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SEXUALITY AND SHAME

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The close association between sex and shame is one of the oldest topics in psychoanalysis. Attention to this special coupling stems from our field's first understanding of mental functioning being set within a culture of concern with the mores and niceties of fin de siècle twentieth-century Europe; from the Judaic and Christian culture of its founders and followers and their traditional views of women that supported the coupling of sex and shame; and from the surround of Western cultures that from the eighteenth century progressively understood individuation and selfhood as valuable psychological acquisitions.¹ Self-consciousness is necessary before shame or its more sophisticated cousin, guilt, can be expressed verbally. The affect of shame, as Darwin noted in his 1872 study of the emotions, is universally signaled physiologically and nonverbally with blushing, downcast eyes, gaze avoidance, and is apparent in all cultures. Anthropologists have pointed to its frequent role in marking a violation of social expectations, not necessarily sexual, of the group to which the individual belongs.

Freud's understanding of sex and shame broadened over his life's work, from the early specific linkage to childhood and body development to the later person's public and private realms of ideals and guilt; to the impact of states of trauma accompanied by ego experiences of being overwhelmed; and to the necessary role of shame and, more important, guilt in lifting civilization from its primitive human proclivity. These ideas are still

¹See, e.g., Laqueur (2003). In chapter 5, "Why Masturbation Became a Problem," he argues that "the problem" emerged with the rise of modern selfhood in the eighteenth century.

acceptable in psychoanalysis and in present-day lay culture. Much has been added, questioned, and revisited since Freud's day, and other psychological emphases have been developed, as attested by the two books reviewed here.

In his writings, Freud referred intermittently to shame. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) he saw shame, disgust, and morality as massive bulwarks of defense against "sexual excesses" originating in the shame-free world of early childhood. By "On Narcissism" (1914), he had expanded his view of the affect, connecting it to self-esteem and the attainment of an ego ideal. Morrison (1996) believes that had Freud developed these ideas he may have written more about shame, for it is in "On Narcissism" that he captures the baby's beginnings in an untempered omnipotence that must be challenged gradually through parental prohibitions, schooling, and sociocultural moral injunctions to control the urgencies of infantile scopophilic and exhibitionistic sexual drives. Shame associated with dependency on social approval becomes an affective response to the growing individual's perceptions of flaw or failure to live up to his own perfectionistic ideals. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud (1930) mentions shame little, but focuses on the structuring superego and especially guilt in the taming of both Eros and the death instinct. Then, in "Femininity" in *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), he returns to shame, this time to associate this primitive emotion especially to females' "genital deficiency," as he called it, their lack of having penises. Fortunately this is one of the "bedrocks" of classical theory that has undergone more essential updating than most! Many still wonder, however, if it might not be true that females experience more shame than males and, if so, wonder why. There are many interesting positions and hypotheses regarding the question, ranging from refutation, to the internalization of a misogynistic culture, to particular aspects of female internal dynamics. Examples of this last would be women's special identification with their mothers, or the vicissitudes of their female-to-female eroticism (Elise 2008) or bodily competition in childbirth (Balsam 2007, 2008), or their vulnerability to "cloacal anxiety" (Gilmore 1998). Freud's original observation that shame is generated very early on as relational, and that it is a response to a clash between the individual's internal desires with external personal forces, has formed a bridge to contemporary theoretical developments in self psychology and intersubjective and relational models.

If Freud was "the father of . . . guilt," Helen Block Lewis, who published in the 1970s, has been called, in a 2006 homage to her by Sara Zarem,

“the midwife of shame.” Lewis widened the descriptive horizon of shame to humiliation, mortification, embarrassment, and even privileged shame over the concept of “narcissism,” saying there was no need for such a diagnosis if analysts would only pay closer clinical attention to the importance of “overt,” “unidentified,” and “bypassed” shame states. Her *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* was published in 1971, just as Kohutian self psychology appeared on the horizon. Also a feminist, Lewis wrote a 1976 book called *Psychic War in Men and Women* that expresses insights gleaned from analyses of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. Sexuality directly relates to her topic. She concluded, for example, that feelings of worthlessness and self-attack seen in women were often manifestations of hidden shame in relation to their sexuality, and byproducts of the prevailing phallogocentric culture.

Many current writers in their vital role of alerting us to the importance of shame do not dwell much on sex and gender issues. In a review of a 2002 book by the British analyst Phil Mollon (a contributor to the edited book reviewed below), Kilborne (2005) wrote, “When Mollon writes that ‘shame is where we fail’ . . . the book begins on sound footing, since, as many have noted . . . shame experiences are by definition anxiety-filled fears of being ashamed, and being ashamed is the very mark of failure” (p. 1284). Sex per se is deemphasized, because many contemporary writers are purposely opening up a traditionally pregendered developmental area—narcissism—or are exploring other concepts of tenuous earliest self-organization. Morrison (1996) is a major proponent of Kohutian self-object constructs in relation to shame. He explores the connection of shame to narcissism, and shame as experienced in a severe gap between the self and the ideal self. He sees drive/conflict theory as limited in approaching the full dimensions of shame. Kilborne (2002) has usefully drawn attention to shame in painful fragmentation and annihilation experiences of the self. Lansky and Morrison have written of the depth and intensity of shame in primitive mental states involving invidious comparison with others, and argue with the Kleinians, who they feel stress aggression within envy at the expense of the power of a more fundamental and coruscating shame (Lansky and Morrison 1997; Morrison and Lansky 1999). Lansky (1992) has also dwelled on the implications of failed fathering. Wurmser (1981) offers a deeply textured theoretical revision of Freud’s drive theory to cope with the field’s consensual view that the roots of shame involve the earliest forms of mental functioning. He alone among the “shameniks,” Lewis’s playful name for herself and the

authors mentioned above (Chiarandini 1998), preserves the import of drive theory, by interpreting conflict within partial drives of voyeurism and exhibitionism. Good papers do appear sporadically in the literature. For example, from the American intersubjective school, Muriel Dimen (2005) writes graphically about disgust as “the eew! factor,” emphasizing the down-to-earth qualities of interaction surrounding body experience, and expounding on what Julia Kristeva means by “abjection.” Among European writers on shame and the body is Riccardo Lombardi (2007); employing a Kleinian-Bionian perspective, he is exquisitely sensitive to the exploration of internal states of psychotic and near-psychotic anxiety.

The two books under review here, one of them an edited collection, take up slightly differing emphases, depending on whether an author favors a theory of mind closer to the classical concepts of Freud, the ideas of contemporary ego psychology, those of Klein or Lacan and the French school, or a more relational or self psychological slant. However the issue is conceptualized, we can all agree that the experience of shame will indicate a person’s pained and significant existential struggle.

Returning then from the last two decades’ enriching coupling of narcissism to shame, to widen Freud’s original coupling of shame and sex now, is to repeat the methodology of taking up an old underdeveloped idea of Freud’s for further exploration. I liked both of these books very much, felt further educated by them, and became more aware of clinical dilemmas I struggle with daily. The latter quality is one of the best experiences of reading for me, and thus is meant as a high compliment.

Joseph Lichtenberg’s *Sensuality and Sexuality across a Divide of Shame* is an available and straightforward, even eminently sensible, book about shame in relation to the development of body and mind. In some ways his is a simple thesis: that “sexuality” is anything (mostly bodily behavior) that is forbidden by the surround, especially by a disapproving parent who activates the child’s shame. It also creates the excited tension of the forbidden. Continuing development of problematic shame in sexuality is dependent on the constitution of the child, and especially the parent-child interactive behavior as affected by procedural memory of the caretaking adult who has connected shame to sex. “Sensuality,” by contrast, for Lichtenberg covers all of the bodily touching, holding, caressing, etc. (in innocence, if you will) that is exchanged between children and adults and that is permitted by the surround. These amiable constellations become the vehicles of secure attachment and activate systems of inner

acceptance of especially expressive bodily interactions as the child grows up into the adult world. The individual's enjoyment of his or her sexed body and gendered psyche depends on this. Lichtenberg's is mainly a relational and intersubjective approach with dashes of self psychology, object relations, and classical theory. He also draws on attachment theory after Fonagy and Target and on family systems theory. Immersed as he is in infant research, during the many decades of his career with his colleagues James Fosshage and Frank Lachmann (see Lichtenberg, Lachmann, and Fosshage 1992), Lichtenberg emerges with a composite and highly peopled theory that comes across as almost commonsensical, but it creates its own idiosyncratic vocabulary and categorizations, no doubt in order to address the need to operationalize the concepts it researches. Thus, his Motivational Systems Theory, for which he is well known, involves five "systems": psychological regulation, attachment in both the psychological and biological dimensions, exploration, aversion, and sensuality. He comes to his present book with the preconception of "sensuality" as a foundational regulator of the psyche; "sexuality" is now seen as distinguishable by shame from "sensuality." I had to work to grasp this counterintuitive division, as for me (and many others of an ego psychological bent) the terms fall on an easy continuum, with affection and sensuality at one end, lust and sexuality at the other, with most behaviors being admixtures between the poles. For me, the conscious and unconscious meanings assigned them by an adult analysis and in the course of free association are what might differentiate them. For Lichtenberg, interactive disruptions and repair and heightened moments of affect are viewed as facets of the varying regulators (such as the system "sensuality") in array or disarray as they pattern self-organization and its transformations from early life to adulthood.

This theory's advocates (much like the research proponents of attachment theory) extend their interpretation of infant and caretaker data directly to the interpretation of the adult psyche. Shame invoked as an inherent, almost unilaterally produced component of a child's instinctual life at the inevitable and unproblematic "civilizing" hands of parents, as in Freud's drive theory, is not Lichtenberg's conception. He argues that the environment aids *regulation* that can be absorbed by the child gradually. But since shame belongs with activities viewed as "sexual" but not sensual, great burdens in relation to sexuality occur when a person experiences, while growing up, multiple interactions encoded from caretakers who are shame-inducing due to their own psychopathology, say, projected

or unleashed sexuality or sadism toward the child. Lichtenberg beautifully elucidates how this co-created interaction is instantiated. Shame's maintenance or re-creation as co-constructed in the past and manifesting in the present treatment is illuminated in the long cases he presents (see especially the case of Veronica in chapter 4).

A consummate clinician in addition to being a researcher, Lichtenberg has always been interested in applying his insights to adult therapies and psychoanalysis; he thus becomes a preeminent "bridge" of many contributory elements of neurobiology, child development from an Anna Freudian perspective, attachment theory, systems theory, and self psychology. His record as an editor and a discriminating supporter of differing psychoanalytic ideas and the plurality of psychoanalytic theory building is impeccable. Witness his stewardship of the *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* series.

This present book follows on his others (often co-authored), which have sought to articulate his vision of the life of the mind and expand his insights. For example, *Craft and Spirit: A Guide to the Exploratory Psychotherapies* (Lichtenberg 2005) was recently reviewed, quite appreciatively, in this journal (Friedman 2008). Emphatically, Lichtenberg makes the point that we have learned from postmodern critics that development is not a linear progression. While signaling especially Adrienne Harris's chaos theory (2005), often in his references to gender, by employing her phrase and her view of its "soft assembly," Lichtenberg suggests a pragmatic truth that most would share, that random things happen in life and will affect the course of anyone's development. His down-to-earth practicality and remarkable range of interests and integration of what he finds to be the useful aspects of others' theories is an appeal of this book.

Lichtenberg uses his own life experience and thoughts about interactions, showing us again and again that the family surround indeed deeply affects an individual. In this way he subtly joins with his patients. For example, the opening scene of the book, like Freud's opening of the story of Little Hans, begins with the birth of a child—Lichtenberg's own grandchild. This is a moving account of his tender but intimate bodily interaction with his daughter as she helps the child to its first draught of milk from her breast. Lichtenberg is a wonderful teacher. We learn here about how such bodily intimacy between the generations can be accomplished because of the ease of the older participant, his lack of shame or shame-inducing behaviors, and the acceptance of help in the younger

adult who has been acculturated to an interaction that for her seems free of shame or restraint. The transmission of these internalizations is nascent then in this infant, whose hunger is eased and primal body needs cherished in the tenderness of the surround of two generations in the presence of the lusty sucking of the infant on its adoring and adored mother's breast. This tableau is a courageous piece of sharing of a potentially private family space, in order to highlight elements of interaction that build the sturdy blocks of the psyche.

Lichtenberg is excellent at capturing the multifaceted and multilayered aspects that impact whatever central concern the individual he is scrutinizing at a given moment might have. In clinical writing he masters one of the most difficult tasks—conveying a lively and believable interaction while not shortchanging theoretical complexity. He can spell out a longitudinal time dimension within a telling psychological moment of existence. Few writers are able to do this so well without creating confusion; nor does Lichtenberg condescend to the reader.

He also writes well about times in his therapies of which he is not proud, as, for example, his private revulsion at some sexual practices and his own prejudices that could have interfered with his treatment of Rob or Jacob (p. 13). The aftermath of these excruciating interactions, and his care and thoughtfulness in dealing with them, show the reader the thought of a man who is willing to examine deeply the consequences of his thinking and interactions while never letting go of the force coming at him from the other person in the room.

My criticism is not about Lichtenberg's book, or its execution, but about the limits of this theory as I understand it, and its application. (He addresses critics of his theory in a "Coda," but I still hold a margin of doubt.) In order to maintain the recommended distinction between sensuality and sexuality, with its developmental implications between the desirable and unproblematic "sensuality" and the shame-laden, edgy, and problematic "sexuality," an analyst would need to be quite sure of his judgments on the patient's behalf. This is easier said than done. It seems to me that in clinical situations there are many described moments of tender sensuality that may also turn out to involve problematic or destructive unconscious motivations. So there are at least two problems with this way of thinking for me. One is the apparent lack of interest in distinctions between what is conscious and what is unconscious; the second follows, that this in turn minimizes the possibility of working on a person's conflicted or doubting sensibility. Lichtenberg's intersubjective mode seems

to require an analyst to be more sure of what he hears and knows than those who see themselves as exploring conflicts. I found myself thinking, what of the adult who denies his borderline sexual action toward the child, and experiences it as unoffending and “sensual”? What of the child’s internalization of this denial so that the shame is so hidden it may be unreportable? Sister Mary (p. 10), the romantic nun with her romantic novice friend, registered no shame till Lichtenberg himself forcefully reacted to her tale of love. On feeling accused, “She roared, ‘This was love, not sex!’ Without reflection I roared back, ‘When you and another person get into bed naked and masturbate one another, that is sex! Whatever else is involved, it is sex!’” (p. 11). Graphic and unusual as this example may be, it dramatizes the therapist interactionally as the final arbiter of what is shamefully sexual—more of the moral teaching position of “an authority” than the elements of his theory itself would propose. (I am not arguing here about the efficacy or inefficacy of Lichtenberg’s treatment of Sister Mary.) Regarding the underlying theoretical conundrum, I would pose some postmodern questions that trouble me: From whose point of view are these interactions either sensual or sexual? From whose point of view are they shameful? And how can we distinguish “sensual” and “sexual” on the basis of a shame that may or may not be present, if not either from the subject’s own conscious vantage point, or in its absence, without some theory that openly acknowledges unconscious conflict?

The abiding strength of this book for me is that it is a welcome vehicle for thinking more about sex and shame, aided by Lichtenberg’s presentation of his patients’ stories, his descriptions of their surround, and their clinical interactions with him. His gifted capacity to describe in exquisite psychological detail many dimensions is outstanding, even as he teaches the paths to self-regulation.

The editors of the second book under review here, *Shame and Sexuality: Psychoanalysis and Visual Culture*, bring a different but strong and valuable set of interests and assets to the illumination of shame in the expressive mutuality obtaining between art works and the psyche. Exploring connections between shame as a primal emotion and “the gaze,” they use and enrich analytic insights about the childhood naturalness of this coupling as they pursue the meaning of images and image-making under their scrutiny. Claire Pajaczkowska is a Senior Research Tutor in Fashion and Textiles at the Royal College of Art, and Ivan Ward is Director of Education at the Freud Museum. A lecturer at London’s Guildhall University, Ward

has a background in the social sciences and anthropology. Pajaczkowska has written widely on painting, avant-garde art theory, and textiles and in her writings has used Freud's ideas on humor, perversion, sex, death, and laughter: a filmographer, she has also written on Marion Milner, Wilhelm Reich, and Bion. Ward is a curator concerned with keeping Freud's heritage alive in contemporary culture. He too has written widely on Freud. Thus, their collaboration here is mutually enhancing. The result is a moving and evocative book in which, as is seldom the case with edited works, the chapters actually cohere.

The authors they have assembled contribute to two sections, "Psychoanalysis" and "Visual Culture." The analysts are Phil Mollon, a psychoanalyst and Tavistock Society therapist; the late Clifford Yorke, a psychoanalyst who had close ties to Anna Freud; Malcolm Pines, a past consultant psychotherapist from the Tavistock clinic with an interest in group analysis; Donald Campbell, a training analyst from the British Psychoanalytical Association, and Ana-Maria Rizzuto, an Argentina-born training analyst from Boston. Among the seven academics, artists, and art critics who write the second section are Ranjana Khama, Associate Professor in the Departments of English and Women's Studies, Duke University; Griselda Pollock, Professor of Social and Critical Histories of Art, University of Leeds; Anna Malik, lecturer in Art History and Theory, Slade School of Fine Art; and Penny Siopsis, Associate Professor in Fine Arts, Wits University, Johannesburg. The whole read is aesthetically pleasing, as befits the subtitle: psychoanalysis and visual culture. It is exciting and unusual in the contemporary world of art criticism for analysts to see psychoanalytic ideas that also have clinical application used so felicitously. Gone are the days when psychoanalysts got into trouble with art critics by naively "psychoanalyzing" painters' biographies and applying those insights to "explain" their works! The psychoanalysts write about shame in the clinical setting. The art critics use the analysts' ideas to examine shame and its connection to visual culture. An implicit and at times explicit foundational text for both disciplines is Freud's *Three Essays*. This of course is the text par excellence for considering a theory that brings together looking, seeing, images, "the gaze," sexuality, and shame. In collaboration with the Freud Museum, the Royal College of Art, and some of their authors, the editors presented these topics in relation to the Tate Modern's exhibitions, as they launched this book in late 2008. One of the contributors had also exhibited installations in the Freud Museum in 2005 to celebrate the centennial of *Three*

Essays. It is gratifying to read of the success of these colleagues in sustaining Freud's ideas in London in this interdisciplinary cooperation.

The editors, in an eloquent introduction that situates the book, dally with the Renaissance Masaccio fresco on the book's dust jacket, which depicts Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden, the emblematic moment—as we Westerners believe—that self-consciousness and the new possibility of shame and the fig leaf dawn. Adam, distraught, covers his eyes with his hands. Eve, agonized, clutches one hand over her breasts and the other over her pubic area. This scene opens the discourse on the potential for clash and shame regarding “passive elements” of the female as the subject of Adam's masculine “active” looking. The authors' interpretations of masculine and feminine, though in the painting they are portrayed in female and male body form, are perhaps more abstract than in Freud's conception. They and the other critics—e.g., Amna Malik and Pennina Barnett—are influenced by Julia Kristeva, or the French school, or postmodern theorists who tend to transcend the biological body. This particular group of authors is, however, more focused on the recognizable body than any theorist of the French school. Pajaczkowska later contributes the ingenious chapter 7, in which she compares *Oedipus Rex* to the Adam and Eve story (including the serpent—“a hybrid monster . . . it can speak like a human but retains . . . amoral beastliness” (p. 137), like the Sphinx). She examines shame, guilt, “the enigma of sex,” infantile omnipotence, separation-individuation, and sublimation: “there is no sublimation without the polymorphous perverse, and its base admixture of sadistic and libidinal appetites directed at narcissistic part objects, half differentiated in the primeval dusk of unbounded energies” (p. 135). The editors in their introduction readily put gender issues front and center in their considerations and in their ambitions for the book. This is most welcome. They convey a sensitivity to the depth of the primitive nature of shame and to dissolution of the sense of self by using Kristeva's “abjection” as “that which lies beyond and before words” (p. 4) and marry it with the anticipation of other contributors' writing about “the authorized ‘differences’ that arise within the visual threshold between self and its others, and the complex interaction between the visible differences of sex, gender, race and culture . . .” (p. 4). They open the way to other chapters that consider key ingredients to any discussion of shame, such as its relation to the ego ideal; to splitting and denial, which they bring to life by speaking of blind spots as “stains” or “scotomata” (see the poetic, evocative chapter by Barnett on stained cloth, clothing, and

body fluids, and the work of the artists Chevska, Yahooda, and Wilson); to sex, of course; and to loss, as in loss of love, abandonment, or loss of ideals; and even to bad smells and disgust as the opposite of “good taste” in aesthetics. They note how “neuroscience shows the close relationship of optical and tactile senses on the level of neuronal structure” (p. 18).

Pajaczkowska and Ward quote Che Guevara’s characterization of shame as a “revolutionary feeling” (p. 15) and remind us that the aim of shamelessness “in the public eye is to generate both speechlessness and attention” (p. 17). Their introduction thus whets our appetite for what lies ahead. Regrettably, I can select only a few chapters to describe in greater detail, and must oversummarize the rest. Every writer in this book, however, will reward the reader with arrestingly vivid moments, fresh angles on old themes, and new lenses through which to see the hidden.

The psychoanalysts’ chapters come first, setting the clinical developmental stage for the artists and critics, who then enter to ably expand on the ideas set before us. Everyone here has in common a respect for the winding paths of childhood development, and for the individual’s subsequent forward growth against the thickets of the surrounding topography.

The analysts are appreciative of Freud in his various phases. Phil Mollon titles his chapter “The Inherent Shame of Sexuality.” He is closest to 1905 Freud. I absolutely agree with his observation that in spite of our life in a sexually liberated culture, sex has strangely disappeared from the psychoanalytic scene in favor of attachment, aggression, and envy. He advocates a return to Freud’s original sense of the inherent conflict that comes with putting sex back into the center of the psyche. He finds Freud right in warning that it is an uphill battle to maintain the wisdom of the centrality of sexuality. “Sexuality is frightening . . .,” Mollon says, “because its biological imperative threatens the symbolic nature of our sociocultural world and personal identity” (p. 23). He takes Freud’s position that achieving civilization has come at the cost of repressing sexuality. Mollon believes strongly, moreover, that sexual repression has in fact been necessary for language and symbol-making to develop. He compiles evidence by default that sexuality is “banished from discourse . . . and is referred to only indirectly” (p. 24). He uses Tourette’s syndrome and psychoses to show how basic indeed is the forceful effort to keep out embarrassingly direct sex in communication and thus infers its role in a pressure toward language formation and psychic structure. Mollon believes that the deepest hurts and psychological wounds frequently become sexualized, because all are repressed together, without

words. Shamed desire is “not allowed access to shared discourse” (p. 24). He elaborates how we banish such pains as a result of failed communication. He points to Tronick’s “still face” experiment (Tronick et al. 1978), in which it seems that even infants can react with an averted gaze of shame and hurt to a lack of response. Like Lichtenberg, Mollon is taken with how the interaction of a disapproving parent activates shame. He sees these experiences as losses and narcissistic injuries to the child. Therapeutic action therefore—he, I, and many others agree on this— involves a widening of verbal communication. Mollon is more blunt in his argument and takes it further than Freud. In going so far as to say that language developed in the first place *because of* sexual repression, he can expect opposition, I think, from linguists who would see the problem as more complex. This is a spirited contention, however, akin to, say, Freud’s sweeping fantasies (1915) about how anxiety originated in the human race, first arising as a fear of extinction among the last men and women standing as the world froze over in the Ice Age. But this chapter offers some good reasons why we have let sex and shame slip off the psycho-analytic map.

In his chapter, Clifford Yorke recalls and reflects Miss Freud’s orderly sense that incomplete work in pregenital phases will mis- and reshape the oedipal situation. Motivating affects can be retained also. Shame as it relates to regressive states or fear of them is addressed, as is shamelessness. Ana-Maria Rizzuto, in a chapter featuring a lovely case study, encompasses all aspects of the mental apparatus by focusing aspects of shame in relation to unconscious fantasy to give a portrait of subjectivity in narcissism. Donald Campbell, writing of sexually abused and abusive adolescents, delicately traces how a prematurely violated “shame shield” (his own concept) may be sundered, and traces how “relief is sought by resorting to actions that project the confusion, passivity and disgust into others” (p. 79). Malcolm Pines rounds out this section with a useful overview of shame and guilt, tracing shame’s increasing prominence in the literature to a better understanding of narcissism and the social dimensions of development.

These clinical insights form what the editors appreciatively call “the hard-won resources of clinical practice,” which add to what follows in the book’s second section: “the analytic methods currently employed in academic, scholarly research into culture” (p. 2).

Griselda Pollock presents a beautifully written feminist piece on *Three Essays* called “The Visual Poetics of Shame.” Her grasp of shame

is profound, breathtaking, and perhaps the most eloquent I've ever read (I have lately taken to quoting her phrases). To startle her readers and help them enter into the experience, off and on she addresses them in the second person. She mounts a passionate argument for the rightness of 1905 Freud, and how misunderstood he was because recalcitrant readers insisted on misunderstanding how "psychoanalytic" he was, as opposed to being "biological." To say in denigration that he thought sex is everywhere is to be blind to his emphasis on complex psychological constellations and outcomes, and to his challenge to heterosexual "norms." As Pollock says, "sexual instinct and the sexual object are not soldered together with a pre-given telos . . . rendering [for example] the eye itself an erotic organ" (p. 117). "It is with the vicissitudes of the archaic inter-subjective formation of the infant's psychic life and the social management of sexual desire that impinges upon us firstly with the oedipal complex and secondarily with the transformations of puberty, that Freud devotes his carefully plotted argument" (p. 116).

Pollock is (correctly) passionate in her antiessentialist position that "sexuality is not a biological but a psychological effect at the interface of fantasy and the drives. It is a human achievement and not a pre-psychological given" (p. 116). I agree, but not with seeing biology as a Foucauldian "mastering scientific discourse" (p. 115). As a "field of life processes"—the additional, less embattled definition of biology she offers—the "essentialist" argument becomes outmoded, because contemporary biology and neurobiology show that body-mind impacts are mutual, and indeed are in tune with some (though not all) aspects of Freud's own biologism. Many neurobiologists, as well as we analysts and academics, puzzle over the origin of consciousness, and it is now often said that the brain is the primary sex organ. For me, it is as if biology has caught up with Freud. But that is a sidebar. Pollock carefully dissects each section of *Three Essays*, and teases out exquisitely how fundamentally deconstructive Freud was in his thinking, in "disassembling the everyday and common-sense ideas about fixed sexuality" (p. 117). This chapter is a significant contribution by this exciting, experienced teacher, especially to teaching *Three Essays*. I hope it will be used often by psychoanalytic and literary teachers. Pollock moves at the end of her paper from an explication of the essays as a foundation to a brief account of her rationale in tackling her feminist project, noting the "suppression that has built an entire phantasmagoria of images, words, and modes of actual bodily punishment to terrorize women into a shameful fear of

betraying their desire. . . . Shame is, therefore, a central feminist issue . . .” (p. 125). Freud traced the vicissitudes of infantile erotic polymorphous desire in male and female alike, at least in the relatively early *Three Essays* (even if his vision wavered over the years), and his acknowledgment in 1905 that female sexuality, in Pollock’s restatement, “smashes [into] a wall built by misogynistic patriarchal culture” (p. 125) is thus vitally important to her, as to all of us interested in female development.

Penny Siopsis, the South African artist, mounted an exhibition in several rooms of the Maresfield Gardens Freud Museum, to draw attention to the oppression and shame of apartheid. She vividly describes her show here, and the rationale for her collection. It was called *Three Essays on Shame*. I will pick out just a few examples of the many objects she exhibited. There were three sections—voice, gesture, and memory. In Freud’s study she installed audiotapes speaking shameful experiences from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where victims publicly exposed perpetrators who responded, in the service of trying to heal human rights violations and assaults on the body and the psyche. A reproduction of Courbet’s *The Origin of the World*, painted in 1886, graphically displayed the female genitals; a video of the genital nudity of angry and provocative dancing women protesting the government’s violent destruction of the township of Soweto played. Interesting, because of my own interest in female development, in her section on “gesture” Siopsis singles out, from the collection of antiquities Freud displayed on his desk, the terra-cotta figure of Baubo. This character, who appears in the Persephone myth (offered by Kulish and Holtzman [2008] as a more cogent mythic analogue for female development than the Oedipus story), is an old nursemaid who cheers up the depressed and bereft mother Demeter by hiking up her skirts to display her exposed vulva! Shamelessness, observed by Freud in very young children, is obviously quite important and participates in a dialectic with shame itself (regarding females, see Balsam 2008). “I’m sorry,” words of private and public acknowledgment of shame and pain, are words Siopsis made reverberate through the rooms of the museum. Another room of the exhibit, once Freud’s bedroom, now with his deathbed in the center, was resonant with images of death and was the location of the “memory” section. The book contains some colored plates of these installations, and Siopsis’s densely red “blushing” figure paintings.

Another remarkable chapter, by Amna Malik, addresses shame and disgust as portrayed in large paper cutouts by Kara Walker, executed in

1994 and titled *A Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*. The otherness of recently freed African American slave experience is depicted in jarring cartoon-like relief together with perverse Southern whiteness. Ranjana Khanna takes up thoughtfully the Islamic veil, shame, nudity, and covering and the relation of psychoanalysis to “the study of coloniality’s resistant melancholic hangover in the post colonial context” (p. 160). In the book’s final chapter, Suzannah Beirnoff approaches shame and disgust through medical history in her essay on facial disfigurement and the medical treatment of British soldiers so afflicted in the First World War. The absence of limbs, she points out, evoked the reaction of “Hero!” and mental problems may have brought out a bias about malingering, but facial destruction and mutilation made (and makes) people turn away. “Indignity” was a word that came to her as she “attempt[ed] to make sense of the abiding horror of disfigurement” (p. 219). This is a courageous and searching study of the soldiers’ and the doctors’ experiences that should be read by analysts, by historians of medicine, and by those in academic disciplines interested in aesthetics. The essay is exquisitely placed last, I imagine, so that we may linger, long after we turn the final page, on this study of what is seen and not permitted to be seen, of sexuality, shame inducement, trauma, mortification, loss, and survival. In their introduction, the editors said they hoped that “the study of visual culture [would] enable psychoanalysts to reconsider the significance of the part played by sight, visual fantasy and iconic representation in the earliest phases of the construction of the self, and the wider significance of shame in everyday life” (p. 2). I loved their book. They have utterly accomplished all they sought to do. Taken together with Lichtenberg’s book, it will allow readers a deep and thorough grasp of the many dimensions of sexuality and the all-important affective phenomenon of shame.

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