phenomenological Argument" (PA) (s. 3.) and "The Grammatical Argument" (GA) (s. 4.) are mine.

⁷ "Formal objects" of emotions correspond to the evaluative properties that allow us to distinguish between different types of emotion: dangerousness is the formal object of fear, unworthiness or shameful is the formal object of shame, loss is the formal object of sadness, praiseworthy is the formal object of pride, etc. (Kenny 1963).

⁸ I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to formulate this argument more clearly.

insecurities is correct *if I am an insecure person* (which is something hateful), and so on⁹. In other words, in all these cases, it does seem that we evaluate the subject's emotional response by looking at the subject herself and her features – the emotion “is correct if and only if the subject exemplifies the evaluative property that constitutes the formal object of the emotion” (Teroni 2016, 5). This means that, in all these cases, the subject is the intentional object of the emotion: she is ashamed of herself, proud of herself, scared of herself and hates herself, respectively. So far, CA seems convincing.

What happens, though, when what I am ashamed of is the lie I have told my friend or what I am proud of is my business? Teroni seems to think that, in these cases, the correctness of the emotional response is also tied to the subject's exemplifying the relevant evaluative property. That is, my shame is correct if I am a shameful person due to the lie I have told my friend and my pride is correct if I am a praiseworthy person for how I have made my business prosper. Accordingly, since I exemplify the evaluative properties that are required in order for my shame and my pride to be correct, *I am the intentional object* of both emotions. On the other hand, and this is where non-reflexive emotions differ from shame and pride according to Teroni, the fear I feel towards the dog in front of me and the hatred that I experience towards my annoying neighbour are correct emotions if, respectively, the dog is dangerous and my neighbour is a hatefully annoying person. Since the features of the dog and the neighbour are what allow us to evaluate the correctness or proportionality of my emotional responses, we can conclude that the dog and my neighbour are the intentional objects of my fear and hatred.

This apparently clear and easy way of distinguishing shame and pride from the rest of our emotions is subject, however, to some difficulties. In order to examine these difficulties, we should first note that when assessing the situation to which an emotion responds (in order to determine whether the subject's emotional response is adequate or not) such a situation *can be described in many ways* and it is not always necessary to make *explicit* reference to the evaluative properties of the object of the emotion. For instance, we can say that my fear of the dog is correct if *I am in danger* or my hatred of my annoying neighbour is correct if *I have to put up with his conversations every day*. In each case, what I analyse in order to see whether the emotion in question is correct is *the subject* of the emotion together with certain aspects related to her. This move, however,

⁹ I do not agree with the idea that feeling an emotion towards certain features or aspects of oneself implies that *the subject herself* is the intentional object of the emotion. For the sake of the argument, however, we will provisionally assume that this is so. This issue will be addressed in section 4.

does not imply that the subject is the object of the emotion, that is, it does not imply that we are emotionally responding to ourselves: although the features of the subject are what allow us to evaluate the emotional response (if I am not in danger, my fear is not a good response), this is only possible because such features *implicitly* refer to the features of the intentional object of the emotion (I am not in danger if the dog is not dangerous).

I believe Teroni would agree that, although I can assess whether my fear is correct by observing whether I am in danger or whether my hatred is correct by observing whether I have to put up with my neighbour every day, the relevant features for assessing such emotional responses are, ultimately, whether *the dog is dangerous* and whether *my neighbour is annoying*. After all, it is the dog and my neighbour that must exemplify the relevant evaluative property for my emotions to be correct. And this is so because *the dog and my neighbour are the intentional object* of my fear and hatred.

Now that we have clarified that the subject's features can implicitly refer to the features of the intentional object and that this does not mean that the subject herself is the object to which her emotion responds, we can look into the difficulties that affect CA. Let us go back, then, to the case of shame and imagine that, out of self-interest or some deep insecurity, I have given a friend of mine some false information that will make it extremely hard for her to pass an important exam. When I think, after a while, about the lie I have told her, I am overcome with shame: not only it is wrong to lie to a friend, but I am significantly harming her by not giving her the right information. From my perspective, what I have done to her is a serious thing. What are the relevant features that allow us to determine whether my feeling shame in these circumstances is correct or appropriate? It seems clear that shame is a response to shamefulness or unworthiness. The question is: *what is the shameful or unworthy object to which I am responding* and that allows us to assess the proportionality of my emotional response? As we have seen, according to Teroni, this object is myself: shame is a response to my own shamefulness. However, it seems that, while we can look at the subject and her features (as in the case of the dog or my neighbour), we can also look at *the lie itself*. Is not the lie, after all, something shameful and unworthy in the face of which it is appropriate to feel shame? Perhaps, just as we sometimes assess whether my fear of the dog is appropriate in terms of whether I am in danger because we implicitly refer to the dangerousness of the dog, when we assess whether the shame I feel is appropriate in terms of whether I am a shameful person, we are also implicitly referring to the shamefulness of the lie.

So, in the case of shame, what is shameful – the lie or myself? And, in the case of pride, what is praiseworthy – my business or myself? A natural answer to these questions is: *both*. This is an important difference with respect to the case of fear: standing before something dangerous puts me in danger, but it does not make me a dangerous person. By contrast, doing something shameful or praiseworthy makes me a shameful or praiseworthy person. In a way, the evaluative property is “transferred” to the agent of the action. Thus, in the case of shame and pride, we can say that both *the act* (that is, the *deed* – lying and building a business) and *the subject* (the *doer*) exemplify the evaluative property in question. But *does it follow from this that the subject is the intentional object of such emotions* (since she exemplifies the evaluative property that is required for her emotion to be correct)? Does it follow from this that the subject is *always* responding to herself when feeling shame and not to something other than herself? Whoever considers that, from what we have said, it does indeed follow that the subject is the intentional object of shame (and not the lie) would have to provide some arguments in favour of this idea, for it seems that there are *two candidates* for the object of the emotion, since both the shameful lie (the deed) and the shameful subject (the doer) exemplify the relevant evaluative property.

Given the two candidates for the object of the emotion, one might point out that the lie has an important *priority* over the liar: the subject is shameful insofar as she has performed a shameful act, but not the other way around. What ultimately determines whether the subject is a shameful person is the lie she has told. So, even if we want to assess the correctness or proportionality of shame in terms of whether the subject is a shameful person, we will inevitably have to refer to the lie and its shamefulness. It would seem, therefore, that the object that ultimately provides us with the criterion for evaluating the emotional response is the lie. We might conclude, then, that *the lie*, and not the subject, is the intentional object of shame. Focusing on the features of the subject seems rather (as in the previous examples of fear and hatred) an implicit way of referring to the features of the lie.

The ideas presented so far, rather than definitively determining what the object of reflexive emotions are, suggest that the subject/object division presupposed in this discussion is quite problematic. The idea that the evaluative property that corresponds to the emotion we have to assess has to be exemplified by the subject *or* by an object other than the subject rests on a rather artificial way of articulating the situation to which the subject’s emotion responds. As we are seeing through the examples we are examining,

evaluative properties seem to depend both on the subject and on objects other than the subject. The sort of things we can say about this issue, however, will depend very much on the conception of evaluative properties to which we are committed. This question is part of a long and complex debate which we will not go into here¹⁰.

3. The Phenomenological Argument (PA)

The following argument turns away from issues of correctness and focuses on the phenomenological differences that may exist between shame and pride, and non-reflexive emotions, for which reason we will refer to such argument as the Phenomenological Argument (PA).

The characteristic reflexivity of emotions such as shame and pride, which is manifested in the attention directed at oneself and one's features, is here [amusement, admiration, joy, pity, gratitude and compassion] replaced by an attention wholly directed outside the self (...) [a]ll these emotions in their normal activities free us from preoccupation with self (Teroni 2016, 6)¹¹

This idea is very different from the one expressed by CA. In the previous argument, the aim was to show that, in the case of shame and pride, the subject is the object of the emotion because the subject and her features are what provide the criteria of correctness of the emotion (as opposed to what happens with non-reflexive emotions). With PA, on the other hand, the reasoning seems to be as follows: *if the subject focuses her attention on herself and her features when experiencing an emotion, we are dealing with a reflexive emotion; the subject's attention is directed towards herself and her features when she feels shame and pride, and thus they are reflexive emotions*. By contrast, when the subject experiences amusement, joy or pity, her attention is "wholly directed outside the self" (2016, 6), thus they are non-reflexive emotions.

The idea here is that the fact that the subject tends to focus her attention on herself – and, more precisely, on how she looks from the point of view of others – when experiencing shame and pride is indicative that she herself is the object of her emotion in such cases. This seems to be Teroni's suggestion when he claims that attention towards

¹⁰ For the debate on the relation between emotions and evaluative properties see Wiggins (1987), Goldie (2000), Dunn (2006), Corbí (2012), Deonna and Teroni (2012) and Tappolet (2016). A related issue we will not go into either is the asymmetry that appears to exist between the third and the first person in the determination of the shameful or blameworthy of a deed. Talk of mere correctness – at least in the terms we have been discussing so far – ignores the fact that someone's shame or guilt may be a rational, correct and proportional response to a situation even if, from a third person perspective, we do not think that the subject has done anything shameful or blameworthy. Cases of survivor's guilt or shame are especially telling in this respect (Corbí 2012).

¹¹ With the last sentence, Teroni is quoting Shand (1918, 227).

oneself is *a manifestation* of “the characteristic reflexivity of emotions such as shame and pride” (2016, 6). This claim is based on the assumption that when I feel ashamed of something, my thoughts and feelings revolve around me – “why did I do this?”, “I am a terrible person”, “I should have known better”, etc. – while when experiencing fear of the dog or hatred towards my neighbour my attention is typically focused on salient features of the dog (its teeth, claws, etc.) or my neighbour (the way he speaks, how repetitive he is, etc.). However, is it really the case that shame and pride are characteristically subject-focused in the way suggested by Teroni?

Contrary to what is presupposed by PA, it seems that those cases in which the subject of shame or pride focuses on herself and on how she might look from the point of view of others constitute *a very particular kind of case* that appears to be a *deviation from the normatively paradigmatic case*. In order to illustrate this idea, Moran (2001) introduces the example of Fred Vincy, one of the main characters of Eliot’s novel *Middlemarch*, who feels ashamed after having lost the money he had borrowed from the Garths. In the example Moran examines, Fred feels sorry for what he has done but, at some point, all he seems concerned with is *how he looks from the point of view of the Garths*, rather than with the harm caused to them. As Moran points out, “[h]is attention to how he is to be esteemed interferes with reflection on the significance of what he did” (Moran 2001, 189).

Curiously enough, his pain in the affair beforehand had consisted almost entirely in the sense that he must seem dishonourable, and sink in the opinion of the Garths: he had not occupied himself with the inconvenience and possible injury that his breach might occasion them, for this exercise of the imagination on other people’s needs is not common with hopeful young gentlemen. Indeed we are most of us brought up in the notion that the highest motive for not doing a wrong is something irrespective of the beings who would suffer the wrong (Eliot 1871, Chapter 24, quoted in Moran 2001, 189).

The point of this example is to show that by focusing his attention on himself, Fred is neglecting, in an important sense, the object of his emotion¹².

¹² It should be noted that Moran originally analyses such an example as a case of guilt. However, Eliot’s words are that Fred’s worry is “that he must seem *dishonourable*, and sink in the opinion of the Garths” (Eliot 1871, Chapter 24, quoted in Moran 2001, 189, emphasis added). Losing one’s honour is something for which one feels shame, not guilt, so the reading I suggest seems to be plausible given the way Eliot describes Fred’s thoughts and feelings. Although for reasons of space I will not be able to dwell on this issue, I acknowledge that more should be said about the difference between shame and guilt since – according to my arguments – this difference cannot be that the former is intentionally directed at the self while the latter is intentionally directed at an object different from the self. As I said in section 1, there is an ongoing debate regarding the criteria that allow us to classify an emotion as reflexive (responsibility, agency, accountability, self-ascription, etc.). Perhaps, the difference between shame and guilt lies in the role that accountability plays within these experiences, or in the kind of failure to which the agent is

According to this, there seems to be two possible configurations of shame: on the one hand, we have *subject-focused shame* – where the subject focuses on how she looks from the outside – and, on the other, *object-focused shame* – where the subject focuses on what she has done and on the harm caused to others. The former constitutes the kind of shame we tend to *ensor* as an inadequate, narcissistic, insensitive or even fearful response on the part of the subject: as Eliot’s and Moran’s fragments show, this does not seem to be the way in which one *should* respond when one has harmed someone, *even if*, in many cases, this is how we *normally* respond. The normative requirement arises from the fact that, by focusing exclusively on herself, the subject ceases to acknowledge the significance of what she has done and distances herself from the harm and the needs of those affected by her actions. This seems to be the reason why refocusing one’s attention away from oneself and towards the harm caused is seen by us as an ethical achievement (Corbí 2012). Object-focused experiences of shame are hence the normatively paradigmatic cases that allow us to criticise subject-focused cases as deviations.

Turning back to our previous examples, this means that when I feel ashamed of the lie I have told my friend, I can focus on myself, on what a bad friend I am, on what others will say of me, etc. (subject-focused shame) or, in contrast, I can focus on my friend, on how much I have hurt her, on what she may need from me now, etc. (object-focused shame). The same goes for pride: when I am proud of my business, I can focus on myself, on how great my achievements are, on how many people must admire me, etc. (subject-focused pride) or, in contrast, I can focus on the business itself, on how smoothly things work, on how good the atmosphere among my colleagues is, etc. (object-focused pride). We might even think that genuine pride is “selfless”¹³.

From all this, it seems that we can conclude that, contrary to PA, cases in which the subject focuses her attention on herself and on how she looks are of a very specific kind, which we censure as inappropriate. There seem to be more proportional and adequate forms of shame and pride in which the subject focuses on the shameful or praiseworthiness of her deed rather than on herself. This brings into question the idea that attention towards oneself is *a manifestation* of “the characteristic reflexivity of emotions

responding in each case. Although more should clearly be said about this issue, all I can argue for at this point is the negative conclusion that shame cannot be distinguished from guilt in virtue of the subject being the intentional object of the emotion.

¹³ There may be many other configurations beyond completely subject-focused and completely object-focused shame and pride (Goldie 2000, 17). Our emotions are closely related to our cares and concerns, so it is only natural that when experiencing an emotion our attention and thoughts occasionally shift back and forth towards ourselves (see Dunn 2006 and Corbí 2016).

such as shame and pride” (Teroni 2016, 6). Such a claim ignores what we have just called proportional and adequate forms of shame and pride and focuses exclusively on their deviations. This is an important distinction that we should keep in mind given the fundamental role it plays in the everyday practices through which we regulate our emotions. Additionally, we can see how CA turns against PA in this respect: the shamefulness or praiseworthiness of a deed determine that when the subject focuses on herself, she is turning away from the object of her emotion¹⁴.

Moreover, the idea that the subject’s attention is “wholly directed outside the self” (Teroni 2016, 6) when feeling typically non-reflexive emotions, such as amusement, admiration, joy, pity, gratitude and compassion does not seem to be correct either. When undergoing these kinds of emotions the subject can also shift her focus of attention and focus on herself (Dunn 2006), something that also allows us to distinguish between proportional or disproportional, adequate or inadequate, narcissistic and non-narcissistic forms of these emotions. This is something that Teroni himself seems to admit when he introduces the case of someone who pities another because feeling such emotion triggers a positive image of herself, and not because she is worried about the other person’s situation. This kind of case, says Teroni, must be explained in terms of narcissistic personality trait (2016, 7).

To summarise, the assumption that the subject’s attention is directed towards herself whenever she experiences shame and pride does not seem to be correct. As mentioned, when this occurs, we are dealing with very specific forms of these emotions. In any case, even if there is a psychological tendency – which is normatively deviated – to focus on one’s own image when experiencing shame and pride, *this does not imply that the subject is the intentional object of such emotions*¹⁵.

¹⁴ Someone may, nevertheless, put forward the following counterexample to the idea that cases of subject-focused shame are normatively inappropriate: noticing that I am a bad person, I may feel shame and worry about my character in general, which would not only be an appropriate response but even a virtuous one, since I would be concerned with improving myself as a person (I thank an anonymous referee for suggesting this counterexample to me). My response to this objection consists in pointing out that such an emotional response can only be a morally virtuous one if my concern is connected to the harm caused to others – to improving myself so that *I will not harm them again* – and not merely with whether I can be considered a good person. I think that, when the former is the case, my shame cannot be seen as completely subject-focused for the others are at the center of my concern: my feelings and my wish to improve is not strictly about me, but rather about them. In any case, these considerations seem to bring us back to the problem of drawing a clear line between the subject and the object of an emotion.

¹⁵ The strategy that I have developed in this section can also be applied to another possible argument in favour of the idea that shame and pride are necessarily directed towards the self (I thank an anonymous referee for pointing out such argument to me). One could think that the fact that shame and pride involve action tendencies that are directed towards oneself shows that such emotions necessarily take the self as their intentional object – for instance, hiding from the world or exhibiting submissive behaviour in the case

4. The Grammatical Argument (GA)

The last argument – which we will refer to as the Grammatical Argument (GA) – focuses on the way we speak about our emotions and the changes in meaning that can take place when we introduce explicit reflexive components such as “herself”, “myself”, etc.

We commonly report pride or shame episodes by saying such thing as ‘Mary is proud of the canvas’ or ‘Mark is ashamed of his big nose’, but these constructions can easily be completed in the following fashion: ‘Mary is proud *of herself* because she painted this canvas’, ‘Mark is ashamed *of himself* because of his big nose’. This rule does not apply to non-reflexive emotions. (Teroni 2016, 5, emphasis in the original).

According to GA, then, *if we can insert an explicit reflexive component in sentences that refer to emotions without changing the meaning of the sentence, we are dealing with a reflexive emotion; we can insert an explicit reflexive component in sentences that refer to shame and pride without changing their meaning – all we do is complete the information already given –, and thus they are reflexive emotions.* In the case of sentences that refer to non-reflexive emotions, by contrast, the insertion of a reflexive component – if grammatical at all – *does* change the meaning of the sentence. As Teroni points out, getting upset at a comment that someone has made is very different from getting upset *at oneself* because one’s naiveté is the reason why the other person made such comment (Teroni 2016, 7).

According to our discussion so far, the case in which Mark is ashamed of his big nose is different, in a relevant sense, from the case in which Mary is proud of the canvas she has painted. In the former case, we have assumed that the intentional object of shame is the subject himself, whereas, in the latter (which is equivalent to the case in which I am proud of my business), we have pointed out that it is not clear that the subject is the intentional object of pride (unlike when I am proud of being a good mother – that is, of one of my features). Someone might say that, for this reason, it is not clear that GA applies to the case where Mary is proud of her canvas or to the case where I am proud of my business: it is not clear that what we are proud of is ourselves (for the reasons given in section 2.)

of shame, or standing up tall in the case of pride. These cases, however, seem to be *subject-focused* examples of shame and pride (although it is not clear to me why exhibiting submissive behaviour should be thought of as being directed towards oneself). In more object-focused cases, our action tendencies might be completely different: trying to make up for what we have done in the case of shame or displaying our work so that everyone can enjoy it in the case of pride, for instance. In any case, and as I have concluded in section 3, even if there is a tendency to focus on oneself when experiencing shame and pride, this does not imply that the subject is the intentional object of such emotions.

Therefore, there does seem to be an important difference between saying that I am proud of my canvas or my business, on the one hand, and saying that I am proud of *myself* because I painted this canvas or because I made this business prosper, on the other. In the latter cases, rather than the canvas or the business, what I am proud of is some trait or ability of mine that I consider praiseworthy. In such cases, intuitively, the subject does seem to be the intentional object of pride¹⁶. In the former case, however, the object of pride seems to be rather the canvas or the business. This becomes more obvious if we notice that we can be proud of our canvas or our business without necessarily being proud of ourselves.

For these reasons, one might think that the transformation suggested by Teroni does not work in the case where Mary is proud of the canvas she has painted. However, as we said, the case in which Mark is ashamed of his big nose is different: since his shame is directed towards himself and his features, it seems that we can assume that Mark is ashamed *of himself* because of his big nose.

Thus far in the paper, we have assumed that experiencing an emotion towards one's own features is equivalent to experiencing that emotion towards oneself. We can now see, however, that just as the subject/object distinction was problematic when we talked about the criteria of correctness of emotions, neither can we draw a clear line between features that belong exclusively to the subject and features that are related to objects other than the subject. Can we really transform "Mark is ashamed of his big nose" into "Mark is ashamed *of himself* because of his big nose"? Just as we can be proud of our canvas or our business without necessarily being proud of ourselves, it seems that we can be ashamed of our nose without necessarily being ashamed of ourselves: being ashamed of oneself seems much deeper than feeling shame towards one of our features¹⁷.

¹⁶ As mentioned in note 9, we have provisionally accepted, for the sake of the argument, that feeling an emotion towards certain features of oneself implies that *the subject herself* is the intentional object of the emotion.

¹⁷ This seems to be evident if we think about the different impact that being ashamed of a physical trait one has and dislikes, for instance, and being ashamed of oneself may have on someone's life. In the first case, the person's shame might not affect her life in very significant ways: it might just be expressed in the way she tends to hide the part of her body she is ashamed of with her clothes, for instance, but, otherwise, it might not affect her overall behaviour and concerns. More importantly, she might not necessarily be ashamed of herself, that is, of who she is. In the second case, however, the impact of her shame on her life might be of a more substantial kind, determining her personality and behaviour in such ways as to become an important obstacle for her. Although, clearly, much more should be said about this contrast – it might be interesting, for instance, to reflect on those cases in which, due to one's identification with certain physical standards, one's shame at certain physical features *does involve* shame at oneself – it is enough for our purposes that feeling shame at oneself does not seem to be necessarily equivalent to feeling shame at one's features.

This idea, moreover, seems to apply also to the reflexive cases of fear and hatred. According to Teroni, we should be able to transform “I fear my impulsive behaviour” into “I fear *myself* for my impulsive behaviour” and “I hate my insecurities” into “I hate *myself* for my insecurities” with no relevant changes. But, again, it seems that we can fear our impulsive behaviour without necessarily fearing ourselves, and we can hate our insecurities without necessarily hating ourselves – fearing or hating oneself seem much deeper than feeling fear or hatred towards one of our features.

If this is the case, it seems that we would have to restrict much more what it takes for an emotion to be directed towards oneself, and this is a question that requires a far more extensive and deep analysis than the one we intend to carry out here. The conclusion we draw from the analysis of this last section is that we do not seem to be able to make the transformations proposed by GA without relevant changes related to the intentional object of shame and pride.

5. Conclusions

I have tried to show that the proposed arguments do not seem to provide sufficient grounds for considering that shame and pride are always intentionally directed at the self while the rest of our emotions are oriented towards objects in the world other than the self. Firstly, regarding CA, we have seen that there are always two candidates for the object of shame and pride – the shameful/praiseworthy deed and the shameful/praiseworthy doer – and that the shameful/praiseworthy deed seems to have an important priority over the shameful/praiseworthy doer in determining the correctness or proportionality of the subject’s emotional response. Secondly, with respect to PA, we have argued that the object of an emotion need not be the focus of the subject’s attention during the emotional experience and that, when this is the case, we are faced with a very particular kind of shame or pride that appears to be a deviation of the normatively paradigmatic case. Lastly, in relation to GA, we have seen that the insertion of an explicit reflexive component in sentences that refer to shame or pride does seem to change the meaning of such sentences. Therefore, it seems that if someone wants to hold on to the idea that the reflexivity of shame and pride is to be found at the level of their intentional object – in particular, in their being necessarily directed at the subject of the emotion – they should provide new arguments in favour of this idea.

More importantly, our discussion suggests that contemporary philosophical research on shame and pride significantly ignores what we have called paradigmatic

normative cases, that is, cases of shame and pride in which the subject focuses on the object of her emotion rather than on herself. These cases clearly exist and, as was said before, in certain contexts, they can be seen as ethical achievements (Moran 2001 and Corbí 2012). The everyday practices through which we regulate our emotions show that object-focused cases of shame and pride are especially relevant to us, for we criticise people who fearfully or narcissistically focus on their own image and neglect the shameful or praiseworthy object to which their emotion might be responding. Ignoring such cases, as the widespread view we have been examining here does, however, has led to a view of the reflexivity of shame and pride that, for all the reasons given above, seems quite implausible. The implausibility of such view, though, should not be taken to entail that shame and pride should ultimately be considered analogous to non-reflexive emotions. All I claim is that we seem to be in need of an alternative account of the reflexivity of shame and pride that does not claim that such emotions are *necessarily* directed at the self as the intentional object of the emotion and that is able to explain their object-focused cases¹⁸.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Josep Corbí and Jordi Valor for their valuable comments and suggestions as well as two anonymous referees, Jonathan Mitchell and Anna Giustina for their helpful insights on earlier versions of this paper. I am also indebted to the audiences in the *Valencia Colloquium in Philosophy* (Universitat de València) and the *Perspectives on Intentionality and Consciousness Conference* (University of Waikato).

¹⁸ These conclusions may also have some bearing on the wider field of philosophy of emotion, for instance, on the debate regarding the continuity among the category of emotion. Authors like Ekman (1991), Griffiths (1997) or Tracy, Robins and Taguey (2007) insist that our emotions must be divided into two different categories: basic emotions and higher-cognitive emotions. Among the latter, they argue, we find the subclass of self-conscious emotions – such as shame and pride – which require cognitive capacities that allow for self-awareness, self-evaluation and awareness of other selves, unlike so-called basic emotions. The idea that shame and pride are not necessarily directed at the self as the intentional object of the emotion – that is, that they are responses to objects different from the self – might contribute to the alternative view that there is a continuity among all our emotions (see Roberts 2009, Clark 2013 and Fugate 2015).

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