Shame and the Scope of Moral Responsibility

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Abstract

According to Peter Strawson's reactive attitudes approach toward moral responsibility, reactive attitudes constitute the foundation of moral responsibility. The content of reactive attitudes determines the scope, i.e., its narrowness and broadness, of moral responsibility. When it comes to the question of which moral emotions are identified as reactive attitudes, it is well-accepted by Strawsonians that guilt is a reactive attitude, but many of them deny that shame is a reactive attitude even though shame and guilt are closely related. The main reason for denying shame as a reactive attitude is that they suppose that people are *only* morally responsible for things within their voluntary control, but people can feel ashamed of things that they have no voluntary control over. This paper argues that those who deny shame as a reactive attitude hold a narrow understanding of reactive attitudes and moral responsibility. The biggest issue underlying this narrow understanding of moral responsibility is that it commits to what Bernard Williams calls "the morality system" and its peculiar assumption, which distorts our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility. Based upon Strawson's relatively less famous article "Social Morality and Individual Ideal", this paper then develops an alternative account of reactive attitudes, i.e., reactive attitudes are emotional responses to the violation or fulfillment of social ethical expectations. This new definition of reactive attitudes covers shame as a reactive attitude and promotes a broader understanding of moral responsibility, which reflects our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility.

Introduction

In this article, I argue that shame can be a reactive attitude by proposing to understand reactive attitudes in terms of emotional responses to the fulfillment or violation of social ethical expectations. This article is divided into three parts. In the first part, I highlight the significance of the question of whether shame is a reactive attitude in a Strawsonian understanding of moral responsibility. The answer to this question directly corresponds with the narrowness or broadness of what we consider an agent can be morally responsible for. In the second part, I argue that many philosophers deny shame as a reactive attitude because they believe moral responsibility can *only* be understood *within* what Williams calls "the morality system" (Williams 1985, Chp 10). The morality system is a *localized* and *unique* development of ethics since the advent of Christianity, which emphasizes *moral obligation*, *voluntariness*, and *blame*.[1] However, the morality system is just *one* form of ethical life that is embodied in what Joseph Henrich calls a WEIRD—Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic society (Henrich 2020). The morality system does not adequately represent all possibilities and versions of moral lives we have. Those philosophers who dismiss shame as a reactive attitude, in my view, limit their understanding of moral responsibility to a localized system and neglect the possibility that moral responsibility can be constructed in various forms in different cultures or multi-cultural intercourse. Since the so-called "morality system" is the source of the issues, in the third part, I try to stipulate a working definition of reactive attitudes that departs from the morality system. I hope my definition will cover shame as a reactive attitude and capture our

ordinary understanding of moral responsibility. Supported by Strawson's article "Freedom and Resentment" and "Social Morality and Individual Ideal", I propose that reactive attitudes are emotional responses to the fulfillment or violation of social ethical expectations. This new definition is not only sensitive to historical and cultural pluralities but also reflects our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility.

Part I The Significance of the Question

In this part, I explain the relationship between shame and moral responsibility and the significance of shame being considered as a reactive attitude. The relation between shame and moral responsibility lies in Strawson's reactive attitudes approach toward moral responsibility. In his article "Freedom and Resentment", Strawson proposes a naturalistic approach toward moral responsibility. According to this approach, we must first have a clear understanding of what is involved when we *hold* someone morally responsible, then we can figure out what conditions a person must meet to be a morally responsible agent. After observing our ordinary practices of blaming and praising, Strawson finds that we attach reactive attitudes, such as resentment, indignation, gratitude, guilt, etc., toward ourselves or others when we hold ourselves or others morally responsible. Further, Strawson argues that to hold someone morally responsible is to be an appropriate subject of reactive attitudes. For example, if my indignation toward a serial killer is appropriate, I am holding them morally responsible for what they have done. [2] So understood, reactive attitudes are constitutive of moral responsibility. Therefore, how we understand the content and scope of reactive attitudes, i.e., what emotions are considered reactive attitudes, is essential to the understanding

of moral responsibility (Calhoun 2021; Russell 2013; 2021; Wallace 1994; Watson 2014). It is precisely at this point that the topic of whether shame is considered a reactive attitude becomes an important question.

It is well-accepted by philosophers who follow Strawson's approach that resentment, indignation, and guilt are reactive attitudes, but it is controversial whether shame is a reactive attitude (Wang 2021). According to reactive attitudes theory, when we regard emotion as a reactive attitude, it means that this emotion has moral significance in terms of our understanding of moral responsibility. For example, resentment, indignation, and guilt are well-known reactive attitudes. These three moral sentiments often relate to voluntary wrongdoings, which might indicate that a morally responsible agent is *only* morally responsible for voluntary wrongdoing. Therefore, if shame is a reactive attitude, it means that a morally responsible agent can *also* be morally responsible for things beyond their voluntary control because people can feel ashamed of things beyond their voluntary control. Because of this reason, since many philosophers, for example, Andreas Carlsson (2019), Douglas Portmore (2019), Randolph Clark (2016), and R. Jay Wallace (1994) believe it is unfair to hold someone morally responsible for things beyond their control, they deny shame as a reactive attitude. However, Cheshire Calhoun (2021), Michelle Mason (2017), Paul Russell (2013), Angela Smith (2021), and Tinghao Shawn Wang (2021) argue that shame is a reactive attitude.

The controversy of shame as a reactive attitude reveals a deep problem with Strawson's account of reactive attitudes, namely, Strawson does not provide a unified

definition of reactive attitudes (Bennett 2008; 1980; Mason 2017; Wallace 1994; Helm 2012). The lack of a unified definition of reactive attitudes leads Strawson to have an overly inclusive set of reactive attitudes. In this inclusive list, Strawson seems to "construe the reactive attitudes as any emotions that involve, or point us toward, interpersonal relations" (Wallace 1994, 12). As Wallace rightfully points out, not every natural emotion in our interpersonal relationship is relevant to our understanding of moral responsibility. Therefore, a unified definition of reactive attitudes is much needed for us to emphasize the unique role reactive attitudes play in understanding moral responsibility (Russell, 2013, 2021b; Smith, 2019, 2021; Wallace, 1994).

There are only a few philosophers who dive into the definition of reactive attitudes. Jonathan Bennett (1980) is among the first group of philosophers who analyzes reactive attitudes, but he fails to provide a more precise concept of reactive attitudes. It is until recently that more and more philosophers have been engaged in defining reactive attitudes, for example, Calhoun (2021), Coleen Macnamar (2015), Michael McKenna (2012), Russell (2013; 1995), and Wallace (1994). In this essay, I particularly focus on the debate between Wallace and Russell about the content of reactive attitudes because both of them explicitly provide a different answer to the question of whether shame is a reactive attitude, which indicates a special role shame plays in the understanding of reactive attitudes.

Wallace argues that what unifies reactive attitudes as a class is the intimate connection between reactive attitudes and expectations: "To hold someone to an expectation, I [Wallace] maintain, is to be susceptible to the reactive attitudes in one's

relations with the person" (Wallace 1994, 19). Our understanding of reactive attitudes goes hand in hand with our understanding of expectations. Reactive attitudes must be explained by the belief that some expectations have been breached. Further, Wallace makes a distinction between moral reactive attitudes and nonmoral reactive attitudes. Both types of reactive attitudes are responses to expectations, but not every expectation we hold people to is moral in nature. What distinguishes moral reactive attitudes from nonmoral reactive attitudes is that moral reactive attitudes are backed by the expectations which are justified by *moral reasons* and Wallace "refers to expectations that admit of this kind of moral justification as [moral] *obligations*" (Wallace 1994, 36, original emphasis).[3] Moral obligations relate to deliberation and autonomy, namely, the agent must deliberately violate moral obligations and demonstrates their own effort to fulfill the moral obligations (Wallace 1994, 36). Wallace states that if someone feels guilty of falling short of expectations that they unreflectively take over from others, such as their parents or church, this episode of guilt is not a moral reactive attitude because the person cannot justify their belief by their own reasoning. Wallace also distinguishes moral reactive attitude from other types of moral sentiments. Moral reactive attitudes are emotional responses to the violation of moral obligations whereas other types of moral sentiments involve "various modalities of moral value, such as the values of kindness or consideration or benevolence or even justice" (Wallace 1994, 37). So understood, positive moral sentiments, such as gratitude, admiration, praise, and so on are not moral reactive attitudes because they are responses to other "modalities of moral value" than moral obligations. Based on the two distinctions that Wallace makes,

he argues that shame is not a *moral* reactive attitude because 1) either shame is a response to *others*' appraisals, or 2) people feel ashamed of falling short of their moral ideals that go beyond moral obligations.

Unlike Wallace, Russell insists that reactive attitudes are reactive values, which are understood in terms of one's emotional response to the weight and value given by an agent to ethical considerations *widely* conceived, "i.e., in terms of our human needs, interests, welfare, claims, and the requirements of social cooperation"(Russell 2013, 195). So understood, positive moral emotions are (moral) reactive attitudes. Also, shame can be a (moral) reactive attitude as well. Russell makes a distinction between moral shame and natural shame based on "the nature of the quality or consideration it [shame] *reacts to*" (Russell 2013, 197, original emphasis). Moral shame is a reaction to ethical qualities, such as kindness, bravery, justice, and so on, which might go beyond moral obligation whereas natural shame is a reaction to non-ethical quality, such as physical appearance, economic status, and so on. Russell admits that moral shame is a reactive attitude because moral shame is a reaction to ethical standards. The difference between Wallace and Russell in terms of shame results from different understanding of reactive attitudes. Wallace holds that reactive attitudes are merely emotional responses to the violation of moral obligations, whereas Russell holds that reactive attitudes include but are not limited to the violation of moral obligations.

The different accounts of reactive attitudes between Wallace and Russell, in my view, result from their different understanding of moral responsibility. Wallace holds a narrow construal of moral responsibility in the sense that people are only morally

responsible for things within their voluntary control, whereas Russell endorses a broader understanding of moral responsibility in the sense that people could be morally responsible for things outside of their direct voluntary control.

In this part, I highlighted the significance of shame in reactive attitudes theory of moral responsibility. The answer to the question of whether shame is a reactive attitude corresponds with the scope and content of what we consider one can be morally responsible for. Wallace denies that shame is a reactive attitude and holds a narrow understanding of moral responsibility, whereas Russell endorses shame as a reactive attitude and holds a broader understanding of moral responsibility. In the next part, I articulate the underlying reasons why Wallace denies shame as a reactive attitude and pinpoint two problematic implications of Wallace's narrow account of reactive attitudes.

Part II Shame and the Morality System

In this part, I analyze the reasons why many philosophers deny shame as a reactive attitude. I argue that their rejection of shame as a reactive attitude is based on a localized understanding of morality, or what Williams calls the morality system, which he describes as "a particular development of the ethical, one that has a special significance in modern Western culture" (Williams 1985, 6). The morality system is a narrow notion that is embodied in a WEIRD—Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic society (Henrich 2020). Henrich summarizes that the key elements in a WEIRD society are individualism and personal motivation. WEIRD people emphasize self-focus, self-regulation, self-control, trust, fairness, free will, and moral universalism; they desire control and love choice; they value guilt over shame, impartial principles

over contextual particularism (Henrich 2020, 64–65). In my view, the morality system embodied in a WEIRD society is a *particular* development of the ethics. As such, it provides *only one* possible perspective for approaching moral responsibility. The ancient Greeks had a different understanding of moral responsibility than WEIRD people as Williams (1993) rightfully states. I argue that an account of reactive attitudes based on the morality system distorts our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility and leads to problematic conclusions. Philosophers who deny shame as a reactive attitude fall prey to the misunderstanding of seeing a particular morality system as morality itself and confuse the features of the said morality system as universal features of morality, which diminishes the diversity and complexity of ethical life.

I divide this part into three sections. In section 2.1, I articulate three core concepts that the morality system emphasizes. In section 2.2, I explain how my discussion about the morality system relates to reactive attitudes, especially to shame. In section 2.3, I point out two problematic implications that any accounts of moral responsibility, based on the morality system, have.

2.1 The Morality System and its Three Core Concepts

I think philosophers who deny shame as a reactive attitude commit to the morality system and its peculiar assumptions. In order to understand this point, an interpretation of the morality system will be discussed. The morality system, as Williams describes it, is a particular development of the ethics since the advent of Christianity and "is *the* outlook, or, incoherently, part of the outlook, of almost all of us" (Williams 1985, 174,

emphasis mine).[4] In other words, the morality system aims to provide *the* framework for any accounts of moral responsibility. The morality system states that a *genuine* understanding of moral responsibility *must* be acquired only *within* the moral system because there are core concepts of the morality system that are essential to understand moral responsibility.

The first notion that the morality system emphasizes most is *moral obligation*. Williams argues that the very concept of moral obligation captures the "morality system's spirit, its underlying aims, and the general picture of ethical life it implies" (Williams 1985, 174). Williams argues that a mere emphasis on everyday obligation does not make obligation very special to the morality system. What makes moral obligation peculiar to the morality system is the *moral obligation* that is understood within the morality system. According to the morality system, the moral in the "moral obligation" results from a *deliberative* conclusion – "a conclusion that is directed toward what to *do*, governed by *moral reasons*, and concerned with a particular situation" (Williams 1985, 174-175, emphasis mine). Deliberation is the key to understand moral obligation. Deliberation provides moral justifications for one's action, i.e., it is the agent's *choice* (epistemological and metaphysical) to decide whether to comply with the obligations or not. Epistemologically, the agent *knows* (and thus *accepts*) the obligations that she complies with.[5] Metaphysically, the agent has the choices to do otherwise, which reduces to the second concept of the morality system.

Voluntariness is the second concept that the morality system highlights. In his essay "Moral Luck"(1981), Williams illustrates the general point that the morality

system lays particularly heavy weight on the *unsure* structure of voluntariness. In the morality system, "*ought* implies *can*" is a well-accepted formula (Williams 1985, 175). Philosophers within the morality system try to *deepen* the concept of voluntariness (Russell 2022, 8). The concept of will is created to achieve their purpose. According to the morality system, it is a general requirement that free will is the necessary condition of moral responsibility. It is logically impossible to hold someone morally responsible without having free will. In order to hold someone morally responsible for their actions, they themselves must be the *ultimate* source of their actions. In other words, their actions must be "up to them". This up-to-ness is granted by free will. When an agent exercises free will over their choices and actions, their choices and actions are *up to them*.

Relating to moral obligation and voluntariness, *blame* is the third important notion in the morality system. Williams calls the morality system "the blame system" because "blame is the characteristic reaction to the morality system" (Williams 1985, 177). According to the morality system, if the agent has voluntarily violated some moral obligations, blame is an appropriate response to the voluntary violation of moral obligations and blame is appropriate only when the agent violates moral obligations. It is unfair to blame someone for things out of their voluntary control, such as a person's birth place, family, country of origin, etc. An implication of this assumption is that morality is immune to moral luck or "transcends luck" because if morality depends on moral luck, then people are held morally responsible for things that are beyond their control (Russell 2008; 2013; 2017;2022; Williams 1985). A morally responsible agent

should not be subject to moral luck and has "limitless freedom" (Williams 1985, 57-58), a freedom out of necessity and causality, which requires falsity of determinism.

Moral obligation, voluntariness, and blame are interrelated concepts. These concepts with the morality system underlying them provide a particular way to approach moral responsibility.

2.2 The Morality System and Reactive Attitudes

How does the above discussion about the morality system relate to reactive attitudes, more specifically, to shame? Based on the three features of the morality system, it is unsurprising that the morality system values guilt but dismisses shame (Lamb 1983). "Guilt is the characteristic first-personal reaction within the system" (Williams 1985, 177), because guilt fits all features of the morality system. Firstly, guilt is a typical emotional response to the violation of moral obligation (Wallace 1994). Secondly, based on the self-action contrast in terms of differentiating shame from guilt, it is well-accepted that guilt is more concerned with failure in particular *action* (Rawls 1971; Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 2007; Wang 2021). Actions, as the object of guilt, are most likely to be considered to be under our immediate control, since we will have feelings or attitudes that we do not have immediate control over.[6] Thirdly, guilt is related to wrongness and blame, namely, when people feel guilty, it means they believe they have done something wrong (D'Arms and Jacobson 2000) and the feeling of guilt is a way to *blame* themselves. On the contrary, "shame has an undeserved bad rap in WEIRD countries" (Flanagan 2021, 133). Philosophers either deny shame as a *moral* emotion because shame lacks the moral concepts that are essential to the morality, such

as wrongdoing and obligation (Lamb 1983; Wallace 1994), or philosophers argue that shame is a *primitive* moral emotion, which means that shame is an emotion that modern people should better off living without it because shame relies on a system of norms that modern people have already overcome owing to enlightenment. For example, being susceptible to *others'* appraisals in the experience of shame reduces the shamer's *autonomy* that is highly valued in modern time. Mason calls the former the No Essential Moral Content critique of shame and the latter the Moral Primitive critique of shame (Mason 2010, 410–11). The point here is that people can feel ashamed of things out of their direct voluntary control, such as their appearance, race, gender, social status, poverty, and so on. More importantly, people can feel ashamed of things that they see nothing wrong with (Calhoun 2004; Lamb 1983; Maibom 2010). For example, a person feels ashamed of eating animal products in front of their vegan friends even though they believe there is nothing wrong in doing so. In what follows, I give some examples of philosophers who dismiss shame in the morality system.

Kant is the first example. Although Kant's view precedes Strawson's, Kant's view on shame, in general, is influential. When it comes to shame, Williams rightfully writes: "in the scheme of Kantian opposition, 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" (Williams 1993, 77). Shame is problematic for the Kantian position.[7] The morality values self-legislation or "legislating for oneself" (Anscombe 1958, 2) whereas shame highlights *face,* namely, shame is sensitive to others' opinions of you, what's your belief in how others see you, etc., which is highly influenced by external factors, such as

gender, race, wealth, social status. Appealing to the dichotomy between autonomy and heteronomy, a moral agent must be autonomous, i.e., they have an ability to sustain their own autonomous judgement about what the morality requires whereas in feeling of shame, an agent allows themselves to be influenced or determined by *others'* appraisals rather than their own will. In other words, the values that shame emphasizes are heteronomous (Williams 1993, 78). All in all, Annette Baier concludes that things that we are ashamed of, such as stupidity, inarticulateness, and lack of wit, are falling out of the scope of the *will* (Baier 1993, 447). People are ashamed of things that are beyond their direct voluntary control.

Wallace is a typical example. He might be one of the first philosophers who argues that shame is not a reactive attitude. Wallace explicitly states that his understanding of moral responsibility commits to the morality system (Wallace 1994, 39–40). Moral obligation, voluntariness, and blame are all the same key elements that feature in Wallace's normative interpretation of moral responsibility. His normative interpretation of moral responsibility is a combination of a refined Strawsonian description of holding people morally responsible and a Kantian theory of reflective self-control of moral agency (Wallace 1994, 8–15). Moral obligation is essential to Wallace's account of moral responsibility. According to Wallace, what distinguishes *moral* reactive attitudes from other moral sentiments is moral obligation, which provides justification for the agent's action. It is natural to feel *resentment, indignation, and guilt* when moral obligation is breached. Shame is not a natural response to the violation of moral obligation. Therefore, shame is not a moral reactive attitude.

Besides Wallace, other philosophers such as Carlsson (2019), Portmore (2019), and Clark (2016) deny shame as a reactive attitude. They compare guilt to shame and believe that guilt is a reactive attitude because the feeling of guilt involves the thought that someone has done something wrong. They then quickly dismiss shame as a reactive attitude because they believe wrongdoing is not necessary for one to feel shame. The fundamental reason for rejecting shame as a reactive attitude is that they hold an assumption, underlying the morality system, that people are *only* morally responsible for their *actions* within their v*oluntary control*.

2.3 Two Problematic Implications

There are two problematic implications of any accounts of moral responsibility based on the morality system. If we understand moral responsibility in terms of reactive attitudes, the first implication is that many positive moral emotions, such as admiration, praise, and gratitude have no room in the morality system. This is because the traits or actions that those positive moral emotions react toward may *exceed* the normatively expected. However, these positive moral emotions are typically emotional responses in ordinary life when we hold others morally responsible for their (worthy) actions. For example, Wallace admits only resentment, indignation, and guilt are reactive attitudes. These three attitudes are *negative* in character. Therefore, it commits us to an asymmetrical account when it comes to morally unworthy and desirable actions (Calhoun 2021; Russell 2013; Smith 2021; Wallace 1994).[8] Wallace's narrow construal of reactive attitudes only focuses on the case where our moral expectations are violated and ignores the *constructive* role positive reactive attitudes play in supporting favorable

actions (Russell 2013, 190). Thus, only negative reactive attitudes are part of our moral responsibility practices, whereas positive moral sentiments are not reactive attitudes. However, as Smith importantly points out, both negative practices *and* positive practices are constitutive of our moral responsibility practice (Smith 2021, 336). I think Calhoun, Russell, and Smith's observation is important because they rightfully grasp our ordinary practice of holding someone morally responsible for some things, which covers both blame and praise, expressing condemnation and gratitude.

The second implication is that they deny that other forms of ethical life share our understanding of moral responsibility (Russell 2013;2022; Smith 2021; Williams 1985). Wallace argues that moral reactive attitudes are only justified by the expectations that some moral obligations have been breached, but people in the so-called "shame culture" "do not have the stance of holding to expectations in their repertoire" (Wallace 1994, 38) similar to WEIRD people. Given that, people in the so-called "shame culture" do not possess moral reactive attitudes and thus do not have *any* conception of moral responsibility. Wallace argues that it does not matter if there is any pure shame culture, the point here is that people might feel shame, rather than guilt to the violation of ethical values in their culture (Wallace 1994, 38). Along with Russell (2013), I believe this thought is problematic since it limits our understanding of moral responsibility to a localized system and denies that our understanding of moral responsibility can be cross-cultural.[9] This also risks a Eurocentric perspective. Practices of blame and praise can be found in every culture. Understanding of moral responsibility, thus, should not be limited to a WEIRD society. Moral responsibility, as we can see through Williams'

example of the ancient Greek, is by no means limited to a particular culture. Our understanding of reactive attitudes needs to enable us to have a cross-cultural construction of moral responsibility.

Up to now, I articulated the reason why philosophers deny shame as a reactive attitude and argued that an account of reactive attitudes based on the morality system narrows and distorts our ordinary understanding of moral responsibility. Therefore, a broader account of moral responsibility is needed. It seems to me that the only way to solve the problems is to get out of the morality system because the morality system is the source of the issue.[10] In the next section, departing from the morality system, I propose a new definition of reactive attitudes.

Part III Shame and Reactive Attitudes

It is accepted by some Strawsonians that reactive attitudes are social emotions (Calhoun 2021; McKenna 1998; 2012; Watson 1987; 2014), but Wallace's narrow construal of reactive attitudes does not capture the social aspect of reactive attitudes very well. According to Wallace, reactive attitudes are tied to moral obligation, and moral obligation is issued by *pure reason*. Although Wallace highlights the importance of reactive attitudes in terms of understanding moral responsibility, the over-emphasis on moral obligation that *should* be grasped *only* by pure reason causes him to take a "certain *detachment* from the actions or agents which are their objects" (Strawson 1962, 21, emphasis mine), which is rejected by Strawson.

In this part, I propose a new definition of reactive attitudes that will address some of the problems that an ethic subscribing to the morality system faces. Whereas the

traditional definition of reactive attitudes is that reactive attitudes are emotional response to the violation of moral obligations, I propose that reactive attitudes are emotional responses to the fulfillment or failures of social ethical expectations. Social ethical expectations are normative expectations we hold towards ourselves and others in the shared ethical practices that flourish the community, which *in turn* help individuals achieve their ideal forms of life.[11] Social ethical expectations are sensitive to culture differences and history because they are embodied in real communities. My new definition highlights the social aspect of reactive attitudes, which corresponds to Strawson's understanding of a morally responsible agent, namely, to be a morally responsible agent is to be a member of a shared community.[12] Based on this new definition which rests on the understanding of social ethical expectations of a society, I also argue that shame is a reactive attitude because shame is an emotional response to *others' appraisals that crystalize social ethical expectations in the shared community*.[13]

In the following, I discus how to approach my new definition and what new light it sheds on our understanding of morally responsible agents. In section 3.1, I dive into Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" and "Social Morality and Individual Ideal" to develop a new definition of reactive attitudes. In section 3.2, I argue that shame is a reactive attitude by highlighting the essentially social nature of shame. In section 3.3, I raise one objection to my new definition and try to give two replies to the objection.

3.1 New Definition of Reactive Attitudes

The discussion of ordinary inter-personal relationships is the starting point of Strawson's account. Strawson argues that in order to understand the nature of moral

responsibility and capture the conditions under which someone can be a morally responsible agent, we should start with the commonplace. As Strawson points out, "it is easy to forget when we are engaged in philosophy, especially in our cool, contemporary style, viz. what it is actually like to be involved in *ordinary interpersonal relationships*, ranging from the most intimate to the most casual" (Strawson 1962, 23). There are many different interpersonal relationships, such as parents-children, professors-students, employees-employers, landlords-tenants, friends, roommates, classmates, and so on. When we are in these various ordinary interpersonal relationships, we take "*non-detached* attitudes and reactions [to] people directly involved in transactions with each other" (Strawson 1962, 21, emphasis mine). Non-detached attitudes toward other people happen when we directly encounter others in the context of particular interpersonal relationships (Mason 2013). It is natural for us to react with certain emotions, such as gratitude, resentment, forgiveness, love, and hurt feelings toward those whom we directly encounter (Strawson 1962, 21). Instead of abstract conceptual analysis, Strawson turns to this commonplace in order to examine what is involved when we hold someone morally responsible in our interpersonal relationships (Russell and McKenna 2008).

When we encounter others in various inter-personal relationships, there are two things that matter to us: one is that "we deeply care about how people regard one another", which Gary Watson calls "basic concern"; the other is that we demand or expect others to show good will, or at least lack of ill will, towards us, which Watson calls "basic demand" (Watson 2014, 18). As social beings, we humans care about

whether others in our inter-personal relationships take our interests and well-being into their consideration and whether we care about others' interests and well-being. In other words, we reciprocally expect others to show good will or regard when we are in the same community.

Combining basic concern with basic demand, Strawson introduces reactive attitudes to refer to "essentially natural human reactions to the good or ill will or indifference of others towards us, as displayed in their attitudes and actions" (Strawson 1962, 25). For example, you were on the bus with a heavy bag and someone pushed you very hard. Consider two scenarios: in the first scenario she pushed you because she was trying to give you a seat but the bus turned suddenly and thus resulting the unexpected push; in the second scenario, she pushed you because she had a malevolent wish to injure you. The pain resulted from the pushing in the first scenario may be no less acute than in the second scenario, but it is reasonable for you to feel resentment toward the person in the second scenario whereas you feel no resentment, or even feel gratitude, toward the person in the first scenario. Thus, it is people's attitudes and intentions toward us rather than pure actions that make a difference in terms of triggering reactive attitudes.[14]

However, I agree with Calhoun that the interpretation of reactive attitudes in terms of emotional responses to good will or its absence is too "thin" to adequately define reactive attitudes. A pure emphasis on good will or its absence is not sufficient to highlight the core feature of reactive attitudes which is that "they are directly connected with our participatory social practices" (Calhoun 2021, 12). A "thick" description of

reactive attitudes is needed. [15] Strawson shows awareness of this issue when he pinpoints that while the demand for goodwill is a very general requirement on people who stand in various relationships with us, "the *forms* we require it[good will or at least lack of ill will] to take vary widely in different connections" (Strawson 1962, 23, emphasis mine). Strawson does not clarify these forms in his article "Freedom and Resentment," but he does discuss them in his article "Social Morality and Individual Ideal," an article published one year earlier than "Freedom and Resentment".

The various forms of good will or at least lack of ill will that we require from others in our inter-personal relationships manifest themselves as social ethical expectations. As social human beings, when we interact with other people in a society or group, social ethical expectations are necessary to regulate individuals' interaction. Social ethical expectations specify what is acceptable and what is not in a society or group, as well as how to interpret when social ethical expectations have been fulfilled or violated. For example, in the professor-student relationship, students are expected to read the required materials before class, attend class, submit assignments on time, respect everyone in the class, and so on; whereas professors are expected to prepare for lectures in advance, organize discussions, grade students' assignments fairly, and the like. When professors and students fail to fulfill these social ethical expectations, we judge that they are not good professors or students.

Social ethical expectations exist in the way of rules, duties, and obligations in social organizations, or exist in a loose and flexible way as demands or requirements. All of them coordinate our relationships with others in the shared community, which

secure individuals to pursue ideal forms of life. Strawson argues that the ethics concerns those evaluations that "can govern choices and decisions which are of the greatest importance to me" (Strawson 1961, 4). In other words, the ethics focuses on "ideal forms of life" and tries to answer the Socratic question regarding how one should live ideal forms of life (Strawson 1961, 1).[16] As a social being, the individual's ideals cannot be realized without the existence of some form of social organization or human community. There is a reciprocal relationship between individuals and social organizations or human communities. On the one hand, social organization or human community secures individuals to pursue their ideal forms of life. On the other hand, "some duties should be performed, some obligations acknowledged, and some rules observed" (Strawson 1961, 6) for the existence of social organization or human community. Social organization or human community requires their members fulfill some social ethical expectations to keep them functional well.

The fact that social ethical expectations can exist in the way of rules, duties, and obligations in social organizations does not mean that these moral rules, duties, or obligations should be applied to all human beings regardless of the circumstance. Strawson particularly emphasizes that we should not exaggerate the applicability of social ethical expectations. Social ethical expectations are supposed to be sensitive to different cultures, societies, and different groups or classes in society. Different cultures or societies have different ethical expectations for their members. Also, a single society held together by a set of rules has different ethical expectations for different classes, groups, or relationships within that society (Strawson 1961, 6).

Duties, obligations, and rules are essential parts of social ethical expectations, but they do not cover all social ethical expectations. Our understanding of social ethical expectations is far beyond duties, obligations, and rules. While Strawson does not specify this idea, he clearly states that it is wrong to understand obligation and duty in an abstract way (Strawson 1961, 7).[17] Contrary to many of his contemporaries, Strawson states that duty and obligation should be understood "in a concrete and realistic way" (Strawson 1961, 7). Our ordinary understanding of obligation and duty is specific and goes down to particular positions and relations, which means that duty and obligation are embodied in offices, positions, and relations with others. Following this, it is reasonable to suspect that Strawson's understanding of moral duty and obligation is *broader* than those of his contemporaries. In other words, the normative expectations relating to moral responsibility in Strawson's understanding, i.e., social ethical expectations, in my view, might go beyond moral duty and obligation that I will explain in the following.

Calhoun (2021), Mason (2017), and Smith (2005) discuss the same example that you *involuntarily* forgot your best friend birthday, which can be used to show how our social ethical expectations are beyond moral obligations. It was your best friend Eason's birthday, but you had no birthday card, gift, or even a text message to him because you had a long school day on his birthday and forgot to set it on the calendar. In this case, neither did you *mean* to forget his birthday, nor did you have any moral obligation to do something for him because you did not *promise* to do anything for his birthday. However, as Eason's best friend, he expected you to do something for his birthday to

show your *appreciation* of your relationship, such as remembering his birthday, sending some gifts, having a nice dinner together, and so on, *no matter how* busy you are. These expectations are demands among friends that designate how much each member values the friendship, depending on whether these expectations are fulfilled or violated. There are many cases like this in our various relationships with others. The point here is that we do hold many ethical social expectations that go beyond moral obligations toward other people in the shared community.

Putting the ideas from Strawson's two articles together, I propose that reactive attitudes are emotional responses to the fulfilment or violation of social ethical expectations. In ordinary social life, we subject ourselves and others to social ethical expectations and express our reactive attitudes when these social ethical expectations are violated or fulfilled. Bringing Eason's example back, if you fail to fulfill the social ethical expectations that are imposed on friends, it is reasonable for Eason to feel resentment toward you. Of course, it is reasonable for him to feel gratitude if you live up to these expectations. It is also appropriate for you to feel ashamed of forgetting his birthday. Your feeling of shame for forgetting Eason's birthday highlights your true understanding of the social ethical expectations among friends which are above moral obligations. You might say yourself: "what kind of friend I am to forget my best friend's birthday!" You ask for your friend's forgiveness and try to amend your relationship with them.

There are two implications of my new definition. Firstly, once our understanding of social ethical expectations is not limited to moral obligations, reactive attitudes are

not necessarily negative in nature as Wallace proposes. Positive moral sentiments, such as gratitude, appreciation, praise, and so on are also reactive attitudes because they are emotional responses to someone whose actions fulfill some social ethical expectations that are beyond moral obligations (Calhoun 2021; Russell 2013; Smith 2021). For example, Eason shows his gratitude to you for your birthday gift.

Secondly, once we understand reactive attitudes in terms of emotional responses to the fulfillment or violation of social ethical expectations, cross-culturally understanding of reactive attitudes becomes possible. As I mentioned, different cultures have different social ethical expectations. There are also diverse communities within a society. Therefore, we might have different reactive attitudes in different cultures (Russell 2013). For example, in ancient Greek society or traditional Chinese society, shame is a reactive attitude. Reactive attitudes can be culturally and socially sensitive. Also, other cultures different than WEIRD society have the practice of holding someone morally responsible and have their understanding of moral responsibility. As Russell (2013; 2022) and Williams (1993) insightfully point out that the ancient Greek had their different understanding of moral responsibility than modern Westerners. Although WEIRD people have different understanding of moral responsibility than the ancient Greek, WEIRD people share the same basic elements in their concept of moral responsibility with ancient Greek because the ancient Greek are their "cultural ancestors" (Williams 1993, 3).[18] There is no conceptual gap in terms of moral responsibility between WEIRD people and the ancient Greek (Russell 2013). The concept of moral responsibility is historically sensitive.

3.2 Shame as a Reactive Attitude

Once we broadly understand reactive attitudes, other moral emotions that are not typical reactions to the violation of moral obligations but to the social ethical expectations, such as shame, gratitude, and praise, also become reactive attitudes. In this section, I particularly argue why shame is a reactive attitude.

It is hard to provide a definition of shame due to its complexity and imprecision (Kekes 1988, 283), but philosophers try to capture it by highlighting some aspects of shame. Jing Iris Hu (2022) provides a good literature review on shame. The first view of shame is called the "personal-ideals" accounts by Stephen Bero (2020) or the "agent-centered" view by Heidi Maibom (2010), according to which people feel ashamed of falling short of the moral standards that they endorse. This view is supported by John Kekes (1988), Mason (2010), John Rawls (1971), Gabriele Taylor (1985), and Justin Tiwald (2017). The merit of this view is that it keeps autonomy in the experience of shame, the cost is that it sacrifices the social nature of shame that is fundamentally essential to shame (Calhoun 2004, 129). The second view emphasizes the social aspect of shame, which is supported by Calhoun (2004), Hu (2022), Maibom (2010), and Bongrae Seok (2017). According to this view, people feel shame because they take others' appraisals seriously and are open to negative feedback that they *may not share* from others in the shared community.[19] Feeling of shame indicates a close relationship between individuals and societies. Someone who insulates themselves from the community would not feel shame and become shameless no matter whether others' negative views about them are appropriate or not. In my view, the latter view of shame

rightfully grasps the social nature of shame and emphasizes the significance of *others* in the experience of shame, which makes shame to be a good candidate for a reactive attitude.

I argue that shame is a reactive attitude because in the experience of shame, others' appraisals typically manifest social ethical expectations in a shared society or group. In feeling of shame, we do not regard others as alien, but treat them as "co-participants with us in some shared social practice of morality" (Calhoun 2004, 139). Co-participants are a part of *we* who are engaged in the shared social practices. When we regard other people as co-participants, we assume we have shared understanding of what social ethical expectations are and how to interpret them when these social ethical expectations have been fulfilled or violated. Because of this, other people's criticisms express a *representative* view of social ethical expectations (Calhoun 2004).[20] Our reactions to others' appraisals in the shared community are reactions to social ethical expectations. Therefore, a person who is vulnerable to shame is a person who is sensitive to social ethical expectations, which makes them a member of the moral community and thus a morally responsible agent (Calhoun 2004; Hu 2022; Maibom 2010; Seok 2017; Weiss 2018; Zhao 2018). A person who has a sense of shame understands which social ethical expectations are placed on them and engages in ethical practices in their community with other people. For example, your feeling of shame for forgetting Eason's birthday manifests your true understanding of the social expectations among friends and your stance as a morally responsible agent.

Shame can be a useful reactive attitude in ordinary inter-personal relationships and

can play a constructive role to flourish societies or groups, especially for people who live in non-individualist or collectivist cultures. For example, in Indian and Japanese cultures, shame is regarded as a positive and socially constructive emotion (Seok 2017, 136). In Confucian culture, shame is a one of the major virtues. "Confucius says that shame is an ideal ability that scholar officials should develop (Analects, 13.20) and Mencius takes it as one of the four foundations of the moral mind (Mencius, 2A6, 6A6)" (Seok 2017, 118). In a collectivist culture, the self is fluid, expandable and relational rather than fixed, stable, and atomic (Wong 2004, 428). In other words, the self is open to be cultivated and improved through learning in the interactions with others in the community. Feeling of shame is a good indicator that there is a discrepancy between who you are in your own eyes and who you are in others' eyes. Once you realize this discrepancy, it is possible to make some changes the on individual level to be a better person if others' appraisals are appropriate; or to make some social changes on collective level to promote a better society if social ethical expectations placed on you are problematic. Even in an individualist society, shame can be a positive emotion. A person who has a keen sense of shame knows what is permissible and what is not in their community and tries to avoid doing somethings that might bring shame to themselves. For example, if you feel ashamed of eating your roommate's food in the refrigerator, you won't do that, which can prevent many issues.

In this part, I argued that shame is a reactive attitude by emphasizing the social nature of shame. Others who are essential to trigger shame are co-participants who share common understanding of social ethical expectations with us. People feel shame

because they have violated some social ethical expectations, which manifest themselves in the way of others' appraisals. However, neither is every social ethical expectation just, nor is shame always relevant to moral responsibility. In the next part, I raise one objection and try to give two replies to the objection.

3.3 One Objection and Two Replies

The biggest objection to my new definition of reactive attitudes is that if our practice of holding someone morally responsible depends too much on current, maybe problematic, social ethical expectations, then the *fairness* of moral responsibility will be undermined. Call this the Fairness Objection. In an inegalitarian society, social ethical expectations unproportionally discriminate against marginalized people. In such a society, social ethical expectations might value wealth, power, higher social status, and marginalized people do violate these prevailing social ethical expectations. However, these marginalized people fail to fulfill the prevailing expectations because of their living environments. It is unfair for them to be held morally responsible for their inborn poverty, powerlessness, and lower social status. This concerns typically manifest itself in our reflections on shame. Both Taylor (1985) and Kekes (1988) argue that if we want to criticize a certain morality, we need to appeal to some (outer) standards. But when the morality is an internalization of social standards, it is impossible to make a distinction between private morality and social morality, and thus it is impossible to critically reflect social standards. Given this, shame is an especially worrisome moral emotion for marginalized groups, such as women, racial minorities, the poor, and the LGBTQ community because in an unfair society, social ethical

expectations are disproportionately harsh to marginalized people (Calhoun 2004; Darwall 2018). Marginalized groups are more vulnerable to shame, but their feelings of shame seem to have nothing to do with moral responsibility. For instance, living in a son-preference society, my mother constantly feels shame of not having a son. But my mother's shame of not having a son does not, and should not, indicate that she is morally responsible for that fact.

My response to this objection has two parts. First of all, our ordinary practice of holding someone morally responsible lies in our inter-personal relationship with others. There is no "external" source to question this framework because the framework provides the boundary of our practice and thought. As Strawson explicitly puts in his article, "the existence of the general framework of attitudes itself is something we are given with the fact of human society. As a whole, it neither calls for, nor permits, an external 'rational' justification" (Strawson 1962, 35). As social beings, we humans are embodied in various relationships and in already ongoing ethical practices. This does not mean that we cannot question the fairness of our ethical practices *within* the ethical practices themselves. Strawson says that "questions of justification arise in plenty *within* the general framework of attitudes in question"(Strawson 1985, 41, emphasis mine). Within the general framework, we can examine the appropriateness of reactive attitudes and the justice of social ethical expectations. As Calhoun (2004) and I myself discussed in 3.1, there are many different cultures and societies in the world. Also, there are multiple communities in a said society. We don't live in a society with a single set of norms. Instead, we have a lot of different norms and communities from which we

can reflect either on our own norms or criticize norms practiced by other communities.

The just or fairness of social ethical expectations is *relative* to the standards that are themselves *internal to* and *constitutive of* an understanding of the social practices (Russell 2008). Russell argues that the fairness of an evaluation about a music competition is embodied in our understanding of the music competition, for example, the judger is *qualified* to appreciate the performance and makes the judgement based on the *quality* of the performance, the player plays the right instrument, and the like; just as the fairness in the music competition, the fairness of social ethical expectations lies in our understanding of social practices. A very general guidance securing the fairness of social ethical expectations is that social ethical expectations are made on others *in one's interests* (Strawson 1961, 10), according to which we can judge whether a social ethical expectation is fair or not. In an inegalitarian society, the power to demand is unequally concentrated in the hands of the dominant group who have higher social status. Social ethical expectations, particularly those expectations for the marginalized group, are unfair because they do not ensure the marginalized group's interests. In other words, social ethical expectations in an inegalitarian society do not protect *every* member's interest, which should be criticized and changed.

Secondly, feeling of shame experienced by marginalized people signals the injustice of social ethical expectations imposed on them, and social changes are required (Calhoun 2004; Hu 2022). As stated in the last paragraph, prevailing social ethical expectations are not inherently unproblematic. They can be criticized, amended, and changed on the individual and societal level based on the general guidance that

Strawson proposes as noted above. Marginalized groups feel shame because social ethical expectations are disproportionally against them. Living in the shared ethical community, marginalized groups share some social ethical expectations with the dominant groups. When marginalized groups regard dominant groups as co-participants and thus are susceptible to their negative judgments, the marginalized groups are vulnerable to feeling shame even though they disagree with the judgments. For example, Adrian Piper (1996) and Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) discuss the case that a female student who *critically condemns* sexist or racist insults is still vulnerable to feeling shamed by those. Unlike Lamb (1983), Kekes (1988), and Nussbaum (2004), who believe that marginalized people are better off without shame, I agree with Calhoun (2004) and Hu (2022) that the suggestion that marginalized people can simply choose to ignore demands that are not in their interests and become "shameless" about them is not realistic and perhaps a tad cruel. We tend to internalize values from dominant culture that are detrimental to us and it is not simple to ignore such values even when we know they are problematic. Shame is an inevitable moral emotion when we take participant attitudes toward others in the community. Shame is a morally useful emotion. The value of shame, even for marginalized people, is that "it is a *communicative channel* between the self and external values, between the moral spheres of the community and the moral life of the individual" (Hu 2022, 387, emphasis mine). A marginalized person or the marginalized group still feels shame even though they believe that the social ethical expectations placed on them are discriminating and there is nothing that should be ashamed of. In this case, what they need to do is not to abandon shame but to turn their

shame into motivation for asking for social changes.

People are not morally responsible for violations of social ethical expectations that are unjust to them. My mother feels ashamed of not having a son because my mother fails to live up to the social ethical expectation that people should have a son to perpetuate the family's tradition and worship their ancestors, thus, according to my new definition of reactive attitudes, she should be morally responsible for not having a son. But intuitively this is wrong.[21] My mother should not be *held* and *be* morally responsible for not having a son. In my view, my mother not being morally responsible for not having a son is not primarily because whether having a son is out of her control, as many voluntarists propose, but because the social ethical expectations held by others are unjust or "immoral"; these social ethical expectations do not take my mother's and other women's (more generally) interests into consideration. My mother lives in a society where women do not have the same equal stance or rights as men do, which brings those social ethical expectations in question to discriminate against women and my mother *uncritically* accepts them. Therefore, she is not morally responsible for falling short of this kind of social ethical expectation even though she feels shame about it.

In a nutshell, when individuals are closely tied with the community, it is difficult, but not necessarily impossible, to critically reflect and try to reject the social ethical expectations in the community. It is especially hard for marginalized groups to do so because they have been at a disadvantaged position for a long time and they may have internalized the social ethical expectations that discriminate against them. As Hu (2022)

suggests that internalization is not always a one-way process that individuals passively accept the social ethical expectations, it could also be a "dynamic negotiating process that individuals have with external values" (Hu 2022, 374). Individuals can critically reflect the social ethical expectations based on the general guidance, namely, whether social ethical expectations equally take their interests and well-being into considerations. They can also ask for social changes if social expectations fail to follow the general guidance.

In this part, I provided two replies to the Fairness Objection. Fairness is internal to the social ethical expectations and the social ethical expectations can be questioned *within* the practices because we do not live in a homogeneous society. Interacting with different societies and different groups in a society makes the reflection of social ethical expectations possible. Social ethical expectations can be wrong and they often are. When they are problematic, our reactive attitudes also become problematic as a result. A woman may feel ashamed for not having a son, or simply for their bodies, such reactive attitudes are a result of, or symptom of problematic social ethical expectations. Under this circumantance, a social change is needed for creating a fairer society.

Conclusion

This essay is a very small step in trying to provide a social understanding of reactive attitudes and thus moral responsibility. Freed of the morality system that issues some concerns with regard to our understanding of reactive attitudes and moral responsibility, I redefined reactive attitudes as emotional responses to fulfillment or violation of social ethical expectations. Social ethical expectations are sensitive to

cultures difference and history, which enables different cultures to have different reactive attitudes and different understandings of moral responsibility in different times. It also enables reactive attitudes to change according to different moral and cultural environment. Therefore, reactive attitudes are not limited to resentment, indignation, and guilt, which are prominent in the WEIRD society. Shame and other positive emotions, such as gratitude, appreciation, praise, and so on are also reactive attitudes and have moral significances in our understanding of moral responsibility.

There are still many unsolved issues with regard to my thesis: What exactly is a social understanding of moral responsibility? Is it possible to theorize it? If so, what does it look like? In what sense does a mature adult *understand* social norms and *is* a member of the community? What is the "right" relationship between individuals and the community so that individuals are susceptible to social ethical expectations in the community meanwhile there is still room for reflection and taking action? All of them are concerning moral agency and self. They are huge and philosophically profound topics, which are far beyond the limit of this essay. I will do more research on these topics in my future study.

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[1] I will explain these three core concepts of the morality system in detail in section 2.1.

[2] Appropriateness depends on 1) the quality of others' will and 2) whether others are the member of our interpersonal relationship.

[3] I will discuss moral obligation in detail in section 2.1.

[4] Russell (Russell 2018a; 2018b; 2022) is very helpful for me to understand Williams's view on moral responsibility.

[5] In his footnote, Wallace says: "the moral obligations in question would thus be ones that the agent *accepts*"(Wallace 1994, 36, original emphasis).

[6] Even for actions, sometimes if they are resulting from negligence, they are also not directly under our control. As Smith (2005) and Santiago Amaya (2015) were discussing in their papers about passive mental activity and slips.

[7] Thomason argues for an opposite position. She argues that shame is not at odds with Kantian moral theory and it plays a central role in Kantian morality. See in Thomason (2013).

[8] Wallace himself realizes this issue and argues that this is an acceptable conclusion because there is an intimate relationship between holding someone morally responsible and blame (Wallace 1994, 71).

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[9] David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche, Williams, and Russell are few philosophers who reject this kind of understanding of moral responsibility.

[10] Williams states that the morality system is something "we [are] better off without" (Williams 1985, 6) because it creates "illusions" and "fantasies" of our current ethical ideas as they relate to agency and responsibility.

[11] I will say more about what are considered as social ethical expectations in section 3.1.

[12] Strawson himself does not explicitly expresses this statement, but his exemption case indicates that we exempt children and abnormal people from moral responsibility because they are not the members of the community, see in McKenna (1998) and Watson (1987).

[13] There are different views about shame and I take the view that emphasizes the social aspect of shame, which will be discussed in details in section 3.2.

[14] Admittedly, reactive attitudes towards others' actions depend on the severity of the consequence. If the person being pushed ends up with a serious head injury, it is less possible that we can easily forgive the "pusher" even if they did not mean to do it. We might consider their reckless and hold resentment towards them. People's intents and attitudes are important factors in determining whether we hold resentment towards them, but they may not be the sole factors. Thanks to my advisor, Dr. Jing Iris Hu, for pointing this out.

[15] Calhoun (2021) argues that Wallace (1994) and Macnamara (2015) respectively provide thick descriptions of reactive attitudes, but their thick descriptions fail to accommodate both negative and positive reactive attitudes.

[16] Williams (1985) has the similar idea.

[17] "These notions [conscientiousness, duty and obligation] have been treated almost entirely abstractly in moral philosophy in the recent part, with the result that they have come to some of our contemporaries [G.E.M. Anscombe 1958, in Strawson's footnote] to seem to be meaningless survivals of discarded ideas about the government of the universe" (Strawson 1961, 7).

[18] Williams identifies four basic "elements" of this concept, please see in details in Williams (1993, 55–56).

[19] Some philosophers, for example, Stephen Darwall (2018), Kekes (1988), Martha Nussbaum (2004), Rawls (1971), and Taylor (1985), argue that the social aspect of shame causes shame to be a problematic emotion, i.e., people who feel shame lose their *autonomy* in feeling shame and are subject to some heteronomous, often problematic, judgements, because when in feeling shame, we see ourselves through *others'* eyes and take seriously others' appraisals that *we may not share*. These philosophers argue that if we succumb to others' appraisals and feel ashamed of failing to live up to *others'* standards, we lose our autonomy and self-identity. In other words, the experience of shame can induce a serious threat to the integrity of self and thus become a psychological burden to individuals. I agree with Calhoun (2004) and Hu (2022) that these philosophers' view insulate individuals from social interactions and ignore positive role shame plays in promoting social changes.

[20] Other people's criticisms express a representative view of social ethical expectations does not mean that the agent *endorses* this representative view. The agent might even believe that others' criticisms are wrong. Also, the representative view of social ethical expectations disproportionately is concentrated among social authorities, men, white, and so on (Calhoun 2004, 143–44).

[21] I admit that this is moral intuitions of "philosophers". As Margaret Walker rightfully points out that other practices of morality might have different intuition than philosophers (Margaret 2008). Thanks to Balam Kenter for urging me to make this clarification.