CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The tragedy of life is what dies inside a man while he lives.

Albert Einstein

What is shame? Although most of us are aware of experiencing shame from time to time and have some sort of implicit knowledge of its character, defining shame accurately and comprehensively has proved to be a demanding and complicated endeavour. Most recent investigations begin by emphasising the horror of the experience. The language used to describe shame is replete with words and phrases which present shame as a distinctly negative emotion. Adjectives such as debilitating, overwhelming, crippling (Tangney, 1993), unbearable (Goldberg, 1991), ugly (Metcalf, 2000) and darksome (Scheler, 1987) provide but a small sample. The unique nature of shame in which the self is both subject and object, both the observer and the observed, renders the individual acutely aware of his or her shortcomings. The victim of shame feels inferior, deficient and unworthy. The very core of the self is experienced as inadequate. Tomkins (1963) reflected the depth to which shame penetrates in his description of shame as "…an inner torment, a sickness of the soul." (p. 118).

Magnifying the horror of viewing one's self as inherently deficient is the mortifying sense of exposure which invariably accompanies shame. The shame-gripped individual feels frighteningly transparent, as though his or her innermost thoughts, secrets and imperfections are glaringly visible to the world. Yet, not only does shame focus attention on imperfections and character flaws, but the shame experience itself further sunders the individual's capacity to maintain basic cohesion

and control. Shame has also been described as intensely disorienting (Schneider, 1977), disrupting cognitive capacities (Nathanson, 1992) and paralysing one's normal capacities for both communication and action. One may be frozen to the spot, unable to move and unable to speak coherently. In this state, feelings of confusion (Darwin, 1872/1965), crushing panic (Wurmser, 1981/1994) and helplessness (Izard, 1991) are painfully dominant. The inherent response to this unbearable exposure and state of incompetence is to hide from view. The characteristic shame posture of lowering the head and eyes and reducing body size by collapsing the shoulders and torso (H. B. Lewis, 1971; M. Lewis, 1992) reflects this need to disappear; to somehow escape the inescapable. Shame is isolating; it is alienating and, at its most intense, it is soul destroying. As so aptly put by Lee (1998), excessive shame "...acts like an acid on self-esteem." (p. 137).

Based on this negative nature of extreme shame experiences, shame has gained a reputation as being *all* bad (eg. Tangney & Dearing, 2002); as something which is best avoided where possible and somehow destroyed or 'got rid of' when avoidance fails. However, such a view appears inadequate and even misleading when we consider the less frequently acknowledged notion of 'shamelessness'; that is, the apparent absence of any capacity for either experiencing or expressing shame. Such cases would appear to be as equally dysfunctional as full-blown shame. Indeed, there is something distinctly subhuman about the state of shamelessness. It is presumably not by coincidence that those who boldly commit the unconscionable crimes of rape, murder and the like, are often conferred with labels such as 'animal' or 'beast'. There appears to be something about shame, and the capacity to experience shame, that separates humans from other members of the animal kingdom. Indeed, Charles Darwin (1972/1965), in his groundbreaking exploration of the adaptive evolution of

2

emotions, identified blushing (which he claimed to be a sign of shame) as "...the most human of all expressions." (p. 309). Darwin further associated blushing with attention directed towards one's own appearance, a feat which he asserted required "mental powers" (p. 363) commensurate with those of man and thus not available to other animal species. More recent major works in the area of shame (Broucek, 1991; Lewis, 1971; Lewis, 1992; Tomkins, 1963; Wurmser, 1981/1994) have supported Darwin's remarkable insights, with the exclusively human capacity for objective self-awareness held to be an essential pre-requisite for the experience of shame. Yet despite this clear association between shame and what could be described as the very essence of our humanity, as well as the apparently unacceptable state of shamelessness, the notion of shame as a beneficial, adaptive and potentially positive emotion has been both neglected and poorly understood.

The last ten to fifteen years have seen a dramatic increase in attention paid to the impact of the shame experience. Recognition of shame's central role in human functioning has motivated clinicians and researchers alike to explore its characteristics and to strive for a consensus regarding its origins, its contribution to human development, and its relationship to other psychological phenomena. However, despite the rich and insightful contributions of so many researchers, movement towards a clear and complete understanding of shame appears stalled, almost as though 'stuck' in its own self-reflective stare. Shame retains a somewhat enigmatic quality, replete with paradoxes such as the previously described ugliness of its presence *and* its absence. Phenomenological aspects of shame are also confusing with shamed individuals feeling small and insignificant on the one hand, but obvious and exposed on the other. They desperately want to hide from the view of others but feel a simultaneous fear of abandonment. They want to escape or run

away but are frozen to the spot, unable to take action. The complexity of shame is evident in almost every endeavour to reveal its underlying truths. Goldberg (1991), for example, explicitly identified shame as "...one of the most complex and contradictory emotions with which the human race must come to terms" (p. xv).

So how do we begin to understand this emotion which is so inherently contradictory and complicated? A thorough review of the literature, presented in *Chapter Two* of this thesis reveals that three overarching psychological paradigms have regarded the study of shame as particularly relevant to their research goals: psychoanalysis, developmental/social psychology and evolutionary/functionalist theories. Of course, the importance of understanding shame has permeated virtually every field of psychology as well as numerous other related disciplines such as philosophy, and religious and cultural studies. However, the prevailing body of shame literature suggests that it is these three disciplines which have come to dominate the study of shame to a degree unmatched by other fields of interest.

Despite the many unique and at times distinctly contradictory views put forward by these three approaches, the one unifying factor, the one central and identifying feature of shame which is almost universally accepted, is the relationship of shame to the global self. The 'self', however, remains a relatively elusive concept; a concept of which we all have incontrovertible implicit knowledge but which remains a theoretical challenge as we seek an explicit and communicable definition. It may be this difficulty which has discouraged the exploration of shame from this standpoint. However, the increasing attention being paid to the understanding of self, and a growing body of related research from fields as diverse as neuropsychology, trauma studies, infant development and self psychology, renders it timely that the study of shame should begin to embrace this research regarding its most central and defining

criterion. It is the contention of this thesis that shame is, first and foremost, about the 'self', a perspective which has been broadly acknowledged yet remains relatively unexplored by the various approaches which are currently dominant within the shame literature.

Study 1, presented in *Chapters Three* to *Five* seeks to distinguish shame, with its global self focus, from the more specific behaviourally-focused experience of guilt. It has largely been via comparisons between shame and guilt that the self has been identified as the focus of the shame experience. This distinction provides an important foundation for the further examination of shame's relationship to various aspects of the self.

Chapter Six is a theoretical chapter which explores the physical aspect of shame and its impact on the 'bodily' self. Here shame is examined via the patterning of Autonomic Nervous System stimulation, with a process of dissolution being proposed; a dissolution of the bodily self to more primitive levels of functioning.

Chapter Seven explores the idea of the self as a manifestation of the highest evolutionary level of consciousness; the so-called 'doubling' of consciousness. In this chapter I argue that the experience of shame, at its most extreme, becomes traumatic, impacting on the self in a manner similar to other forms of trauma. By drawing upon current understandings within the field of trauma studies, the relationship between shame and the self at the level of consciousness can be elucidated. This theorising suggests, once again, that shame acts as an instigator of self dissolution, causing a temporary loss of the highest level of consciousness and a regression to a more evolutionarily ancient level of self manifestation. Moreover, such a relationship has important explanatory value, providing a means by which

certain of the disparate views on shame held by researchers in the various paradigms identified in Chapter Two, can be unified.

Chapters Eight to Ten further expand on the examination of the impact of shame on the self, this time in terms of the 'interpersonal self', the 'functional self', and the 'self in time'. In this context *Study 2* provides empirical support for the detrimental effects of shame. In particular, shame is shown to disrupt both the level of self-cohesion and the experience of elapsed time.

Chapter Eleven explores the important process of protecting the self from the ravages of shame. A wide range of defense mechanisms as well as processes of affect substitution and euphemism render the majority of shame experiences to be hidden from view; unacknowledged and unrecognised. Despite the short term benefits of such protective measures, chronic use of such procedures has been identified as the source of much long-term psychopathology, suggesting that hiding from shame is not necessarily a beneficial strategy. Study 3 further examines the data from Study 1 for evidence of defensive behaviours representative of both shame- and guilt-dominant experiences.

Chapter Twelve examines the alternative face of shame; the positive and functional aspects of this emotion. Despite the detrimental impact of shame identified thus far, the absence of shame evidenced via the shameless behaviour of the psychopath is indicative of a different influence. In Study 4 the data from Study 1 are once again examined in order to identify the potential for shame to have positive and self-enhancing outcomes; in contrast to the traumatic concomitants described thus far. Moreover, the potential for shame to contribute positively to self-development will be compared with the potential for guilt to function in a similar manner.

The identification of shame's potential to be *either* self-destructive *or* self-enhancing leads to the important examination of the developmental processes which facilitate each of these outcomes. *Chapter Thirteen* presents a developmental profile of shame; a maturational theory which parallels the maturation of self and the development of attachment styles. Shame is identified here as an emotion which increases in complexity, with three major developmental transformations underpinning its maturation and consequent contribution to self-development.

Chapter Fourteen identifies the socialisation processes which facilitate the development of mature, healthy shame, with emphasis on the specific interactions which facilitate each phase of this developmental process. *Chapter Fifteen* then extends this developmental theory to an understanding of the more maladaptive socialisation experiences which lead to the development of shame-based psychopathologies. In particular, the divergent manifestation of shamelessness and shame-proneness are explored.

Chapter Sixteen draws conclusions from the material presented in this thesis with specific emphasis on implications for the treatment of shame-related disorders as well as the further theoretical and empirical development of shame studies.
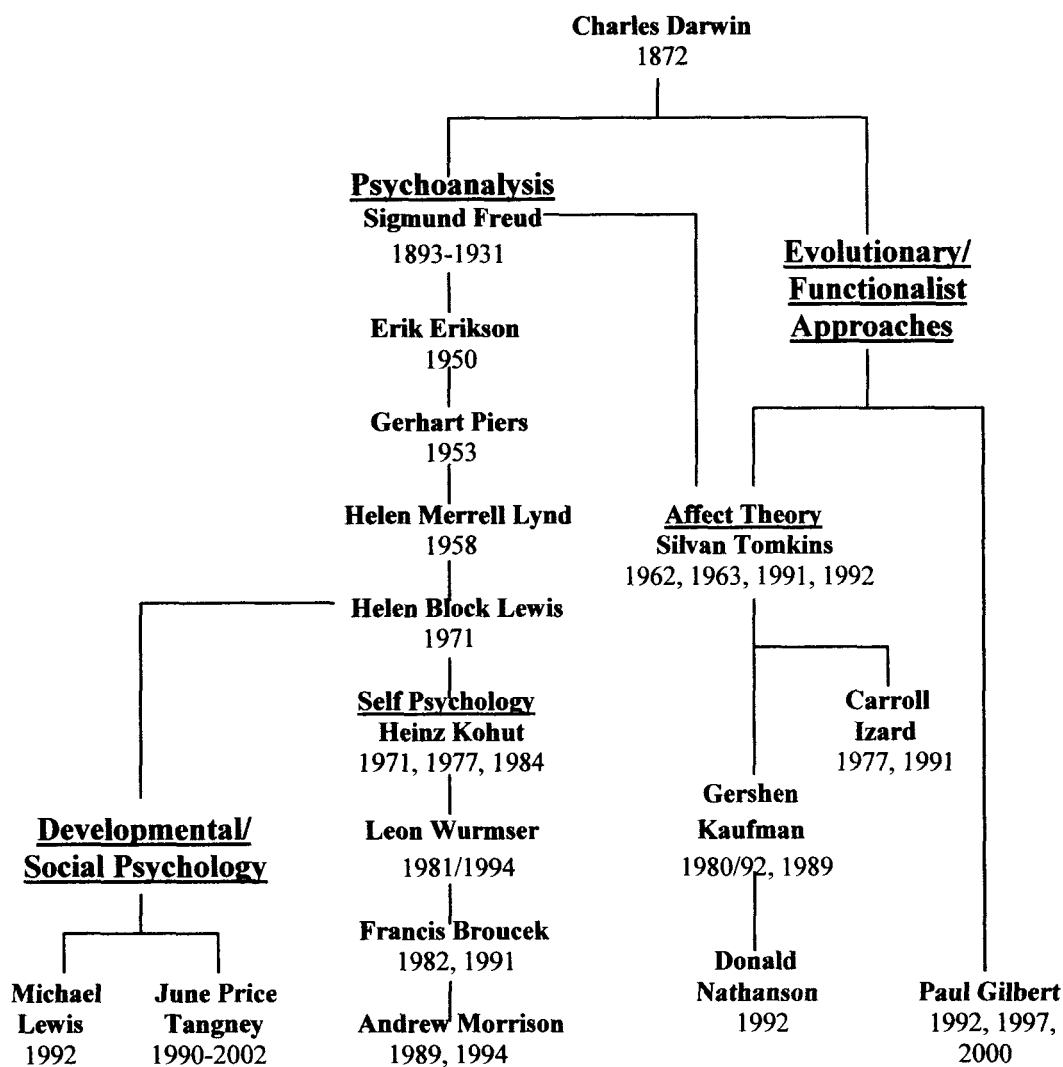
CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF SHAME: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

While there has been a dramatic increase over the last twenty years in the number of researchers studying shame, the history of shame research has been dominated by a limited number of contributions of major importance. It is these publications of outstanding merit which provide the central tenets upon which current understanding is based and upon which future developments depend.

One of the pioneers in the study of shame was Charles Darwin (1872/1965). Although not generally identified as a psychologist, Darwin's work formed an undeniably important foundation upon which the later study of emotion was substantially based. Mainstream psychological development of shame studies began, of course, with Freud in the late nineteenth century. The psychoanalytic tradition dominated the exploration of both shame and guilt for many years and continues to provide clinical and theoretical contributions of immense value. However, as is the case in virtually all psychologically-based investigations, the second half of the twentieth century saw dissatisfaction with, and divergence from, this psychoanalytic orientation. It was during this time that the evolutionary and functionalist approaches, as well as the disciplines of developmental and social psychology, emerged, each with a view of shame that differed substantially from the prevailing psychoanalytic formula, as well as from each other (see Figure 1).

Charles Darwin
1872

Psychoanalysis
Sigmund Freud
1893-1931

Erik Erikson
1950

Gerhart Piers
1953

Helen Merrell Lynd
1958

Helen Block Lewis
1971

Self Psychology
Heinz Kohut
1971, 1977, 1984

Leon Wurmser
1981/1994

Francis Broucek
1982, 1991

Andrew Morrison
1989, 1994

**Evolutionary/
Functionalist
Approaches**

Affect Theory
Silvan Tomkins
1962, 1963, 1991, 1992

Carroll
Izard
1977, 1991

Gershen
Kaufman
1980/92, 1989

Donald
Nathanson
1992

Paul Gilbert
1992, 1997,
2000

**Developmental/
Social Psychology**

Michael
Lewis
1992

June Price
Tangney
1990-2002

Figure 1. History of shame research. (Dates indicate either major contributions or period during which numerous contributions were made).

The Foundation of Emotion Theory

Charles Darwin

Despite being better known for his formulation of the theory of evolution in his

ground-breaking contribution to the biological literature, 'The Origin of Species'

(1859/1965), Charles Darwin can also be credited with being an important player in

the early development of the field of psychology. In particular, Darwin's book, 'The

Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals' (1872/1965), provided impressive

and detailed observations of behavioural and phenomenological aspects of a range of

emotional expressions. Furthermore, Darwin associated emotions with the nervous

system, identifying emotion in general as occurring independently of will or habit.

In his specific review of shame, Darwin identified its reliance upon a high level of

neurological development and also described the postural response of shame;

avoiding eye contact, hiding the face and attempting to mask or conceal any evidence

of shame from the eyes of observing others. Perhaps most importantly, Darwin noted

the mental confusion which accompanies shame: "Persons in this condition [blushing

and shame] lose their presence of mind and utter singularly inappropriate remarks.

They are often much distressed, stammer and make awkward movements or strange

grimace" (p.322). This aspect of the shame experience has since become recognised

as one of its most central and distinguishing features. Darwin also recognised that the

shame response, particularly blushing, tended to focus one's attention toward one's

self. While the key significance of what is now referred to as 'reflective self-

awareness' was not recognised or elaborated, Darwin nonetheless sowed the seed for

the future germination and development of this unique characteristic of shame.

As might be expected Darwin also laid the foundation for contemporary

understanding of the evolutionary significance of emotional expression. Darwin

identified the innate quality of emotions by observing their uniformity of expression amongst different human races and within animal species. He described shame as being distinctly human and therefore comparatively recently evolved. Darwin specifically linked shame's appearance to the development of that most important organ of evolutionary development; the brain. Darwin also noted that, despite its universal presence in all human races, the shame response is not evident in infants. Based on observational reports, Darwin placed the development of the capacity for shame at between two and three years of age. Again we find that recent studies such as those conducted by Lewis (1992) which similarly place the emergence of shame at about the third year of life, provide support for Darwin's careful observations.

Darwin is rarely recognised as a major contributor to the current body of shame literature. Indeed, his presentation of a general theory of emotion dedicated only limited space to shame. However, when we consider that much of the work of contemporary researchers can be traced back to the phenomenological, evolutionary, developmental and neurological principles described by Darwin, we can see that, despite his simple methodology and brevity, his observations and descriptions provided a remarkably accurate foundation for the future development of the field of shame research.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC TRADITION

Sigmund Freud

Freud's contribution to the understanding of shame is often dismissed and even regarded by some as a hindrance to the development of shame theory. However, Freud did contribute some important concepts which have since proved to have

important implications for the theoretical and clinical enhancement of the shame model.

Freud's earliest views on shame can be found in his work with Joseph Breuer presented as "Studies on Hysteria" (1893-1895). Here shame was described as a distressing affect, and one which could be associated with "psychical trauma." Freud also recognised the impact of, not only single, major traumatic events but the collective impact of multiple "partial traumas." This relationship between shame and trauma was not further developed by Freud, but has important relevance for the application of contemporary trauma theory to the understanding of shame.

Freud (1893-1895) also recognised shame as a feeling that "…one would prefer not to have experienced, that one would rather forget" (p. 269). This realisation contributed to Freud's consideration of the concept of defense, a process by which ideas and memories, with which an unpleasant feeling is associated, are pushed out of conscious awareness. Freud further developed his ideas on defense in Draft K, a letter to Wilhelm Fliess (1896). Freud saw defense as a normal way of dealing with "unpleasure" and proposed it as a "psychical mechanism" governed by "the law of constancy." Thus shame was seen, at this early stage of Freud's work, as an important motivator of repression, a process which, in turn, provided protection from shame's destabilising potential.

In the "Neuro-Psychoses of Defense", Freud (1894) proposed a link between shame and sexual pleasure which was to dominate much of his subsequent theorising. Freud saw the earliest stage of childhood as a stage of immorality and a time during which sexual stimulation brought only pleasure. With sexual maturation (Freud later suggested the slightly earlier stage of latency) arises self-reproach in response to the application of newly acquired moral awareness. Memories of

13

pleasure associated with sexual acts are now repressed by what Freud called the "symptoms of defense"; conscientiousness, shame and self-distrust. Shame now forms a protective function and a period of apparent psychological health ensues. Illness or psychopathology result when these defensive factors fail and the previously repressed memories re-emerge with the original self-reproaches now taking on an obsessive and pathological quality. The link between shame and sexuality was further developed in Freud's "Three Essays on Sexuality" (1901-1905). Here Freud proposed that shame reaches its full potential during the developmental stage of latency. During this period, the "mental forces" of shame, disgust, and moral ideals were believed to form "dams", functioning to resist the flow of sexual instinct and bringing about sexual regulation.

Although shame virtually disappeared from Freud's work after 1905, Lansky and Morrison (1997) pointed to the importance of Freud's (1914) work "On Narcissism". It was in this context that Freud developed the concept of the ego-ideal, a psychic component concerned with aspirations and goals. Although Freud did not relate the ego-ideal to shame, the concept of the ego-ideal has none the less been taken up by several important post Freudian shame theorists, most notably Piers (1953) and Morrison (1983, 1989).

In his "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis" (1916-1917), Freud turned his attention towards guilt, initially citing its development in relation to the oedipal complex. Guilt was seen to arise parallel to the awareness of the oedipal wishes of the young boy to destroy the father and to take the mother for himself. Guilt became an even more central feature when Freud (1923) developed his structural model of the mind, comprising the id, ego and superego. Guilt was now seen to arise in the wake of conflict between the knowing ego and the judging superego. At this stage of

14

his theorising, Freud began to place guilt, rather than shame, at centre stage in his developing conceptualisation of psychopathologies. He identified guilt as the central torment of neurosis (1916-1917), as the promoter of self-punishing masochistic desires (1917-1919), and as the conscience driven origin of obsessional anxieties (1927-1931).

Although Freud addressed shame and guilt quite independently of one another, at least in a chronological sense, he did use the term "self-reproach" in connection with both. He also, at one stage (1917-1919), seemed to imply that unresolved guilt led to a state which was akin to a sense of inferiority, a term far more commonly used today in relation to shame. Thus Freud's work on shame and guilt left many questions to be answered, particularly regarding the relationship, or lack thereof, between the two emotions. However, despite the fact that Freud did not develop his theory of shame and did not elucidate his somewhat conflicting ideas, it does seem that Freud viewed shame as undergoing a distinct developmental process with important implications for *both* psychopathology *and* well-being.

Erik Erikson

Erikson (1950/1963) presented a developmental theory, the "Eight Ages of Man", in which shame was held to be especially pertinent during the second of these stages. During the second and third years of life, Erikson saw the major developmental task to be the achievement of a degree of autonomy whilst simultaneously minimising the development of the alternative; shame and doubt. As the growing child becomes increasingly mobile, a sense of autonomy, of pride and a feeling of self-control is fostered by parenting which, while ensuring boundaries of safety, supports the child's attempts to explore and make independent choices. With overzealous control

and restriction, the child instead comes to doubt his own capabilities; he learns to feel inadequate and ashamed of his or her own limitations. Erikson did, however, emphasise the importance of a healthy balance between autonomy and shame/doubt, with too little shame resulting in maladaptive impulsiveness or a tendency to overestimate one's abilities. In contrast, too much shame may lead to compulsive patterns of behaviour in an attempt to over-control one's environment.

The developmental stage which follows that of autonomy versus shame and doubt is "initiative versus guilt"; a stage which is held to span the period from about age three up until five or six (Erikson, 1971). During these years the child is exceptionally active and develops the capacity to plan and to undertake new tasks. The child begins to have a sense of 'future' and thus an understanding that his or her actions have consequences. With the healthy development of initiative comes a sense of purpose and the potential for fulfilment of one's capabilities. Excessive guilt, on the other hand may have an inhibitory action, resulting in the repression of desires and dreams. Erikson saw guilt as essentially replacing or "absorbing" shame, thereby resulting in an apparent minimisation of the importance of shame.

Gerhart Piers

The work of Piers (1953) formed something of a landmark contribution in the development of shame understanding. Piers addressed two specific issues which remained glaringly confounded in the post-Freudian era:

1.   The differentiation of shame and guilt.

2.   The relationship between shame and guilt.

In differentiating between shame and guilt Piers helped to reduce existing confusion and also provided an important framework for further exploration. Piers agreed with

Freud's assertion that guilt is generated by tension between the ego and the superego. He viewed the superego as the setter of boundaries, originally established to inhibit the aggressive or sexual impulses of the pleasure driven id. Guilt was seen to arise when these boundaries had been crossed or transgressed. In understanding shame, Piers expanded upon Freud's concept of the ego-ideal, describing it as the internalised representation of all that is positive about the parental figures. Piers also saw the ego-ideal as the site of the "maturation drive"; that is, the goals and strivings which propel maturation, individuation and growth. Shame occurs when the goals or standards set by the ego-ideal have not been achieved. Thus, guilt is induced by transgression or wrong-doing, whilst shame is about failure.

Piers was also astute in his recognition of a complex and, at times, interwoven and even antagonistic relationship between shame and guilt. Piers cited evidence of patients whom he described as, "...floundering between the horns of two powerful anxieties [shame and guilt] and wavering in their choice of defenses and behavior" (p. 20). He argued that unacceptable behaviours such as hostility, aggression or sexual impulses initially induce a sense of guilt. This may be assuaged by inhibition of the offending behaviour which in turn induces shame in response to the individual's passivity. This shame might then be addressed by overcompensatory behaviours or fantasies, such as acting out in aggression or exhibitionistic ways. Inevitably this then returned the person to the starting point; to guilt, with the individual thus trapped in an inescapable shame/guilt cycle.

In addition, Piers recognised the potential for guilt to provide a preferred respite from shame, and vice versa, with certain individuals appearing to have a strong preference for one emotion or the other, such that it is possible to speak of shame-ridden or guilt-ridden personalities. The shame-ridden personality, for example, may

be evident in the use of self-deprecation as a form of self-punishment or as a means to appease the punitive superego. Guilt, as a response to compulsive acting out may be preferable to the shame of poorly developed capacities in realms such as relationships, work or school. This concept of shame-ridden and guilt-ridden personalities continues to be the dominant focus of much recent empirical research that uses measures of shame-proneness and guilt-proneness to establish relationships to other psychological dimensions (eg. Harder, 1995; Tangney, Burggraf & Wagner, 1995; Tangney, Wagner & Gramzow, 1992b).

Interestingly, Piers viewed the shame-ridden personality as having far greater potential for growth and healthy maturation than the guilt-ridden personality which he viewed as trapped in a cycle of restitution and resentment. He argued that shame-driven individuals use shame to motivate and to propel themselves, not only to fulfil their potential, but to actually exceed their innate potentialities. Such a proposal is distinctly at odds with many current theories which have devoted considerable attention to identifying the links between shame and various psychopathologies (eg. Kaufman, 1980/92, 1989; Lewis, 1992; Morrison, 1989, 1994; Tangney, 1991, Tangney et al. 1992a, Tangney et al. 1992b, Tangney & Dearing 2002).

Helen Merrell Lynd

Lynd (1958) expanded upon Piers' foundation for differentiating between shame and guilt, as well as drawing attention to the relationship between shame and identity. In her research of the Old English and Germanic root meanings of shame and guilt, Lynd found that guilt related to a specific transgression, crime or taboo for which one could anticipate punishment or penalty. In contrast, shame, rather than specifying a particular offence, holds the 'self' at the centre of awareness. Shame involves an

intense feeling of self-conscious exposure; that is, shamed individuals feel not only exposed to the gaze of others but, even more painfully, they are revealed to themselves. Most importantly of all, Lynd recognised that shame relates to the "whole" self. Whereas the more behaviourally specific nature of guilt lends itself to mitigation via remedial acts such as confession, punishment, repentance or restoration, shame requires transformation of the entire self – a far more formidable task.

Lynd also recognised that shame involves the exposure of an aspect of the self which is incongruous with expectations. As Lynd put it:

"We have acted on the assumption of being one kind of person living

in one kind of surroundings and unexpectedly, violently, we discover

that these assumptions are false" (p.35).

It was in this context that Lynd identified the potential for shame's influence on identity. Initially Lynd saw the impact of shame and its intense experience of incongruity as manifesting in a "loss of identity." One is no longer who one thought one was. The individual's response to this state of shame could, however, be twofold. One possible reaction is to assume a protective stance by refusing to recognise or acknowledge the pain and the reality of shame. Such denial of shame experiences Lynd saw as potentially diminishing a person's sense of identity. The alternative was to confront the shame; to face the revelations it imposes and to be open to the learning and insight regarding the self and also the world in which one lives. In this way shame acts to *promote* rather than inhibit the development of identity.

Helen Block Lewis

Although Lewis's (1971) most influential work on shame largely built upon the foundation already laid by Freud (1894-1923), Piers (1953) and Lynd (1958), her impressive analysis of clinical material set a new standard for the recognition of shame as well as the understanding of its experience and implications. Perhaps Lewis's most important achievement was to attract the attention of the psychological and psychoanalytic communities, fostering an interest in shame which led to an explosion of research spanning the remainder of the twentieth century.

According to Lewis (1971) shame renders the individual "unable"; that is, shame disrupts cognitive capabilities as well as inducing behavioural and functional paralysis. The individual lacks a sense of agency, instead feeling childish and helpless. In Lewis's words, shame disrupts the "smooth functioning of the self" (p. 35). Because the experience of shame is so disabling and so unwelcome, the major response to shame is to escape from the experience as rapidly as possible. Lewis identified "denial" as the major defense against shame and distinguished between two common ways in which this denial functioned. The first, Lewis labelled as, "overt, unidentified shame." In this case, the affective shame response; that is, the physical and cognitive flooding and debilitation, is fully experienced. However, the shamed individual is either unable or unwilling to identify this overt affective feeling as shame. The second type of denial involves minimisation of the affective content rather than the cognitive content. The individual manages to stop the *feeling* of shame from developing beyond a brief "wince" or "jolt", severely truncating the shame experience and maintaining an essentially functioning and thinking self. Lewis referred to this type of shame denial as "by-passed shame."

It was this central characteristic of shame - its inclination to remain hidden, to be denied and to go unrecognised and thus inaccessible to any type of processing - that Lewis recognised as a potential source of psychopathology. Because shame is so difficult to identify; because it is so disruptive to the self's normal level of functioning; and because it is so often denied, resolution is seriously hampered with, according to Lewis, depression being the associated affective consequence.

As did Piers (1953) and Lynd (1958) before her, Lewis made clear and important distinctions between shame and guilt, with guilt having its own, distinct, associated psychopathologies. In contrast to the self-disruptive impact of shame, the guilty self remains "able". The high affective and low cognitive content of shame is reversed in guilt, with cognitive processing dominating and affect considerably less evident and even completely absent in some cases. According to this theory, psychopathologies, as a consequence of undischarged guilt, are thus likely to be reflective of this high cognitive content, with obsessive/compulsive disorders and paranoia being the most likely outcomes.

An important advance in the understanding of shame came with the recognition of shame's relationship to the entire or "global" self. While this idea originated with Lynd (1958), it is often credited to Lewis, perhaps due to her greater emphasis on, and development of, the actual concept of "self" and the implication of shame for its functioning. Lewis recognised the dual nature of the self as central to the shame experience. This duality of self was not in itself a new concept, having previously been elucidated by, among others, William James (1890). However, Lewis's application of this concept to the understanding of the self-disintegration associated with shame was unique. Lewis described the "me" aspect of self in terms of the experience of oneself as a result of "...feedback from the musculature and the gut..."

(p. 33). The "I" component of self she described as "...a highly verbal and visual articulated concept." (p. 33). While these definitions of the "I" and the "me" are somewhat vague, the essential concept of the double nature of the self has become one of the most central tenets of almost all current studies in this area. As presented by Lewis, the "self" normally involves a fusion of the "I" and the "me", thus functioning as a single experiential unit. Under the impact of shame, however, the self becomes divided or 'split' such that the self is "in two places at once", disrupting perception, behaviour and cognition and rendering the "self" horribly incapacitated. In the experience of guilt, on the other hand, the self does not divide. The "I" and the "me" continue to function as one. The self remains intact.

In summary, Lewis's (1971) landmark work, plus the insightful contributions of those psychoanalytic theorists who preceded her, provided an important platform upon which a variety of approaches to the further understanding of shame could flourish. The general phenomenology of the shame experience had been clearly and uniformly established, as had the important relationship of shame to the global self and its impact on the self's capacity to function. Furthermore, despite an early priority being afforded to guilt (Erikson, 1950/1963; Freud, 1916-1917, 1917-1919, 1923, 1927-1931), the dedicated contributions of Piers (1953), Lynd (1958) and Lewis (1971) led to the toppling of guilt as the supreme affect of psychological pain. Shame had begun its emergence into the consciousness of psychological thinking.

At this point in time, however, the limitations of Freudian psychoanalytic theory were becoming evident. The overarching concept of 'self', which had emerged as central to the understanding of shame, held an uncertain and undefined position in relation to Freud's lower order structural theory of mind. A general dissatisfaction with the purely clinical and observational foundation of psychoanalytic theory

became the impetus for the emergence of a range of new paradigms seeking to improve the scientific quality and respectability of psychological understandings. Even within psychoanalysis itself, there arose concern that the classical Freudian structural theory was not only inadequate but also potentially a hindrance to the improved understanding of shame. Although a range of schools of thought emerged within the psychoanalytic tradition, one orientation in particular, that of Kohut's Self Psychology, proved to be particularly conducive to the further elaboration of shame theory.

The Shift to Self Psychology

At around the same time that Lewis (1971) was raising the profile of shame and clearly establishing the global self as its experiential field, a new paradigm began to emerge within the psychoanalytic community. In 1971, Heinz Kohut published the first of three major works (1971, 1977, 1984) which collectively led to the birth of "Self Psychology." Although not considered to be a major contributor to the body of shame-related literature per se, Kohut's theory of self and its development provided a new way to understand the important relationship between shame and the global self. By the 1980s, a new group of psychoanalytically-oriented shame theorists emerged; researchers who increasingly turned to the precepts of self psychology as a means to understanding the impact of shame experiences and the development of shame-prone personalities. For this reason, a brief synopsis of Kohut's theories is a necessary digression at this point.

Heinz Kohut

Although from a strongly psychoanalytic background, Kohut (1971, 1977) found that the classical conflict/defence and oedipal models had less than ideal explanatory value for the many patients who presented with narcissistic vulnerabilities such as unstable levels of self-esteem, and extreme sensitivity to "failures, disappointments and slights" (Kohut & Wolf, 1978, p. 413). Kohut identified this type of psychopathology as representative of disorders of the 'self'.

Kohut (1971, 1977) viewed 'self' as a socially embedded phenomenon, dependent upon a responsive and nurturing human milieu. He identified the "selfobject" experience as the foundation of self elicitation and maintenance. A selfobject is defined as an object which is experienced as a part of the psychological self. Selfobject experiences provide the psychological functions which are not yet present in the individual, but which are necessary for survival and healthy psychological development. For example, the nascent self of the neonate is nurtured by the caregiving selfobject who provides the required soothing functions; the feeding, the holding, the cleaning, which calm the infant's distress. Kohut identified two basic human needs; the need for "mirroring" in the form of confirming and validating responsiveness from the selfobject environment, and the need to "idealise"; that is, to experience another as a source of omnipotence, calmness and morality from which one can draw strength. The timely and empathic responsiveness of caregivers to these basic needs leads to these selfobject functions being slowly internalised, resulting in the gradual consolidation of 'self' and in the maturation of selfobject needs in an age appropriate way.

Based on this conceptualisation of human needs, Kohut developed his bipolar model of self, with the need for mirroring being represented by the 'grandiose pole'

of the self, and the need to idealise represented by the 'ideals pole'. Between these two poles, Kohut hypothesised the existence of a tension arc, comprising the individual's basic talents and skills. From the grandiose pole emanates one's ambitions, feelings of self-confidence, and enthusiasm as one strives towards one's goals and ambitions. From the ideals pole arises the internalised and individualised ideals which guide one's life. The tension arc of innate talents and skills provides the vehicle via which, pushed by one's ambitions and pulled toward one's ideals, the nuclear self of the individual moves toward realisation.

Kohut's attention to shame was brief and mostly restricted to the first of his three major works. Kohut (1971, 1975/1996) linked shame specifically to the grandiose pole of the self. According to this theory, when mirroring has been inadequate during early childhood, grandiose fantasies and exhibitionistic urges remain untransformed; that is, they remain grandiose and unrealistic rather than being modified into acceptable, mature goal setting and healthy ambition. These archaic fantasies and urges are instead repressed or disavowed, split off and 'held' behind a "repression barrier"; hidden in order to abide by socially acceptable standards of behaviour. Shame occurs when these hidden fantasies and urges break through this repression barrier, and are met with either absence of the longed for positive, accepting response, or rejected outright, resulting in massive disappointment and let-down; that is, shame.

Leon Wurmser

The first of the post-Kohutian psychoanalytic shame theorists to emerge was Leon Wurmser (1981/1994). Using Kohut's (1984) conceptualisation of the bipolar self, Wurmser saw shame in relation to both over-evaluation of the self (untransformed

25

grandiosity) *and* over-evaluation of the other (untransformed idealising). Each of these forms of over-evaluation was seen to lead to catastrophic disappointment and shame when either the self *or* the other fails to live up to expectations. Thus, Wurmser did not restrict the manifestation of shame to the ambitions (grandiose) pole of the self, as did Kohut (1971, 1975/1996), but included shame as a response to failed, archaic idealising needs.

At its most severe, Wurmser described shame as being *traumatic*, with much associated psychopathology resulting from a desperate need to restore severed relationships and regain acceptance, whilst paradoxically perpetuating the shameful and alienating aspects of the self that caused the shame in the first place. Typical of this dilemma, Wurmser identified such narcissistic defenses as contempt (putting another down), machismo, ridicule, defiance and hubris. In addition, Wurmser viewed 'shamelessness' as a pathological, narcissistic defense against shame. By abandoning or denying his values and ideals, the shameless psychopath, for example, is able to defend against a deeply shamed core self via the empowerment that results from taking revenge, from taking advantage of others and by ruthlessly pursuing out of control ambitions.

Francis Broucek

Broucek was another scholar who recognised and embraced the intricacy of the relationship between shame and the psychology of the self. Broucek (1982) focused his attention on the developmental relationship between shame and self, citing early experiences of inefficacy as the earliest indicators of innate shame. According to this theory, as soon as the infant develops the capacity to anticipate or expect certain responses from the human environment, then he or she is vulnerable to the shock of

shame. Failure to elicit the anticipated response, such as a smile on the mother's face, or simply her attention, results in a state of distress which Broucek classified as "primitive shame." The developmentally later acquisition of the capacity for objective self-awareness, Broucek (1982) described as a "shame crisis"; a time during which the innate experience of shame takes on new and more complex characteristics.

Andrew Morrison

Like Broucek (1982, 1991), Morrison (1989, 1994) viewed shame as the basic response to early experiences of misattunement and lack of selfobject responsiveness; the essential elicitors of 'self.' Morrison was, however, critical of Kohut's (1971) view that shame was associated only with the grandiose pole of the self. Rather, Morrison (1983, 1987, 1989) supported Piers' (1953) conceptualisation of shame as a response to failure to live up to the image of one's "ideal self"; an internalised, subjectively unique construction of self which emanates from the ideals pole of the self.

In addition, Morrison (1994) proposed an interesting developmental progression in which he identified the type of shame described by Kohut (1971), that which is experienced as a consequence of unrestrained grandiosity, as more archaic in form than that which is experienced as a result of failure to live up to the image of the ideal self. Morrison based this proposition on his earlier exploration of Kohut's theory of self development (Morrison, 1989). In his early work, Kohut (1971) insisted that the grandiose and ideals poles of the self developed simultaneously. Later, however, he began to veer away from this view, implying instead a sequential process, with the critical developmental period for the grandiose pole preceding that

for the ideals pole (Kohut, 1984). Based on this latter conceptualisation, Morrison (1989) viewed the development of an ideal self as an indicator of a more highly developed self; a relatively cohesive self which is capable of the objective self-awareness necessary if one is to judge one's self in relation to the internalised ideal self. The experience of shame in this context results in the depletion of self, potentially manifesting as feelings of depression and emptiness. On the other hand, shame in response to disavowed grandiosity relates to a more primitive self; a self which is less cohesive and therefore vulnerable to the failure of selfobjects to provide mirroring, validating, and affirming experiences. Shame in this context is more severe, impacting the self by way of fragmentation; a terrifying breaking up of the self which may take one to the edge of psychosis, as is often evidenced in the borderline conditions, or beyond.

In summary, Kohut's Self Psychology allowed for a view of shame which placed its most central and defining feature, that is, the focus on the global self, at the forefront. By exploring shame in relation to the bipolar model of self, the work of this group of self psychologically-oriented theorists provides useful insights into the developmental genesis of shame and its relationship to the socially embedded elicitation of self. This approach, particularly the work of Broucek (1982, 1991) and Morrison (1989, 1994), suggests a stage-wise maturation or transformation of shame and provides an impressive foundation for the elaboration of a more comprehensive developmental theory, with the potential to clarify some of the current confusion regarding shame's emergence and potential functions.

Despite its strengths, however, there is a strong emphasis within this theoretical approach on the relationship between shame and arrested self-development, in the form of untransformed grandiosity and untransformed idealising needs. This

association is strongly suggestive of a view of shame as purely pathological, devoid of any functional aspects. The positive potential for shame as conceived by early psychoanalytic theorists, particularly Piers (1953) and Lynd (1958) appears to have been lost and forgotten in the midst of a clinical theory of self disorder.

EVOLUTIONARY/FUNCTIONALIST APPROACHES

As dissatisfaction with the psychoanalytic approach to understanding emotion began to emerge, some researchers began to eschew the search for a psychic understanding of shame in favour of a biologically-based, functional and evolutionary approach. Of these evolutionary-oriented theorists; Tomkins' (1962, 1963, 1991, 1992) "Affect Theory" was to become a dominant force in its own right. A more classically Darwinian approach to the understanding of shame also emerged in the form of Paul Gilbert's exploration of the phenomenological and functional aspects of shame's evolutionary development within a social structure (Gilbert, 1992, 1997, 2000; Gilbert & McGuire, 1998).

Affect Theory

Silvan Tomkins

The major work of Tomkins, comprising his four volume series entitled "Affect, Imagery and Consciousness" (1962, 1963, 1991, 1992), is extraordinarily detailed and complex. His general theory of affect is unique and has generated a worldwide scholarly following which has grown considerably over the years. Amongst shame theorists, however, Tomkins' (1963) work has been controversial.

Tomkins proposed "affects" as the prime motivational system; a system which interacts with the biological drives, memory, perceptual, sensory, motor and nervous

systems, amplifying their signals and imbuing them with intensity and a sense of urgency. Tomkins (1962) reserved the term "affect" for the biological and innate component which underpins the "total complex" we more generally refer to as emotion. He viewed affects as being essentially neurobiologically based and restricted to facial expression, devoid of collateral bodily responses, perceptions, cognitions or behavioural responses. According to Tomkins' theory, there are nine such innate affects, each originating from unique "programs" which are encoded in the subcortical sector of the brain. The basic distinguishing principle of these innate affects is the "density of neural firing"; that is, the rate of neural firing per unit time. Three affects are accounted for by an increase in the density of neural firing. A sudden, rapid increase would induce what Tomkins called the "surprise-startle" affect, with the bi-polar name indicating the range of intensity. The affect of "fear-terror" was seen to be activated by a somewhat less rapid increase in the density of neural firing while "interest-excitement" would result from an even more gradual increase. Only one affect, "enjoyment-joy," was deemed to result from a decrease in the density of neural firing. A high sustained level of neural activity was believed to indicate "anger", while a less high but similarly sustained activation was seen to induce "distress".

Thus far there is an intuitive elegance to Tomkins' proposal, particularly when we think about the sudden and rapidly alerting experience of surprise or the reduction of tension that accompanies joy. However the affect of "shame-humiliation" could not be accounted for by this patterning of neural activity, thus complicating Tomkins' theory. Despite its innate foundations, shame-humiliation was allocated the role of "auxiliary" to the positive affects of interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy. Specifically, Tomkins (1963) claimed, "...the innate activation of shame is the

incomplete reduction of interest or joy" (p. 123). It is this conceptualisation of shame

that has caused much confusion and debate. In particular, despite the centrality of the

rate of neural firing to his theory of innate affect, Tomkins was decidedly unclear

about the neural patterning in shame. In addition Tomkins insisted that guilt is but a

variant of shame with the underlying affect being identical. While Tomkins did allow

for distinction between shame and guilt at the experiential level, he believed the

differences to be due solely to the addition of related components such as

antecedents, associated cognitions, and behavioural responses.

It is worth noting, that although it would appear to be an essentially simple

process to confirm Tomkins' theory on the distinctive patterns of neural firing which

he claims to be representative of the basic affects, no supporting empirical evidence

appears to have been produced (see Frijda, 1986). Despite the availability of

sophisticated neural imaging techniques such as electroencephalography (EEG)

(which records neural patterns of activity) and positron emission tomography (PET)

(which is capable of measuring metabolic activity in the brain) (Rizzolatti, Fogassi &

Gallese, 2001), physical evidence which would support Tomkins' otherwise elegant

theory remains conspicuously absent .

The real strength of Tomkins' work lies in his detailed description of the

phenomenology of shame; its expression, and the development of protective

defensive reactions. Tomkins recognised the dual role of the self as both subject and

object of one's own reflexive self-consciousness. He emphasised the impact of

shame on the core of one's being, striking at one's heart, one's soul, one's very spirit.

Tomkins also acknowledged the shame of shame and the concomitant

unacceptability of uninhibited expression, such that the overt expression of shame

which is often evident during childhood becomes modified and disguised in adults.

Gershen Kaufman

The work of Kaufman (1980/1992, 1989) focused specifically on shame and was strongly supportive of Tomkins' theory regarding its innate activation; that is, via the incomplete reduction of the positive affects of interest or joy. However, Kaufman (1989) also proposed an "interpersonal activator" (p. 34) of shame which he labelled "rupture of the interpersonal bridge" (p. 34). This additional mode of shame activation is based on the premise that it is the eyes, through mutual gazing, that are critical to the formation of a bond between two individuals. Such a bond forms a bridge between two people, resulting in a sense of communion or oneness. This bond is fragile and must be constantly reaffirmed. It is sensitive to basic slights such as not being listened to or not being affirmed. The breaking of this interpersonal bridge instigates the affect of shame with its inherent aversion of gaze and tendency to withdraw.

Kaufman placed much emphasis on the potential for progression from a basic form of shame which he viewed as functional and adaptive, to a far more toxic form of shame which has a serious impact on the 'self.' Kaufman (1980/1992) introduced the term "internalised shame" to describe a malignant, cancer-like spread of a compulsion to self-shame, independent of any external shame producing source. It is of interest that despite being an adamant supporter of Tomkins' Affect Theory with its emphasis on the underlying biological and innate foundation for shame, Kaufman's work focused almost exclusively on shame at the level of emotion, on the consequences and developmental impact of the internalised shame which he so clearly distinguished from shame as affect.

Donald Nathanson

Like Kaufman, Nathanson's (1992) major work on shame adhered quite stringently to the understanding of shame hypothesised by Tomkins. However, while both Tomkins and Kaufman argued strongly against any distinction between shame and guilt at the level of affect, Nathanson expressed uncertainty. Although he was unable to suggest any alternate innate origin, and on this basis conceded that guilt must be related to shame, Nathanson did identify fear as an inherent component of guilt. As a consequence he defined guilt as a complex emotion comprising both shame and fear as inherent constituents.

Nathanson placed much emphasis on the response to the experience of shame, believing acceptance and confrontation to be quite rare. Instead, he viewed much of human psychopathology to be the result of extreme systems of defence as a result of the difficulties of coping with the unbearable nature of shame.

Carroll Izard

While Izard was a close colleague of Tomkins, and there is evidence of Tomkins' influence in his work, Izard could not be regarded as a 'follower' of Tomkins in the same way this description can be applied to Kaufman and Nathanson. Izard did not embrace Tomkins theory of neurological firing as the basic premise for distinguishing between affects. Although he did acknowledge the existence of an innate neurological foundation for emotional experience, he was adamant that an understanding of the neural activation of emotions had not yet been established.

Izard (1977, 1991) used the term "fundamental emotions" to identify those emotions which are innate, universal to all cultures and which are displayed via specific and clearly distinguishable facial and/or postural expressions. Izard's

identification of the fundamental emotions paralleled Tomkins' nine innate affects of interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear and shame. However, an important variation holds particular relevance for the study of shame and guilt. While Tomkins viewed guilt as simply a variant of shame, Izard classified guilt as a "fundamental emotion" in its own right, thus identifying shame and guilt as having distinct evolutionary pathways and unique biological substrates. The dominant feature of guilt is its pervasive cognitive activity, with the physical response identified only by an unpleasant, though at times quite intense, gnawing feeling. As Izard (1991) put it, "Guilt hangs heavy on one's mind" (p. 357). The guilty individual becomes preoccupied by thoughts of what they have done, or not done, as well as the likely consequences of their behaviour for both themselves and others.

Izard presented a well-balanced view of shame's negative and positive aspects, insisting that all fundamental emotions are adaptive and that the assessment of the shame experience as negative or damaging is superficial. Izard emphasised the importance of shame to the development and maintenance of social cohesion. According to Izard, avoidance of shame is a powerful force motivating conformity to group norms and standards and ensuring the fulfilment of the individual's need to belong. Avoidance of shame can also motivate the development of individual skills and talents. Moreover, Izard also noted that while the experience of shame tends to inhibit cognitive processes, reflection on the experience, once it has passed, allows for the development of self-knowledge and may inspire the processes of self-change and self-improvement.

Classical Evolutionary Theory

Paul Gilbert

Gilbert has sought to understand the evolutionary significance of shame and, as a consequence, its functions within modern human societies. Gilbert (1992, 1997, 2000; Gilbert & McGuire, 1998) regards shame as related to the earlier evolved capacity for social comparison and the establishment of power or dominance hierarchies within a group of conspecifics. The formation of such hierarchies involves two complementary behaviours; aggressive and threatening intimidation by the dominant member/s of a group, and also the willingness of others to accept a subordinate status. As explained by Gilbert (1992), the communication of such an acceptance via the adoption of a submissive posture, avoidance of eye contact, and by backing away or retreating, functions to de-escalate the aggression of the dominant other, thus protecting the subordinate from potential injury or death.

It is this subordination which Gilbert proposes is the evolutionary precursor to shame. However, while the aggression/submission dynamic serves a useful purpose in simple social groups, as hominoid evolution progresses, social structures become more complex, with human well-being becoming increasingly reliant upon co-operation rather than competition. Maintaining one's position within a group becomes dependent upon one's capacity to elicit the approval, acceptance, respect and admiration of others. Failure to present one's self as being of value to others could result in rejection and persecution and, from an affective point of view, shame.

Gilbert thus sees shame as serving the important function of warning individuals of the imminent threat of loss of attractiveness to the group, alerting them to immediately stop their unacceptable behaviour. In addition, the shame response itself acts as a signal to others that one acknowledges one's loss of status and is willing to

35

submit and conform to the standards of the group. Shame, therefore, sends a signal to others that aggression in the form of rejection or sanction is not necessary; the individual has already submitted.

The shame response itself, that is, the avoidance of eye-contact, head lowered, the desire to hide or escape, Gilbert (1992) identified as a vestige of the submissive strategy which had earlier functioned to de-escalate aggression in a dominant other. Moreover, Gilbert (1998) saw this response as a kind of regression to a primitive and involuntary response to threat, maintained by the need for a rapid or more automatic defense system than that which is afforded by the self-reflective, rational method of information processing. While Gilbert does acknowledge the human capacity to internalise and form one's own set of ideals against which one can evaluate one's self, his theory of shame strongly emphasises the social positioning of shame; positing shame and the shame response as social signals.

In summary, this cluster of theorists, despite their placement of shame within a biological context, present a diversity of views. One important contribution from those within this group who are supportive of affect theory, is the dedication to exploring the response phase of shame; that is, the patterns of defensive strategies which are employed in order to manage shame, and which have major importance in the development of a range of psychopathologies. This view differs substantially from the perspective presented by theorists in other fields, most notably the psychoanalysts who tend to implicate shame itself as a direct cause of psychological disorder. The existence of these two general views on the relationship of shame to psychopathology has important implications for the future development of treatment strategies and, in particular, identification of the stage of the shame sequence at which intervention may be most beneficial. Furthermore, it is noted that amongst

those who are otherwise supportive of Tomkins' Affect Theory, dissent is evident regarding the relationship between shame and guilt. Based on the various perspectives presented we are left to ponder whether shame and guilt are separate emotions with unique biological origins as proposed by Izard (1977, 1991) or whether Tomkins is correct in his assertion that guilt is purely a variant of the basic affective experience of shame.

The ideas of Gilbert on the evolutionary origins of shame are quite distinct yet stand united with the emphasis placed by Affect Theorists on an innate, biological foundation for shame. In addition both Tomkins and Gilbert stress the standing of shame as an affect of functional importance. However, understanding how the two potential functions of shame; the regulation of positive affect (Tomkins, 1963) and a signal of social evaluation (Gilbert, 1992, 1997, 2000), may complement each other remains another interesting area for further exploration.

DEVELOPMENTAL/SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

A third group of researchers has taken a distinctly different approach to the study of shame. Perhaps the unifying feature of this group is their general rejection of psychoanalytic and affect theory based studies. While Freud focused almost entirely on guilt and, more recently, self psychologists and affect theorists have focused on shame, there has been considerable emphasis within this group of developmental/social psychologists on the importance of comparative studies of shame and guilt as a means of determining the specific characteristics of each. While a large number of researchers have contributed to this approach, two psychologists in particular, Michael Lewis and June Price Tangney have made noted, influential, and perhaps dominant, contributions.

Michael Lewis

Lewis (1992) applied his strong background in developmental psychology to the understanding of the cognitive capacities which must be attained in order for shame to be fully experienced. Unlike psychoanalytic and affect theorists, who conceive of shame as innate and present in primitive form from early infancy, Lewis argued that shame requires the attainment of three cognitive abilities:

1. The capacity for objective self-awareness.

2. The internalisation of a set of standards, rules and goals against which to measure one's behaviour, ideas and feelings.

3. The achievement of a sense of self.

Based, therefore, on the age at which all three of these cognitive requirements have been achieved, Lewis viewed shame as unlikely to be evident until the age of about three years. He did, however, conceive of a form of embarrassment, one based on self-consciousness and the capacity for objective self-awareness but devoid of any evaluation processes, as emerging at the earlier age of around eighteen months.

Lewis also viewed shame as only one in a group of self-conscious emotions with guilt, pride and hubris also being based on similar developmental and cognitive criteria. The centrepiece of Lewis's theory is his Cognitive Attributional Model which differentiates these four self-conscious emotions on the basis of an evaluation of either success or failure according to the individual's own standards, rules and goals, plus a self attribution which is either *specific*; that is, relating only to a specific aspect of the self, or *global*; that is, relating to the whole self. According to this model, shame involves a global attribution of failure in relation to one's standards, rules and goals. Guilt, on the other hand, involves a specific or limited attribution of failure and is consequently less intense and less all-consuming. Attributions of

38

success correspond to pride when the attribution is specific and to hubris when the attribution is global.

Lewis did not agree with the suggestion made by Freud (1894) that shame is a more mature affect than guilt. Neither did he believe the reverse, that is, that shame precedes guilt developmentally, as implied by Erikson (1950/1963). Rather, Lewis believed that both emotions, based on similar cognitive capabilities, emerge at approximately the same stage of childhood development. Lewis did, however, regard shame as more severe than guilt and proposed that in shame, the distinction between the subjective self and the objective self; that is, the dual perspectives on self that are the manifestations of objective self-awareness, is lost. Subject and object become fused resulting in cognitive confusion and the cessation of all ongoing activity. The self is incapacitated. In guilt, however, the distinction between the self as subject and the self as object remains intact. The focus of attention is limited to a specific behaviour, the effect of that behaviour, and ways to remedy the potential outcome of that behaviour.

Although Lewis viewed shame as 'normal', as part of every day life, he also saw shame as problematic. Lewis viewed shame as resulting in a "loss of self", a state of self-disorganisation which may manifest in borderline and psychotic disorders. Attempts to protect the self from such disruption may, on the other hand, manifest in protective narcissism or dissociative disorders such as multiple personalities.

June Price Tangney

Throughout the final decade of the twentieth century, June Price Tangney emerged as a dominant force in the field of shame research. Tangney (1990) found that the terms shame and guilt were often used interchangeably by both lay persons and

psychologists, and thus suggested that much of the literature to date, particularly that focusing on guilt, was confounded by a lack of clear distinction between these two emotions. In addition, little empirical support was available for the largely clinically based, observational accounts that dominated the psychoanalytic and affect theory accounts of shame.

Tangney (1993) made an important distinction between state and trait measures of shame and guilt. Tangney found that many of her predecessors had directed their attention to understanding the 'states' of shame and guilt; that is, to the 'in the moment' phenomenologies which characterise each emotion. Tangney (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993; Tangney et al., 1992b) drew upon the work of Lewis (1971) in emphasising the importance of measuring 'trait' shame and guilt, the pervasive disposition towards responding to a range of situations with either shame or guilt. Specifically, Tangney noted the paucity of an empirically sound measure of dispositional shame.

In response to this deficit, Tangney and her colleagues developed a pencil and paper, scenario-based measure of shame-proneness and guilt-proneness. The original Self-Conscious Affect and Attribution Inventory (SCAAI) (Tangney, 1990) and the further refined Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) (Tangney, et al., 1992a) have become widely used, providing an incisive view of the relationships between shame-proneness, guilt-proneness and a range of psychopathologies and interpersonal behaviours. Tangney and her colleagues (Tangney, et al., 1992b) identified strong, positive correlational relationships between shame-proneness and a range of disorders including obsessive-compulsive behaviour, paranoid and phobic tendencies, depression, anxiety and somatisation. Highly shame-prone individuals were also found to be more angry and hostile towards others (Tangney, et al., 1992a;

Tangney et al., 1996), and less empathic (Tangney, 1991) than were those who were highly guilt-prone.

In general, Tangney (Tangney et al., 1992a; Tangney, et al., 1992b) found shame-proneness to be associated with both interpersonal and intrapersonal maladaptation. Guilt-proneness, on the other hand, appeared to be a far more adaptive emotional disposition, motivating individuals towards resolution and/or repair of interpersonal difficulties. As a result of her findings, Tangney rejected ideas of a positive function for shame. Indeed, Tangney & Dearing (2002) described shame as:

> "...a primitive emotion that likely served a more adaptive function in the
>
> distant past, among ancestors whose cognitive processes were less
>
> sophisticated in the context of a much simpler human society" (p. 126).

While shame may once have been viewed as the guardian of morality, Tangney and Dearing (2002) instead focus on the "dark side" of shame, and endow guilt with the status of being the "moral emotion of the new millennium" (p. 127).

In summary, Lewis and Tangney took an emotion which had, for a long time, been ignored outside the psychoanalytic community, and made it accessible to psychologists from a broad range of academic and clinical paradigms. Lewis (1992) highlighted the important role of cognitive capacities in the post-infancy phase of shame development, exemplifying the complexity of shame as an affective/cognitive/behavioural conglomerate. Tangney (1990, 1991, Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, et al., 1992a; Tangney, et al., 1996), on the other hand, through the development of a shame-proneness scale, made it possible to explore the impact of individuals' tendencies to experience shame on a wide variety of psychological and behavioural constructs, thus raising the awareness of shame's contribution to psychopathology. Unfortunately, however, Tangney's development

of a scale which measured only one aspect of the shame experience, that is, the tendency or likelihood of experiencing shame (shame-proneness) may have confounded her results when they are extrapolated to an understanding of the total complex of shame. This is a problem which requires serious consideration; one which can potentially be examined in the light of the broad range of perspectives on shame which currently exist.

DISCUSSION

Most literature reviews are presented in an integrated manner with commonly held views providing a common thread or theme, against which opposing ideas can be contrasted and gaps in the body of knowledge can be identified. However, I considered that such a format would obscure the considerable diversity, both between and within the three major paradigmatic approaches to shame research. Instead, by considering each contribution separately, the complexity of shame is revealed via the juxtapositioning of the unique, contradictory and at times quite isolated theoretical and empirical approaches.

Evolutionary Origins

Different theories have been presented regarding the evolutionary origins of shame. Darwin (1872/1965), the father of evolutionary theory, noted that shame was evident only in the human species and consequently related its emergence to the evolution of a more complex brain structure and function. Tomkins (1963) also proposed a neurological basis for the evolution of shame, relating its emergence to the inhibition of the neural firing patterns associated with the positive affects of interest/excitement and enjoyment/joy. Gilbert (1992, 1997, 2000), on the other hand, looks at the

evolution of shame from a social perspective, proposing that shame evolved from the expression of submission observed in lower animal species. As with other aspects of shame, these theories remain isolated with no attempt having been made to explore how they might be interrelated and how each may further inform the others.

Development of Shame

A major area of ongoing controversy involves the developmental course of shame. One view (Darwin, 1872/1965; Lewis, 1992) insists that shame is not evident until about three years of age when certain cognitive capacities such as the ability to self-reflect and the internalisation of standards and goals have been established. On the other hand, most psychoanalytic and affect theory-based approaches (eg. Broucek, 1982; Nathanson, 1992; Tomkins, 1963; Wurmser, 1981/1941) insist that, in line with shame's innate nature, evidence of a primitive form of shame can be identified within the first few months of life. In accordance with this view, Broucek (1982) suggested that the emergence of the capacity for self-awareness represents a "shame crisis"; that is, a time when the experience of shame undergoes significant developmental transformation.

Shame's Function

Perhaps the most confusing issue which emerges from a comparison of the numerous approaches to understanding shame concerns shame's potential functionality. As already mentioned, the dominant view of shame is as a negative and at times traumatic experience which is the source of much human misery. The most extreme view presented by Tangney and Dearing (2002) identifies shame as a primitive and pathological remnant of our evolutionary past, with essentially no useful function in

43

modern society. This implies the need to rise above or grow out of shame. Such thinking, however, flies in the face of the otherwise identified association between shame and humanity; between shame and evolutionarily and developmentally advanced cognitive capacities. An alternative view has been briefly but repeatedly mentioned through the history of shame research; that is, shame as a potentially functional and positive experience. Freud (1894, 1901-1905) saw shame as having important moral implications, functioning to regulate the expression of sexual impulses. Piers (1953) noted its potential to motivate, while Lynd (1958) focused on shame's contribution to the development of personal identity. Others, such as Izard (1977, 1991) and Gilbert (1992, 1997, 2000) have emphasised the contribution of shame to social cohesion via the promotion of submission and conformity to group standards.

Such contradictions and conflicts within the shame literature remain poorly explained by current theories. It is suggested here that the current state of separate and isolated approaches to the understanding of shame is further contributing to the maintenance of these contradictions and, unless a more co-operative and unified approach can be established, will continue to facilitate ongoing theoretical divergence.

Seeking Consensus

The answer to this problem would appear to lie in a thorough examination of those threads of agreement and consensus which do currently exist. One area of agreement throughout the history of shame research relates to its phenomenological experience. The facial and postural expression of shame; that is, head lowered, eyes downcast and body slumped, along with cognitive and behavioural incapacitation,

has remained unquestioningly accepted for over 130 years, despite disagreements regarding the biological foundation of this response. Similarly, those works which focus on distinguishing between shame and guilt appear to be in agreement with regard to essential characteristics of each emotion. However, the relationship between shame and guilt still remains difficult to discern. Is guilt simply a variant of shame as suggested by Tomkins (1963); do shame and guilt have distinct but related origins (Lewis, 1971); or is Izard correct in his assertion that shame and guilt have very distinct evolutionary and biological origins?

An important area of agreement has emerged amongst those researchers who have followed on from the work of Lynd (1958) and Lewis (1971), both of whom contributed to the establishment of the attentional focus on the *whole* self as the central identifying feature of shame, critically distinguishing shame from guilt and its more specific focus on behaviour. Only Affect Theory has assumed a somewhat maverick position in this regard with Tomkins (1963) standing virtually alone in his refusal to distinguish between shame and guilt and to thus accord shame this unique characteristic. However, even Tomkins recognised the importance of the relationship between shame and self, emphasising the self-reflexive nature of shame and the concomitant dual positioning of self as both subject and object.

Yet despite the widespread acceptance of self as an important dimension of the shame experience, the majority of researchers have made little or no attempt to elucidate the concept of self in a way that may further enlighten our understanding of shame. Only self psychologists have placed the self at the centre of shame research, attempting, despite some disagreement in this regard, to view shame according to Kohut's bipolar model of the self. However, once again, this avenue of exploration remains isolated with the major contemporary paradigms becoming increasingly

insular, either criticising or ignoring points of view which do not readily support their own theorising. Furthermore, no alternate views on the understanding of self have been either presented or explored in relation to shame, an area of unique and yet obvious potential for research.

Shame as Trauma

A further feature of shame which is widely recognised but poorly developed is its traumatising potential. Freud (1893-1895) and Wurmser (1981/1994) specifically identified shame as traumatic. Others (Darwin, 1872/1965; Lynd, 1958; Lewis, 1971; Kohut, 1971; Broucek, 1982, 1991; Morrison, 1989, 1994; Tomkins, 1963; Kaufman, 1980/1992, 1989; Nathanson, 1992; Lewis, 1992), although not applying the actual word trauma, clearly recognised and emphasised the severity and horrendous debilitation of shame's phenomenology. Yet, once again, there has been little lateral reaching for understandings developed within the field of trauma studies which may prove beneficial to the realm of shame.

Broadening the Perspective

It is consequently deemed important to recruit into the fold of shame research, understandings from related fields; to look beyond what is obvious and accepted and to seek answers outside the traditional paths of the shame literature. Current understandings in the fields of trauma, neurophysiology, infant development and, in particular, 'self' theories provide such an opportunity; a means by which we can explore the most central and identifiable feature of shame with a view to addressing some of the conflicts and contradictions which presently abound. By expanding knowledge and understanding in relation to shame and the self it is possible to

embrace the contributions of all three of the major approaches to the study of shame (psychoanalytic/self psychology, evolutionary/functionalist, and developmental/social psychology) and to begin the process of developing a more integrated and cohesive understanding of one of the most ubiquitous and influential emotions known to humans: Shame.

In the next chapter, I will present an account of shame's phenomenology and identifying characteristics by way of a critical analysis and integration of the contributions from this broad range of theoretical approaches. In particular I will address the distinctions between shame and guilt, and expound upon the unique characteristics of shame which have led to this emotion being such a difficult and complex experience to study and understand.

CHAPTER THREE

IDENTIFYING AND DIFFERENTIATING SHAME AND GUILT

*Notice the difference between what happens when a man
says to himself "I have failed three times", and what
happens when he says "I am a failure".*

S. I. Hayakawa

As mentioned in the previous chapter one of the major problems confronting

researchers in the field of emotion studies has been the historic tendency to

theoretically 'lump' shame and guilt together, with the terms often being used

interchangeably. Such misuse of terminology, which is also widespread amongst the

general community (Jones, 1995; Miller, 1985; Tangney et al., 1995), has contributed

significantly to much of the confusion and disagreement which continues to confound

research and understanding of these two emotions. As a consequence, much of the

work on shame, in the post-Freudian era, has focused intensely on the process of

extracting shame from its entanglement with its close cousin, guilt. This is not to deny

that these two emotional experiences do share a number of common features and may,

at times, be experienced either simultaneously or sequentially in relation to the same

situation. The relationship between shame and guilt is undeniable. However, there are

also important and fundamental differences between the two; differences which

define shame and guilt as two distinctly unique emotional experiences. Thus it is that

we begin our journey toward clarifying the experiential nature of shame by

identifying its distinguishing features and determining a procedure for disentangling these two emotions.

Shame versus Guilt: Seeking the Main Point of Difference

Although shame and guilt differ in a variety of ways, particularly experientially, the history of shame research reflects an ongoing search for a single, central, distinguishing characteristic. This task has proved to be of major importance to the general understanding of each emotion and, in particular, the clarification of those factors which point to developmental origins and/or precipitate their elicitation.

Public versus Private

Unfortunately, early attempts to distinguish between shame and guilt were at times misleading, leaving a lasting impression which has required persistent and repeated efforts to correct. For example, Benedict (1946) popularised the idea that guilt is an essentially private emotion based on the judgement of one's own conscience. Shame, on the other hand, was seen to occur in public, a result of criticism or ridicule by others. Shame was believed to require an audience, whilst guilt did not. However, even prior to this time, Darwin (1859/1965) had recognised the capacity for shame to be experienced when one is completely alone. More recently, Tangney, Miller, Flicker, and Barlow (1996) reported findings showing that *both* shame *and* guilt were most likely to be experienced in a public setting, but that each emotion could also be experienced whilst in a solitary setting. Such a finding suggests that there is

essentially no difference between the two emotions based on this public/private dimension.

Situational Determinants

Researchers have also sought to distinguish between shame and guilt by establishing different types of situations or experiences which are likely to result in one emotion *or* the other. For example, Freud (1900-1901, 1901-1905) wrote of shame as a consequence of bodily exposure (nakedness) or sexual impulses. Guilt, he described in relation to naughtiness, punishment and the development of a critical conscience (1917-1919). More recently, some researchers have worked to establish lists of prototypical elicitors. For shame these have included issues related to personal strength, size, competence and attractiveness, experiences involving physical or psychological exposure, competitive situations involving loss (Nathanson, 1997), failing to meet expectations, and inappropriate behaviour (Keltner & Buswell, 1996). For guilt, typical antecedents include lying, cheating, breaking a diet, not adhering to an exercise program, neglect of one's duties (Keltner & Buswell, 1996) and failing to meet one's own or another's expectations (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1994).

Unfortunately, there is little consistency between lists compiled by different researchers and, in fact, there is some overlap with similar items appearing on the lists of elicitors for both shame and guilt. More commonly, this idea of prototypical shame or guilt eliciting situations is rejected. A study by Tangney (1992) found that virtually no "classic" shame or guilt eliciting situations could be identified. Although a few situations appeared somewhat more likely to produce one emotion or the other, more

51

commonly, any particular situation held the potential to produce guilt in one individual yet shame in another.

Attentional Focus

Lynd (1958) was the first to emphasise "attentional focus" as the definitive point of demarcation between shame and guilt. Specifically, Lynd noticed that in guilt a person's attention is focused intently on the actual transgression, crime or code violation for which they are responsible. The focus is upon one's *actions*. Shame, on the other hand, is more personal in nature, and involves a broader and more global awareness. The focus is upon the whole of the *self.* Thus Lynd proposed that it is not the situation which determines shame or guilt but whether one focuses on the specific behaviour or on the entire self.

This distinction was re-presented and emphasised by H. B. Lewis (1971) who distinguished between the shameful evaluation of the self and the guilt-driven evaluation of what was done or not done. Some years later Michael Lewis's (1992) Cognitive Attributional Theory again emphasised this distinction by identifying shame as the result of an attribution of *global* failure to live up to a set of standards, rules and goals, whilst guilt resulted from an attribution of *specific* failure. This distinction between global self failure and specific behavioural failure has since become widely accepted as establishing the defining characteristic of each of the emotions in question; shame and guilt. It is of interest to note, however, that while this distinction is one which is readily made by experts who are well trained in the theory of shame and guilt, lay individuals are generally unable to make a similar

distinction, at least at a conscious level. A study conducted by Tangney and colleagues (1995) found the conceptual distinction between one's actions and one's self to be too abstract for untrained participants to understand.

However, for the well-trained and psychologically educated, this conceptualisation of shame and guilt as being distinguishable according to the focus of one's attention (Lewis, 1971; Lynd, 1958) or according to the focus of one's attributions (Lewis, 1992) allows us to conceive of shame and guilt elicitation in a more 'experience near' manner; that is, from within the subjective experience of the individual (Kohut, 1984). We can now identify a "deficiency of the self" (Lewis, 1971) as the elicitor of shame, whereas guilt is stimulated by some form of behaviour; some action or absence of action. This very concept of a deficient self also supports Lynd's (1958) suggestion that shame is involuntary. One cannot easily 'choose' to be different than one actually is. Guilt, on the other hand, involves choice; an active and voluntary, though not necessarily deliberate, process. It is readily possible to choose to act or to not act in a specific way. Lynd (1958) also made the important point that we can feel very ashamed of our behaviour. We can be ashamed to be the person who would behave in such a way. We do not, however, feel guilty for our deficiencies.

A secondary point of focus is also evident when we distinguish between shame and guilt. Both of these emotions often occur in an interpersonal context; that is, an 'other' is often perceived to be relevant. In shame, this other, either an actual other or an internalised other, is a focus of some consideration due to concern about what that other may *think* of the self. There is a fear of being judged, scorned or otherwise negatively evaluated. The guilty person, however, tends to be concerned with the

impact of their behaviour on the relevant other. Have they hurt someone, let them down or caused some form of distress? Concomitantly, shame and guilt entail different fears. The shame-ridden individual fears rejection; the loss of love and ultimately loss of the love object (Wurmser, 1981/1994). The guilty person fears being 'found out' and punished. However, it is the primary focus, directed toward self or behaviour, which determines the secondary, other-based focus and which defines and distinguishes shame from guilt. Moreover it is also this primary focus which contributes to the distinctive phenomenologies of shame and guilt and to the behavioural, cognitive and physiological responses which follow their instigation.

Experiential Distinctions

Shame arises suddenly (Lynd, 1958). It 'hits' unexpectedly, causing what Nathanson (1987a) described as "cognitive shock." The individual in the immediate grip of shame is rendered cognitively disabled. They are temporarily unable to think clearly and unable to speak coherently. In addition, physical and behavioural inhibition may render one frozen to the spot (Wurmser, 1981/1994), unable to escape despite an intense desire to do so. The self seems to collapse in on itself; frozen, wordless and incapacitated.

The shame-struck individual experiences massive autonomic dysregulation; a flood of bodily sensations including blushing, sweating and accelerated respiration and heart rate (Broucek, 1982; Darwin, 1859/1965; Lewis, 1971), further contributing to the overwhelming sense of self-awareness. There is an intense feeling of exposure such that one's deficiencies are visible to both the external and internalised other. The

bodily self looms large, causing one to wish to disappear, to hide or to escape from view. The observable shame response involving head and eyes lowered, and shoulders slumped is an attempt to make one's self smaller (Lewis, 1971), to reduce one's exposure, whilst ironically and helplessly drawing further attention to one's self.

The experience of guilt, on the other hand, is far less calamitous. Guilt tends to arise slowly; often anticipated in advance. It generally does not take us by surprise as does shame (Lynd, 1958). The guilty person remains cognitively and behaviourally able. In fact, the cognitive aspects of guilt are often viewed as being far more dominant than the affective aspects. Darwin (1859/1965) referred to guilt as a "complex state of mind" whilst Lynd (1958) emphasised the ongoing "weighing up of pros and cons"; a cognitive wrangling that both precedes and follows the guilt-inducing behaviour. The autonomic response to guilt is minimal in comparison to that which accompanies shame (Lewis, 1990). Guilt may involve a certain amount of tension (Piers, 1953; Tangney, 1996; Tangney, Wagner & Gramzow, 1992b), or an uncomfortable, gnawing anxiety. However, guilt may also, at times, be devoid of any feeling state at all (Goldberg, 1991; Lewis, 1990). In addition, the behavioural response to guilt is likely to be an active one (Lewis, 1992). There is no postural constriction as there is in shame. Rather, the guilty individual is likely to exhibit little or no outward sign of their emotional state, maintaining or even increasing their pre-guilt level of activity.

Summary

Despite the existence of an intricate relationship, shame can be distinguished from

guilt based upon a widely supported set of phenomenological criteria (see Table 1).

The *primary* distinguishing feature is seen to be the attentional focus, with shame

defined by the focus directed towards the global 'self', and guilt by the focus on

Table 1
Shame and Guilt: Major Distinguishing Features

Criterion	Shame	Guilt
Primary		
Focus (self)	■ Deficiency of entire self (global)	■ Behavioural transgression (specific)
Secondary		
Focus (other)	■ What the other thinks of the self (sense of judgement)	■ Impact of behaviour on the other (fear of punishment)
Physiological Response	■ Autonomic arousal: Blushing, sweating, accelerated respiration and heart rate. Postural constriction	■ Little or no physical response. Limited to tension, gnawing feeling.
Cognitive Response	■ Severe cognitive disruption	■ Cognitive processes intact – may be heightened
Behavioural Response	■ Inhibition, withdrawal, desire to hide, escape, cover up	■ Active response, undoing, reparation

specific behaviour. *Secondary* criteria include other focus, along with the physiological, cognitive and behavioural responses.

Associated Features

In addition to the inherent characteristics of shame and guilt, certain associated factors have been identified, some of which provide additional evidence of the unique natures of these two emotions. For example, it has been suggested that shame and/or guilt have a tendency to elicit certain secondary emotions, either as a consequence of, or in defense of the primary emotional experience. Another important consequence of the inherent characteristics of shame and guilt is the length of time for which each of these emotions is likely to endure. These two factors can be examined in greater detail.

Associated Emotions

Not only have shame and guilt been identified as having a tendency to appear in an interwoven or sequential manner, but certain other emotions have been regularly cited as common accompaniments. For example, both shame and guilt have been associated with certain *fears or anxieties* such as the guilt-related fear of punishment and the shame-related fear of rejection (Izard, 1977, 1991; Kaufman, 1980/1992, 1989; Lewis, 1971; Nathanson, 1992; Piers, 1953). Other emotions, such as sadness, disgust and anger, have also been associated with shame and guilt but in less clearly defined ways.

Kaufman (1989), for example, identified *distress or sadness* as one of the most common affects to follow shame. Moreover, he identified prolonged sadness as the foundation of depression, a psychopathological condition which has been widely identified as having powerful links to shame-proneness (e.g. Lewis, 1971, 1987; Tangney, Wagner & Gramzow, 1992). In general, guilt has been less strongly associated with depression (Lewis 1971, 1989; Tangney, Wagner & Gramzow, 1992b). Nathanson (1994), however, identified both shame *and* guilt with depression, even going so far as to suggest that the principal affect (i.e. shame or guilt) underlying the depression determined the type of psychopharmacological treatment which would be most useful. Nathanson found the serotonin reuptake inhibitors to be most effective in the treatment of shame-based depression, while the tricyclic antidepressants were better suited to the treatment of guilt-based depression. However, the contribution of anxiety to depression cannot be discounted and may have a confounding effect on the identification of depression as based purely on sadness.

The literature also suggests that the relationship of shame and guilt to the experience of *disgust* is strongly skewed towards shame as the dominant association. Disgust, particularly when directed outwardly, is generally seen to have a defensive function; ridding the self of shame by inflicting it upon an other (Loader, 1998; Morrison, 1989). However, disgust may also be directed inwards; that is, towards the self. Tomkins (1963) claimed that even inwardly directed disgust could serve a defensive function by essentially splitting the self into subject and object. The shame-deserving self is thus objectified by the judgemental self; a self which is experienced as *different* to the shameful self. Tomkins distinguished this from the experience in

which *both* subject *and* object are engulfed by shame. Interestingly, Tomkins also

linked disgust to guilt, an association which is noticeably absent from the writings of

other theorists. However, this may be a result of Tomkins' failure to clearly

distinguish between shame and guilt; a potentially confounding aspect of his overall

theory of shame.

Perhaps one of the most complex affective associations to be examined within the

literature is the relationship between shame, guilt and *anger*. H. B. Lewis (1971)

found inwardly-directed hostility to be more strongly associated with shame anxiety

and outwardly-directed anger to be more strongly associated with guilt anxiety.

Lutwak et al. (2001) also found shame-proneness to be related to inwardly directed

anger. However, in contrast to the findings presented by Lewis (1971), guilt-

proneness was found to be *negatively* correlated with outwardly-directed anger.

Lewis (1971) further complicated this matter by suggesting that shame-based

anger may initially be directed towards the self but that this anger may then be

redirected outward; a defensive manoeuvre designed to empower and protect the self.

Drawing upon this idea of a link between shame and externalised anger, Tangney

(1990; Tangney et. al. 1992a) found shame-proneness to be strongly related to the

tendency to externalise anger, while guilt-proneness, as the study by Lutwak et al.

(2001) also showed, was found to exhibit either a negligible or negative correlation

with the tendency to externalise anger and blame. Tangney, however, did not examine

the tendency for anger to be directed inward towards the self.

Michael Lewis (1992) made an interesting point in suggesting anger to be

associated specifically with *unacknowledged* shame and that this anger could be

directed *either* outwardly *or* inwardly. Moreover, Lewis linked externally directed anger with the shame-prone personality; a concept similar to the narcissistic rage identified by Kohut (1977), Morrison (1989) and Nathanson (1987a).

Overall, the literature regarding the relationship between shame and anger, the relationship between guilt and anger, and the differences between shame and guilt with respect to anger, lacks consistency. One potentially confounding factor, which is evident in many works in the field of emotion research, is the failure to distinguish between shame and shame-proneness and, by extension, guilt and guilt-proneness. The finding of both Tangney and Lutwak, as presented above, refer specifically to shame- and guilt-proneness. The work of H. B. Lewis, on the other hand is drawn from specific episodes of shame and guilt, yet these episodes were obtained from individuals who were pre-determined to represent those who experienced high levels of either shame or guilt. Only Michael Lewis appears to make a distinction between shame and shame-proneness, evidenced by his suggestion that shame-related anger can be directed *either* inwardly *or* outwardly *but* for the shame-prone individual the direction of anger is likely to be outward. It appears likely that the relationship of shame and guilt to anger may be quite distinct from the relationship of shame-proneness and guilt-proneness to anger. This confounding of shame and guilt with shame-proneness and guilt-proneness is noted here, but will be discussed at greater length in later chapters of this thesis.

Duration

One of the major characteristics of the experience of shame is its tendency to endure

over long periods of time (Goldberg, 1991; Hultberg, 1988; Izard, 1991; H. B. Lewis,

1971, 1990; M. Lewis, 1992, 1993; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Lynd, 1958; Pines, 1995;

Scheff, 1987; Shultz, 1996; Wharton, 1990; Wurmser, 1981/1994; Yorke, 1990). The

extent and severity of this characteristic is well described by Hultberg:

> "At times it [shame] is a violent feeling which may last a staggeringly
>
> long time and even after 50 years produce a wince and the wish in a
>
> person to sink deep down under the surface of the earth" (1988, p. 110).

Not only are episodes of shame almost impossible to forget (Yorke, 1990), but when

remembered, the intensity of the re-experienced shame may be equal to, or even

greater than, that experienced during the original episode. Scheff (1988) emphasised

the propensity for shame to rise in a "potentially limitless spiral" (p. 404), as we not

only relive our experience of shame but we also feel ashamed of our shame.

This tendency for shame to endure is in stark contrast to the relative ease of

resolution associated with experiences of guilt. The global nature of shame versus the

specific behavioural nature of guilt, along with the self-incapacitation which

accompanies shame versus the heightened cognitive and behavioural activity

associated with guilt, renders feelings of guilt more easily and more rapidly resolved

than is possible for feelings of shame. It is far easier to make reparation for a specific

behaviour and even to change that particular behaviour in the future, than it is to

atone for, or change, a defect in the entire self. This distinction has been noted by

many writers (eg. Lewis, 1971, 1990; Lynd, 1958; Pines, 1995; Wharton, 1990) who

have focused on the process of distinguishing between the experiential factors associated with these two emotions. As yet, however, no researcher has provided empirical evidence to support this theoretical and observational distinction.

The Impact of Shame and Guilt on the Developmental Process

Since the time of Freud, shame and guilt have been seen to impact on the developmental process in a variety of ways, particularly in relation to theoretical constructs such as the ego ideal and the superego. However, it has been the role of these emotions in the attachment process which has come to prominence as the key developmental influence. H. B. Lewis (1971, 1987) was the first to specify this relationship and identified both shame and guilt as playing an important role in the maintenance of attachment bonds. Lewis (1987) suggested that shame and guilt act as warning signs that signal the potential loss of affective ties and thus impel the individual to undertake restitutive action. Other writers, however, have focused more specifically on shame as the emotion likely to have the greatest effect on development and, in particular, the attachment process (Ayers, 2003; Karen, 1998; Kaufman, 1989; Lewis, 1971, 1987; Schore, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2003a, 2003b). Kaufman (1989), for example, identified shame to be the result of the breaking of the interpersonal bridge. It is this interpersonal bridge or, to use the terminology of Bowlby (1969), "attachment" bond, that shame both acts upon and shapes. Episodes of shame act, in situ, to disrupt the attachment bond, whilst a milieu of shame-based interactions is seen to shape the type of attachment style which comes to be an enduring part of the

individual's personality or self-structure. A brief review of attachment theory is

necessary at this point.

Overview of Attachment Theory

Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1973, 1980) emphasised the developmental

importance of the caregiver's responsiveness to the child's attachment behaviours;

with the five attachment behaviours typically evident during infancy being sucking,

clinging, following, crying and smiling. However, Bowlby stressed that these

attachment behaviours are not purely activated in response to the child's

physiological needs; that is, the need for food, temperature control or physical

comfort. Instead, Bowlby emphasised the importance of attachment as a *social*

process with the main function of such behaviours being either the maintenance of

physical proximity to the attachment figure or restoration following its loss. Ongoing

and reliable elicitation of this required social proximity enables in the child feelings

of safety and security.

The great advantage of Bowlby's focus on identifiable behaviours as the hallmark

of attachment processes was the ready application of his theory to empirical

investigation. Another of the important writers in the field of attachment theory was

Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth et. al., 1978). Ainsworth developed the first of the

attachment classification systems based upon the behaviour of infants in a laboratory-

based experiment. Ainsworth observed the behaviour of twelve month old infants in

response to separation from their mothers and again upon reunion. Ainsworth was

able to identify three distinct response patterns. Those infants who Ainsworth was to

label as *securely attached* were happy to play and explore their environment whilst in the company of their mother. They became distressed when separated from her, sought comfort from her upon reunion and were soothed by the mother's attention such that they were soon able to resume exploration and play. A second group of infants, whose attachment style Ainsworth labelled as *insecure/avoidant* were less distressed by the separation phase of the experiment and tended to avoid their mother upon reunion. The third group, designation *anxious/ambivalent*, were less willing than the secure group to explore their environment, preferring to maintain proximity to mother. They became highly distressed during separation and were difficult to soothe at reunion.

Despite the early emphasis on attachment during infancy, Bowlby (1977) viewed attachment and the need to form affectional bonds as a lifelong phenomenon. A range of adult attachment classifications systems and measures were thus developed as an extension of the early, infant-based work of Bowlby and Ainsworth. The Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan & Main, 1985) provided a classification scheme which roughly paralleled the infant attachment styles identified by Ainsworth (1978). However, this measure involved detailed one on one interviews, with interpretation procedures being time consuming and requiring extensive training. An alternate approach to the measurement of adult attachment styles was developed by Hazen and Shaver (1987). This self-report measure was based on attachment behaviours within romantic relationships and, due to its concise and easily evaluated construction, proved to be a very useful research tool.

Attachment Theory and Shame Research

An alternate but equally useful research tool is the "Relationship Questionnaire"

developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). Whilst quite similar in structure to

the Hazan and Shaver measure described above, this particular measure of attachment

style was constructed in a way which has proven to have great relevance to the study

of shame and guilt. In her development of a new classification system, Bartholomew

(1990) returned to one of the basic premises of Bowlby's attachment theory, his

conceptualisation of working models of self and other. According to Bowlby (1973),

when a child grows up in a responsive and co-operative caregiving environment they

are likely to develop positive "working models" of both self and other. The self is

experienced as worthy of another's love; as capable, resilient and competent. The

other is experienced as reliable, helpful and also worthy of love. Moreover, such

conceptualisations of self and other provide a framework for future relationships as

well as an expectation of relational security and stability which enables the individual

to 'survive' adverse events and situations and to project into the future; making and

following through on plans and goals.

Based upon this proposition of Bowlby's (1973), that early interactions with

attachment figures become internalised in the form of "working models" of self and

other, Bartholomew (1990) developed a two-dimensional, four-category model of

attachment. Four attachment styles were identified based upon a positive or negative

internal conceptualisation of one's self, in combination with a positive or negative

conceptualisation of the other (see figure 2). A positive view of the other in

combination with a positive view of the self corresponds to a *secure* attachment

MODEL OF SELF

	Positive	Negative
Positive **MODEL** **OF** **OTHER** **Negative**	**SECURE** Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy **DISMISSING** Denial of attachment Counter-dependent	**PREOCCUPIED** Overly dependent **FEARFUL** Fear of attachment Socially avoidant

Figure 2. Attachment Styles (Bartholomew, 1990).

style, while a positive view of the other combined with a negative view of the self corresponds to a *preoccupied* attachment style. A negative view of the other combined with either a negative view of the self or a positive view of the self accounted for two avoidant attachment styles; *fearful* and *dismissing* respectively.

Given the negative self evaluation which forms the core of the shame experience, a small number of researchers have noted the likely association between shame and the two attachment styles based on a negative model of the self; that is, the preoccupied and fearful attachment styles. Lopez et al. (1997) conducted a study which did indeed find that individuals who identified themselves according to these two attachment styles exhibited higher levels of shame-proneness than did those who had identified as secure or dismissive. Similar results were found in studies conducted by Gross and Hansen (2000) and Consedine and Magai (2003). Gross and Hansen, however, found that, while the secure attachment style was negatively correlated to the propensity for

shame, the dismissing attachment style did not appear to be related to shame at all. They suggested that the positive self image of the dismissive individual might be somewhat defensive in nature and potentially less stable than the positive self image of the securely attachment individual. Thus the dismissive individual may not be as well protected from experiences of shame as the secure individual.

Two of the above studies also examined the relationship of the four attachment styles identified by the Relationship Questionnaire to the experience of guilt. Based upon the concern for the wellbeing of others which tends to be associated with guilt, Lopez et al. (1997) hypothesised that guilt-proneness should be associated with a positive internalised model of others, and thus either a secure or preoccupied style of attachment. This hypothesis, however, was not supported by the data. In fact, guilt-proneness was not found to be related to attachment style at all. Consedine and Magai (2003) found that only the secure attachment style, which was associated with *decreased* levels of guilt, had any relationship to the tendency to experience guilt.

Lopez et al. (1997) also examined the impact of attachment style on the *differentiation* of shame and guilt experiences. As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, shame and guilt are often confused conceptually and are also often experienced together such that their isolation and identification is often compromised. In fact, many studies have shown shame-proneness and guilt-proneness to be highly correlated such that individuals who have a tendency towards high levels of one emotion are also likely to experience high levels of the other. Lopez et al. hypothesised that individuals who are more securely attached should exhibit a higher capacity for differentiation of these two emotions than should those who are

insecurely attached. This was indeed shown to be the case, with significantly lower

correlations between shame-proneness and guilt proneness being recorded for those

individuals who identified with the secure attachment style.

Review of Methodologies used in the Study of Shame and Guilt

Based on the above discussion of the distinctive phenomenologies and concomitant

accompaniments of shame and guilt, the essential task becomes that of formulating a

procedure for effectively and accurately distinguishing between the two emotions.

Early discussions of shame and guilt, such as those presented by Darwin (1872/1965),

Piers and Singer (1953), Lynd (1958), Tomkins (1963) and Lewis (1971), were

largely dependent upon the combined data gathering techniques of observation (both

clinical and non-clinical) and introspection. The term introspection is used here to

describe either personal reflection on one's own experiences of shame and guilt, or

the introspection that forms one of the stages of empathic immersion into the

experience of an other. This work was critical to the establishment of

phenomenological descriptions of shame and guilt and, in particular, identification of

their unique and defining characteristics. These techniques dominated the 'pre-

behaviourism' era in the development of psychology as an academic discipline

(Walker, Burnham & Borland, 1994). During this period psychology was

predominantly a clinically and theoretically-based pursuit. Psychoanalysis formed the

core of psychological thinking; a paradigm which was as much an art as a science.

However, the emergence of behaviourism in the mid nineteenth century heralded

much change in both the clinical practice of psychology and in the methodologies

used for research and data collection. Subjective techniques such as introspection and/or empathy were dismissed as unscientific and without academic rigour. Only the objectively observable and measurable aspects of human functioning were deemed suitable for the stringently empirical study which was seen to enhance the legitimacy of psychology as a 'science'.

This paradigm shift was reflected in the ways in which shame was studied; evidenced by a major trend away from the qualitative elucidation of shame as a largely internal experience and toward the objectively-based quantitative measure of shame episodes. It was the work of Helen Block Lewis (1971), perhaps the most influential writer of the 20th century, with regard to the topic of shame, which set the stage for the qualitative versus quantitative divergence which has since come to represent a major divide within the current field of shame research. Lewis, influenced by her strong psychoanalytic background, retained the emphasis on introspection as an essential feature of the qualitative and phenomenological study of shame. However, she also recognised the impact of shame on general psychological well-being from a quantitative perspective. As such, Lewis used the Gottschalk method (Gottschalk & Gleser, 1969) to conduct a language-based quantitative analysis of transcriptions of general therapy sessions in order to determine the frequency with which shame and/or guilt were evidenced. In accordance with this methodology, shame was identified by the presence of phrases or clauses which reflected either its variants, such as embarrassment and humiliation, or the feelings associated with shame such as exposure and inadequacy. Guilt was similarly identified based on statements of condemnation, criticism or moral disapproval. Moreover, each of these measures was

identified as representative of shame- or guilt-proneness; factors which Lewis's

research associated with various personality constructs such as field-dependence

(shame-proneness) and field-independence (guilt-proneness), and various

psychopathologies such as depression, alcoholism and overeating (shame-proneness),

paranoia and ruminative anxieties (guilt-proneness). Although psychoanalytic

theorising, based on the traditional methodologies of introspection and clinical

observation, remains an important force in the realm of shame research, Lewis's

(1971) quantitative work provided the foundation for the emergence of a new branch

of shame research based on the empirical and/or "scientific" methodologies which

became *de rigueur* during the latter half of the 20th century.

The quantitative route, best represented by the work of June Price Tangney and

her colleagues (Tangney 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993; Tangney & Dearing, 2002;

Tangney, et al., 1992a, 1992b) continued in the direction established by Lewis (1971);

focusing on the measurement of shame- and guilt-proneness and empirically relating

these measures to various psychopathologies, personality traits and behaviours. Such

methodologies, despite their inherent dismissal of qualitative data collection

procedures, are dependent upon the prior qualitative work of theorists such as Piers

(1953), Lynd (1958) and Lewis (1971) for the phenomenological accounts which pre-

determine the identifying characteristics of shame and guilt upon which their

measures of shame- and guilt-proneness have been based. Unfortunately, however,

further elucidation of the fundamental elements of shame and guilt has been stalled

by this necessary, yet unquestioning, acceptance of historical data. At the same time,

the psychoanalytic (particularly self psychological) focus on the central relationship

between self and shame has remained academically isolated by the general academic distrust of the clinical and theoretical data which are so central to the essence of psychoanalysis.

It is suggested here, however, that this divide within the shame literature is unnecessary and that a combination of the methodologies identified above is not only possible but, in fact, essential to the ongoing expansion and enrichment of our knowledge and understanding of shame. The study reported in the next chapter will thus combine the technique of empathic immersion, a clinical, somewhat subjective and typically psychoanalytic method of data collection, with the more objective methodology of inductive coding.

Empathic Immersion as a Method of Data Collection

In the current climate of stringent empiricism, the use of empathic immersion as a method of data collection exposes any researcher to the possibility of criticism and an evaluative assessment, by those of strictly academic backgrounds, which is likely to attribute a dubious quality to the resulting data set. Yet, as clinicians know only too well, the subjective and often unarticulated state of the individual can indeed be accessed via the process of empathy. Psychoanalytically-oriented theorists have clung vehemently to this traditional means of data collection. Kohut (1959) in particular, emphasised introspection and empathy as the *only* means by which we can access the inner worlds of ourselves and others. In fact, he claimed data, obtained solely via observation of behaviours and/or physical attributes, to be inherently non-psychological and described it as "mechanistic and lifeless" (1971, p. 300). Only

when we access the *meanings* of behaviours and attributes, for the individual, have we perceived psychological fact. The ideas of Kohut have been supported by many writers and researchers (eg. Basch, 1988; Lynch, 1994; Rowe & Mac Isaac, 1995; Schwaber, 1984; Wolf, 1988), who have agreed with his insistence on the importance of empathy as a means of psychological data collection. Collectively, these researchers have worked towards a careful and precise definition of empathy which has improved its utility as both a clinical and an academic application. In 1959 Kohut defined empathy as "vicarious introspection" (p. 206), and later as "...the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person" (1984, p. 82). He also emphasised the need to define and apply this procedure with "academic rigor" in order to defend its application against the criticism arising from the perception of empathy as a 'fuzzy' concept; typically confused with sympathy, kindness, compassion and intuition.

The definition of empathy has been further refined by writers such as Wolf (1988), Book (1988) and Basch (1988), all of whom noted the importance of combining vicarious entry into the subjective world of an other with intermittent 'stepping back' or distancing. Book (1988) referred to a process of "oscillation" which allows the empathiser to enter briefly into the experience of the other followed by reversion to an objective stance, thus allowing the empathiser to identify the affective state of the other. As such, empathy does not involve total and ongoing immersion, a process of emotional 'joining together' which is better defined as 'sympathy' (Schlesinger, 1984; Wolf, 1988). Empathy also involves a process which Basch (1988) referred to as "decentering"; a setting aside of one's own emotional experience and the assumption

of a position of neutrality such that one can perceive the affective state of the other without contamination by one's own affectivity. This distinguishes empathy from the process of 'identification'; the imagining of how one might feel if in the other's shoes. Identification is about the self, rather than the other. Similarly projection refers to the process of attributing one's own emotional state to the other. Neither identification nor projection entail the decentering which is the essential core of empathy.

The process of empathy thus involves three discrete phases:

1. Orientation to the affective state of an other.

2. Decentering, followed by affective attunement with the other.

3. 'Stepping back' and objectively identifying the emotion which is now shared, though only to a minimal extent for the empathiser. This phase entails application of the understanding and expertise gained through a thorough knowledge of the experiential aspects of the emotion at hand.

Of course, as noted by Basch (1988), the clinical use of empathy includes the additional processes of deciding how the data obtained via the empathic process may be therapeutically helpful, and then responding to the client in an appropriate manner.

It is also understood that, while the natural capacity for empathy varies between individuals, it is a skill which can be taught and developed (Basch, 1988; Kohut, 1977; Wolf, 1988). Improving empathic skills has been one of the most important aspects of psychoanalytically-oriented training and has typically included extensive clinical supervision, the enhancement of theoretical knowledge through study, and also the development of self knowledge through personal analysis (Wolf, 1988). Such training and development, when combined with experience, dramatically increases the

accuracy and reliability of the empathic process (Wolf, 1988), factors which support the legitimacy of a return to this historically-based method of data collection in the ensuing chapters of this thesis.

Summary

Available evidence points to the identification of shame and guilt as two quite distinct and unique emotional experiences. The primary distinction of the shameful focus on the global self versus the guilty focus on specific behaviour is seen to be accompanied by the readily recognised physiological, cognitive and behavioural patterning which outwardly distinguishes these two emotions. Moreover, the process of differentiating between shame and guilt has exposed shame, in particular, as an emotion with important consequences. Its capacity to elicit certain secondary affects, its tendency to endure, and its apparent association with the developmental process are not matched by the concomitants of guilt.

The following chapter will present the first of two studies designed with the objective of extending current understandings of shame. Study 1 will focus on the process of distinguishing shame from guilt with particular emphasis on the integration of the two major streams of research methodologies described above. In addition, the associated emotional, durational and developmental factors identified in the present chapter will be examined.