Rev. Latinoam. Psicopat. Fund., São Paulo, *21*(4), 779-797, dez. 2018
http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1415-4714.2018v21n4p779.6

Notes on the Evolution of the Relationship between Guilt and Shame in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology

Nota sobre evolução da relação entre culpa e vergonha em psicanálise e antropologia

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The author examines evolution of the relationship between the concepts of shame and guilt in anthropology and in psychoanalysis between 1900 and 1980. He finds that three periods have succeeded; in a first period guilt was presented as more essential in symptom-construction than shame in occidental societies; in anthropology shame was mainly viewed as germane of primitive or non-occidental societies, and guilt was seen as an "occidental" feeling. He shows that this view has been criticized in the 1960ies, and that nowadays shame is recognized to be much more pervasive in occidental cultures and guilt is also present in non-occidental settings

Key words: Shame, guilt, psychoanalysis, anthropology, history

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... Scham, die als eine exquisit weibliche Eigenschaft gilt, aber weit mehr konventionell ist, als man denken sollte.... (Shame, which passes as an exquisitely feminine peculiarity, but is much more conventional than one might think…)
S. Freud, Die Weiblichkeit, in Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, *Gesammelte Werke,* Bd. X.

Mourir de honte est le seul affect de la mort qui la mérite (Dying of shame is the only affect of death that deserves it)
J. Lacan (2007). *L'Envers de la psychanalyse*, 17 juin 1970, p. 209.

In the last hundred years, the notions of shame and guilt, and the relationship between both of them have been through important modifications in the fields of social anthropology and psychoanalysis; they have been successively considered as opposed and even contradictory, with guilt being seen as a more "noble", "civilized" "occidental" feeling than shame — the notion of the "lack of empathy" in "shame cultures" is still quite popular in the mass-media —; later, the articulation between both notions, and the idea that they should not be seen as separate entities came to the fore; ultimately several authors have promoted the idea that shame was perhaps a more significant notion that guilt — but their opinions were far more dissenting than what one might think. We shall attempt to describe and disentangle a few of the paradoxes involved.

Freud's preference for guilt

Quite rightfully, the prevalence of the notion of guilt in the human sciences has been strongly associated with psychoanalysis;

the frequency of the occurrences of the term *Schuld* in Freud's Gesammelte Werke (Freud, 1999) — indicated in the *Gesamtregister* included in the eighteenth volume (674 occurrences) — dwarves that of the other notions we will discuss, like *Schande* (only 5!) and even its semantic complement *Scham* (54) — *Schande* is mainly applied as an "objective" notion (as in "*Jemandem Schande machen*"shaming someone, etc.), and *Scham* as a subjective one (as in "*sich schämen*", to be ashamed). It seemed quite obvious, from the start, that Freud tended to consider the lexical couple Scham/Schande as depicting rather artificial, conventional feelings imposed on individuals by a certain state of social mores. As Ernest Jones has rightfully put forward, psychoanalysis emerged at the end of Queen Victoria's reign, a puritan era that certainly did not make light of social conventions and heavily insisted on the obligation of moral purity, especially in women; however Freud's own liberal inclinations, his support of several feminist movements (especially Helene Stöker's "*Sexualreform Bewegung*"), of the pro-homosexual Humanitarian Committee (which lobbied to end the criminalization of homosexuality — *Sodomie* — in German and British law and to align them on the French legal system, that made it a crime to inquire about someone's sexual orientations or practices), of the Youth *Wandervogel* movement and of course his thesis that most of moral values could be secretly supported by not-so-moral instinctual tendencies, tended to lead him into the opinion that a fair proportion of shame feelings were in fact "*falsche Scham*" (Freud, 1895/1999a). This phrase which apparently is not so frequent in German might have been imitated from the extremely usual French "*fausse honte*", especially in the French *théâtre de boulevard*, which deeply influenced one of Freud's most favorite playwrights, JN Nestroy[1] (Sauvagnat 2003). It happens to be a specificity of the French word "*honte*" (of Germanic origin, related to Old High German *Honida* and Middle Dutch *Hoonde,* and phonetically associated with *honneur*, the origin of English *honour* in spite of its Latin origin),[2] that whereas in medieval and baroque times it used to be a fairly frequent motive of duels and wars, most of its recent usage is negative, and in comparison with Scandinavian languages contemporary French is quite poor in

[1] Johann Nepomuk Nestroy was recognized both as a master of the Viennese Fantasy theatre and of the importation of the French *theatre de boulevard* in Vienna; Freud quotes him extensively in Das Unheimliche.

[2] Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, article Honte. <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/honte>.

phrases and idioms concerning shame. It is a commonly assumed notion in the dominant French secular/republican/egalitarian ideology that one should not make too much fuss about his embarrassment ("*toute honte bue*"), avoid exaggerating the importance of social conventions, and denounce unnecessary hypocrisy (which would lead someone to exhibit "false shame", *fausse honte*) — even if the practice of duels subsisted into the XXth century in small segments of society (some journalists and politicians) and if another contradictory phrase, *mourir de honte* ("dying of shame", but often in an ironical context) is also quite frequent.

Guilt and symptom formation

The main difference between shame (*Scham/Schande*) and guilt (*Schuld*), the overwhelming import attributed by Freud to the latter, lies in Freud's claims about psychoneurotic symptom formation; a mere psychological trauma, he contended, is unable to create an enduring symptom unless a sexual signification becomes entailed into it; what he calls "sexual" here is not only the emergence of embarrassment about some innocent game; it has to do with the subject's initiative, be it action, thoughts or desires — no matter how secret the latter may be; Freud had a special word for this, "*Urteil*", that is, judgment, understood as a mental act, a "decision" that did not need to be "fully conscious" to operate and involve the individual's responsibility. A signification could only have an enduring, symptom-building effect if the subject felt that he was somehow, in his fantasies, committed in a guilty sexual activity, i.e., that could have some disastrous consequences on himself, his kin and significant others; that this "judgment" was repressed, and often in a complex way, that it was not the mere effect of social pressures, but the result of conflicting unconscious mechanisms, this was at the core of what Freud was eager to assert. Although he never found quite a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon — admitting that his evolutionary works, like "Totem and taboo" (Freud, 1915/1955b), and his attempts at historical reconstructions, like "Moses and monotheism" (Freud, 1939/1953-74), contained much more hypotheses than verified facts, Freud nevertheless stuck to the notion that psychoneurotic symptoms were directly influenced by (mainly unconscious) guilt feelings.

There have been several attempts to explain why such symptom-formations were linked to sexuality. The interpretations of Fromm, close to

Horkheimer and Adorno's (1944/2002) theory of reification as a perverse result of the dialectic of Reason, seemed to infer, following a Schellingian perspective (Sauvagnat, 2004), that the tragic events of the 30ies and 40ies were due to a kind of revenge of the myth against rationality; Wilhelm Reich, a famous proponent of the energizing qualities of genitality (the so-called "Orgone theory"), assumed that there had to be a special link between character defenses (constituting a "*körperlicher Panzer*"), pregenital sado-masochist fixations and authoritarian social structure (Reich, 1933/1945). More modestly J. Lacan saw sexuality as a source of irreconcilable misunderstanding , and the prevalence of sexual themes (Weininger, 1906; Swoboda, 1904, Fliess, 1906) at the end of the XIXth century as promoting the new figure of the cheated master, as several of Freud's observations clearly showed: the dream of the father who did not know that he was dead, (according to the subject's desire), in Freud's *Formulierungen über den zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens* (Freud 1911/1999c) and the famous Cracow-Lemberg joke, in which, Lacan argues, the real subject of enunciation is expressed as "I cheat you" (Freud, 1901/1999b; Lacan, 1963-1964/1977, p. 160).

Compared to the meager comments he had on shame, Freud's contributions on guilt were intensely researched and documented. Not only did he discuss the modification of passive seduction into *nachträglich* trauma (Freud, 1895/1999a), or how active seduction transformed into obsessions; he also commented on the way drives cornered the individual into unbearable paradoxes, with dramatic changes of "dialect" between the different instinctual stages, starting from the first emotions of the infant; satisfaction itself seemed to bestow occasions of guilt; family history, the guilt of the fathers, the recriminations or humiliations of mothers (as in the case of the Rat-man, Freud 1909/1955a) could also bring new occasions of moral affliction and by compensation, produce mythomaniac fantasies of *Familieromane*; and finally he formulated the hypothesis of a "phylogenic crime" (Freud, 1915/1955b), drawing on Lamarckian biology, repressed but attempting to return in every possible manner, utilizing the most discrete circumstances of an individual's life to express the guilt it deserved, that was quite comparable to the original sin theme in Jewish and Christian traditions, a theme that has been copiously expanded on by Freud's followers.

One of the closest opponents concerning this hypothesis, during Freud's life, was Alfred Adler (1870-1937), a convert to Protestantism with a professed interest for socialism (he was in relation with Leon Trotzky and

was the therapist of Adolf Joffe, one of the main redactors of the *Pravda*), who claimed that neuroses had "biological bases" which determined a sense of humiliation, and that no other significant factor was to be reckoned in the formation of symptoms: a non-sexual inferiority complex based on social or even organic defect, against which the "manly protest" of the individual had failed was the only relevant factor (Adler, 1921). Although Freud was intensely critical of him, Adler was immensely popular in the United States and probably opened the way for what would become Ego-psychology and self psychology, and more generally one may suppose that his popularity expressed a local aversion towards the detailed study of unconscious guilt mechanisms.

Extreme "primitive shame": Cannon's research on decorticate cats and "sudden Voodoo death"

The opposition between guilt and shame has been extremely popular in social anthropology from the 1930ies on, under the form of a purported contradiction between guilt cultures and shame cultures — elaborated by Ruth Benedict (1934) and Margaret Mead (1935/2003) — that seems to have simply, in the mind of many of its enthusiasts, continued the less sophisticated opposition between "modern" and "primitive" cultures, a distinction that met with very little opposition or even fuss before the 1960ies. Its popularity even touched a domain where modern sociology was not necessarily welcome — classical humanities. In a celebrated study of classical Greek culture, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Eric R. Dodds (1951) contended that whereas Hellenic culture is often perceived as the original crucible of Western rational thought, such was hardly the case in Homeric times, when a culture of shame was totally predominant — contempt or ridicule were felt as totally unbearable, and the Athenian philosophers around Socrates mainly sketched the possibility of a rational, autonomous conduct within the framework of a functional democracy. Plato, for instance, never admitted the notion of inherited guilt, his view of the divinity, no matter how lofty it was, never included a clear notion of responsibility. Politically he never went farther than conceiving a closed society, in which rational agency would be submitted to that of a (hopefully philosophically minded) tyrant.

If Freud's preference for guilt over shame as an etiology of psychoneuroses was mainly related to the context of the end of the Victorian Era,

the notion that Western subjectivity was strongly dominated by feelings of self-conscious guilt, theological disputes on the meaning of atonement and a sense of personal responsibility was also imposing itself in another context, that of the colonial conquests, of which anthropology was strongly dependent. Even if we feel somewhat awkward about this, we have to admit that colonialist views about the world, and the distinction between the Western vs non-Western populations still dominated the humanities not so long ago, with the notion that "primitive mentalities", especially in non-Christians or partially Christianized populations, were intensely sensitive to shame and mainly immune to guilt. One of the most impressive documents, among the huge literature on the subject, is probably Walter Cannon's famous article on "Voodoo death". Cannon, a physician and researcher, who was the first to introduce the notion of "adrenalin discharge in fight or flight situations" (Cannon, 1914) and one of the first specialists of stressful situations. He devoted a paper to cases of "pure shame", in which he compiled cases of "primitive subjects" around the globe who were convinced that they had been cursed by a wizard. His idea was that these populations were so vulnerable to these beliefs that death could occur in no time once an individual was persuaded that a spell had been cast on him. As the evidence he proposed for this was mainly hearsay and even outright fiction, he was keen to show that his laboratory research on stress in "decorticate cats" had proven that such an eventuality was physiologically quite possible (Cannon, 1942, p. 180). Under stressful circumstances,

> The (cats')hairs stand on end, sweat exudes from the toe pads, the heart rate may rise from about 150 beats per minute to twice that number, the blood pressure is greatly elevated, and the concentration of sugar in the blood soars to five times the normal. This excessive activity of the sympathico-adrenal system rarely lasts, however, more than three or four hours. By that time, without any loss of blood or any other event to explain the outcome, the decorticate remnant of the animal, in which this acme of emotional display has prevailed, ceases to exist. (p. 187)

Suffice it to say that "Voodoo death" is considered by today's anthropologists as mainly fictional (Lester, 1972); even if the accusation of having "cast a spell" is frequent in places like Western Africa and the Caribbean, and does provoke various spats, dying instantly of this belongs to the domain of mythology, as various recourses against spells are traditionally to be found, like exerting some (magical) counter-measures, redirecting the spell, and also recurring to other religions. However, the notion that non-Westerners belong

to "cultures of shame" has been a very enduring notion, which periodically reappears in the most diverse domains, as psychiatry — along with the highly controversial thesis that "depression does not exist in non-western cultures" (Pewzner-Apeloig 1992) —, some local variants of psychoanalysis (Wurmser, 2003) on the "shame culture of the terrorists" ignoring "feminine sensitivity") or applied anthropology and political sciences (with the notion that non-Western cultures are obsessed with the danger of "losing face publicly", whereas Westerners are busy managing their guilt-feelings), and also of course war propaganda, in which populations of coveted oil-rich territories are typically depicted as cruel, immoral and dominated by a "culture of shame". One of the most curious phenomena in this respect is the obsession and even rage, in some researchers on China (Hu, Hsien Chin, 1944; Ho, David Yao-Fai, 1974, 1976), to document the notion of "losing face" in the traditional Chinese culture, if one considers the classical studies by Marcel Granet (1926) on *Jang* in classical China, which is precisely the opposite: a series or ritualized situations (and dancing ceremonies) in which the subject shows how humble and self-critical he can be to create a new equilibrium in which he could fit in, as a secret strategy to conquer the highest political posts.

The book that was certainly the most instrumental in building up a distinction between Guilt and Shame "cultures" was Ruth Benedict's, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1948). Benedict (1887-1948), a pupil of Franz Boas and a colleague of Margaret Mead, seems to have responded to a demand by the American State Department and Office of War Information to provide a social-anthropological account of Japanese mentality, in order to propose appropriate political decisions now that Japan had been defeated. Under her influence, the hierarchical structure of the country and especially the imperial administration was preserved. On the basis of the notion of "basic personality" (the notion that a culture could best be grasped as a "personality type" dominating in the corresponding society), by then an extremely popular view among anthropologists and psychologists (as evidenced by their use in the Frankfurt School and in the contemporary Nuremberg trials) which she had tried to systematize in the previous decade in Patterns of Culture (1934) (opposing for instance the "Dionysian" Kwakiutl to the "Apollinian" Zuni, etc). Unable to do field research in war circumstances, Benedict resorted to newspapers articles, interviews of Japanese-Americans, novels, films and histories. Her theoretical framework had been exposed in the previous decade; she described a two-fold culture in which poetic sensitivity, esthetic values — the chrysanthemum culture — was but a disguise of much more

strongly implanted core "samurai values", a cult of heroism and a total dependence towards "exterior" signs of honor, virtue and commitment to duty (*on* and *giri)*, a high sensitivity to humiliation and shame and a quasi-absence of interiorized sense of guilt, compassion and autonomous responsibility. This is how she sums up her views:

> A society that inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on developing a conscience is a guilt culture by definition. True shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behavior, not, as true guilt cultures do, on an internalized conviction of sin. Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism. A man is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasying to himself that he has been made ridiculous. In either case it is a potent sanction. But it requires an audience or at least a fantasy of an audience. Guilt does not. In a nation where honor means living up to one's picture of oneself, one may suffer from guilt though no one knows of the misdeed, and a feeling of guilt may actually be relieved by confessing the sin. (Benedict, 1948, pp. 222 -223)

Even if she later admitted that she had underestimated the dimension of "secret guilt" in Japanese conscience, and even if in a few years' time, the Japanese would overcome their proverbial politeness to point out the high degree of inaccuracy and the lack of nuance in Benedict's account, this bipartition has become a sort of an intellectual stereotype which, by the time it became obvious that sociologists and anthropologists could not afford any longer to approve it, had made its way into public relations techniques and propaganda documentaries. The public reception of this book was, at least at first, all the more favorable, that Benedict, along with her disciple and friend Margaret Mead, enjoyed a "liberal" profile and presented themselves as audacious explorers of cultural diversity, anti-racists, and implicit supporters of the "liberation movements" that flourished in the 60ies.

Doi Takeo's response: *amae* as a core Japanese "guilt feeling"

In a famous book ((甘えの構造, *Amae no kozo*, translated as *The anatomy of dependence, [1974]*), a Japanese psychoanalyst, Takeo Doi (1920-2009), took issue with Benedict's bipartition between shame and guilt culture and its application to Japan. He did not deny that a "samurai ideology" had been governing his country, but he insisted that Benedict, who had never set foot on the Nippon archipelago, had failed to understand the presence of deep-rooted mechanisms of guilt in Japanese individuals. He claimed that this

mechanism is of course difficult to perceive for a foreigner; but for whoever has lived Japanese culture from the inside, the dominant, although sometimes hidden emotion is that of *Amae*, a term derived for the verb *amaeru*, "depending and presuming of someone's benevolence". In the explanations he provides on *Amaeru*, Doi insists on the mother-child relationship. Amaeru means, struggling to be loved, protected, trying to provoke in the other a protective, loving reaction; it implies being defenseless and anticipating the other's negative reaction; it also implies a deeply internalized sense of dependence on the community and intense guilt for whatever inner movement could be adverse to these criteria; in a dialectic typical of the *Nihonjinron* tradition (a local tradition trying to depict what is "purely Japanese"), Doi asserts that the Japanese language is certainly the one that enjoys the greatest lexical wealth to describe such feelings, that are the true bases of Japanese social bonds, even though he admitted that such sorts of bonds certainly existed in other cultures.

Gehrard Piers and Milton Singer: A new approach on the relationship between guilt and shame

Whereas the approaches heretofore mentioned insisted on the contradictions and even incompatibility between shame and guilt cultures, from the 1950ies on, a number of authors started claiming that this bipartition was wrong, and that one should in fact study the way each notion was more or less combined with the other. In fact, one of the first authors who seem to have launched such a notion was certainly Imre Hermann, the main inspirer of the concept of attachment, who claimed to enlighten psychoanalytic practice by drawing on animal ethology, and provided descriptions of primary shame feelings in apes, when the mother-child dyad is perturbed by an angry adult male, producing "Augenleuchten" (fiery eyes) and "Lautwerden" (auditory din) (Hermann, 1934, 1941), but his efforts seem to have remained mostly unnoticed. Piers, a psychoanalyst and Singer, a social anthropologist (specialized in the study of Indian culture), both residing in Chicago, were particularly instrumental in making the case that guilt cannot be separated from shame. Their little book (86 pages) comprised two parts (Piers & Singer, 1953).

In the first, *Shame and guilt: a psychoanalytic study* Piers contended that whereas shame could be defined as the failure to comply with some standards or ideals presented to the Ego by the Ego ideal, guilt was the transgression of

boundaries set by the superego; there is also a difference in the threat implied (castration in the case of guilt, abandonment in the case of shame); now what is particularly insightful (and Dostoyevskian) in Piers' approach is that he subtly infers that there is most of the time a dynamic relationship between both, revealing a functional signification of masochism. Shame can relieve guilt; and conversely, too strong a humiliation can be resolved in a (forbidden) impulse through which the subject proves to himself that he is able to reach his ideal — in which case shame becomes guilt.

Singer's contribution, "Shame Cultures and Guilt Cultures", used Piers' twofold conception to criticize the notion proposed by Margaret Mead in *Cooperation and Competition*, that in guilt cultures social control is internalized, whereas in shame cultures it depends on an exterior agency; Singer tackled outright the common mantra about non-Western cultures being uniquely structured by internalized control; in his demonstration, he mainly used his own field research on Indian industrialists in Madras, who had proven to be able to move from a very traditional countryside setting to a metropolis and become extremely successful, without abandoning their cultural institutions, including a major proportion of internalized guilt feelings. Although Piers and Singer's contribution has frequently been presented in a simplified manner, there is a general agreement that their little book has marked a sort of a "turn of the tide", reshuffling the cards, and preparing the notion that the Anglo-Saxon culture might not be univocally a guilt culture after all.

Kohut's mirroring and narcissistic rage

Heinz Kohut (1913-1981), an immigrant from Vienna who became extremely popular in the US after he promoted "self psychology" and the notion that a grandiose narcissistic self should be considered as a normal phenomenon in young children, borrowed the cornerstone of his theory, "mirroring" in the eyes of one's mother, from an article by Winnicott (1967/1971), who in his turn had borrowed this from Lacan's "Mirror stage" theory (Lacan, 1949/2006). But whereas Lacan's theory never purported to erase guilt in favor of shame — quite to the contrary, Lacan (Radiophonie) even contended that analysands should be confirmed their guilt, as a means to alleviate their anxiety and limit their death-drives (Lacan, 1969-1970/2007) — and saw the various imagoes (weaning, fraternal rivalry, i.e. Mirror stage,

Oedipus complex) as a series of moments through which several varieties of guilt could be displayed, Kohut (1971) understood mirroring as a dependency on the gaze of a significant other, through which the subject's narcissism could and should flourish, and which was far more important than the issue of unconscious guilt. One of the most striking examples of this is the notion of "narcissistic rage". Pathological aggressiveness has been traditionally understood as determined by a desire for revenge over a crippling sadistic superego, and more or less linked to death-drives. Kohut claimed that most of it could be better explained by narcissistic frustrations, which could produce "narcissistic rage", a catchphrase that has enjoyed considerable popularity since then. The "conservative leftist" Christopher Lasch (1979) has lamented that North American culture has progressively abandoned its puritan roots to reel in the "culture of narcissism", as new versions of capitalism have promoted, via advertisement and mass-media, a new "narcissistic personality of our times" (Lasch 1979, p. 11); Heinz Kohut has probably been one of the main instruments of this in the domain of psychoanalysis.

Lacan: dying of shame and the seamy side of contemporary history

As we have already mentioned, in most of his research, Lacan seems to have mainly continued the Freudian prevalence of guilt over shame.He was originally known as a theoretician of guilt feelings, of the sadistic superego, and even his theory of enunciation owes quite a lot to these (Sauvagnat, 2005): in fact, this term hardly appears at all in his seminars and published texts, except in two seminars, The seamy side of psychoanalysis, and *Ou pire* ("Or worse"). In his seminar *The Other side of psychoanalysis*, Lacan claims that although he has hardly used the term, the issue of shame lies at the heart of what he has been trying to promote. The reference to H. de Balzac's *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine* (1848) in which the novelist describes a secret Catholic society whose (religious) role is to save individuals in dire straits, is used as an ethical guideline, to illustrate an essential aspect of discourse: "dying of shame". Transforming Heideggerian notion of "Sein zum Tode" (Heidegger, 1929/1977) in a direction that the German philosopher probably never foresaw, he considered that shame was the only affect indicating directly the "being for death" that characterizes a subject's relationship to being. In a conference at the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1972, Lacan (1972) was to claim that death was a "matter of faith", insomuch as, failing the acceptation

that one's life is bound to end, one's existence becomes unreal — in cases of psychotic melancholia, Cotard's syndrome (Cotard, 1891) shows the incapacity of such subjects to conceptualize, to accept the idea that their life will have an end, and the result is an unlimited, delusional feeling of guilt. Thus Lacan presented shame as an anticipation of the object included in guilt: the part of guilt that can be articulated through what he calls a discourse. In Balzac's novel, *The seamy side of Contemporary History* (Balzac, 1848/1855) the secret society of the Brothers of Consolation are informed that a certain man has a strange conduct, and is suspected of planning to commit suicide; he is discreetly followed, and he is found to hide a shameful secret. In spite of the modesty of his trade, he has arranged a secret room with all the possible luxury in which his daughter, Vanda, lies in bed, suffering from a mysterious disease, the polish plait. A specialist, a Jewish physician, is summoned on the premises by the Brothers of Consolation, only to find that the poor woman is paying for her grandfather's faults: he is a Polish noble who has betrayed his country to the Russian Emperess Catherine II, and thus facilitated the dismemberment of that Nation. On the other side, her father is the prosecutor who has pronounced the death penalty during the French revolution against the daughter of Mme de la Chanterie, the main leader of the Brothers of Consolation, but who found himself pennyless after the restoration of kingship. The result of a double shame, Vanda's symptom can only be cured by persons who have been victims of her father and her grandfather. Thus the change of discourse, the political transformations in which the victor becomes the vanquished, are measured in terms of unbearable shame. The true subject of discourse, in Lacan's view, is the subject of shame: the subject at the mercy of the master signifier.

Whereas a growing proportion of US psychoanalysts started abandoning the classical notion that guilt was more crucial than shame in symptom-formation, and increasingly depended on the study of shame and narcissistic mechanisms, relying on concepts that were originally coined by Lacan, Lacan himself described shame as being at the heart of guilt, in a new version of the Freudian death-drives.

What if the US culture was in fact … a culture of shame?

In the recent years, although there has been some continuation of the classical opposition between the "primitive shame cultures" and the "civilized guilt cultures" in political and war propaganda, there has been an inflation of the

interest in mechanisms of shame, to such a point that several authors, following Lasch's example, have proclaimed that "US culture is a culture of shame". There is little question that the notion of guilt is not exactly popular in this cultural domain, and that "guilt feelings" are considered as highly pathological.

Kaufman & Raphael (1984, p. 57), Kaufman (1989, p. 93) have argued that the real moral standard in the US was shame, but that this went unrecognized because of a local taboo, according to which "one should not show his shame", one should "proclaim his pride" and that when unavoidable, shame would be termed in more lenient terms like "embarrassment". Similarly, Scheff (2003) following Tomkins (1963), considers that shame should be considered as the social emotion *par excellence* — the feeling that social bonds are threatened —, of which guilt should be seen as a subaltern.

Conclusive remarks

Although psychoanalysis appeared until the late 1960ies to be mainly concerned with guilt and seemed to underestimate the import of shame — and cultural anthropology seemed to comfort this position —, a complete reversal of this picture has recently taken place, with a multiplication of analytical texts dealing mainly with the latter. One may rejoice that the traditional prejudice, concerning the alleged gap between "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures" appears to be thus reduced. But this has not happened without some misunderstanding: whereas it seems clear that the recent notion of a "culture of narcissism" is the source of this curious adoption of shame feelings by the Anglo-saxon world, one wonders whether this very notion is the best choice if the deepest motives of shame are to be explored. This is where the idea that shame should not only be seen in terms of intersubjectivity, but also as the point where the subject, submitted to the master signifier, is confronted to the function of death.

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Abstract

(Nota sobre evolução da relação entre culpa e vergonha em psicanálise e antropologia)

O autor estuda a evolução da relação entre culpa e vergonha em psicanálise e antropologia entre 1900 e 1980. Devem-se distinguir três períodos: no primeiro, a culpa foi apresentada como mecanismo essencial na construção do sintoma nos indivíduos ocidentais e a vergonha, como prevalente nos não ocidentais. Essa concepção foi criticada nos anos 1960, e agora se reconhece que o sentimento de vergonha está muito mais prevalente do que se acreditava nos ocidentais, e que os sentimentos de culpa têm um significado importante nos sujeitos não ocidentais.

Palavras-chave: Vergonha, culpabilidade, psicanálise, antropologia, história

(Note sur l'évolution de la relation entre culpabilité et honte en psychanalyse et en anthropologie)

L'auteur examine l'évolution de la relation entre les concepts de honte et culpabilité en psychanalyse et en anthropologie entre 1900 et 1980. Trois périodes se sont succédées. Dans la première la culpabilité était vue comme plus essentielle que la honte pour la construction des symptômes en milieu occidental; en anthropologie, la honte était vue comme fréquente dans les sociétés non-occidentales «primitives». Cette notion a été critiquée dans les années 1960; actuellement on reconnaît que la honte est beaucoup plus présente dans les cultures occidentales et la culpabilité est également fréquente dans les milieux non-occidentaux.

Mots clés: Honte, culpabilité, psychanalyse, anthropologie, histoire

(Nota sobre la evolución de la relación entre culpa y vergüenza en psicoanálisis y antropología)

El autor estudia la evolución de la relación entre los conceptos de culpa y vergüenza en psicoanálisis y en antropología, entre los años 1900 y 1980. El autor distingue entre tres periodos: en el primero, la culpa fue presentada como un factor más relevante que la vergüenza en la construcción del síntoma en sociedades occidentales; en la antropología la vergüenza fue vista, principalmente, como parte integrante de las sociedades primitivas o no occidentales, y la culpa fue vista como un sentimiento "occidental". El autor muestra que esta visión ha sido criticada en los años 1960, y que hoy en día se reconoce que la vergüenza está

mucho más presente en las culturas occidentales y que la culpa también está presente en configuraciones no occidentales.

Palabras clave: Vergüenza, culpabilidad, psicoanálisis, antropología, historia

(Zur Entwicklung der Beziehung zwischen Schuld und Scham in der Psychoanalyse und der Anthropologie)

Der Verfasser analysiert in diesem Artikel die Entwicklung der Beziehung zwischen Scham- und Schuldgefühle in der Psychoanalyse und der Anthropologie zwischen 1900 und 1980, wobei zwischen drei Perioden unterschieden wird. In der Ersten wird angenommen, dass das Schuldgefühl in westlichen Gesellschaften viel stärker zur Symptombildung beiträgt als das Schamgefühl. Anderseits ordnet die Anthropologie das Schamgefühl hauptsächlich primitiven oder nicht-westlichen Gesellschaften zu, wobei das Schuldgefühl als „westliches" Gefühl eingestuft wurde. Diese Auffassung wurde in den 1960er Jahren revidiert und heutzutage wird anerkannt, dass das Schamgefühl auch in westlichen Gesellschaften weit verbreitet ist und dass Schuldgefühle auch in nicht-westlichen Gesellschaften zu finden sind.

Schlüsselwörter*: Schande, Schuldgefühl, Psychoanalyse, Anthropologie, Geschichte*

Citação/Citation: Sauvagnat, F. (2018, dezembro). Note on the Evolution of the Relationship between Guilt and Shame in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatologia Fundamental*, *21*(4), 779-797 http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1415-4714.2018v-21n4p779.6.

Editores do artigo/Editors: Profa. Dra. Ana Maria G. R. Oda e Profa. Dra. Sonia Leite.

Recebido/Received: 23.5.2018/ 5.23.2018 **Aceito/Accepted**: 21.7.2018 / 7.21.2018

Financiamento/Funding: Este trabalho não recebeu financiamento / This work received no funding.

Conflito de interesses/Conflict of interest: O autor declara que não há conflito de interesses / The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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