The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible

The Prophetic Contribution

Johanna Stiebert

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This book is for my little sister
Hanna Wanli
(für wen denn sonst?)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)
BHS	*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur *ZAW*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
IDB	George Arthur Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962)
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KJV	King James Version
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, Robert Scott and H. Stuart Jones, *Greek–English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th edn, 1968)
NIV	New International Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
THAT	Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (eds.), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1971–76)
ThWAT	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970–)
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction

This book seeks to explore shame in the Major Prophets, because it is in these three biblical books—Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel—that shame vocabulary is most prevalent. Hitherto, shame has been discussed primarily in the literature of psychology and anthropology. Consequently, I will begin by summarizing the psychological explanations for the putative origins of this apparently universal human emotion. In the course of this I will outline the phenomenological similarities between shame and guilt, which are grounded in the shared centrality of negative self-evaluation. Further, shame and guilt have both been identified as self-conscious emotions that may be exacerbated by the disapproval of significant others. I will describe this social dimension of shame with recourse to socio-scientific studies. Prominent among these are anthropological field studies conducted primarily in the Levant. Here shame, alongside its binary opposite, honour, is said to be a pivotal social value around which traditional Mediterranean communities are centred.

The honour/shame model was derived from apparent patterns of Mediterranean social organization. Although this model has received criticism from within the discipline of anthropology, it has, generally speaking, from the late 1980s been embraced enthusiastically by biblical scholars. This is evidenced by a considerable number of books and articles hailing the model as a hermeneutical device that opens a window into 'the biblical world'. Alongside the (qualified) concession that findings from anthropological field studies can provide a useful fillip for reflection when approaching shame in the Hebrew Bible, I will draw attention to the referential fallacy many biblical commentators have been propagating. Further, with very few exceptions the psychological dimension of shame is underdeveloped, even ignored, in both anthropological studies and biblical scholarship. I will argue that in examining shame in the Prophets attention to the psychology of shame is not only appropriate but also important.

Following on from this more general discussion, I will focus on the three Major Prophets. Each of these prophetic books will be approached

from a discrete perspective. With regard to Isaiah, I will seek to illustrate the shortcomings of the honour/shame model; with Jeremiah, the use of shame terminology in ideological discourses. The final section, on Ezekiel, will examine the relationship between shame and impurity and focus particularly on the female imagery of chs. 16 and 23.

Before I proceed, let me be candid about two important matters. First, a detailed discussion (even a summary) of scholarly opinion regarding the dating, provenance and authorship of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel is beyond the scope of this study. While I acknowledge that these matters are very significant, they are also very contentious. The fall of Jerusalem strikes me as the salient event that has given rise to shame discourses, hence I am assuming a date of composition well after 587 BCE,[1] namely the Second Temple period, which would have provided a more stable environment for the production of such substantial literary works than the period leading up to, during or immediately after the siege of Jerusalem and the exile.[2] It is not, however, my intention to imply either that shame was not experienced prior to the exile, or that the experience of shame is limited to the postexilic era. (My guess is that the opposite is true.) Instead, my reason for focusing on the Major Prophets is that all three are substantial collections of texts where shame vocabulary is relatively abundant. Secondly, I believe that all three prophetic books were composed and compiled over an extended period of time and by several authors and editors. At the risk of occasionally sounding vague, I consider it preferable to be outspoken about the fact that the social and historical contexts, as well as the identities and aims of the authors who contributed to these

1. Seebass (1973: 571) points out with reference to the exile, 'Bemerkenswert...dürfte sein, daß die Wurzel בוש von den großen Propheten auf die Katastrophe ihres Volkes vor seinem Gott angewandt worden ist und sie diese Dimension in einem alles entscheidenden Moment der Geschichte ihres Volkes zur Sprache gebracht haben'. ('Notably, the root בוש was applied by the Major Prophets with reference to the catastrophic turn in the relationship between the people and their God. This [experiential] dimension was not articulated until this most decisive of moments in their history'; my translation.) I am aware that there exist also compelling arguments challenging the traditional interpretations of the exile and Second Temple (e.g. Thompson 1999).

2. I will be explaining my emphasis on the postexilic period more fully with reference to ideological criticism and the book of Jeremiah. While I certainly do not reject the idea that all three of the major prophetic books contain material that predates the Second Temple period, I will contend that all are likely to have been influenced by the ideology of and to have undergone editorial processing during this period.

texts, ultimately remain unverifiable. Any attempts at reconstruction, therefore, are at best intelligent guesswork, the subjective nature of which I concede.

Shame: Definition and Characteristics

Shame is a complex phenomenon straddling psychological, cultural, social and ethical aspects of human experience. To experience shame is to designate an action, experience or state of affairs as belonging in the category of the shameful. The criteria determining this category derive from a combination of sources. The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of 'shame' is 'the feeling of humiliation or distress arising from the consciousness of something dishonourable or ridiculous in one's own or another's behaviour or circumstances, or from a situation offensive to one's own or another's sense of propriety or decency'. Shame thus derives from either or both subjective attitudes and sensitivity to 'propriety or decency', which is (I think it is safe to assert) at least to some extent culturally and socially constructed. Shame, then, is an emotion focused on the vulnerability and conspicuousness of one's self-image (subjective, internalized) in terms of a perceived ideal (objective, external).

In an attempt to describe the subjective–objective tensions inherent in the concept of shame, I will turn next to the two disciplines where it is discussed most prominently: psychology and the social sciences. Both depict shame as a universal concept. (This shared universality, however, rarely receives acknowledgment.) In psychological literature shame is often described in contradistinction to guilt, while socio-anthropological literature most commonly contrasts shame with honour (or, sometimes, pride). Some anthropologists *have* characterized traditional, face-to-face communities as 'shame cultures' and modern, more anonymous, industrial and post-industrial societies as 'guilt cultures'.[3] In the light of the shame/guilt binary opposition of psychology, this might be regarded as an incorporation of a psychological taxonomy into social anthropology.[4] The

3. E.g. Mead 1942, 1943. Cairns persuasively refutes Mead's designations (Cairns 1993: 36-45, see below, pp. 14-16).

4. Comparable typologies exist, too, within the discipline of sociology. I am aware of F. Tönnies, who speaks of a corporate and communal *Gemeinschaft* ('community') as opposed to a secular and associational *Gesellschaft* ('society'). The latter is distinguished by 'a high degree of individualism, impersonality, contractualism, and proceeding from volition or sheer interest rather than from the complex of affective

emphasis here, however, is on behavioural responses to social settings, with the self-evaluating psychological dimension rarely receiving attention.[5] I perceive this to be a shortcoming and will argue that the social-scientific and psychological disciplines have much to learn from each other.

Shame and Psychology:[6] *Shame and Emotion*

There is general agreement that shame is a human[7] emotion. Dennett designates it in the emotion or affect category of conscious experience that mediates between experiences of the purely external world (e.g. sights, sounds and feeling the position of our limbs) and experiences of the purely internal world (e.g. fantasy images and sudden hunches). This category spans a broad range of evaluative experiences, from surges of anger and astonishment to less corporeal sensations, like pride or ironic detachment (Dennett 1991: 45). Within this diverse category, shame has been allocated to the sub-category of self-conscious emotions. Tangney and Fischer

states, habits, and traditions that underlies *Gemeinschaft*' (Nisbet 1967: 74). E. Durkheim also describes two ideals of social solidarity: the mechanical and organic. The former, 'associated with primitive peoples', pertains to 'regimented' communities where religion pervades the whole social life; the latter, to 'greater individual freedom' and a more differentiated social life (see Pickering 1984: 446).

5. This lack is to some extent redressed by the sociologist T.J. Scheff (1990: 71-95) (see below, pp. 21-23).

6. This section comprises a variety of elucidations from both psychology and its sub-discipline psychoanalysis. Its aim is to provide a selective sample of prominent approaches to shame. I have drawn heavily on Cairns's Introduction (1993: 1-47), as well as on texts for the non-specialist.

7. Scheler argues that shame is the emotion that most clearly distinguishes humans from other conscious beings: 'For man's unique place within the structure of the world and its entities is between the divine and animality. It expresses itself nowhere both so clearly and so immediately as in the feeling of shame... According to up-to-date information and observations, the animal, which shares so many feelings with us such as dread, anxiety, disgust and even jealousy, seems to lack the feeling of shame and its expressions. It would also be nonsensical to think of a "Godhead who feels shame"' (1987: 3-4). (Concerning this latter point, see below, 'Shame and the Role of Yhwh', pp. 96-97) Furthermore, Burne: 'shame, like laughter and language, seems to be rooted in what it is to be human' (1996: 2). Scheff, in his overview of biological and social sources of shame, concedes that shame may have a biological basis that is shared with other higher mammals, but adds that 'the human emotion of shame in adults is considerably more elaborate and complex' (1990: 81).

refer to such emotions as 'especially social', because they are founded in social relationships in which people interact and evaluate both themselves and each other.[8] Hence, people feel ashamed because they assume that someone (self and/or other) is judging some activity or characteristic of theirs in a negative way (Tangney and Fischer 1995: 3). Cairns has argued that although the presence of an 'other' or audience (be it real or eidetic) is the main catalyst of the emotion of shame, the judgment constitutive of the emotion still depends on oneself: 'in every case shame is a matter of the self's judging the self in terms of some ideal that is one's own' (1993: 16).

Cairns and Tangney and Fischer agree that emotions have a cognitive aspect (Cairns 1993: 5; Tangney and Fischer 1995: 7-9),[9] and also, that they may be accompanied by physical or physiological symptoms or characteristic behavioural responses. Tangney and Fischer thus describe that:

> In shame...physical signs seem typically to include lowering the gaze, covering the face, and sometimes blushing and staying quiet. The subjective experience of being ashamed includes feeling exposed, heavy, or small, and dwelling on the flaw that one is ashamed of. The organizing action tendency describes the whole sequence from situation to primary actions, perceptions, and reactions. With shame, a person wishes to be judged positively in a given situation but instead is judged negatively (by self or other) for some action or characteristic, especially something that signals a deep-seated flaw. The person reacts by trying to hide or escape, or, alternatively, trying to blame others for the event. Emotion refers to all three of these facets (physical signs, subjective experiences, and action tendencies) (1995: 7).

Scheff, a sociologist, specifies that the behavioural responses of the emotion shame (whether they are verbal or non-verbal) all entail 'hiding' behaviour. With the verbal responses, shame is hidden under disguising labels: hence, a person experiencing shame is prone to speech disruption, such as stammering, and the use of 'static speech' (i.e. words such as 'well', 'you know' or 'uhhh'). The non-verbal markers, meanwhile, suggest physical hiding and include lowering or averting the gaze (to escape

8. Scheff mentions that this recognition is alluded to already in Darwin's *Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals* of 1872. Darwin's focus, however, is on the phenomenon and evolutionary function of blushing rather than on shame in particular (Scheff 1990: 80).

9. Dennett's description of the phenomenology of emotion, as entailing a reaction (e.g. amusement) to an external variable that is evaluated or appraised, also suggests a cognitive basis for emotional experiences (1991: 64).

eye-contact) and 'oversoft speech', sometimes to the point of inaudibility (to hide the content of one's speech and thoughts) (1990: 86).

As both Scheff and Cairns stress, however, evaluation remains the crucial defining factor of the emotion: 'the paradigm case of an emotion will involve both an evaluation of the situation and occurrent physiological changes. Yet it remains the evaluative aspect that specifies and differentiates the emotion' (Cairns 1993: 6; cf. Scheff 1990: 86). In order to illustrate this, Cairns points out that the emotions of embarrassment and shame, for instance, are distinct not due to 'the putative specificity of the deep physiological changes involved' (1993: 7), such as the extent of one's blushing or degree of eye-contact avoidance, but because they belong to different scenarios. Embarrassment is thus restricted in application to social situations of exposure, while shame is related to perceived moral shortcoming. Hence, if one is embarrassed to speak in public, embarrassment is adequately justified by the public nature of the action; if, on the other hand, one is ashamed to speak in public the question arises as to what one is ashamed *of* (Cairns 1993: 7 n. 13).[10]

Shame and Guilt

The origin of the emotion of shame, as well as its relationship to, or distinction from guilt are prominent themes in psychology-orientated discussions. More often than not, shame is depicted as the more original or primitive of the two (cf. Scheff 1990: 79; Caplovitz Barrett 1995: 27). The difference is frequently attributed to socialization and reflected in the division made in social anthropology between shame cultures and guilt cultures. Guilt is hereby associated with 'Western', diversified and industrialized societies and said to be derived from internal sanctions provided by an individual's conscience (i.e. one's own disapproval of oneself). Shame, on the other hand, is associated with small, face-to-face communities and exacerbated by a fear of external sanctions, especially the disapproval of others. Reducing shame to a response to purely external sanctions, however, is inadequate because *self*-judgment, an internalized

10. Scheff states: 'Embarrassment...refers to a shame state of less intensity than humiliation or mortification' (1990: 80 n. 2). While it is correct that shame, humiliation and mortification entail a more intensely unpleasant emotional state of being than embarrassment, Cairns is correct in identifying evaluation as the factor that both distinguishes and accounts for the difference in intensity between shame and embarrassment.

evaluation, is constitutive of shame.[11] Even if an audience real or imagined should be the primary catalyst of shame, internalized ideals and standards cannot be disregarded. (Just how these in practice differ from conscience then becomes difficult to establish.)

Freud relates both shame and guilt to intra-psychic conflict. He depicts guilt as a conflict between the superego (the internalized parental and social prohibitions or ideals which act as censor upon the ego, loosely equated with conscience) and the id (the inherited instinctive impulses of the unconscious). Shame, he argues, is a more specialized form of this conflict that constrains primarily sexual impulses such as exhibitionism and voyeurism (Caplovitz Barrett 1995: 28). In 1971 Piers, a psychoanalyst, and Singer, an anthropologist, collaborated on a treatise on shame and guilt. Their proposal is that shame arises from the tension between ego (the most conscious part of the self and primary centre of individuality) and ego-ideal (a part of the mind evolved from the ego through an awareness of both parental and social standards that tries to impose upon the ego concepts of ideal behaviour); guilt from the tension between ego and superego. Guilt, therefore, is generated when a boundary defined by the superego is transgressed (rule violation), whereas shame occurs when a goal presented by the ego-ideal is not attained (shortcoming, failure) (Caplovitz Barrett 1995: 29-30). As Cairns points out, such a shame/guilt differentiation is complicated by the fact that the ego-ideal constitutes an aspect of the superego: it, too, is a construction of internalized parental and social rules (1993: 19). This then leaves us with little more than the (unsurprising) conclusion that both shame and guilt involve evaluations of the ego—be it measured against the rules and prohibitions of the superego or the perceived ego-ideal. Cairns argues that both are 'abstract constructs

11. It is indeed possible to envisage scenarios whereby one experiences shame without there existing an external source of negative evaluation; or, conversely, where there exists a source of negative external evaluation without one feeling shame. Scheler, too, connects shame with perception of the self. Hence, he describes how a bashful woman may not feel shame when being a model for a painter, a patient of a physician or when bathing in the presence of a servant, because there is no 'turn-experience'. That is, she regards herself in these situations as a 'visual thing', a 'case' or 'the lady' (external emphasis), rather than as an individual (internal emphasis). Likewise, 'prostitutes can be without shame when they are with their customers and at the same time show the greatest modesty and tenderness to their beloved. There is in neither case a contradiction in intention. The customer seeks the prostitute, not the individual, and the prostitute seeks the customer; in the other case both seek the individual' (1987: 15 and n. 14).

which therefore have no explanatory force in demonstrating that the phenomena are, in fact, distinct' (1993: 20).

The focus, therefore, should perhaps be shifted away from such abstract constructs as id and superego and towards the nature of self-perception. From this perspective, I am said to be prone to shame if I regard myself as a whole (as what I am and would like to be). If, on the other hand, I am more focused on my actions as an agent, I am said to be more prone to guilt. As Cairns admits:

> This distinction explains a lot; it explains why shame tends to be assuaged by restoration or increase of self-respect, guilt by making amends, why causal responsibility is necessary for guilt, but not for shame, why shame can be felt with reference not just to one's own actions and omissions, but also to wishes, desires, character traits, physical characteristics, passive experiences, and those actions of others which somehow reflect on oneself. These are the most important phenomenal criteria which establish that shame and guilt are indeed distinct concepts... (1993: 21-22).

Again, however, as with the 'superego versus ego-ideal' distinction, a finely tuned 'self-as-whole versus self-as-agent' distinction is difficult to maintain in practice. As Cairns explains, the idea that shame involves thoughts such as 'what a terrible person I am!' and guilt thoughts such as 'what a terrible thing to do!' with 'what a terrible person I am to do such a terrible thing!', representing a concurrence of shame and guilt, may be tidy but it is also unrealistic. Therefore, the conclusion that shame and guilt resemble each other in that *both* centre on dissatisfaction with aspects of self and behaviour seems safest:

> the 'pure' case of shame *qua* evaluation of the whole self will frequently contain an integral reference to some action perpetrated by the self as agent, and the 'pure' case of guilt will inevitably encompass a reference to an overall ideal of the self. Quite simply, self-image will constantly be called into question by specific acts, and in such situations the sharp distinction between shame and guilt will begin to disappear (Cairns 1993: 24).

There exists some scope for arguing that people may tend more towards either guilt or shame. Caplovitz Barrett describes an experiment with two-year-old children, for example, where the experimenter gives her 'favourite' doll to the child to play with before leaving the room. When the child plays with the toy, a leg becomes detached: 'Such an event is relevant to both shame and guilt, in that it involves violating a standard of harm to another by harming the other's prized property' (1995: 46). The experimenter returns and the child's response is video-taped. It was found that

some of the children tended more to guilt responses (trying to repair, make amends, confess—especially before the experimenter 'noticed' the breakage), others to shame responses (averting, avoiding behaviour, slow to tell). Caplovitz Barrett believes that non-disciplinary socializing practices are especially important in influencing a propensity to shame or guilt. She suggests that where there exists pronounced parental emphasis on the importance of achievement, in conjunction with a strong bond between parent and child, for instance, the likelihood of shame-of-failure feelings is increased (1995: 54-55). She is careful, however, to stress that these designations are not absolute but of degree.

Shame and guilt, then, overlap in that both pertain to negative self-evaluation; they are not mutually exclusive and may be difficult to distinguish in practice. Their origins are difficult to pin down. According to Freud, both develop in the child after the resolution of the Oedipus Complex, during the so-called latency period (c. six to eleven years of age)[12] where they serve to suppress the inclinations of phallic/Oedipal children to exhibit themselves and look at each others' bodies. Prior to this, Freud argues, such emotions as shame or disgust are not active because younger children seem unconcerned about the enjoyment of such practices (Caplovitz Barrett 1995: 29).

Other psychoanalysts have promulgated a much earlier development of shame. A. Schore, for instance, emphasizes the pre-verbal and pre-individuation nature of shame and identifies its earliest appearance as the inhibitory response to an infant's excessive joy. He argues that ten- to eighteen-month-old babies undergo a period of practising separation from the mother. This experience, he maintains, is accompanied by an enthusiasm and interest while exploring the world, which would become too much were it not for the regulating mechanism of shame. Shame, therefore, occurs for the first time when the mother, on occasions when she is not fully attuned to her baby, mismatches its demands. This, according to Schore, induces a reduction of enthusiasm and 'triggers an assault on the

12. The latency period is said to occur between the diphasic onsets of sexual life. After the first efflorescence of sexuality (climaxing in the fourth or fifth year of a child's life) passes, sexual impulses are overcome by a repression lasting until puberty, 'during which the *reaction-formations* of morality, shame, and disgust are built up' (Gay 1995: 23). Shame and disgust, further, are singled out as the most prominent forces that contain sexual impulses 'within the limits that are regarded as normal' (Gay 1995: 254).

burgeoning narcissism of the practicing infant, on the ideal ego...and represents the first experience of narcissistic injury and narcissistic depletion associated with all later shame experiences' (cited in Caplovitz Barrett 1995: 31).

D. Nathanson also situates the earliest experiences of shame in infancy. Like Schore, he argues that shame constrains excitement when social interaction first fails. The infantile experience of disappointed expectations and desires, he claims, is crucial for the development of a sense of selfhood, because it highlights the distinction between self and (m)other. Shame, then, is traced to the pre-verbal infant's rudimentary awareness that something beyond the self is interacting with it. Nathanson goes on to say that subsequent developmental stages, such as the toileting situation and sexuality, heighten this sense and, therefore, likewise evoke shame.

These depictions are somewhat reminiscent of the state of being that J. Kristeva calls abjection (1982: 1-6): a borderline state between subject and object when an infant first begins to perceive itself as separate from the undifferentiated relationship with the mother. This is the semiotic relationship, which precedes sublimation (the possibility of naming). Abjection is depicted as an ambiguous state of revolt of and against the feeling that gives one existence; a threat from something that is neither 'me', nor 'not me', that is both compelling and horrific. Food loathing is one of the earliest and most characteristic feelings of abjection. Abjection can, however, return at any time in later life and be triggered by anything that disturbs identity, system and order.[13] The unpleasant feeling which attends abjection and its crucial role in the formation of selfhood, have much in common with what Schore and Nathanson have called shame.

While all these theories could account for the universality of shame (i.e. people everywhere recognize their selfhood—shame is intimately connected with effecting this recognition) they are problematic. The fact remains that we are unable to establish whether the pre-verbal infant experiences shame.[14] Consciousness of one's self is indeed *one*

13. Douglas discusses the phenomenon of revulsion at anything that is composite, or difficult to categorize, in the context of anthropology—particularly with regard to the dietary laws of Leviticus (1966: 41-57). See also Goffman: 'In social situations with an individual known or perceived to have a stigma, we are likely, then, to employ categorizations that do not fit, and we and he are likely to experience uneasiness' (1963: 19).

14. Shame is certainly more difficult to identify than primary emotions such as pleasure or anger, which exist from the first few months of life and which can be

prerequisite for the emotion of shame, but shame is also characterized by an acute sensitivity to standards or rules and the ability to judge oneself in the light of these (e.g. Lewis 1995: 207).[15]

Connected with this intermediate status of shame, which combines subjective and objective factors, is the notion of stigma. Originally, this word signified a physical sign, such as a cut or burn, designed to expose something defective about its bearer. Nowadays, it tends to convey a *quality* perceived as shameful rather than the bodily evidence of it.[16] As Goffman explains, a person's perception of having a stigma incorporates an awareness of societal standards in conjunction with negative self-evaluation:

> the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments, to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of one of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess (1963: 7).

triggered by simple stimuli: 'joy at the sight of a parent; fury when milk is late in arriving' (Burne 1996: 2).

15. Orbach, a representative of popular psychology, also acknowledges that alongside the instillation of shame in the narrow social sphere, when the young child shows interest in something that an adult feels is inappropriate, there operate shame-inducing measures in the wider social sphere: 'The Ten Commandments once served as a public standard which, if breached, could induce personal and community shame. Each culture creates such standards and, in this context, shame serves as the emotional social conscience. Transgression costs. We aren't supposed to want our aging parents dead, to envy our friends' fortune, to wish badly [*sic*] on others. And if we have such thoughts, shame keeps them tightly bound in, choking our ability to explore what they mean... Shame is never absent in a culture. It is a regulator, a source of morality, a set of stories and a standard that a culture creates for its members to live by. The suppression of shame is an alarm signal alerting us to the continual violation of cultural mores, the failure of the culture to meet important needs and the consequent disintegration of interpersonal responsibility' (1996: 6).

16. As we have seen, shame *can* be aroused in response to perceived physical defects (see Cairns 1993: 21-22, cited above). The same is true of stigma. Goffman distinguishes three types of stigma: first, various physical deformities; secondly, blemishes of character (such as rigid beliefs, mental disorder or addiction); and thirdly, tribal stigma (pertaining to race, nation or religion and transmitted through lineage). All result from labelling and constitute 'a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype' (1963: 4).

Societies devise standards in order to facilitate and shape human interaction; social living and interdependence effect the need to maintain others' respect and affection—and both of these factors appear to be connected with the instigation of guilt and shame. Thus, infringement of a rule, or disappointing a loved one or superior can be a catalyst of negative self-evaluation. Where the relationship between shame (or guilt) on the one hand, and societal standards and methods of enforcing power on the other, is concerned, we are on slightly firmer ground. The connections between shame, social rules, prohibitions and sources of power, therefore, feature in my discussion. This will, I think, be more fruitful than the pursuit of a primarily psychoanalytical angle.[17]

Aside: Scheler on Women and Inherent Shame

As emerges from the discussion above, shame has been depicted as a universal human emotion in the literature of both psychology and the social sciences. Further, it has occasionally been suggested that shame has a biological basis.[18] M. Scheler has argued that there exists some

17. Epstein's anthropological study of shame in Melanesia is heavily influenced by psychoanalysis. Hence, he states that 'the attitudes concerned are an outgrowth or reflection on the cultural or conscious plane of a psychological substrate in which unconscious processes are also at work' (1984: 45). Epstein ascribes some of the similarities between Tolai and Goodenough attitudes to intra-psychic conflict associated in Freudian theory with the anal phase of psycho-sexual development. This shared anal focus, he argues, lies behind such rituals as *abutu*, where an opponent is shamed by presenting him with food of such abundance that he cannot make return. In psychological terms, Epstein 'explains', the giver of food is likened with the prototypical food-giver: namely, the mother. When the loving and nurturing mother arouses hostility, the negative feeling cannot be granted expression. *Abutu* allegedly arouses similarly ambivalent feelings of discomfort. The casting of food at an opponent, Epstein claims, is symbolic of anal products. In both—food-giving and (reluctant) receiving while repressing hostility—retention is focal. This, according to Epstein, combines oral and anal elements. The scatological humour prevalent on Goodenough is another expression of this anal orientation, reflecting the unconscious fixation on infantile intra-psychic conflicts (1984: 46-47). As stated above, due to the fact that the sexuality and ego-formation of the pre-verbal infant cannot be studied satisfactorily, which in turn leads to unfounded (if fascinating) abstractions, such proposals as Epstein's are, I think, best avoided.

18. Following an overview of biological and social studies on shame and related emotions and phenomena, Scheff acknowledges: 'It may also be true, as recent infant-caretaker studies suggest, that for infants and very young children, the arousal of

biological propensity that inclines women to feelings of bodily shame while men have a more refined feeling of spiritual or psychic shame.[19] Women, he claims, feel honour and chastity at a deeper level of confluence because sexuality is 'felt more individually than in men' (1987: 20). This is 'explained' with recourse to women's more confined lives:

> The woman lives a less expansive and a more bound and ego-related life. All her thoughts, willings, values, perceptions, and representations do not detach themselves from her body-consciousness as is the case with a man. This explains her lesser degree of duality between spirit and body and, therewith, a lack of the condition for the experience of psychic shame... Just as a woman hides her secret life less than a man does, so also she shows less respect of other's [*sic*] secrets. Her nature is less 'discreet'; she lets out more than a man does. For discreetness rests on a co-feeling with the psychic shame of another person. Her tendency to prattle, chatter, and gossip, with which men of all peoples and of all times have found fault, is a consequence of the woman's lesser degree of psychic shame (1987: 84).

While Scheler, then, is willing to attribute an element of women's more pronounced bodily shame and less pronounced psychic shame to their 'less expansive' lives (for which support can be found in the anthropological literature of the Mediterranean, depicting women's lives as largely confined to the home and private sphere while the public sector is a male preserve),[20] he suggests that this tendency is for the most part inherent and inevitable: a part of her 'nature', evidenced in women everywhere.

Even more controversial and disturbing than this suggestion is Scheler's assertion that propensity for higher feelings of shame is determined not only by sex but also by race:

shame is largely biological' (1990: 84). While this might accommodate the notion that shame is somehow inherent or inborn, Scheff writes elsewhere: 'Very young infants quickly show the rhythm of looking into the caretaker's eyes then away...[which] appears to be crucial in the development of a strong bond' (1990: 79), which seems to suggest that shame is instead learnt very early (cf. Nathanson, Schore and Kristeva, as discussed above). Neither can be proved conclusively.

19. The ideas summarized here are from Scheler's essay of 1913, 'Zur Funktion des geschlechtlichen Schamgefühls', translated and discussed in *Person and Self-Value* (1987). Scheler (1874–1928) has been called one of the leading philosophers of twentieth-century Germany. His essay is one of the earliest detailed discussions on the topic of shame (see Staude 1967). Scheler appears to be 'out of fashion' and his essay is not mentioned in any of the shame studies I have consulted.

20. See below, pp. 16-18.

> Any loss and diminution of shame is tantamount to a degeneration of the human type... The decline of the feeling of shame in modern times is undoubtedly a sign of racial degeneration... He who understands the Germans well will find that it is the tall, blond, blue-eyed and long-faced people of lower Saxony that have the most refined feeling of shame easily aroused. And if one ignores prudishness and cant among the English, one will find that it is the English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh peoples that have a most refined feeling of shame and traces of a master-type. What alone produces true culture, and justifiably so, is the gradual transition of more conventional expressions of shame in mores into more changeable ones and transition from more bodily shame to more psychic shame (1987: 68-69).

Scheler could not have predicted where such ideas would lead within decades of the publication of his essay. Of course, such statements are blatantly and deeply alarming. While these excerpts may be considered unfairly selective and misrepresentative, I consider any suggestion that shame is determined by either sex or race undesirable and best avoided. While shame is in part an internal psychological phenomenon, it has also been recognized as inter-personal and as characterized by sensitivity to external sanctions. In the discussion that follows, I will review how shame has been discussed as a social phenomenon within the social sciences.

Shame and the Social Sciences: Shame and Guilt Cultures, Honour and Shame

We have seen that the distinction between the emotions shame and guilt can be difficult to maintain in practice. It is true also that the designations of 'shame culture' and 'guilt culture' have generally speaking been rejected—or, at the very least, carefully qualified.[21] Mead, among other social anthropologists, popularized this distinction, the crux of which is expressed in the following statement:

> in societies in which the individual is controlled by fear of being ashamed, he is safe if no-one knows of his misdeeds; he can dismiss his misbehaviour

21. This rejection is in part due to damaging generalizations. Cairns articulates this with particular vehemence: 'The shame-culture/guilt-culture antithesis has its roots in a strategy of American self-definition which sought to elevate (an anti-historical and idealized version of) WASP cultural identity as a norm against which other cultures should be measured. At its heart stand assumptions regarding the superiority of post-Kantian models of the autonomous moral self which share the same project of using pre-modern, non-Western society as the contradictory of "our" privileged, uniquely "moral" outlook' (1999: 171).

> from his mind...but the individual who feels guilt must repent and atone for his sin (cited in Epstein 1984: 31).

Shame is here understood as an external, guilt as an internal sanction. Mead has claimed that there exist Samoan, Balinese and Iatmul (of New Guinea) shame cultures notable for an absence of internalization. She argues that this stems from a socialization process in which a child is influenced less exclusively by the commanding presence of its parents, with responsibility for children instead being more widely shared. In so-called guilt cultures, meanwhile (including Western cultures), the nuclear family and, therefore, the parental role are particularly important. Consequently, children come to internalize the values of their parents who adopt a pose of absolute moral superiority. This later transpires in conscience and feelings of guilt, as opposed to shame. It is guilt, therefore, which prevents the devout Roman Catholic from consuming meat on Fridays—even while alone and unobserved on a desert island.[22]

The case for non-internalization within so-called shame cultures, however, is weak. Even Mead's field studies—recounting first, the complex forms of ritual and culturally approved forms of behaviour that children of these cultures must learn; and secondly, the procedure of controlling, correcting, rewarding and punishing children until they do so—in fact suggest internalization (Cairns 1993: 37-43). Admittedly, it may not be accidental that public shaming functions as a prominent and poignantly felt sanction in small-scale societies where the local community provides the setting for the most intensive forms of social interaction and where residents are in a very real sense on face-to-face terms. Shame, however, is not absent either in technologically more developed, socially differentiated

22. Foucault's essay on panopticism (1977: 195-228) comes close to describing the existence of a completely internalized sanction. Outlining a system of enforcing discipline based on surveillance, Foucault explains: 'He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects' (1977: 202-203). This sanction, too, however, cannot be disconnected from 'external power' and being in 'a field of visibility' implies the possibility of someone outside who is capable of seeing. Likewise, the Catholic abstaining from meat may arguably be motivated by the belief in an omniscient deity, i.e. a sanction with an external component. Internal and external sanctions are difficult to separate completely.

and anonymous cultures. In the context of contemporary and industrialized Western cities, shame plays an important role in the dock of a criminal court, for instance (Epstein 1984: 32). The tabloid press, too, could be said to exploit shame-propensity, as does the 'outing' campaign: misdemeanours in the context of the political arena, or closeted sexual activity often emerge as activities about which implicated individuals have no qualms for as long as they are shielded from the glare of publicity. Guilt and the need for atonement, too, are not confined to Western cultures.[23] Shame and guilt are not mutually exclusive and Cairns is, in my view, correct in stressing that the considerable differences between, for example, ancient 'shame' and modern 'guilt' cultures lie not 'in the former's lack of any internalised mechanism which might reject certain forms of conduct as unacceptable in themselves' (1999: 171).[24]

Since 1959, anthropologists working predominantly in the circum-Mediterranean landmass have used the binary categories of honour and shame with regard to the strong affinities between diverse cultures such as Greek Cypriots, Bedouins and Berbers, especially in terms of male–female relations. Peristiany has been prominent in advocating that they are pivotal social values and a 'constant preoccupation' in these cultures (1965b: 9-10). In the small-scale, face-to-face communities he and others describe,[25] an individual's moral obligations are concentrated primarily within the family. Outside of this close-knit circle, interaction is often marked by distrust and competition. There is, furthermore, a pronounced gender division where men vie with each other for honour in an agonistic fashion and women are acutely sensitized to shame as a mechanism for preserving their honour.

23. See Cairns's strong evidence to support the capacity for remorse (strictly speaking a guilt culture phenomenon) in Classical Greece (generally designated a shame culture) (1999: 171-78).

24. Also Epstein, who argues that shame sometimes requires the presence of an 'Other' but that the deepest shame is not shame in the eyes of others but weakness in one's own eyes—where the 'Other' is internalized and the self observes the self (1984: 33). Huber, too, writes that Mead's absolute dichotomy is simplistic, claiming instead that there exists 'a preserve of *both* shame and guilt in varying degrees in all cultures' (1983: 246).

25. E.g. Campbell's study of the Sarakatsani (1964); Peristiany's of the Pitsilloi (1965a); and Abou-Zeid's of the Bedouin (1965); as well as Schneider (1971) and Davis (1977).

Male honour derives from both antecedence (i.e. it can be inherited) and prowess but it is also bound up with the individual's value in his own eyes and in the eyes of his society. A man's claim to honour hence demands acknowledgment or recognition of the claim. Honour is related to the maintenance of ideals, which are largely socially oriented and determined:

> Honour...provides a nexus between the ideals of a society and their reproduction in the individual through his aspiration to personify them. As such, it implies not merely an habitual preference for a given mode of conduct, but the entitlement to a certain treatment in return (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 1).

As Chalcraft points out, honour can be an incentive for maintaining the status quo: 'Socially, honour "works" in a number of ways. First, by offering social prestige—which brings, in turn, wealth, influence and power—honour motivates individuals to achieve social norms' (1990: 191). Honour is hierarchical and it is honourable to submit to the greater honour of a superior: one's father, a community elder, or the king, for instance. Among equals, however, honour is not simply 'a given' but something which must be constantly asserted, competed for and defended. It is a zero-sum game: one can only gain honour by depriving another man of his share.

Shame is intimately connected with woman's variant of honour. It also determines her reputation, claim to pride and status in the community. Unlike male honour, female honour (sometimes referred to as shame in a specialized sense) is a passive quality focused primarily on preservation of virginity prior to marriage and faithfulness to one's husband thereafter. It makes a woman sensitive to the pressures exerted by public opinion and elicits not assertiveness and competitiveness but expressions such as shyness, blushing and other restraints deriving from emotional inhibition and the fear of exposing oneself to comment and criticism (Pitt-Rivers 1965: 42). Once lost, a woman's honour is irrecoverable. A woman's lost honour occasions destructive or negative shame, which has a powerfully defiling property and affects not only the woman herself but her kindred too.[26] Pitt-Rivers thus describes a man's honour as being closely tied to the sexual purity of his mother, wife, sisters and daughters—rather than to his own. Variants of the proverb 'the honourable woman: locked in the house

26. In anthropological literature shame is very commonly associated more particularly with women. This is true, too, of contexts other than the Levant countries. Mead, for example, writes of New Guinea that 'with girls there is no pause—the girl is ever more restricted, more self-conscious, more ashamed' (1942: 155).

with a broken leg' and powerful insults calling into question the purity of one's mother are, he explains, ubiquitous in the countries of the Mediterranean and indicative of this honour/shame ethos (1965: 45-48).

Pitt-Rivers has compared the honour and shame matrix to magic, in that both are widespread but clothed in different conceptions from place to place (1977: 1). Peristiany, too, admits that honour and shame are universal aspects of social evaluation (1965b: 11); and yet both anthropologists have contributed to the perception that honour and shame belong to a demarcated geographic region, are within this realm worthy of cross-cultural analysis and somehow less characteristic of other regions. Schneider (1971: 1-24) and Pitt-Rivers (e.g. 1977: 170) attribute this distinctive quality to the peculiarly sexualized conception of Mediterranean honour and shame; Davis to thousands of years of continual contact (comprising trading and talking, conquering and converting, marrying and migrating; 1977: 13).[27]

As one reads the articles of Peristiany's *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (1965), the 'Mediterranean-ness' of honour and shame becomes increasingly tenuous. Both, it seems to me, emerge as convenient 'catch-alls' for a wide variety of social phenomena from diverse field studies. This imprecision is first and most articulately seized upon by Herzfeld. He argues that because 'honour' and 'shame' have been used to label such a wide range of local-social, sexual, economic and other standards, they have both become no more than 'inefficient glosses' (1980: 339). According to Herzfeld, whether one is ascribing the notion of Mediterranean honour to a product of the historical process of social interchanges (Davis 1977), or to an emphasis on chastity (Schneider 1971), the result remains nebulous and simplistic, because both rationalizations fail to pay sufficient attention to ethnographic specificity (Herzfeld 1980: 340). He proposes instead that there should be a greater emphasis placed on independent examination of terminology and concepts within confined local settings. If the definitions of honour and shame are as wide and indeterminate as some of the Mediterranean studies suggest, Herzfeld cautions, the social phenomena they supposedly signify are detectable everywhere, including beyond the Mediterranean realm.[28]

27. Davis acknowledges that honour is not an institution either universal within the Levant, or exclusive to it. At the same time he proposes honour as a defining feature of Mediterranean social construction and does not consider it unreasonable to speak of 'the people of the Mediterranean' as a collective group.

28. Herzfeld indeed cites an honour/shame study conducted in the West Indies. See

Wikan takes on board Herzfeld's suggestions regarding ethnographic particularization and focuses on a small urban community in central Cairo. She disputes Peristiany's claim that Mediterranean people constantly call upon the concepts of honour and shame in order to assess their own conduct and that of their fellows (e.g. Peristiany 1965b: 10), observing that in her community of focus there was indeed much talk of shame but very little of honour (Wikan 1984: 638). Wikan also mentions that the people she encountered were less prone to ascribing value judgments than much anthropological literature would have one believe. She describes, for example, the surprising tolerance[29] extended to an adulterous wife: her neighbours refrained from telling her husband and considered her a likable person (1984: 648). Wikan concludes that when honour and shame are studied in detail in a defined context, then 'the illusory generality and abstraction which the anthropologist's concept of "honour" and "shame" provide' is thrown into sharp relief (1984: 648).

The collection of anthropological articles in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Gilmore 1987), to which Herzfeld contributes, is also more cautious than some of the earlier Mediterranean studies. In his introduction, however, Gilmore nevertheless writes that

also Epstein's fieldwork conducted in Melanesia (1984). Epstein, focusing on shame in particular, does clarify indigenous categories and their usage in exercising social control. He contrasts shame with pride rather than honour, explaining that: 'in the dynamic and highly individualistic world of New Guinea, where a man is encouraged to be combative and self-assertive, shame is clearly coupled with pride. By contrast, in more static societies, where there is much concern with matters of personal status, shame is more appropriately paired with the concept of honour' (1984: 49). Other shame studies, conducted in settings which are described in similar terms as the Mediterranean ones, are those by Shaver (1987), contrasting shame terminology in the US with that of Italy and China (cited in Tangney and Fischer 1995: 12) and those referred to by Huber, conducted in China, Japan and among various North American Indian societies (1983: Appendix 2, 245-48).

29. Surprising that is with regard to such studies as that of Abou-Zeid (1965), among the Awlad Ali Bedouin. He describes *'ird* as a particularly contaminating form of shame associated with chastity, prudence and continence, that is used only with reference to women. Awlad Ali women, he explains, preserve the honour of their people by observing the rigid rules that control sexual relationships. If there is gossip about a woman, it is the duty of her agnatic kin to get rid of her. Abou-Zeid mentions that if a woman is slandered falsely, the slanderer is held responsible but he adds that the woman is killed if she consented in any way and sometimes even if she was raped (1965: 254).

> Pitt-Rivers and Peristiany were right to look at the Mediterranean area as a unit of culture—though perhaps for the wrong reasons. This unity is at least partly derived from the primordial values of honor and shame, and these values are deeply tied up with sexuality and power, with masculinity and gender relations (1987c: 16).

To an extent he plays his cards both ways with the following claim:

> Like all cultures, Mediterranean culture is an arbitrary symbolic system... But symbolic systems do not derive from nowhere; they *mediate* between internal and outside worlds... Honor-and-shame then may be seen as a 'master symbol'...of Mediterranean cultures (1987b: 17).

The articles in this edition, while cautiously paying close attention to local variation, are generally favourably inclined to using honour and shame as convenient categories. Delaney thus writes that dispensing with them would be like throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water (1987: 35), while Giovannini is unapologetic:

> Despite considerable variation in the content of mediterranean [*sic*] moral-evaluative systems, some striking parallels exist which cannot be ignored... The cultural equation between female chastity and social worth may not be a mediterranean 'cultural universal.' Nor is it necessarily restricted to the mediterranean region. Yet, it is very pervasive in that part of the world where it is associated with institutionalized practices that both affect and reflect gender-based relations of authority, dominance, and coercion (1987: 61).

The upshot of the anthropological studies on honour and shame is that while these social values are not considered exclusive to particular geographic domains, the small communities of the Mediterranean have been regarded as providing a fertile ground for a multitude of field studies that have illuminated certain alleged tendencies. These tendencies are often connected with defined gender roles and issues of kinship. Honour is exemplified by publicly proving oneself a man (through behaviour approximating that associated with socially constructed masculine ideals: such as assertiveness, success in competing with men of equal rank and being seen to control and protect the women of one's family), or woman (through modest conduct that might be seen to epitomize the feminine ideal of sexual purity prior to marriage and complete fidelity to one's husband after marriage). Shame has a dual sense. Sometimes it refers to women's honour (positive shame); at other times it signifies the diminution or loss of social standing (negative shame).[30]

30. This dual sense is known from English language usage also. Negative shame is

As we have seen, criticism of the idea that Mediterranean social systems are constructed according to the values of honour and shame has arisen from within the discipline of anthropology itself. This criticism has highlighted a need for particularization: for assessing social phenomena in specified contexts and paying close attention to terminology and its usage. When attempting to discern the social setting behind a *text*, as opposed to observing social dynamics at first hand, the difficulties, are, if anything, compounded. None the less, suggestions by Mediterranean anthropologists that the honour/shame-system has very ancient roots (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 145-70) and that findings from modern-day field studies in remote, small-scale and rather static cultures can illuminate ancient societies (Peristiany 1965a), have been seized upon by biblical scholars to explore the social contexts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Pseudepigrapha.[31]

I welcome not only Herzfeld's call for particularization but also the qualification by Scheff that an examination of shame must not ignore its status as an emotion. Scheff calls attention to the fact that shame is felt to be both exterior and constraining. The exterior component, he explains, derives from a complicated and frequently subtle and low-visibility system of rewards and punishments, which he calls the deference-emotion system. This system may take formal and public forms but is more often 'virtually instantaneous and invisible, and cheap as dirt' (1990: 75). It involves cognitive processes[32] but is only experienced as compelling because of its

evident in such expressions as 'child of shame'. The statement 'she has no shame', on the other hand, signifies the absence of a shame that is regarded positively.

31. The difficulties attending the transfer of findings from anthropology to biblical criticism have been discussed by various authors: cf. Culley's summary (1982) and Rogerson's comments that biblical scholars should not underestimate the complexities of tackling another discipline such as anthropology (1984: 2) and also, that 'it will do no harm to Old Testament study to have to recognize more clearly the limits of what it can know about ancient Israelite society' (1984: 18). Fiensy (1987, repr. in Chalcraft 1997: 43-52) points out that while accounts from the Hebrew Bible have been compared with such cultures as the Nuer of Africa 'for at least 200 years' (1997: 43), this is sometimes conducted without following current debates in anthropology, which has transpired in biblical research founded upon discredited ethnological theories. Fiensy illustrates that the Nuer segmentary political and lineage theory developed by J. Evans-Pritchard, for instance, while enthusiastically received by Old Testament scholars as a means of understanding ancient Israelite society, is being seriously challenged from within the discipline of anthropology. As we shall see, numerous biblical scholars have adopted the honour/shame model with comparable enthusiasm—often without acknowledging its limitations.

32. Scheff describes a cognitive process of consensus, which holds some promise

emotional component: more specifically, the rewarding emotions of pride and fellow feeling, on the one hand, and the punishing emotions of embarrassment, shame, or humiliation, on the other (1990: 73-77). Scheff is in my view to be commended for his fusion of social and psychological analyses.

As I will be explaining in more detail in Chapter 1, the honour/shame model from anthropology has in the arena of biblical studies dominated examinations of shame. The emphasis, therefore, has been on identifying behaviour, values or expressions compatible with Mediterranean social construction. In the course of this there has been a lack of particularization in the sense that scant attention has been paid both to the vocabulary of shame and to the texts where shame vocabulary is actually prevalent (that is, prophetic literature). Further, the emotional dimension of shame has, generally speaking, been ignored (or, perhaps, taken for granted). As Scheff has pointed out, the deference-emotion system operates in a variety of ways, ranging from formal and public events (such as the awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honour, or an impeachment proceeding), to virtually invisible ones. Examples from the latter end of the spectrum, Scheff claims, occur almost continuously, 'even when we are alone, since we can imagine and anticipate its movements in vivid detail' (1990: 75). The reason for this is that social monitoring of self is virtually continuous, even in solitude: 'We are... "living in the minds of others without knowing it"' (1990: 82). This social monitoring always has an evaluative component and therefore gives rise to emotions of pride (if the evaluation is positive) or shame (if the evaluation is negative).

The anthropological studies, as we have seen, focus for the most part on small Mediterranean communities and, within these, on observable gender-specific behaviour (challenge ripostes among men; sexual modesty of women). Scheff, however, has argued persuasively that pride/shame is a universal emotion and that its manifestations are most often very subtle: 'pride/shame is ubiquitous but of a kind that has such low visibility that we do not notice it... Adults are virtually always in a state of either pride or shame, usually of a quite unostentatious kind' (1990: 82). The emotional component of the deference-emotion system (which has pride/

for a study of both social influence and shame. This model proposes that people acquire a sense of fellow feeling through a series of reciprocal understandings, such as: 'I not only agree with my neighbor that God exists, but I also know that she agrees, and she knows that I agree, and I know that she knows that I agree, and so on, up the ladder of reciprocating attributions' (1990: 74).

shame at its centre), he proposes, is responsible for the reality that social influence is felt first, to be compelling and constraining and secondly, to facilitate conformity. Being internal, however:

> The documentation of this system has so far escaped the net of systematic research; it is too subtle to be caught by the laboratory experiment or the social survey. Since it often functions outside the awareness of interactants, field workers have also missed it (Scheff 1990: 75).

Summary

Shame is a self-conscious emotion. It is probably a universal and distinctly human emotion. Constitutive of shame is negative self-evaluation. The evaluative component indicates a cognitive dimension. Not uncommonly shame arises in social situations, especially where a person suspects the disapproval of another. Further, shame may be attended by physiological symptoms, such as blushing or hiding behaviour.

Shame has been prominently discussed with regard to Mediterranean social organization. In this context shame is contrasted with honour. On the one hand it pertains to constraint in a woman's behaviour that ensures her reputation (positive shame), on the other to dishonour (negative shame). Both are said to be pivotal Mediterranean social values that have given rise to distinctive and observable behaviour.

The important sociological study of shame by Scheff has not received attention from biblical scholars. Scheff is careful to highlight the emotional alongside the social aspect of shame. He points out that shame operates almost continuously: not only in human interactions but also in solitude. It is experienced as a compelling emotion and induces conformity.

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Chapter 1

SHAME AND BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Background

One of the earliest studies of honour and shame in the context of the Mediterranean is Campbell's *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (1964), based on fieldwork among Sarakatsani shepherds. Campbell writes that women's shame is exemplified by a professed revulsion at sexual activity and by attempts to disguise the possession of female attributes (through veiling, modest attire, movement and attitude). As a Sarakatsani woman's honour is always something imputed by others, she can never retreat within her own conscience: instead, she must not allow herself to behave in any way that may so much as be seen to implicate her in anything considered shameful. This expresses itself, for instance, in restraint at showing emotion in public, except when this is dictated by convention (especially in the context of mourning rituals). She must not, however, kiss her husband in public or shout (1964: 289). Her honour depends on the estimation that the community is willing to concede and her deportment must therefore conform to its code of sexual shame (1964: 270).

Campbell's study describes social mores and conduct that have some affinity with those that can be inferred from portions of the Torah. The law of Deut. 25.11-12, for example, condemns a woman who responds to a fight between her husband and another man by seizing the assailant by his private (literally 'shameful') parts to having her 'hand' cut off.[1] The

1. The text states that the woman's כף (usually translated 'palm, or hollow of the hand') shall be 'cut off' (from the verbal root קצץ). As Eslinger (1981) points out, cutting off the palm of the hand seems improbable, even impossible. He proposes that just as 'shameful parts' is a euphemism for the man's genitalia, so כף is a euphemism for the woman's. The law, Eslinger continues, is telic. I am persuaded by the suggestion of J.T. Walsh (private correspondence) that the punishment entails shaving of the genital hair, rather than clitoridectomy. As Walsh points out, the verb is used

severity of this law could be accounted for by pointing out that in terms of the social codes characteristic of honour/shame societies, the woman's public action is shamefully unrestrained, unbefitting of her sex and, therefore, damaging to the honour of her husband. Further, Campbell describes that in the Sarakatsani community much is made of brothers' wives in one household quarrelling (1964: 71), as well as of rivalry between brothers (1964: 175). The former is reminiscent of the topos of a patriarch's quarrelling wives (Sarai and Hagar in Gen. 16; Leah and Rachel in Gen. 30); the latter is represented by the sibling rivalry between Jacob and Esau (Gen. 27).[2] Even the observation that wells and sex are somehow linked in the Sarakatsani imagination, because 'If an unmarried man for any reason wants to see the local girls, he has only to sit by the well' (1964: 86), may have a parallel: after all, Abraham's servant, commissioned to find a wife for Isaac, goes to the well where he encounters Rebekah (Gen. 24); and Moses, too, meets the daughters of Jethro (including his future wife) by the well (Exod. 2).

Peristiany's honour/shame study among the Pitsilloi, the inhabitants of a small Cypriot village, mentions that they are regarded by other Cypriots as a repository and living embodiment of traditional values of manliness, perseverance, hardihood and generosity (1965a: 174). The Greek word for honour (τιμη), furthermore, is used in this setting in the classical sense of social worth, ranking and value (1965a: 179). This lends substance to the argument that there exist communities in the Mediterranean, which (like some kind of time-capsule) retain much older social forms and might, in turn, enable anthropologists to observe social structures not dissimilar to those reflected in and by ancient literature.

It must be kept in mind that the Hebrew Bible (the Torah alone) is a substantial and diverse accumulation of texts, which can be used to illustrate many things. Suffice it to say for now that modern honour/shame studies *may* provide scope for the illumination of such narrative accounts

elsewhere of cutting hair (Jer. 25.23 and 49.32). Furthermore, shaving of genital hair is known from other biblical texts to have been a practice aimed at inciting humiliation. This emerges most clearly in Isa. 7.20: in this passage the king of Assyria is the instrument of Yhwh's humiliating punishment. He uses a razor on the heads, 'hair of the feet' and beards. 'Feet' is here most probably a euphemism for the genitals (cf. Isa. 6.2; on sexual euphemism also Delcor 1967 and Carmichael 1977); some translations suggest 'hair of the legs', which is, in my view, less likely.

2. As Carroll (1977) has pointed out, the motif of competing brothers is prominent in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible.

as those of Genesis. This is the assertion of the anthropologist Pitt-Rivers, who, in a fascinating chapter illuminated by observations from fieldwork in contemporary societies, argues that the origins of Mediterranean politics of sex and the honour/shame system can be discerned in the book of Genesis. The elucidation of Genesis, regarding the establishment of rules of marriage and land rights, he claims, gives rise to problems 'that can only be approached from an anthropological standpoint' (1977: 127). In the course of this establishment, Pitt-Rivers claims, we see a transition from pure myth—characterized by moral indifference, where matters that may be regarded as wrongful and which do not pretend to furnish recommendations of behaviour (e.g. Lot's incest with his daughters) pay off handsomely (i.e. in the issue of male progeny)—towards moral precepts and clearly enunciated rules of conduct. The movements of this transition are irregular but detectable none the less, with Gen. 34 (recounting the rape of Dinah) marking a vital turning point.

The story of Pharaoh taking Sarai and adultery bringing copious material advantages for Abram and divine punishment for the Egyptian (Gen. 12),[3] together with the repetition of the Sarah-'sister' incident with Abimelech (Gen. 20) and the account where Isaac calls Rebekah (his wife and patrilateral cousin) his sister, in order to protect himself against the possibility of sexual rivalry with Abimelech and his men (Gen. 26), all explore the uncertainty as to whether sisters should be kept and married within the patriline or given away to foreigners for the sake of political advantage (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 152). The marriages of Esau and Jacob develop this issue. Esau's marriage to two Hittite women incites his mother's disgust (Gen. 27.46) and Jacob is advised to marry a daughter of Laban, his mother's brother (Gen. 28.2). This, Pitt-Rivers proposes, suggests that Israelites ought to marry within the covenant.[4] It is the Shechem story, however, which forms the conclusion of the sister-wife stories and which resolves all uncertainties:

> Abram, Abraham and Isaac offered their sister (or patrilineal cousin) to whom they were already married to the local ruler as a concubine for the

3. Pitt-Rivers comments that this is 'a most un-Mediterranean distribution of deserts!' (1977: 151).

4. In practice, however, four founders of the twelve tribes are born to slave mothers and two tribes are descended from Joseph's Egyptian wife Asenath. As Pitt-Rivers points out, the four founders may be exempt from the classification 'of foreign descent' because the slave women conceived them as proxies for their mistresses (1977: 155).

> sake of political safety and material advantage. Jacob hesitates to complain about the seduction (or violation) of his unmarried daughter and his sons settle the matter negatively by political means and material advantage (pillage) but at subsequent political risk. The rules of marriage are spelled out in detail in subsequent books, but it is never again implied that it might be honourable to give daughters away to foreigners (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 155).

The crucial distinction between the earlier stories and the Shechem story, then, is that Sarai and Rebekah, had they really been sisters and not wives, might legitimately have been given to a powerful stranger while Dinah, who really is a sister and *only* a sister, emerges as a woman who cannot be given away at all (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 157).

Abram/Abraham and Isaac may have participated in a form of sexual hospitality that, as Pitt-Rivers points out, is not dissimilar to that of other nomadic peoples who sometimes use their women for purposes of establishing relations with sedentary populations.[5] Simeon and Levi, however, set a different tone for the remainder of the Hebrew Bible with regard to sexual honour.[6] Their question 'is our sister to be used as a harlot [זונה]?' might well have been asked of Abraham or Isaac. It foregrounds the notion of sexual honour and this new centrality of sexual honour, corresponds, appropriately, to the first attempt to abandon the nomadic lifestyle. Once they have taken possession of the land the Hebrews no longer need to use their women for maintaining political relations. Therefore, Hamor's offer of direct marital exchange draws on a conception of marriage no longer acceptable: by now the Israelites have learned through the harsh experience of political subordination to keep their women to themselves once they can (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 161).

5. Gen. 20.13 ('this is the kindness you must do me at every place...') may imply that Abraham's treatment of Sarah is customary rather than exceptional. Pitt-Rivers mentions that there exist parallels in modern nomadic cultures, among the Romany and Zapotecs of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (1977: 159-60). Romany, he explains, are strictly endogamous, placing high value on female purity. Nevertheless, women's sexual charms (practising seduction without literally granting favours) may be exploited for political advantage. The principles of such customs are explained with recourse to a particular social structure in which nomads live in habitual contact and in a relationship of mutual distrust, even disdain, with sedentary peoples upon whom they, to some extent, depend.

6. Winkler states explicitly what Pitt-Rivers insinuates, namely that it is penetrative sex which 'was apt for expressing social relations of honor and shame, aggrandizement and loss...and so it is that aspect which figured most prominently in ancient schemes of sexual classification and moral judgment' (1990: 40).

The Shechem story then, could be said to illustrate that men's honour is made vulnerable through the sexual behaviour of women and that sex has political and economic significance. According to Pitt-Rivers, the story is not so much 'the unreasoned product of the collective consciousness' as a 'consciously reasoned [construct] of individual men attempting to find in the debris of events a pervasive sense, and...an authority to be exercised in the present' (1977: 169). The social theory implicit is that sex is a political matter and 'a function of a system of status and power manifest in the idiom of honour' (1977: 170). It has, he concludes, been such in the Mediterranean ever since and the notion of honour is fundamentally a matter of sexual behaviour.[7]

The binary pair 'honour and shame', or 'shame and guilt', familiar from anthropological studies, has begun to appear in interpretations of ancient literature with increasing frequency. Some important examples on literature from Classical Greece, for instance, include Dodds's chapter 'From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture' in his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951); Winkler's *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (1990); Fisher's *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (1993); Gérard's *The Phaedra Syndrome: Of Shame and Guilt in Drama* (1993); and Cairns's *Aidôs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (1993). Biblical literature, too, has become a focus—especially since the 1990s. Particularly in interpretations of the New Testament and Apocrypha, both the pairing of shame with honour and the argument that the social structures described in modern Mediterranean field studies reach far back in time and are discernible in biblical texts, persist. With regard to the Hebrew Bible, the reception of anthropological evaluations has been moderately more reserved.

Honour and Shame in the Apocrypha and New Testament: A Summary and General Comments

One of the earliest detailed applications of the anthropological honour/shame model to a biblical text is Camp's analysis of Ben Sira (1991). Camp's stated intention is to gain a deeper understanding of women's

7. Pitt-Rivers's conclusion is in agreement with Schneider's of 1971. Schneider argues that it is above all the emphasis on women's chastity and virginity, which is treated similarly to an economic resource and is competed for by men, that is characteristically Mediterranean.

lives in second-century Jerusalem. One important premise is that this apocryphal text was embedded in a cultural context in which honour and shame functioned as focal social values. Camp claims that 'Though details remain debated, there is a wide consensus that variations of what is called the "honor-shame complex" are a determinant feature of contemporary Mediterranean life' and further, that 'Mediterranean cultural continuity, at least in the villages, allows us to consider ancient society and persons from this framework' (1991: 2).

Ben Sira, she points out, has a higher concentration of shame vocabulary than any book of the Hebrew Bible[8] and insistently mentions 'the fear of the Lord'. The motivation for the latter, she argues, lies in preserving one's good name and avoiding shame (1991: 4). Camp is careful to distinguish between proper and improper shame—'the shame-by-which-one-must-be-bound in order to avoid the shame-that-destroys' (1991: 5)—and goes on to illustrate how the connections between shame, sexuality and economics, which are an important focus in Mediterranean anthropological studies, pervade Ben Sira. In her analysis Camp describes the strong relationship between honour and wealth. While there is an emphasis in Ben Sira on the pivotal importance of wisdom and on the moral imperative to care for the poor, there are also expressions of grief for the wealthy reduced to want and an appreciation of financial security (1991: 7-18). By implication, poverty signifies idleness and both bring dishonour. Camp summarizes: 'Thus, while the sage holds an idealized vision of the poor man honored for his wisdom, he also, realistically, advises his students not to wrap sheer laziness in such a flag. Better to be wise and wealthy (10.31a)' (1991: 10).

By far the most potent source of dishonour depicted in Ben Sira is women's sexuality and this, Camp claims, is typically Mediterranean. The poem on sexual relationships in 9.1-9 provides 'a fairly complete list of female nemeses' (1991: 20-21) and envisages women as being inherently dangerous for men. This expresses, she argues, a belief in women's indiscriminate sexuality and justifies men's containment of it. Again, this is said to be 'typical among men in contemporary Mediterranean culture' (1991: 22). Women are closely linked with a man's material possessions and both can confer honour. According to the idealized notion, a good wife can bring cheer even amid poverty (26.4), but for the most part her goodness is inextricably linked with material benefit. Thus, the good wife

8. Ben Sira contains almost 19 per cent more shame vocabulary than the canonical works (Camp 1991: 5 n. 16).

brings fatness to her husband (a sign of prosperity) and she is likened to a good portion (that is, a valuable asset) (26.1-4). The bad wife, meanwhile, is depicted as one who exposes a man to the danger of losing control over his household as well as face in public. The connection between shame and failure to control one's women and money is particularly clear in 25.21-26, where a wife who controls the household finances (v. 22) and gives orders (v. 25) brings disgrace (v. 22) and ruin (v. 23).

Ben Sira's 'rather extreme commentary on controlling the sexuality of one's daughters' (1991: 34) has no biblical parallel but is, Camp claims, entirely compatible with the attitudes reflected in contemporary Mediterranean studies. So convinced is Camp that these findings are applicable to Ben Sira, that she rejects the traditional interpretation of 7.24. The expression 'do not let your face shine towards them', hence, does not allude to fathers indulging their daughters[9] because

> In typical Mediterranean family arrangements...there is 'unusual absention of Mediterranean males generally from domestic affairs' and 'a rigid spatial and behavioral segregation of the sexes.' Thus, there would have been little opportunity for such paternal indulgence... Since the actions of children, virtuous or otherwise, advert to their parents, we should probably read our present stich to mean something like 'do not count on your daughters' capacity to bring you honor' (1991: 34).

Camp also favours a more concise translation of the adjective 'sensible': when used of a daughter at 22.4 it has, she asserts, 'the perversely narrow sense of "faithful to her husband"' (1991: 34)[10]—which would again underpin the Mediterranean value system. Characteristic, too, could be Ben Sira's account of the anxiety that daughters incite in their fathers (e.g. 7.25 and 42.9-10). The intensity of paternal concern and the fact that women's sexuality in Ben Sira seems to epitomize all that is potentially out of control, is, according to Camp, best understood in the light of 'the enormous reality of shame in Mediterranean culture', which she calls 'a culturally defined prison' and 'stigma' (1991: 36). The fear of losing control and incurring shame, as reflected in both Ben Sira and contemporary Mediterranean culture, affects, according to Camp, all honour-investing arenas of a man's life: his wealth, public standing and family

9. Cf. the RSV 7.24: 'Do you have daughters? Be concerned for their chastity [Greek "body"], and do not show yourself too indulgent with them.'

10. The sensible and the shameful daughter are contrasted. RSV 22.4 has: 'A sensible daughter obtains her husband, but one who acts shamefully brings grief to her father.'

life. Daughters, she claims, are a particularly disturbing factor, or 'wild card', in this context:

> As his property, he is honor-bound to prevent encroachment on them; as women they share the 'woman's wickedness' of indiscriminate sexual inclination; unmarried, they have no stake in regulating their own honor; awakened to their own sexuality in marriage, they may have even less restraint (1991: 36-37).

Camp concludes that in the cultural context underlying Ben Sira's writing, as well as in the contemporary Mediterranean context, where 'more traditional values' continue to 'shine through the veneer of Catholic teaching' (1991: 37), women fulfil the role of their family's repository of honour. Honour and shame are the central values of the traditional cultural symbol system, which finds its clearest expression in links between sexual and economic issues in which both money and women operate as 'overdetermined symbols of male honor' (1991: 38). Daughters' capacity for conferring shame on their fathers, finally, is so potent because 'An adulterous wife can be divorced, but a sexually deviant daughter has no place to go but home. She is an everlasting blot on her father's name, which is all, in the sage's view, a man has to live for' (1991: 37).

Camp's enthusiastic reception of the Mediterranean anthropological social categories and her conviction that these enable insight into the cultural context of ancient texts, is reflected in many other honour and shame studies conducted in the 1990s.

J. Neyrey (1991: 25-65), for instance, in an exploration of the social world of Luke–Acts, makes strong claims for the distinctive and enduring centrality of the social values of honour and shame in the countries of the Mediterranean. He emphasizes the importance of group cohesion and external sanctions, which are said to stand in sharp contrast with 'Western' communal organization. In such statements as the following, Herzfeld's call for closer attention to cultural particularization is disregarded completely: 'Unlike Western culture, cultures in which honor is a dominant value depend totally for their sense of worth upon this acknowledgement by others as "honorable"' (Neyrey 1991: 25). Similarly, in a later publication, B. Malina states that first-century societies 'did not consider individualism a pivotal value as we do' (1993: 45). While this may be reflected in some binary sociological typologies (see my Introduction, p. 3 n. 4), I find such a claim (especially as its sole basis is textual) too strong. Not only do such statements indicate a leap from 'social reality past' to 'social reality present', they also contain the assumption that texts do

indeed reflect social reality. Such unqualified assumptions transpire in such confident statements as, 'It is truly an understatement to say that the whole of Luke's Gospel, almost every piece of social interaction, should be viewed through the lens of honor and shame' (Neyrey 1991: 64) and 'seeing [Jesus's] life through the lens of honor and shame, we begin to view it from the native's perspective and to appreciate the social dynamic as natives see it' (1991: 64). Surely, if reader-response criticism has taught us anything, it is that modern readers of texts such as comprise the New Testament will impose on them diverse kinds of expectations, and that the idea of retrieving a determinate or correct 'native' meaning is unrealistic (e.g. Bal 1989: 11-15).

Neyrey and Malina claim not only that honour and shame are essential components of the first-century personality (1991: 65; 1993: 45), but they also imply that this personality has remained largely unchanged to this day (1991: 25) and that it goes far back in time and can be discerned in the Hebrew Bible (from which they cite to support their arguments, e.g. 1991: 31). Some of their huge generalizations, however, do not stand up well to the evidence in hand. They argue, for instance, that

> Honor is always presumed to exist within one's own family of blood, i.e., among all of one's blood relatives. A person can always trust blood relatives. Outside that circle, all people are presumed dishonorable, guilty unless proved otherwise, a presumption based on the agonistic quality of competition for the scarce commodity, honor... Blood replicates honor; with blood relatives there is no honor contest (1991: 32; cf. Malina 1993: 38).

We have seen that Pitt-Rivers stresses the centrality of endogamy in Hebrew culture through the ages, which might be said to substantiate Neyrey and Malina's argument. Further, the anthropological studies also provide some evidence for a pronounced sense of family loyalty. Campbell, for instance, describes the prevalent idea of 'one blood', the impressive solidarity and almost complete identification of interests among Sarakatsani siblings:

> In the eyes of outsiders siblings are morally identified. Whatever, for good or ill, is suffered by one sibling is held to affect the other siblings to an almost equivalent degree. An insult to any member of the group is felt with the same resentment by all the brothers and sisters (1964: 172).

Campbell adds, however, that this solidarity tends to come into force in the face of challenges from outside of the close family group and stresses that the blood bond does not eliminate honour contests between brothers.

Neyrey and Malina's claim defies both the observations of Campbell concerning sibling rivalry and the evidence of the Hebrew Bible. As Carroll has pointed out, the Hebrew Bible in fact frequently depicts interactions among blood relations as neither amicable, nor marked by loyalty. The contest for precedence between brothers instead appears to be something of a topos:

> the dominant pattern of conflict in the Old Testament is that between brothers. Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and Aaron, Absalom and Amnon, Solomon and Adonijah to name but the more obvious examples. As the Old Testament presents the history of the kingdoms it was a conflict between nations produced by brothers, Judah and Ephraim. It is unlikely that the sage had any ironic intentions when he wrote 'a brother is born for adversity' (Prov 17.17)... (Carroll 1977: 201).

The honour and blood relationship, therefore, is not as straightforward as Neyrey and Malina indicate and their approach in general shows a tendency to sweeping claims.

A lack of qualification and specification is evident in many of the biblical honour/shame studies. Plevnik (1993), for instance, does not heed Herzfeld's call and rides roughshod over any pretensions to particularization. He draws support for his assertion that honour and shame are the core social values in the present-day Mediterranean world and 'in the Bible as well' (1993: 95) from a range of Psalms, some prophetic literature and the New Testament (1993: 97-98). The fact that this 'evidence' very probably stems from several eras and provenances is given no mention or consideration.

Further, the occurrence of honour/shame language, which has often been cited to legitimize critical analyses, appears to hold little interest for Plevnik. Peristiany comments that Mediterranean peoples constantly speak of honour and shame in assessing their own conduct and that of their fellows (1965b: 10). Wikan mentions that

> Mediterranean peoples do not, in their daily lives, speak of their own and each other's honour. But they do speak of shame... 'Shame' accompanies negative sanctions as an exclamation and explicative, it constantly enters both into commentary and transactions. 'Honour' figures mainly in 'theory' discourse—it is not itself part of the give and take of interaction (1984: 638).

Camp, too, as we have seen, justifies her analysis of shame in Ben Sira by pointing out that 'Ben Sira's concern for shame is evident both in the number and frequency of words within this semantic field' (1991: 41).

Plevnik, however, is undeterred by, for instance, the paucity of honour or shame references in the words of Jesus:

> While the Gospel tradition reports Jesus speaking only rarely about honor and shame, the narrative is replete with honor concerns. This feature is clearly underscored in the many scenarios in which Jesus demonstrates considerable skill at challenge and riposte and thereby reveals himself to be an honorable man, capable of defending God's honor, his group's honor, and his own honor (1993: 100).

He argues that the core social values of honour and shame are elucidated by a set of related means values, one of them being purity. Hence, a person who knows how to be pure rather than polluted knows 'how to maintain honor and avoid shame'; purity thereby functions as a means value, 'because it facilitates the realization of the core values of honor and shame' (1993: 101).

The question remains, however, whether Jesus' words or the actions of those maintaining purity result from the values of honour and shame which they themselves hold, or whether the authors of the handbook are projecting their model on to the data. (I suspect the latter.) In any case, if honour and shame indeed are core values for the Bible as a whole, then their meanings, when all the means values are taken into account, are rendered little more than that honour is everything approved of and shame everything disapproved of in the context of 'the Bible'—which, of course, is far less homogeneous than the handbook implies. Plevnik's uncritical discussion strikes me as a case in point where Herzfeld's warning that the labels 'honour' and 'shame' have become little more than 'inefficient glosses' is concerned (1980: 339).

But, nevertheless, honour and shame have maintained a firm position in New Testament studies. In 1995 McVann was able to claim that 'Honor and shame as axial cultural values in the ancient Circum-Mediterranean are by now well enough...accepted categories in biblical interpretation that they need no lengthy...defence as legitimate perspectives brought to bear on the interpretation of biblical texts' (179).[11]

11. McVann does, however, follow Herzfeld's recommendation to particularize, and closely analyses a few demarcated ritual texts. The same can be said of deSilva, who is careful to examine the terminology and socio-historical contexts of the texts under investigation: 'honor itself is vacuous apart from culture-specific content' (1996: 435).

In the following year an issue of *Semeia*, subtitled 'Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible', put forward the premise that the honour/shame value system 'is a fundamental characteristic of all Mediterranean cultures, including those where ancient Israel and early Christianity took root' (Matthews and Benjamin 1996: 7). Another assertion is that, 'The world of the Bible was eastern, virtually changeless, and agricultural' in sharp contrast to 'The modern western world [which] is changing and industrial' (Matthews and Benjamin 1996: 10). This, in turn, leaves the door wide open for assumptions regarding cultural continuity and the enduring relevance of honour and shame, thereby legitimizing attempts to project modern anthropological findings on to ancient texts. This is evident in the two New Testament contributions by Hanson and Neyrey.

Hanson's article on Matthew's makarisms and reproaches claims that support underpinning the centrality of the social values of honour and shame can be found among Semitists, classicists, Old Testament[12] and New Testament scholars, as well as Mediterraneanists. He distinguishes makarisms from blessings because they are not words of power pronounced by either God or cultic mediators, but pertain rather to humans only, never to God, and exist independently of ritual contexts (1996: 89). Hebrew אשרי and Greek μακαριος refer, he continues, not to ritual blessing or expressions of happiness but are 'understandable only in terms of the Mediterranean competition for honor' (1996: 90). Virtually every formulaic instance of אשרי and μακαριος is, according to Hanson, best translated 'how honoured' or 'O how honourable'. They are, he claims, expressions that are understood as pronounced by 'one's community of orientation', which validate personal claims to honour. The binary opposite of אשרי is the expression הוי, which Hanson consequently translates not 'woe!' but 'shame!'. In Mediterranean societies, he elaborates, 'this is understood as a serious challenge to the honor of those addressed. To be shamed means the loss of status, respect, and worth in the community' (1996: 94). Having decided upon the meanings of אשרי and הוי (as well as their Greek equivalents) Hanson imposes the modern understanding of

12. Hanson cites Klopfenstein among the Old Testament scholars. Klopfenstein's monograph (1972) focuses on shame and dishonour and is primarily philological in its approach. While he points out that shame-terminology is sometimes paired with antonyms, among them כבוד (often translated 'honour'), he does not make any pronouncements concerning the centrality of a pivotal honour/shame value-complex. In fact, he explicitly criticises Pedersen's attempt to pair a multifarious phenomenon like shame with honour (1972: 208).

honour and shame from anthropological studies on to the biblical text. This, in turn, transpires in such strong conclusions as: 'Makarisms and reproaches are comprehensible only in terms of Mediterranean honor/shame values and the challenge–riposte transactions' (1996: 104).

Neyrey's analysis of the Johannine Passion Narratives, meanwhile, begins with a statement describing the profoundly shaming purpose of crucifixion, before elaborating that despite the shameful treatment of Jesus, he is portrayed as maintaining his honour and even gaining glory and prestige: 'Far from being a status degrading ritual, his passion is seen as a status elevation ritual. This hypothesis entails a larger consideration, namely, the importance of honor and shame as pivotal values of the Mediterranean world' (1996: 114).

The Cross, although explicitly called 'shame' (αισχυνης, Heb. 12.2) none the less transpires in honour[13] and the pivotal social values become part of a larger pattern of inversion: 'ironic perspective is part and parcel of the principle that Jesus constantly narrates: that last is first, least is greatest, dead is live, shame is honor' (1996: 115). Neyrey defends his perspective—'we must attempt to see things through the lenses of ancient Mediterranean culture, which were those of honor and shame' (1996: 115)[14]—by stressing the importance and peculiarly Mediterranean status of honour and shame:

> It is always tempting for modern readers to psychologize biblical characters, often imposing on them modern notions of the self or motivations and strategies typical of the modern world. Appreciation of the ancient psychology of honor and shame offers a more authentic cultural and historical reading of those social dynamics... Thus no study of conflict in the biblical texts would be complete without its assessment in terms of the cultural dynamics of honor and shame (1996: 133).

13. McVann (1995) makes this point too. See also deSilva on Heb. 12.2, who argues that Jesus, depicted here as despising the shame of the cross, 'is linked with the exemplars of faith in chapter 11, who in large measure are held together by a shared disregard for certain cultural norms of the honorable and shameful' (1995a: 2); and Martin, arguing for Paul's inversion of what constitutes shame and honour (1995: 59-61, 65).

14. Although our environment and social values will affect our perception of the world around us, it is unlikely that there was ever '*a* Mediterranean way' of looking at the world that filtered everything through the lenses of honour and shame. Pilch and Malina have argued that the core-value in the contemporary US is 'efficiency' (1993: xvii). Surely, this cannot mean that all inhabitants of the US construct the world around them on the basis of this one notion. The approach is simplistic.

The sweeping claims of the writers in *Semeia* 68 are addressed in a response by Chance. He writes in no uncertain terms that

> The authors...have employed a common model and applied it to peoples diverse in time and space. Yet they can hardly be blamed for doing so, since the historical—not to mention the biblical—literature lags far behind the ethnographic where Mediterranean values are concerned, and has not yet reached the required critical mass that would enable a more comparative style of analysis (1996: 148).[15]

He points out, further, that 'there is more to Mediterranean culture than honor and shame'; which, although it may appear obvious, is, in the light of the forceful claims of much of the writing on honour and shame in biblical literature, worth emphasizing. I do not consider the findings of Mediterranean anthropological studies valueless.[16] I agree with the comments of several anthropologists, however, that there is a strong need for specification, as well as for acknowledging the complexities of transferring values observed in living communities on to ancient texts. The enthusiastic absorption of the honour/shame model into the study of the New Testament[17] and apocryphal texts has, as Chance, for example, recognizes, often led to misleading simplifications. Where discussions of shame in the Hebrew Bible are concerned, however, the reception of the model has been moderately less ebullient.

Honour and Shame in the Hebrew Bible: A Summary and General Comments

Early 'Cultural' Studies: Pedersen and Daube

The 'shame culture/guilt culture' distinction is in the context of Hebrew Bible studies expounded most fully in Daube's exposition of Deuteronomy (1969). The factors complicating the distinction once again emerge clearly

15. McVann's article is criticized in a similar vein by LaHurd, who warns that the 'tentative and abstract' nature of the classifications 'honour' and 'shame' must not be lost sight of and further, that 'generalizing across geographic boundaries and certainly across temporal divides' must be avoided (1995: 199).

16. I have found the honour/shame model a useful starting point for an examination of the narratives in Gen. 19 and Judg. 19 (Stiebert and Walsh 2001).

17. There are numerous other studies on honour and shame in the New Testament (see deSilva 1995a: 15 n. 48). Torjesen also claims that the Mediterranean gender system has left discernible traces throughout the literary sources of the early Christian period, too (1993: 292-95). I have tried to provide a representative sample.

in his discussion. Daube's argument for 'a strong shame-cultural element' in Deuteronomy (1969: 27) has affinities with Mead's definitions. While Daube does not exclude the presence of guilt feelings generated by 'the inner voice of authority' per se, he none the less emphasizes that the laws of Deuteronomy appeal primarily to people's 'consideration for appearances' (1969: 28) and an acute need to avoid anything that may jeopardize social acceptance and honour, which are 'the great rewards in a shame culture' (1969: 29).

Daube attributes this perceived tendency to Deuteronomy's link with Wisdom because, 'Wisdom, emanating as it does from a circle of counsellors rather than the one commanding figure of the father, and teaching us how to make it in the world, how to find favour and evade disgrace, has a natural penchant towards the shame mechanism' (1969: 28). He foregrounds the centrality of public, visually effective shaming in Deuteronomy, claiming that it contains 'the only instance of a Biblical law with a punishment consisting exclusively in public degradation, [Deut. 25.5-10]' (1969: 35).[18]

Other laws, too, he adds, develop the importance of what people think of you and your name: he cites Deut. 22.13-21 (recounting the making or breaking of reputation, which occurs in public, before the elders of the gate) and Deut. 24.10-11 (where a person who gives a loan is prevented from entering the house of the one giving a pledge). Daube writes regarding the latter:

> To have the creditor inside the home, for the purpose of collecting his security, would be the most down-putting, dishonouring experience for the debtor and his family. The handing over outside preserves appearances, the worst of the visible, formal disgrace is avoided (1969: 34).

If taking a loan is indeed considered dishonouring, it seems to me that a transaction outside on the street is far more visible and presumably, therefore, more shaming than one conducted in the comparative privacy of a house. Possibly, the public nature of the transaction is instead aimed at protecting the pledge-giver, because others witness what is being given,

18. Carmichael, writing of Deut. 25.5-10, also maintains that 'it is the only law in the Pentateuch in which public disgrace is enjoined as a penalty' (1977: 321), explaining that 'It is the woman who, having suffered the loss of protection and honor that is associated with her dead husband's name, suffers the further indignity of being denied the means of remedy because of her brother-in-law's non-action. It therefore makes sense that she should strike out, symbolically, at him in order to disgrace him' (1977: 331).

thereby deterring the loan-giver (by playing on *his* sensitivity to public shaming!) from exploiting his position of relative power and exacting more than might be proper.

Daube returns to the visual facet of shame with reference to Deut. 18.10 and 24.1. He comments regarding 18.10: '...that a commandment, instead of forbidding the act, should forbid the impression, "There shall not be found among you", is a phenomenon not evidenced prior to Deuteronomy' and concludes that it stems from 'the shame-cultural trend of this work' (1969: 46). (Unhelpfully, Daube does not elucidate what phenomena *were* evidenced prior to Deuteronomy: an absence of shame? an emphasis on guilt...?) Regarding 24.1 Daube comments that the man who 'finds in his eyes' something indecent about his wife, considers not the shortcoming itself but its display offensive (1969: 49). Daube makes much of a perceived interchangeability of 'to find' and 'to see' (1969: 49 n. 3), equating both with exposure to view. I find this quite unnecessary and suspect that Daube finds (or sees!) visual features throughout the text, because he has determined that they are integral to a shame-culture. The idiom 'in [someone's] eyes' by no means always pertains to literal perception[19] and the indecent feature of 24.1 could conceivably not be visual at all. Surely, the impression or display of the act of 18.10 and the offensiveness (literally 'naked matter') of 24.1 are difficult to separate from the events or things that generate them. Daube's point, therefore, is difficult to sustain.

The injunction 'there shall not be seen with thee leaven in all thy quarters seven days', he persists, yet again stresses a visual 'keeping up appearances' emphasis. It is, he comments, 'interesting' that it occurs once in Deuteronomy (16.4) and once in Exodus (13.7), in a passage 'universally attributed to a Deuteronomic editor' (1969: 49). Also, when guilt-features slide into his picture of a shame culture, Daube remains undeterred:

> A law like that demanding purity in the camp indeed also refers to shame towards God. Now evidently, where it is God himself before whom you wish to preserve appearances, we are approaching the realm of guilt. Perhaps one way of putting the matter is to say that what substantially pertains to guilt is represented here in terms borrowed from shame. Which testifies all the more powerfully to Deuteronomy's shame-cultural leaning (1969: 50).

19. Cf. BDB, 744b, which renders this extremely common phrase, 'in the view, opinion, of'. There are examples of this usage in Deut. 12.8, 25, 28.

My impression is that Daube, in insisting on a shame-culture setting for Deuteronomy, both ignores the book's actual dearth of shame words and overinvests such idioms as 'to find in one's eyes' with meanings such as might allude to the visual recognition of things shameful. In the course of his argument he is also prepared to regard features illustrative of guilt rather than shame as somehow *accentuating* shame sensitivity. It is more straightforward, I would argue, to acknowledge, instead, the affinities between the two related emotions of shame and guilt. Daube's article, I believe, illustrates some of the difficulties of imposing an anthropological model on to an ancient text and of attempting to reconstruct a coherent cultural background on the basis of the collection of stories and regulations that is Deuteronomy.

More significant than the shame culture/guilt culture distinction is once again, in Hebrew Bible studies also, the honour/shame opposition. Pedersen's *Israel: Its Life and Culture* contains a chapter entitled 'Honour and Shame' (1926: 213-44). Predating the flourish of Mediterranean field studies, Pedersen's definitions of the two social values are different from the anthropological ones. Honour, Pedersen describes, is a consequence of blessing, which affects the 'substance of the soul', filling it and keeping it upright (1926: 213). He illustrates honour with recourse to Job, because this book, he claims, reveals most of the Israelitic conception of life-values (1926: 213).

Job, Pedersen describes, is an honourable man because he is richly blessed. His blessing, moreover, is 'typically Israelitic': he has many sons, herds and other possessions; he is highly regarded in his community and able to sustain his brethren by giving gifts, which is perceived as a privilege rather than a duty (1926: 214-15). Job's personal honour is manifested by harmony in the community:

> The community forms a closely connected circle, a society of friends where all belong. Each communicates to the other of the blessing he possesses, but he who communicates most has the authority and honour, because he upholds them all. This honour maintains harmony in the community, because it is determined by the relation between giving and taking. Honour is not a mechanically established factor which the man possesses, howsoever he may be; on the contrary, it is identical with the very being of the man. At the moment when the blessing departs from him, so that he can no longer give, he has also lost his honour (1926: 215).

Pedersen is in agreement with the later anthropological literature in that he regards honour as a social value that is acknowledged interactively.

Whereas he claims, however, that honour is God-given in the form of blessing, the anthropological literature describes honour as ascribed (usually through lineage) or as acquired in challenge–ripostes by depriving an equal of his share of honour. The agonistic element is mentioned by Pedersen but played down. He refers to Saul at 1 Sam. 18, who, on hearing the women sing of David's superior military conquests, has to decide between succumbing to or defeating David in order to defend his pre-eminent status (1926: 217); as well as to 2 Sam. 2, where Abner must slay Asahel in order to prevent the shame that would ensue a successful challenge from an inferior (1926: 219). Pedersen does not, however, regard such warrior heroes as 'Mediterranean types' but as anachronisms: 'Jephthah, Samson and Saul stand forth in the Israelitic literature as solitary relics of the past' (1926: 224). This 'relic type' has, Pedersen continues, more in common with the Arabian ideal of a chief, for whom there exists nothing higher than to fight and gain honour as the first among one's fellows (1926: 222), than the 'typically Israelitic' Job-type, whose aim is harmony (1926: 224).[20] Whereas the former is distinguished by the desire to gain and defend honour at any cost by means of valiant deeds, the latter seeks honour through the gaining and distribution of counsel and wealth: 'The life of the fighting and plundering nomads is to him a strange world' (1926: 224). Thus, whereas Samson strives for glory to the point of death, Job, on losing his property, ceases in his striving: 'His honour is taken away, and so all is over' (1926: 224).

Women's honour, according to Pedersen, also reflects these two different types. Abigail and Tamar represent the allegedly earlier, agonistic type: the former cleverly defends her impetuous husband; the latter's daring and initiative enables her to ensure her deceased husband's lineage. The later type, meanwhile, is reduced to little more than an extension of her husband's property. Abram's 'lack of chivalry' in calmly giving up his wife and her honour in order to save his own life, Pedersen argues, 'entirely agrees with the conception of honour and the relation of the stronger towards the weaker which gradually came to prevail' (1926: 232).[21] Pedersen describes the Israelite woman as sharing in and adding to

20. DeSilva also argues for the need in the context of biblical studies to counterbalance the agonistic honour-model with the idea that the acknowledgment of honour can serve as much to bond as to divide (1995a).

21. Pedersen consigns Abram to a later type. Pitt-Rivers, on the other hand, argues that Abram's extension of sexual hospitality reflects ancient customs that came to be phased out as the Israelites became sedentary (1977, see above, pp. 26-27).

her husband's honour by being a 'good wife' and giving him children to perpetuate his line (1926: 231). Adultery and extra-marital loss of maidenhead do, he concedes, confer dishonour upon the Israelite woman, but Pedersen does not mention women's contaminating effect on male kin. He draws attention, instead, to the 'fair amount of freedom' the Israelite woman seemed to enjoy—'She goes about tending her sheep, and in the evenings she meets the shepherds at the well' (1926: 232)—which is very different to the restrictive lifestyle depicted in the writings of Campbell or Peristiany.

Pedersen writes that honour is identical with the substance and weight of the soul and therefore individual in its kind: 'The chief has his honour, the lesser man his. The older man has more honour than the younger; one must be *zakan*, a full-grown man, in order to possess full honour' (1926: 230).[22] Further, honour is manifested in the body and associated especially with the head (1926: 227)[23] and may be made visible through the garments worn,[24] 'because the soul of the man penetrates everything that belongs to his entirety' (1926: 227). Likewise, property expresses honour, due to 'a particularly intimate association between the man and his property' (1926: 228), and makes the soul 'heavy' (Gen. 13.2).

Shame is defined as the opposite of honour and, therefore, characterized by an emptying out of the soul and an absence of blessing. The soul is empty where there is, for instance, a lack of valour (hence, the warriors stealing into the town after fleeing from battle are designated shameful in 2 Sam. 19.4) (1926: 239). Lack of blessing, meanwhile, is indicated by, for instance, a lack of rain (Jer. 14.3-4) or by poverty (1 Sam. 18.23). Like honour, shame subsumes the whole person: hence, one can be clothed in shame (Ps. 35.26) and express shame in one's face (2 Sam. 19.6), or through one's actions (2 Sam. 13.19). Just as *giving* property or respect confers honour, *taking*—through mutilation (Judg. 1.6), shaving (Jer. 7.29), or stripping (Ezek. 16.37), or through not granting gratitude or acknowledgment (2 Sam. 19.6)—brings about shame (1926: 241-42). The conception of shame, according to Pedersen, changed substantially over time. Like honour, shame became more and more transferred to the result:

> When honour consists in thriving, then defeat, the failure to carry out one's undertaking, becomes a shame. Samson may fall with honour, because he

22. Cf. Pitt-Rivers's depiction of honour having gradations (1977: 3).

23. This idea is frequently alluded to in anthropological writing (e.g. Pitt-Rivers 1977: 5) and appears elsewhere in biblical criticism (e.g. Neyrey 1991: 34-35).

24. Cf. Pilch and Malina's handbook (1993: 20-25, 'Clothing').

> has preserved his inner greatness, the indomitability of his soul; but in the eyes of later Israel the fall is identical with shame, just as wealth and prosperity are identical with honour. 'Israel shall be shamed from its counsel' (Hos. 10,6), when it cannot be carried through, and the prophets are shamed when they cannot see visions (Mic. 3,7), or when they see false visions (Zech. 13,4) (1926: 242).

According to Pedersen, then, honour derives from blessing, is manifested in an individual's soul and determined by the values of the society in which that individual lives. Shame, meanwhile, signifies an absence of blessing, empty soul and diminished social status. As we have seen, some New Testament commentators have justified the relevance of modern anthropological findings for social interactions reflected in ancient texts (in particular agonistic interactions), by pointing to cultural continuity reaching far back in time. Pedersen, in contrast, argues for evidence of a development from an older agonistic type to a later harmony-and-property-orientated type. As is the case in the anthropological literature, Pedersen discusses shame in terms of its relationship to honour—but he does not accentuate the gender-focus. Pedersen's chapter is admirable in its attempt to pool the wide-ranging evidence of the Hebrew Bible with a view to attaining a relatively unified idea of the concepts of honour and shame.

The Major Hebrew Bible Shame Studies: Klopfenstein and Huber/Bechtel

The most thorough investigation of shame in the Hebrew Bible remains Klopfenstein's monograph *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament* ('Shame and Disgrace in the Old Testament'), which pays tribute to Pedersen's chapter (1972: 14) and comments on the general scarcity of material on this subject (1972: 199). Writing at a time when 'honour and shame' was already a binary pair widely written about in the context of Mediterranean social anthropology but before their more generalized absorption into biblical studies, Klopfenstein is considerably more reserved regarding the pairing of shame with honour than the commentators on the New Testament and Apocrypha discussed above.

Klopfenstein examines the Hebrew roots בוש, כלם and שחפר (all of which refer to feeling shame and/or disgrace) in detail, taking into consideration the translation of these terms in the Septuagint, as well as Ugaritic and Akkadian cognates. He applies form-critical methods and then categorizes individual words from each of these groups according to

their meanings and functions within profane as well as indirectly or directly theological contexts. He concludes that Hebrew shame words cover a huge variety of associations:

> The conceptual unit 'shame/disgrace' spans the entire spectrum of psychological, social, politico-militaristic, forensic, cultic, religious (and, peripherally, even cosmic) diminution (even to the point of complete cancellation) of all that makes life qualitative (1972: 208).[25]

Only the קלה word-group, he maintains, has an adequate antonym—namely כבד:

> All other roots have no pronounced, clearly definable opposite. Consequently, one should not pair the entire conceptual unit 'shame/disgrace' with a single antithesis such as 'honour', as Pedersen and others have done. Certainly, this is *one* important semantic dimension. Beyond this, however, there is the spiritual, social, politico-militaristic, forensic, cultic and religious life in its totality, which is damaged by 'shame' and 'disgrace'. Of this totality of life, as it is depicted in the Old Testament, 'honour' is only a part—albeit a significant part. In extreme cases, however, 'shame' and 'disgrace' threaten one's very existence. This is strikingly evident wherever God's justice is executed to address the state of being in disgrace (1972: 208).[26]

Klopfenstein is to be particularly commended, I think, for his clear position on the close connection between shame and guilt in the Hebrew

25. 'Der Begriffskomplex "Scham/Schande" umspannt somit das ganze Spektrum psychischer, sozialer, politisch-militärischer, rechtlicher, kultischer, religiöser (und als Randerscheinung sogar kosmischer) Lebensminderung, ja Lebensohnmacht.' All translations from the German are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

26. 'Alle anderen Wurzeln stehen in keinem ausgesprochenen, klar definierten Gegensatz. Man darf daher den ganzen Begriffskomplex "Scham/Schande" nicht einseitig auf die Antithese "Ehre" beziehen, wie Pedersen u.a. es tun. Gewiß ist das eine wichtige Bedeutungsgrenze. Darüber hinaus aber ist es das seelische, gesellschaftliche, politisch-militärische, rechtliche, kultische, religiöse Leben im Vollsinn, das in "Scham" und "Schande" seine Gebrochenheit anzeigt. Von diesem vollen Leben, wie das AT es sieht, ist die "Ehre" nur ein Teil, wenn auch freilich ein gewichtiger. In "Scham" und "Schande" ist aber im Extremfall die Existenz als solche bedroht. Dies ist radikal dort der Fall, wo im "Zuschandenwerden" sich Gottes Gericht vollzieht.'

The honour/shame model, as developed in the anthropological literature and appropriated by many biblical interpreters, depicts honour and shame as comprehensive. There are some divergences: Hanson, for instance, plays down the psychological dimension (1996); McVann accentuates the ritual (1995) and deSilva the Torah, or quasi-legal, dimension.

Bible. As discussed above (Introduction, pp. 6-9), while shame and guilt may differ with regard to their pertaining to either wrongful actions (guilt), or states of being (shame); or to an emphasis on either sensitivity to disapproval of others (shame), or inner conviction of one's wrongfulness (guilt), in practice they are difficult to differentiate—hence, the weakness of Daube's argument. Klopfenstein's conclusion that the shame/guilt connection is a logical consequence of the forensic context of the majority of biblical shame-words, however, is more disputable:

> The question whether the Old Testament associates shame with guilt should definitely be answered in the affirmative. This is already clearly indicated by the roots בוש and especially כלם. All the terms investigated are characteristic of legal language and have become typical of prophetic court language, too. This, in turn, proves their affinity with the concept of guilt (1972: 208).[27]

Klopfenstein continues that it is unhelpful to link remorse (*Reue*) with guilt instead of shame (as Bonhoeffer did)[28] because the Hebrew Bible knows no such distinction:

> Subjective shame includes subjective remorse. Hebrew knows no distinct verb for 'to feel remorse'; נחם only occasionally conveys the sense of a subjective feeling of remorse in response to a wrongful deed done. It remains the case that 'shame' and 'disgrace' indicate guilt and that subjective shame and guilt feelings thereby imply remorse (1972: 209).[29]

Shame, he expands, does not necessarily denote transgression: hence, widowhood or childlessness are repeatedly linked with shame, without the

27. 'Die Streitfrage ob im AT Scham mit Schuld gekoppelt sei oder nicht, ist eindeutig positiv zu beantworten. בוש und insbesondere כלם zeigen dies schon von der Wurzel her. Alle analysierten Begriffe aber sind ja... Topoi der Rechtssprache und namentlich der prophetischen Gerichtsrede geworden. Das beweist ihre Affinität zum Begriffskomplex der Schuld.'

28. Klopfenstein cites Bonhoeffer's pronouncement, 'Scham und Reue sind meist verwechselt. Reue empfindet der Mensch, wo er sich verfehlt hat, Scham, weil ihm etwas fehlt' ('Shame and remorse are usually confused. People feel remorse when they have fallen short, shame because they lack something') (1972: 208). This is the 'doing versus being' distinction. On remorse and its relationship with shame and guilt see Cairns 1999.

29. 'subjektive Scham schließt subjektive Reue...ein. Das Hebräische kennt ja für Reue...kein eigenes, besonderes Verbum; נחם hat nur ganz vereinzelt den Sinn subjektiver Reue über begangene Schuld. Es bleibt dabei, daß "Scham" und "Schande" Schuld anzeigen und daß insbesondere subjektives Sichschämen Schuldbewußtsein und damit Reue impliziert.'

implication that the widow or infertile woman 'deserves' her state due to any specific transgressive act. Klopfenstein adds, however, that shame connotes transgression: 'This is because such an unfortunate event is regarded as a symptom of transgression—as can be seen with the example of Job' (1972: 209).[30] Klopfenstein concludes that both shame (subjective) and disgrace (objective) constitute symptoms of guilt. This can be seen with the enemies of the Ebed-Yhwh in Isa. 50.6-7: '[The enemies] intend to disgrace [the Ebed-Yhwh] by making him appear guilty. But here this consequential sequence is upturned dramatically: disgrace is no longer indicative of the guilt of the one being humiliated but of his righteousness—and the guilt of his tormentors!' (1972: 209).[31]

Klopfenstein's approach throughout is thorough and methodical. He examines each word-group in the light of its cognates, supplies statistics as to the various grammatical forms and tables indicating the distribution of occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. He also arranges these occurrences according to their usage (i.e. profane, directly or indirectly theological) and their form-critical categories and attempts to illustrate changing nuances of meaning. With regard to the בוש word-group, Klopfenstein argues that Gen. 2.25 constitutes the oldest occurrence. He explains that this singular occurrence in the hithpolel is not reflexive (the qal can mean 'to be ashamed') but reciprocal: 'to be ashamed before one another' (1972: 32). Shame is here the accompaniment of nakedness (this is confirmed with reference to Gen. 3.7, 10). From this, Klopfenstein concludes that בוש is here intimately connected with the sexual realm. Subjectively speaking, it is an expression of guilt and objectively-speaking an expression of disclosed guilt. In this way the ambivalence of the Hebrew word, which, according to Klopfenstein, encompasses the meanings of both 'shame' and 'disgrace', is captured. The word is, furthermore, indicative here of a fractured relationship with fellow humans (Gen. 2.25) and God (Gen. 3.7) (1972: 33). Klopfenstein continues that other ancient references (1 Sam. 20.30 and Deut. 25.11) prove that בוש was originally rooted in the sphere of sexual semantics (1972: 48). This sense is then envisaged as widening over time to pertain to anything that is considered unseemly (*unschicklich*)

30. 'Das hängt aber damit zusammen, daß solches Mißgeschick just als Symptom begangener Schuld gewertet wurde, wie am Beispiel Hiobs abzulesen ist'.

31. 'indem sie ihn schänden, wollen sie ihn also schuldig hinstellen. Doch nun schlägt der Zusammenhang in dramatischer Weise um: Schande zeigt diesmal nicht mehr die Schuld des Geschändeten, sondern seine Gerechtigkeit an—und die Schuld seiner Schänder!'

(e.g. Judg. 3.25; 2 Kgs 2.17; 8.11) and, even later, to that which is considered inappropriate (*unangemessen*) (e.g. Job 19.3; Ezra 8.22).

Klopfenstein argues that the association of shame with a ruptured relationship once founded on trust and loyalty, which is already evident in Genesis, persists and acquires in the Prophets, where the word-group is most widely represented,[32] a forensic nuance.[33] The relationship of loyalty, furthermore, is here often politicized and Yhwh, in his role as judge or arbiter, is the frequent executer of attendant acts of shaming. In Jer. 2.36, 30.5 and Isa. 20.5 בוש is the consequence of investing trust in the nations (a false form of loyalty) instead of in Yhwh. Such a usage of בוש in a concrete political context, so Klopfenstein, leads on naturally to this word becoming a part of the jargon of prophetic-poetic depictions of war. As a result בוש is then often closely associated with other terminology characteristic of war accounts, such as חתת 'to become broken (through fright)' (Isa. 37.27 = 2 Kgs 19.26; Jer. 48.1, 20; 50.2; cf. Isa. 20.5); as well as שדד (Jer. 48.1, 20; Isa. 23.1, 4), 'to be despoiled' (Jer. 9.18), or 'to be conquered' (Jer. 48.1; 50.2).

Klopfenstein argues that Prophetic literature evidences a shift in the meaning of shame/shaming from being a *symptom* of the experience of guilt to becoming Yhwh's *instrument* for revealing or punishing guilt.[34]

32. This is strikingly laid out in tables (Klopfenstein 1972: 29, 118). These show that of the 167 total occurrences of words of the root בוש, 99 occur in the Prophets and 42 in the Psalter. The distribution is: Jeremiah 42; Isaiah 27; Ezekiel 5; remaining Prophets 25; Psalms 42; remainder of the Hebrew Bible 26. For the כלם word-group (69 occurrences in total) the distribution is similar: Deutero-Isaiah 7; Jeremiah 10, Ezekiel 19; other Prophets 3 (39 altogether); Psalms 13; remainder of the Hebrew Bible 17.

33. Jemielty is another author who locates the shame threatened by the prophets in a legal context. He attributes this to his belief that prophetic literature emerged in a shame culture where public ridicule signified the most poignant form of punishment. The suffering endured by those who are shamed, he continues, is effected by divine judicial authority and an exemplary punishment for wrongdoing (1992: 38).

34. This represents a secondary shift towards the objective pole, 'to become ashamed, disgraced', which Klopfenstein considers as in keeping with the new forensic context (the original context being the sexual sphere). The כלם-word-group is considered to be of forensic origin: 'Tatsache ist, daß von den ältesten Belegen an die profan gebrauchte Wurzel כלם im AT stets eine Aktion zum Nachweis rechts- oder normwidrigen Verhaltens bedeutet, also stets irgendwie die Vorstellung des "Anklägerischen" ausdrückt. Mit anderen Worten: Die Wortgruppe כלם bedeutet nie "Bloßstellung" an sich, sonder *"Bloßstellung" auf Grund und zur Anprangerung wirklicher oder angeblicher Norm—oder Rechtsverletzung*' ('The fact is, that from the

This is especially clear, he claims, in Isa. 37.27 (= 2 Kgs 19.26), where Sennacherib, having brought about a humiliating military defeat, acts as Yhwh's arbiter (*Gerichtsinstrument Jahwehs*) (1972: 57); or Jer. 48.1, 13, 20, 39 and 50.2, where humiliation on a political level is understood as punishment for worshipping foreign gods. This shift, so Klopfenstein, is in accordance with the form and tradition critical observation that all the prophetic בוש-references belong to prophetic court speeches (*prophetische Gerichtsreden*); in particular, words of reproof, threat (*Schelt- und Drohworte*) and promise (*Verheissungsworte*) (1972: 85). This leads him to conclude: 'This proves that the theological nuance of the wordgroup בוש came to be acquired in the context of prophetic court speeches' (1972: 57).[35]

Klopfenstein claims that concrete *Sitze im Leben* can be distinguished and that in the prophetic literature, too, the oldest בוש-reference (Hos. 2.7) betrays its origins in the sexual realm (1972: 87). In Hos. 2.7, he continues, הביש belongs to the evidence of guilt in the context of a legal procedure concerning marital infidelity (1972: 87). It is, so to speak, a 'missing link' between the sexual Ur-context and the later prophetic-forensic context: 'Hence we can observe at Hosea 2.7 the semantic transition of the root בוש from its context in the sexual realm to the legal context' (1972: 87).[36] This shift occurred, Klopfenstein elaborates, due to the fact that all of the five oldest prophetic בוש references (Hos. 2.7; 4.19; 9.10; 10.6; Isa. 1.29) occur in polemical texts concerning the Canaanite fertility cult,[37] indicating a transference of בוש from the primary sexual sphere to the secondary sphere of the fertility cult. In another stage of

earliest occurrences on, the root כלם, when used in the Old Testament in profane contexts, consistently signifies an act of defying either law or convention. That is, it expresses something in some way suggesting accusation. The word-group כלם does not refer to "humiliating exposure" as such, but to *"humiliating exposure" based upon and intended to draw attention to, actual or supposed infringements of convention or law*') (1972: 138).

35. 'Damit ist erwiesen, daß sich die Theologisierung der Wortgruppe בוש in der prophetischen Gerichtsrede vollzogen hat'. Klopfenstein lists the variety of legal scenarios to which he sees בוש-words as belonging at 1972: 85-89.

36. 'So sehen wir in Hos 2,7 die Wurzel בוש im Übergang vom Sitz im Sexualbereich zum Sitz im Gerichtsverfahren'.

37. The connection between Isa. 1.29, on the one hand, and Canaanite fertility cults on the other is interpretative and has been disputed by some commentators (e.g. Fohrer 1960: 49). The text refers to oaks and gardens, not to their deification; hence, both might conceivably refer to pleasure-gardens of the wealthy.

development, reproof of fertility cults led to the adoption of the בוש word-group into the reproving language of the profane law court, which then became absorbed into theologized legal language as applied in the Prophets (1972: 87-88).[38]

This evolution of בוש-language sounds remarkably neat. It also sounds unrealistic, I think, and depends entirely on Klopfenstein's proposed chronology and *Sitz im Leben*. He claims, for example, that the majority of Psalms using בוש-vocabulary are of the *Gattung* 'lament of the individual', requesting the shaming of enemies and protection from disgrace of the pious. This, he continues, is envisaged as occurring before the divine law court (*Gottesgericht*) (1972: 106). (One may well ask, 'why?') The dependence of the Psalms using בוש-language on the Prophets (1972: 107) and the forensic background of both, just like the form-critical categories, are by no means as uncontentious as Klopfenstein implies.[39] His categorical statements regarding the dating of individual biblical passages and form-critical categories cannot be accepted uncritically. While Klopfenstein's study, then, is a valuable reference work, pooling important data, his conclusions are often deceptive in their decisiveness.

Alongside Klopfenstein's monograph, Huber's PhD thesis of 1983 is the second major study on shame in the Hebrew Bible. Huber makes a strong case for the need to acknowledge the centrality of shame and illustrates diverse ways in which pertinent vocabulary is applied: such as in psychological warfare;[40] in the judicial system as a sanction on

38. At Exod. 32.2 the people realize that Moses is בשש (polel of the root בוש II), 'delayed (in coming down from the mountain)'. Daube argues that here and at Judg. 5.28, where Sisera is late in returning, the word harks back to the 'original meaning', which, he claims, was 'to put a man to shame by keeping him waiting' (1969: 37). There may be some support for this at Judg. 3.25, where Eglon's servants wait עד־בוש (NIV, 'to the point of embarrassment'). Holladay's lexicon lists Ezra 8.22, בשתי לשאול מן־המלך, under both בוש I and II (cf. NIV *ad loc.*: 'I was ashamed to ask the king'), suggesting semantic ambiguity. The semantic difference between I and II is, however, clear and an attempt to connect the two unnecessary and artificial.

39. See also Klopfenstein's claim that the Psalms incorporating כלם-words all fall into the lament category and that most constitute 'prayers of the accused' (*Gebete von Angeklagten*), which he again cites as proof that these Psalms have their *Sitz im Leben* in the forensic realm (1972: 168).

40. E.g. the Assyrians' humiliating public parades of naked captives, which are especially effective because such shaming 'makes it possible to dominate and control others (particularly defeated warriors) because it is restrictive and psychologically repressive' (1983: 93).

behaviour;[41] by the psalmists, to justify an entitlement to divine help[42] and with regard to God, in order to point out incongruities and elicit blessing.[43] She begins by reviewing the two prominent approaches to biblical shame, which she calls the cultural (as represented by Pedersen and Daube) and the philological (as represented by Klopfenstein and Seebass),[44] as well as the data of psychoanalytic and anthropological shame studies.

Huber argues for a pronounced shame/guilt distinction (*pace* Klopfenstein), which is borne out, she believes, by the findings of modern psychoanalysis and supported linguistically in the Hebrew Bible. She relates shame-proneness to external sanctions. Consequently, it is associated with group cohesion and mechanisms for social control. Huber refers to contemporary anthropological studies to illuminate these and draws parallels with the social contexts in the background of texts in the Hebrew Bible. In these texts, as she illustrates, shame as opposed to guilt vocabulary is considerably more prominent. As regards guilt, she writes: 'Most psychoanalysts and social scientists would agree that the majority of people in Western society function with much more pronounced guilt sensitivity than shame sensitivity, which makes it difficult to be aware of shame' (1983: 1).

Accepting Piers's historical reason that the Reformation represents the climax of the Western emphasis on guilt rather than shame, with Luther's

41. Huber points out that punishment-shaming is circumscribed in order that, while keenly felt, it does not strip persons of their human dignity (cf. Deut. 25.3, ונקלה אחיך לעיניך, 'lest your brother is humiliated before your eyes') (1983: 101).

42. The psalmists' emphasis on helplessness and shame, according to Huber, 'helps take the sting out of those feelings by giving them value in the appeal. It also puts the psalmist more in control of his shaming... When he is in control, then no one else can shame him. Consequently, shame...can open him up to God's compassion' (1983: 163).

43. It is argued that Yhwh, too, is susceptible to shame and that Ps. 74, for instance, calls him to account by juxtaposing former acts of honour/creation with the present shameful condition: 'shaming is often aroused by incongruity. So when there is incongruity between what God has promised and what he is actually doing, this implies a failure to achieve an ideal (a promise in this case). In that failure, shame is aroused' (1983: 172-73).

44. With the exception of Pedersen, Klopfenstein and Daube, writings on shame and the Hebrew Bible prior to Huber were largely confined to Bible dictionaries. Most detailed are the בוש entries by Stolz, in *THAT* (1971), and Seebass, in *ThWAT* (1973, vol. I).

pronouncements on self-responsibility ('Freiheit eines Christenmenschen')—putting immanent conscience first and foremost—being symptomatic of this trend, Huber proposes that Western guilt assumptions have led to a lack of understanding regarding the subtle but important differences between guilt and shame (1983: 2-5). In the Hebrew Bible, she continues, shame is central and therefore a reorientation is required.[45]

Huber's criteria for distinguishing between guilt and shame are those discussed earlier: she regards guilt as an emotion associated with internalized societal demands and prohibitions, which is triggered when these are transgressed; and shame as an emotion associated with an idealized picture of the self, which is triggered when one fails to sustain valued personal assets or to live up to ideals (1983: 4). Huber concedes that guilt and shame can overlap: one can lead to or conceal the other; both can be reactions to one stimulus; both are socially conditioned; and both can be stimulated by either internal pressure (self-sanctioning) and/or external pressure (group sanctioning). In spite of such connections, Huber insists: 'as interrelated as shame and guilt are at times, they are, in our view and in the view of psychoanalytic and social anthropological theory, separate emotional reactions' (1983: 29).[46]

Huber is careful to avoid references to shame or guilt cultures. Recognizing the implicit value judgment bound up with these categories (that is, characterizing 'guilt cultures' as 'moral and progressive' and 'shame cultures' as 'backward and lacking in moral standards'), she avoids describing ancient Israelite societies as shame cultures (*pace* Daube).[47] Instead, she claims that all cultures 'contain both shame and guilt in varying degrees and the presence or absence of either sanction has nothing to do with its moral standards' (1983: 35). She does, however, argue that the societies which are reflected in and by texts of the Hebrew Bible indicate shame-proneness and draws parallels with other cultures similar in this respect. Surprisingly, Huber refers to none of the Mediterranean honour and shame studies (which strikes me as a glaring omission). Her

45. Huber criticizes Klopfenstein thus: 'Klopfenstein's monograph on biblical shame is shaped by a strong guilt-orientation in his interpretation; throughout he sees shame as a manifestation of guilt and of a guilty conscience' (1983: 203).

46. I have already explained my reservations concerning the practicalities of such a claim.

47. Cf. Jemielty, who also accepts the notion of a shame culture in the background of the literature of the Hebrew Bible (1992: 26-35).

comparisons, instead, are with geographically distant societies.[48] Hence, she refers to studies conducted in China and Japan (1983: 248-55) and several others among the Navaho, Hopi, Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island, Zuni Indians of New Mexico and Dakotas of the Tetons (1983: 256-69). Her conclusion is that in spite of the 'great differences' between all these cultures, they have in common that each 'adheres to strong behavioral ideals which are maintained and enforced through group or personal pressure (in particular, shaming) and through internal pressure of self-sanctioning (in particular, the fear of being shamed)' (1983: 270). She claims, further, that in such societies pronounced group cohesiveness accentuates the individual's sense of responsibility regarding the maintenance of group values, because the individual relies on the group for support, validation and identity. But such behaviour could also, conceivably, be observed in Western, industrial societies. After all, even in a society which, using Huber's criteria, might be regarded as guilt-prone, individuals generally live and function within sub-communities (the nuclear family, boarding school, groups of colleagues, etc.) to which they, too, turn for support, validation and identity. While the extent of group or personal pressure might indeed constitute a key variable within different societies, I would want to stress both the absence of a 'pure' or 'ideal' type and the difficulties in determining this 'extent'.

Huber justifies her insistent claim that in the Hebrew Bible shame and guilt are regarded as separate phenomena (with shame being the more prevalent of the two) with recourse to philology. First of all she draws attention to the fact that there are a number of Hebrew terms translated 'shame' (בוש, כלם, חפר, קלה, חרף) but considerably fewer translated 'guilt' (עון, אשם), adding that 'none of the shame words has a meaning "guilt"' (1983: 45). Further, guilt words are not linked or parallel with shame words: 'In fact linguisticly [*sic*] there seems to be no connection in Hebrew between shame and guilt' (1983: 55). Huber continues: 'In contrast to shame, in biblical society guilt relates to *culpability*, to deserving blame for having violated a moral or penal law, and it relates to actions or facts of culpability, not feelings' (1983: 53; emphasis original).

In consequence, guilt terminology is found when people have done something specifically wrong (Gen. 26.10; 42.21; Judg. 21.22; Prov. 30.10; Ezek. 22.4)—even when this is unwitting (Lev. 4.3, 22, 27; 5.2;

48. Laniak is also prone to this tendency. He draws comparisons between the social world of the book of Esther and those of Japan, Spain (1998: 29, 51) and Colombia (1998: 118 n. 40).

Num. 5.6-7; Ezra 10.19). Having thus tailored her definition, Huber claims that guilt terminology in the Hebrew Bible is not linked with 'feelings of guilt or anxiety or internal wrestling with the conscience' (1983: 53). As a result, she concludes: 'there is a good linguistic case for pursuing shame as a separate, distinctive emotional experience and as a separate means of social control, although we will again note that shame and guilt are sometimes interrelated' (1983: 56).

Huber, then, links feelings (of shortcoming or anxiety) with shame terminology. Guilt terminology, meanwhile, is descriptive of wrongful activity only and not of the psychological response to such actions. In the definition of psychology, however, as we have seen, guilt *is* depicted as an *emotion* affecting one's conscience, which might be triggered by an act that is perceived to be wrongful. What Huber appears to have done, therefore, is to apply the emotional factor of guilt to Hebrew Bible shame terminology. Guilt terminology, on the other hand, is confined to designating deliberate or inadvertent illegal action. There is some confusion here: Huber describes guilt as a separate *emotional* reaction from shame (1983: 29, see above) but Hebrew guilt terminology as pertaining not to emotion but to transgression alone.[49]

On the one hand, Huber distinguishes between guilt and shame on the basis of internal/external sanctions and deems the cultures in the background of the texts of the Hebrew Bible to be more shame-prone (while not going so far as labelling them 'shame cultures'); on the other, she argues that guilt-words in these texts pertain to wrongful actions, shame-words to an emotion of distress. In practice the interrelatedness of shame and guilt that Huber is prepared to admit to is so pronounced that once again the distinction begins to fade. The idea that shame constitutes the sense of failure when one fails to fulfil one's ideals does explain, however, why shame terminology is applied to barren women and farmers confronting drought. As Huber points out, drought brings about a man's failure to produce food, barrenness a woman's to produce children—both of which represent a failure to live up to an ideal (1983: 128). Only too frequently, however, by Huber's implicit admission, shame terminology is linked to

49. Where the inadvertent transgressions which Huber associates with guilt are concerned (see her examples from Leviticus, above), Frymer-Kensky's (1983) distinction between guilt and impurity is worth noting. As Frymer-Kensky points out, these words sometimes translated 'guilt' pertain not to moral failing but to onus-free pollution; whereby the transgressor *is* culpable and required to become purified but not condemned on any ethical grounds.

wrongful action: the shame David confers on his victorious warriors (2 Sam. 19.3-7), for instance, is the result of his action of mourning for his rebellious son instead of honouring the warriors (1983: 74). With reference to Jeremiah's use of both shame and guilt words,[50] Huber writes that:

> Jeremiah feels Israel should demonstrate her shame because she has failed or been inadequate in living up to the ideals of her covenant with God. He suggests that Israel's sinful behavior should violate her pride, which should then cause feelings of shame. Yes, she is culpable for blame for her sin and thus is guilty, but Jeremiah wants Israel to feel inadequate or inferior for her sins. He wants her pride in her obedience to God to be violated, so he stresses her 'failure of being' more than her 'failure of doing' (1983: 117).

It seems unclear how Israel might have failed in living up to the ideals of the covenant other than by wrongful actions (or wrongful *in*actions)—that is, by incurring guilt. Also, it does not seem unreasonable that culpability, if wrongful action is deliberate[51] (which appears to be the case here: Israel, a partner in the covenant relationship, was, presumably, aware of her responsibility and commitment) should be accompanied by emotions of negative self-evaluation (such as feelings of inadequacy and inferiority).

In her articles of 1991 and 1994 Bechtel[52] still maintains that shame and guilt should be clearly distinguished and that the social dynamics of ancient Israelite society lend themselves to shame-sanctioning (1991: 47-48; 1994: 24). She writes of the Levirate law of Deut. 25, for instance, that 'the fact that guilt and legal punishment for having violated a policy of the community was not involved indicated that shaming was often the more powerful sanction because of the group-orientation of the community' (1991: 61). While it is plausible that the brother-in-law in the scenario described felt the public nature of the ritual to be expressly humiliating and while his refusal to impregnate a deceased brother's widow may represent the failure to fulfil a societal ideal, guilt cannot, I believe, be eliminated from the equation. The brother-in-law, after all, *has* 'violated a moral or penal law' (cf. Huber 1983: 53) and he is considered culpable.

50. Huber points out that Jeremiah uses shame words extensively but words of the root חטא only twice (2.3; 50.7) (1983: 117).

51. Where wrongful action is inadvertent it may be more appropriate to speak of pollution (which is generally onus-free and removed by means of purification rites) rather than guilt (Frymer-Kensky 1983).

52. Publications postdating her PhD appear under the name Lyn M. Bechtel; the name, too, under which these articles are cited in the bibliography.

Bechtel's explanation of the differences between the two sanctions—'Shame relies predominantly on external or group pressure and is reinforced by the internal pressure of fear of being shamed. Guilt relies predominantly on internal pressure from the conscience and is reinforced by the external pressure from the society' (1991: 51)—in fact indicates that guilt and shame in practice overlap considerably. Generally speaking, drawing too sharp a distinction between the two remains, I would argue along with Klopfenstein and Cairns, unhelpful.

Bechtel is notable among interpreters of shame language in biblical literature for accentuating a psychological dimension. With regard to the usage of ענה, for example, she explains that her translation 'to humiliate/shame' is justified in the light of the psychological make-up of the ancient Israelite. This is because group-orientation made him or her particularly susceptible to shame, which works on a fear of contempt leading to rejection, abandonment or expulsion (1994: 24). The word ענה, she argues, reflects the process of status manipulation inherent in shaming and, with regard to women, refers to shameful sexual relations which threaten the 'well-articulated and highly valued boundaries' of group-orientated societies. Bechtel is referring particularly to those relations violating existing marital, family or community bonds, or those with no prospect of leading to marital or family bonds (1994: 21).

The word can, she claims, but does not necessarily, pertain to rape. At Deut. 22.28-29, Bechtel argues, the sexual relations described by the verb שכב are quite possibly between a consenting unmarried man and woman. The verb ענה, therefore, refers here not to rape but to the fact that the man's penetration of an unmarried woman has violated the obligations she owes to her father and family and therewith conferred shame. At Deut. 22.25-27, however, where rape *is* at issue (שכב + חזק) there is no mention of ענה, because the woman, being unable to alert help, is *not* shamed. Bechtel continues that Tamar (2 Sam. 13), on the other hand, *is* shamed (ענה + חרפה) after Amnon rapes her (חזק), because he, being a member of her family, is a person with whom there exists a bond that is violated (1994: 27). Shechem, Bechtel proposes, does not rape Dinah: she stresses the expressions used of his feelings for Dinah ('speaking to her heart' and דבק, 'to cleave'), as well as his desire to marry her and that 'sociological studies reveal that rapists feel hostility and hatred toward their victims, not love' (1994: 29). The expression ענה, she concludes, refers not to an act of aggression but to the Jacobite perception of an outsider, a foreigner, violating the boundaries of the kinship unit. Dinah has the capacity to

ensure the continuation of her group by marrying within it; marriage to a Canaanite would, however, be perceived as defiling or otherwise threatening the group by violating its boundaries.

While I agree with Bechtel that it is likely that there existed communities in ancient Israel where a strong emphasis was placed on group cohesion and that this might have manifested itself in suspicion of, or outright aversion to, members outside of the group,[53] I find her cultural reconstruction somewhat problematic. For instance, although the word ענה is not used in Deut. 22.25-27, I do not think it can therefore be argued that the woman is not shamed. The text only says that she has not committed a sin deserving death (אין לנער חטא מות, 22.26): while the woman may be regarded as exonerated from *blame*, this would not automatically allow us to assume that she was immune to the perception of being defiled, humiliated or socially denigrated. With Tamar it seems to me to be the rape, constituting in this context the forced penetration by a male to whom she is not, nor will be, married, which brings about her חרפה; not, more specifically, that the rape is carried out by a member of Tamar's family with whom there is bonding and an obligation that precludes sexual activity (as Bechtel claims [1994: 27]). It seems that Amnon and Tamar's degree of relatedness does not preclude the possibility of marriage at any rate (2 Sam. 13.13). Tamar, like the woman in the field, is forced; both are depicted as not culpable for what befalls them. Tamar suffers חרפה and I do not think it unlikely that the woman raped in the field did too. Neither is regarded by the author of the respective texts as responsible for her predicament but shame, as we have seen, is not confined to causal responsibility but may be incited by passive experiences, even physical characteristics.[54]

53. There is evidence to support the existence of an ideological cast that is pronouncedly xenophobic. See below with regard to the book of Jeremiah (pp. 123-25).

54. Washington comments that, 'Whatever light Bechtel's interpretation may shed on interactions among social groups with closely guarded corporate identities, this reading is not adequate to the brute fact of what happens to Dinah when she goes out, not to meet Shechem, but "to visit the women of the region" (Gen. 34.1)' (1997: 357); and, 'Bechtel's reading seems to amount to the view that because Shechem loves Dinah...and forms a bond with her...and since Jacob and Hamor, the male heads of households, are willing to let Shechem keep Dinah, his action should not be regarded as rape' (1997: 357 n. 127). He also concedes that rape in the context of biblical writing is understood not so much as a crime against women as against the possession of fathers and husbands (1997: 353).

Bechtel's reading of Gen. 2.4–3.24, meanwhile, interprets the garden story as recounting the process of human maturation, with 2.7-9 describing infancy, 2.16-25 early and middle childhood and 3.1-19, adolescence. Male–female bonding, she claims, is critical in a group-orientated society and the becoming 'one flesh' (2.24), mentioned in the childhood stage, a significant preparation for adult life. The role Bechtel ascribes to shame in this process is reminiscent of the psychological literature and could apply to human maturation universally.[55] The following, for instance, is compatible with Freud's description of the latency period, before shame activates a repression of exhibitionist drives:

> the reader is reminded that the human and the woman are now naked (ערומים) and not ashamed of themselves (בוש). This statement is pivotal. When in the course of human life would a person be publicly naked and not ashamed of public nakedness? Because they have not matured enough to be self-conscious (indicated by the use of בוש in the Hithpalel with its reflexive quality) and not yet socialized enough to be aware of the social implications of public nakedness (Bechtel 1995: 17).

As with the word ענה, Bechtel prefers a translation for ארר that pertains to shaming and argues that a clever wordplay stresses the snake's role of representing both the potential and the limitations of life. Thus, the snake is ערום, 'cleverly wise' (from ערם, 'be shrewd, crafty'), and causes awareness of being ערם, 'naked' (from ערר II, 'be exposed, bare'), which signifies the consciousness of shame and therefore maturation. Through mature eyes the snake is perceived as ערום and ארור: shamed. Bechtel explains, 'I have purposely chosen to translate ארור as "shamed" in regard to the snake because the snake's body position is the same as a position found in shaming techniques' (1995: 21). She refers to the image elsewhere of humiliated persons being made to crawl and eat dust (Isa. 49.23; Mic. 7.17).

Bechtel's belief that shame, as both emotional response and social sanction of undesirable behaviour, is a central feature of the Israelite

55. Halperin, applying a psychoanalytical approach to biblical literature, mentions (but does not develop) that, 'All humans...are likely to have had the infantile experiences that lie behind the Eden story' (1993: 233 n. 5). Perhaps he is referring here to the exceeding bliss of the preverbal infant, which might be called Edenic and which, according to some psychologists (Schore, Nathanson), is first checked by the onset of shame. This would support the interpretation that Gen. 2–3 is a story of universal relevance describing human maturation, as well as the argument that the experience of shame is crucial to this process.

psyche and culture that is reflected throughout the Hebrew Bible, has influenced her translation. In the case of אָרַר, while shaming might be the result of a curse and while shaming and cursing are both means of social control, I find the equating of the two problematic. At Gen. 3.17 the ground is cursed, which has repercussions for the man. Here the interpretation of אָרַר as 'shamed' would not fit at all—not even in the sense of the earth being withered, which is elsewhere exploited in a בּוֹשׁ/יבשׁ ('dry up, wither'/'to be ashamed') play on words: the earth *is* fertile but it produces not only crops but also thorns and thistles (3.18). Hanson, as we have seen, renders הוֹי 'shame!'. The premise of Bechtel likewise, is that shame is central to the culture that produced the texts and ubiquitously in evidence. As with Hanson this has influenced (and I would say distorted) her translation.

I find the notion that shame and guilt are emotional phenomena widely represented in human communities and probably also in those that produced the texts of the Hebrew Bible, entirely plausible. Also, I see some merit in Bechtel's attention to the psychological dimension of how shame makes one feel. I am, however, wary of her reconstruction of a culture and mindset behind the texts that is so fundamentally based on the centrality and ever-presence of shame. First, because I consider biblical texts inadequate for such a reconstruction and secondly, because, in spite of the claims of Neyrey, Malina or Pilch, the view that any culture can be more fully understood by examining it through the perimeters of an alleged pivotal value, strikes me as problematic.

Honour, Shame and Hebrew Bible Narratives

One notable feature of honour/shame studies of the Hebrew Bible is the focus on the narrative texts. Such a focus is evident in Matthews and Benjamin (1993), as well as Olyan (1996), Stone (1996) and Stansell (1996). Matthews and Benjamin, writing of the social world of ancient Israel (1250–587 BCE), like Plevnik, Pilch, Malina and Neyrey, accept that honour and shame are central social values. Similarly to Pilch and Malina's core and means values, they, too, propose that these labels can be facilitated and reinforced by related paradigms: 'Life-giving behavior was labeled "wise" or "clean." Destructive or anti-social behavior was "foolish" or "unclean." To be wise or clean was a generic label for honor. To be a fool or unclean was a generic label for shame' (1993: 143).

Again, the range of meanings attributed to the words 'honour' and 'shame' is wide and again the writers are relatively unconcerned about

where honour and shame vocabulary actually occurs, appealing instead to attendant values,[56] such as purity and pollution (1993: 144).[57]

Matthews and Benjamin's depiction of honour and shame 'in the world of the Bible' (1993: 176), again, is on occasion comprehensive at the expense of accuracy. For instance, they regard Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Sam. 13) as a politically coercive bid for honour: 'To force David to name him heir, Amnon rapes Tamar hoping that his actions will assure him the right of becoming monarch' (1993: 181). While the defilement of a man's daughter might indeed harm his reputation and while Adonijah's request for Abishag could be regarded as a barely covert challenge to Solomon's monarchial power (1 Kgs 2.13-25), it cannot be assumed that Amnon is motivated by aspirations to the throne. The text states that Amnon son of David loved Tamar the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David (13.1), that he became ill as a result and that her virginity prevented him from acting (13.2). Following the suggestion of Jonadab, Amnon tricks David into sending Tamar (described as *his* sister in vv. 6, 11) and rapes her (13.14). David is enraged (v. 21) and Absalom hates Amnon (v. 22) but years pass (v. 23) and there is no mention of Amnon's actions having achieved anything that might procure him rights to the kingship. The only one who is described as having been disgraced, furthermore, is not David but Tamar (v. 22).

The case of Amnon and Tamar is tricky. In the so-called honour/shame cultures depicted in anthropological literature brothers fiercely protect

56. Bal argues that the notion of defilement often has a primarily symbolic quality: 'The memory of the other man is what makes the postvirginal woman unmarriageable. In the equally symbolic context of Levitical law, defilement is related to the loss of body liquid, of blood, for example, which represents a beginning of death. Hence, it is the loss of semen, the male body liquid, that defiles the virgin at least as much as the one-time loss of blood at defloration, as indeed Leviticus 15.16-18 explicitly states' (1988a: 72). O'Connor, further, writes that in Lamentations the perception that menstruation is defiling becomes 'a metaphor for shame and humiliation' (1992: 180). This might suggest the presence of a variety of symbolic paradigm discourses (e.g. purity/pollution, honour/shame, holy/unholy, folly/wisdom, blessing/curse), which reinforce each other. The distinctions and metaphoric associations between them, however, require closer attention than Matthews and Benjamin provide.

57. As Frymer-Kensky (1983) has demonstrated, however, shame and pollution are distinct. Some forms of pollution, for instance, as they have no onus attached to them, do not, like public shame, affect reputation adversely. Certain matters incurring pollution are recognised as necessary and even, ultimately, a source of blessing—such as the situation of childbirth.

their unmarried sisters' virginity. Perhaps, Tamar is regarded as Absalom's sister first and foremost (cf. 13.1); possibly because they shared not only the same father but also the same mother.[58] This could have provided Amnon with a political motivation: he might have seized an opportunity to humiliate his popular brother by dishonouring his sister. This, in turn, could also account for Absalom's desire for revenge (13.32).[59] The story, however, none the less fails to fit as easily into the pattern as Matthews and Benjamin would have us believe. Broadly speaking, they may be correct in claiming that in contrast with the contemporary Western usage of the word 'virgin', 'the Bible focuses on the political connotations of the word' and further, that sexual activity was not as much an aspect of interpersonal relationships as 'an expression of the political power of households' (1993: 176). 2 Samuel 13, however, seems to be an exception. Amnon is most probably motivated primarily by lust. This could account for the inclusion of the details that Tamar is beautiful (13.1) and that Amnon's extreme frustration has physical manifestations (13.2)—these are more likely to be a side-effect of sexual passion than of political calculation.

Matthews and Benjamin also maintain the following, regarding men seeking honour by gaining access to nubile women or virgins through rape:

> The rape must take place in the context of some activity connected with fertility such as harvesting (Gen 34.1-2; Judg 21.17-23), sheep-shearing (2 Sam 13.23-28), eating (2 Sam 13.5-6), or menstruating (2 Sam 11.4). Otherwise, it was treated like any other crime (Deut 22.23-27). The basis for this criterion was the concern over a household's ability to supply food and children to its members. Tying the aggressive act to an event associated with fertility clearly identified the intention of the aggressor (1993: 181).

There are several problems with this statement. First, the rape scenarios described in Deut. 22 do not exclude settings connected with fertility.

58. According to 2 Sam. 3 and 1 Chron. 3, Absalom's mother was Maacah daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam of Jezreel. Tamar is mentioned as the sister of the sons of David at 1 Chron. 3.9 but her mother is not named.

59. Revenge or 'face saving', aimed at restoring wounded pride and honour, is cited by Bechtel alongside self-abasement as one of two typical responses to being shamed (1991: 50). Whereas Absalom appears to adopt the former response, Tamar's action of removing her ornate robe and performing mourning actions (2 Sam. 13.19) could be seen to conform to the latter.

Whether a woman is betrothed or not, rape is depicted as a crime (22.23-29). She does have a duty to scream and resist if, in the setting of a town as opposed to the open country, she is capable of alerting someone who may rescue her. Rape is not, however, depicted as somehow less criminal should it happen to occur at harvest time. Secondly, a 'context of some activity connected with fertility' is not clear at Gen. 34. Dinah's brothers are in the fields with the livestock when Jacob hears of her rape (v. 5) but there is no suggestion of harvest or breeding time. The case for Judg. 21 is stronger: a festival at Shiloh that may be celebrating harvest provides an opportune occasion for snatching women. As at 2 Sam. 13.23-28, however, where Amnon, celebrating after the sheep-shearing, is drunk and vulnerable to attack, distraction seems more at issue than fertility. (Quite how sheep-shearing and fertility are connected eludes me.) Also, no rape occurs at 2 Sam. 13.23-28 but rather the revenge for rape. Thirdly, eating, which Matthews and Benjamin link with fertility, does not actually take place at 13.5-14. Lastly, the uncleanness from which Bathsheba is purifying herself at 2 Sam. 11 may not necessarily be that associated with menstruation and menstruation should not automatically be assumed to indicate fertility.[60] A promise of fertility, then, does not appear to have a mitigating or potentially honour-conferring impact on rape. Matthews and Benjamin's arguments, therefore, are sometimes misleadingly vague, even inaccurate.

Stone's examination of the representations of sexual activity in the Deuteronomistic history uses anthropological studies more cautiously. In his attempt to decode the network of cultural and symbolic meanings which the texts might presuppose, Stone takes great pains to stress that a continuity between biblical perspectives on sexual matters and the beliefs about sexual activity that have emerged among Jewish and Christian communities cannot be assumed (1996: 12). He does maintain, however, that 'a productive interdisciplinary conversation' (1996: 27) can expose links between literature and its social and cultural context. Stone is careful to point out that while biblical texts may be 'informants' about the beliefs

60. Be'er has demonstrated that the biblical narratives generally depict menstruation positively. Sarah calls herself worn out and past 'the manner of women' (Gen. 18.11-12), thereby linking menstruation with fertility and youth. Rachel, not rising before her father because she claims to be with 'the manner of women' (Gen. 31.35), is not avoided by Laban but kissed upon his departure (Gen. 32.1). In contrast, the Priestly Code attaches very negative connotations to menstrual blood, deeming it a major source of both defilement and shame (1994: 162-64).

and assumptions held by ancient Israelites, they are none the less deeply imperfect sources of ethnographic data. They are not so much transparent windows into an ancient world as glimpses of a world deemed possible or desirable by those individuals and groups among whom they originated; the result being, 'that much of the Hebrew Bible contains mainly ideology rather than a historically accurate picture of Israelite behavior in the periods which it claims to represent' (1996: 34).

For all his cautionary comments, Stone, referring to the contributions in Gilmore's edition (1987), still recognizes merit in the honour/shame model. His justification is that the relation between a competitive notion of male sexuality and an emphasis upon female chastity illuminate the depictions of sexual activity in the Deuteronomistic narratives. This relation, he argues, frequently capitalizes on 'the potential for sexual acts to impact the honor, power and prestige of men', a potential that is 'known to us especially (but not exclusively) from the anthropological literature on the Mediterranean basin and parts of the Middle East' (1996: 137).

Stone applies findings from anthropology to a variety of biblical narratives. Concerning Judg. 19, for instance, he writes that in a male homosexual act, one man is perceived as assuming a role that is, culturally speaking, allotted to the female alone (of sexual object rather than subject). This man becomes 'feminized' and thereby dishonoured. One reason for this is that masculinity is considered not only different from but also superior to femininity:

> Within a culture marked by rigid gender differentiation and hierarchy, a man who assumes the role allotted by convention to a woman is moving, socially, *downward.* If this role is forced upon him by another male, as is the case in homosexual rape, then the effect is both a challenge to his masculinity and a challenge to his honor (1996: 79).

The men of Gibeah, then, according to Stone, wish to express their power over the Levite by bringing shame upon him (1996: 81). Deterred from raping him they achieve this aim by raping his concubine:

> It must also be recalled, from the anthropological material, that not only a woman's conduct but also the conduct taken toward her may reflect upon the honor of the male(s) responsible for her. A sexual misconduct committed against a woman is, therefore, an attack upon the man under whose authority she falls. Thus, although the men of Gibeah did not dishonor the Levite directly by raping him *as if he were a woman*, they nevertheless challenge his honor in another way: *through his woman* (1996: 81; emphasis original).

This damage to his honour is then addressed, Stone continues, with a riposte that is typical of an honour/shame culture (1996: 83). Typical, too, he argues, is the Levite's withholding of certain information when rallying support: crucially, he omits to mention that he himself cast the concubine outside of the house. Quite possibly such an admission might have diminished his claim to honour yet further. Stone's comment that 'most of the Israelites would have responded to such a situation in precisely the same way' (1996: 83), is, however, in my view, assuming too much.

From here Stone develops the idea that there exists a recurring pattern, whereby male characters by means of heterosexual contact dishonour other men. With the threat of male rape the attack on a man's honour is very direct and aggressive; while with these heterosexual, or better 'homo-social', conflicts (1996: 84) the attack occurs at one remove. Stone cites 2 Sam. 3.6-11, where Abner threatens Ishbaal's honour through Rizpah as one example (1996: 85-93). The sexual act is not recounted here in its chronological place (prior to the conversation between the two men) indicating, according to Stone, that it is considered important primarily in relation to their quarrel (1996: 87). Ishbaal's indignation is again explained on the basis of anthropological literature as originating from an implication that he is 'not good at being a man'—since Abner has shown that he cannot maintain control over the women who, it is thought, ought to be under his supervision. Rizpah, like the Levite's concubine, is the means by which a message of power is communicated between two men. Stone calls her the 'conduit of their relationship' (1996: 91).[61] Stone does not believe that the ideology at work here reflects a 'custom' about monarchial legitimacy: 'It is rather a complex bundle of premises about masculinity, sexual practice, and prestige which the anthropological literature helps to clarify' (1996: 92).

Other narratives, too, Stone maintains, can be elucidated with recourse to anthropological findings. First, 2 Sam. 11–12, where the dishonourable nature of David's conduct might be explained in part as an abuse of power. In the context of a society where honour is hierarchical and competed for only between men who are relative social equals this abuse is thrown into sharp relief: 'If two men are obviously contrasted in terms of some significant social differential, then the more powerful man [such as

61. Stone discusses another instance of this pattern with regard to 2 Sam. 16.20-23, where David's concubines are the conduit between David and Absalom (1996: 120-27).

David] who chooses to provoke a weaker man [such as Uriah] risks dishonoring himself'(1996: 103). Another example is 2 Sam. 13, where Tamar's request that Amnon, who has just raped her, marry her, might be explained by the emphasis on female chastity:

> The fact of male dominance, the emphasis upon female sexual purity as a prerequisite for marriage, and the relative scarcity of positions available to unmarried women in the society which produced the text are all relevant considerations here. Where marriage is the primary avenue through which female prestige can be secured, and the loss of one's sexual purity can become an obstacle to marriage, it is not inconceivable that a woman would prefer to take advantage of the androcentric rationale which expresses itself in the Deuteronomic law and choose marriage over non-marriage. At any rate, the perspective from which the story is told seems to be based upon such logic (1996: 115-16).

With regard to the latter, Stone acknowledges that David is caught between two imperatives of masculine honour: first, to avenge the shaming of Tamar, his daughter; and secondly, to honour the relations of kinship, including those with his firstborn son. Both Absalom and Simeon/Levi, Stone points out, seek vengeance—as the anthropological literature would require us to expect. In both instances, however, the father of the raped woman apparently does not see this response as the most suitable way of addressing the crisis. This leads Stone to ask whether it is possible that we have here a rebuttal of the protocols of honour and shame (1996: 118).

Leaving this question unanswered, Stone raises several more interesting points, which he does not have scope to develop. He muses, for instance, whether the metaphorical use of sexual activity in the Prophets, where Israel is sometimes depicted as an actively unfaithful wife, may rely upon a different ideological position with regard to gender and sexual practice than the narratives. In Hosea and Ezekiel, he proposes, it is suggested that female sexuality is active and insatiable whereas in the narratives the tendency is to regard female sexuality as passive and in need of male protection. Both perspectives, he believes, do, however, link male honour with an ability to prevent sexual relationships between another man and the women of one's household (1996: 143). With regard to the role of Yhwh, furthermore, some archaeological evidence that might imply the existence of a female consort complicates matters yet further:

> If YHWH can be represented as a male deity with a female consort, then the gendered language applied to YHWH needs to be interpreted literally, at least insofar as literary, historical, and cultural matters are concerned... Hence, the imagery of Israel as YHWH's unfaithful wife may take on

> specific connotations in a context where the symbolic assumptions discussed in the present project exist... [I]t seems that YHWH may have been represented as a sort of vigilant husband concerned about his masculine honor, who for precisely this reason must prevent illicit sexual relationships between a woman under his authority (Israel) and other potential male sexual partners (such as Baal). Thus, an approach to the biblical texts which takes the ideology of sexual practice in its relation to gender as an explicit point of departure may finally impact our understanding of the characterisation of YHWH in the biblical texts, and so also our understanding of biblical theology (1996: 143-44).

Stone's study raises and examines many interesting points and his use of anthropological data is tempered by caution. While he uses the honour/shame model extensively, he makes no such claims, as Neyrey does, for instance, of having access to the native's perspective. Further, he acknowledges that both the biblical texts themselves and their interpreters have biases. His suggestions for examining prophetic literature in the light of some of his findings are to me compelling.

Olyan, focusing more particularly on the David narratives, seeks to illustrate a connection between honour/shame and covenant language. Both, he claims, are ubiquitous in the Hebrew Bible. He introduces his discussion with the assertion, 'Few would dispute that covenant was a primary basis for social organization in the West Asian cultural sphere in which Israel emerged as a distinct polity' (1996: 201-202) and adds that the vocabulary of honour and shame occurs in covenant-related discourses throughout the ancient Near East. His conclusion is that, 'notions of honor and shame must therefore play a role in West Asian covenant relations, including those evidenced in Israelite sources' (1996: 202). Honour and shame, he continues, had the social and political function of publicizing the relative status of participants in ritual action and were 'common almost to the point of banality' (1996: 203).

Olyan accounts for the points of contact between covenant relations and the notions of honour and shame by pointing out that treaty partners must honour one another:

> To honor a loyal treaty partner confirms publicly the strength of existing covenant bonds; to diminish or shame one who is loyal in covenant communicates at minimum a loss of status and may in fact constitute a covenant violation. The conferring of honor and the inscription of shame may function to externalize conformity or nonconformity to covenant stipulations or to communicate relative position in a status hierarchy (1996: 204-205).

Olyan's understanding of honour, moreover, is clearly influenced by that of the Mediterranean studies (1996: 202 n. 4); thus he describes biblical honour as a phenomenon with an important public dimension (1996: 204) and an inbuilt hierarchy (1996: 207).

A passage that illustrates a covenant-honour/shame connection is, according to Olyan, 2 Sam. 19.1-9, where Joab warns David that shaming his servants will result in disaster. Rejoicing and public demonstrations that confirm victory and the king's honour are appropriate actions; David's mourning, on the other hand, which does not follow the prescribed pattern of ritual behaviour following victory in battle, threatens to shame his soldiers. Olyan explains the covenant undertones he perceives in this excerpt in that David, here the suzerain, violates a treaty agreement by not rewarding covenant loyalty (1996: 210). 2 Samuel 10.1-6, where David sends emissaries to the court of Ammon to honour publicly the deceased, thereby confirming the covenant bond as the throne of Ammon passes to a new ruler, is cited for further support. David states that he is practising חסד, which is interpreted by Olyan as a reference to covenant loyalty. When the Ammonites intentionally break the covenant by publicly shaming David's men only one course of action remains:

> In the universe of reciprocal honor, David had little choice but to respond with military action; only through victory for Israel and defeat (and thus humiliation) for Ammon could David recover honor for himself and his people after such a devastating, public inscription of shame (1996: 213).

Olyan also believes that a case for the centrality of honour and shame in covenant contexts can be made where neither is mentioned explicitly (e.g. 1 Sam. 31–2 Sam. 2). The treatment of Saul's corpse is, he argues, shameful. The Gileadites, on the other hand, who burn the corpse, bury the bones and practise mourning rituals, fulfil honourable actions befitting a sound vassal–suzerain covenant relationship.

Olyan, then, is working from the assumption that both prescriptive covenant relationships and the notions of honour and shame were so endemic that they can be discerned in many public and ritualistic interactions of the Hebrew Bible[62]—even where they are not mentioned explicitly. While he cites numerous examples, the legitimacy of perceiving either complex of ideas can none the less be challenged. Olyan's

62. Olyan's examples are from the books of Samuel and Lamentations but he asserts that evidence can be gathered throughout the Hebrew Bible and in other ancient West Asian texts also (1996: 202-203).

arguments depend heavily both on his assertion that certain words (such as חסד) reflect covenant language and on his identification of honour and shame vocabulary in the Hebrew Bible with the notions labelled honour and shame in anthropological literature. The possibility that he is imposing later constructs that may very well not have existed in the definitive form he purports, cannot be excluded.[63]

Another study of the David narratives seeking to demonstrate their 'substantial interest in honor and shame' (1996: 56) is that by Stansell. As he explains, David gains honour in a series of incidents: he is anointed by Samuel in secret (1 Sam. 16.1-13), is appointed as court musician and armour bearer (16.14-23) and triumphs over Goliath (17.1-58), thereby rising from an insignificant position to one of relative status and prospect (1996: 56-57). David's response to Saul's subsequent offer of his daughter Michal's hand in marriage (18.23), according to Stansell, acquires a new meaning and significance when placed in the context of a world where honour and shame constitute core values (1996: 57). David refers to himself as a poor man (אִישׁ־רָשׁ) of light esteem (נקלה). Stansell translates these as 'no honor', explaining that the term נקלה clearly suggests the realm of honour and shame (1996: 58). Stansell argues, further, that within the context of ch. 18, such a low estimation of his own honour and prestige takes on an ironic sense. He has, after all, been given his robe, armour and sword by Jonathan, the king's son (v. 4) and his mighty feats have been praised in the women's song (v. 7), which can be interpreted as enhancing his status. David's success is also alluded to once more in the concluding verse: וייקר שמו מאד ('his name was greatly valued/regarded'; NIV: 'his name became well known'), which Stansell again prefers to translate 'and his name was very honored' (1996: 59).

63. Hobbs (1997), in a response to Olyan's article, proposes that the patron–client rather than the vassal–suzerain covenant relationship is the dominant metaphor that gives meaning to the use of biblical honour and shame language. This model, he argues, is preferable because it arises from more inclusive and immediate social situations, while the covenant model, derived from political interactions between kings, is rather elitist and therefore less accessible. Hobbs, like Olyan, appears to presuppose the significance of the honour/shame model as well as the idea that biblical texts accurately reflect cultural matrices. He is undeterred by a shortage of relevant vocabulary, explaining that the patron–client, like the honour/shame model is an 'etic' one: no one will find words like 'patron' or 'client', because an etic model is 'a system fitted by modern ethnographers of the Mediterranean world over widely observed patterns of behavior for the purposes of understanding them and interpreting them' (1997: 503).

Stansell depicts David's rise through military victories as compatible with the challenge-response situation described in anthropological literature, whereby honour is gained through competition and by depriving another of his share. David also links his lack of prestige with poverty and Davis (1977) and Camp (1991) have illustrated the connection between economic wealth and honour. Honour is also described as hierarchical, which could explain Saul's jealousy as deriving from the feeling that David's success is compromising his supreme position in the honour ranking. Stansell argues that there are many other such parallels. Saul calling Jonathan a son of a perverse and rebellious woman (1 Sam. 20.30), for instance, is best clarified, in his opinion, by the observation of anthropologists that a woman who has engaged in shameful activity infects her children with the taint of her dishonour and further, that the most powerful Mediterranean insults relate to the purity of one's mother (1996: 60). The situation of conflict with Nabal (1 Sam. 25), too, Stansell continues, can be best understood in the context of Mediterranean customs of challenge and response over claims for honour and precedence:

> Nabal's words of insult provide the grounds for his non-acceptance of David's challenge to honor him with 'whatever you have at hand' (v. 8). For while Nabal is rich and 'lives like a king,' David is rootless, unknown, a rebel 'without genealogy.' In an honor/shame society, only equals can strive with one another for honor.... Hence Nabal must reject David's claim that he has 'protected' Nabal's flocks; he need not take David's challenge seriously, for David hardly seems to be a threat; he can easily be insulted and dismissed. But the reader knows what the narrator and Abigail know: David is the future king, and as such, he can hardly allow a rich shepherd to shame him. Thus he must at least do what a clan chieftain would in a similar situation—seek revenge (1996: 63-64).

While challenge-responses may be typical of an honour/shame society, the assertive conduct of Abigail is not. Stansell claims that in this context of challenge and response, Abigail serves as mediator between the disputing parties. He writes that in 'Mediterranean culture...' (once again a monolithic label, ignoring Herzfeld's call for specificity) 'the office of mediator is a position of prestige, and thus Abigail accrues honor to herself, even if she is self-selected' (1996: 64). Mediators, however, are not, to my knowledge, mentioned much in the anthropological literature. Instead, this literature describes women's lives as focused around the home and their acute sense of shame as fostering shyness and an aversion of contact with persons outside the family unit. The manner in which Abigail addresses David, a strange man, would be considered unthinkable

and immodest.[64] Stansell is at this point somewhat selective in his analysis.

Elsewhere, Stansell's arguments are more convincing. Mediterranean notions of honour and shame, as described in cultural anthropological literature, frequently focus on defined gender roles and on publicly affirmed repute that is earned by fulfilling these socially accepted roles. This could explain the poignancy of the public shaming in 2 Sam. 10, where David's men, sent to offer his condolences to Hanun, have their beards shaved and garments cut. Stansell specifies that the shaving off of the beard is an assault on masculinity, because the beard is a symbol of masculine honour (1996: 69).

The idea that the sexual purity of one's mother, wife, daughters and sisters is embedded in the honour of the male, meanwhile, is addressed, Stansell continues, in the story of Amnon and Tamar. Absalom is prepared to kill his brother Amnon when he rapes and shames their virgin sister, which is, so Stansell, like the vengeance exacted after the sexual assault on Dinah and consonant with the values of an honour/shame society.[65] Further, the idea that women's sexuality is used for political purposes, as expounded by Pitt-Rivers (1977), finds eloquent expression in the account of Absalom consorting with his father's concubines (2 Sam. 16). This, according to Stansell, is a 'political act that establishes Absalom's claim to the throne, thus making a complete break with David' by utterly dishonouring him (1996: 72).

Pedersen, we remember, regarded the warrior-hero and such determined women as Tamar (of Gen. 38) and Abigail as old types, possessors of an honour that is gained through valiant deeds. Stansell, meanwhile, argues that contemporary anthropological studies of Mediterranean societies elucidate the David narratives, thereby implying cultural continuity. Some incidents of the narratives are indeed compatible with the descriptions from these studies and there is scope for justifying the presence of the challenge-response pattern, revenge for insults and sexual purity of the female being bound up in the honour of the male. Again, however, the

64. McKay argues that Abigail's self-lowering circumlocution 'your handmaid', not only suggests service but also hints at sexual possibilities and that she 'rubbishes her husband' (1998: 47). Such conduct may represent an inversion of social norms (1998: 50); certainly it sits distinctly uneasily with everything that is described as typifying Mediterranean women.

65. Stansell does not explain why Amnon violates the sexual purity of his sister, thereby compromising his own honour.

honour/shame model is applied too rigorously. This is evident first, in Stansell's harmonizing translations; and secondly, in his glossing over features that are more difficult to accommodate. Among these are Abigail's un-Mediterranean behaviour of disobeying her husband (1 Sam. 25.19) and speaking of him disloyally (25.25), while seeking out David and talking assertively to a strange man and the complexities of the Amnon–Tamar–Absalom narrative.[66]

Criticism of the Honour/Shame Model in Hebrew Bible Studies

There do exist isolated critical voices in Hebrew Bible studies. An important article by Domeris (1995), for instance, takes issue with the attempts of biblical scholars to project the so-called Mediterranean values of honour and shame upon biblical values. Focusing his discussion on the book of Proverbs,[67] he argues that the understanding of honour and shame reflected here is distinctive and free from some of the features described in the anthropological studies, which he attributes to the impact of Christianity and Islam.

Domeris points out that in Proverbs shame terminology pertains to the dishonour of fools, the proud, the poor and the wicked, the bad son and the rapist, as well as the glutton, those who lose a court case and those who speak unwisely (1995: 94). While Mediterranean cultures identify shame most closely with women's sexuality, Proverbs associates a wife with shame just once (12.4). Male shame, meanwhile, is considerably more prominent. Domeris concludes from this that

> the category of shame of a wife is a minor one, and that the whole understanding of shame was far less sexually orientated than in the studies of modern Mediterranean cultures. For example, no attention is given to the

66. Another honour/shame study focusing on narrative is Laniak's exposition on Esther (1998). I have summarized my reservations regarding Laniak's treatment in a forthcoming review in *VT*.

67. Domeris approves of Herzfeld's argument for particularization (1995: 88). While he admits that Proverbs is of diverse origins, he claims that it is none the less particularly suitable for this discussion, because it reflects a relatively uniform picture of honour and shame, due to its inherent conservatism. Furthermore, it provides a forum for examining these values in a culture not coloured by some later Christian perspectives. Domeris argues that its primary purpose is the communication of religious values and that it stems from the postexilic era, from a period testifying the changing role of women and the restrictive context of the nuclear family (1995: 93).

> need to guard one's wife against possible temptation. Although the idea of adultery as a crime against the honour of the husband is taken for granted, the underlying reason for the prohibition on adultery probably had more to do with the issue of the paternity of the children and potential heirs... We may contrast this with the modern Mediterranean societies which saw the protection as intrinsically bound up in the image of the masculinity of the husband. Similarly, one might contrast the biblical concern with pollution as related to menstruation and child-bearing with the Mediterranean concern with sin and the woman's sexuality... Here lies one of the most important distinctions between the biblical world and the world of the modern Mediterranean—purity/impurity versus sin/guilt (1995: 94-95).

The Hebrew Bible, Domeris continues, attributes honour to Yhwh and it is Yhwh, too, who bestows and removes it. One of the characteristics of Proverbs is its connection between honour and wisdom (4.18). A connection with wealth also exists (8.18) (1995: 95). The emphasis of Proverbs gives precedence to wisdom, with wealth taking second place and honour third: 'This relative depreciation of honour in favour of wealth or possessions is particularly marked in 12.9 when the person of honour, who is also poor, takes second place to the person who is without honour and yet has a servant (i e [*sic*] some wealth)' (1995: 96).

This, Domeris concludes, is quite different to the precedence accorded to honour in the Mediterranean studies. Another un-Mediterranean feature, he points out, is the priority of humility over honour (15.33), 'which would seem to be in contradiction to Mediterranean evaluations' (cf. 13.18, where those who accept reproof are honoured) (1995: 96).[68] Domeris also points out the striking absence in Proverbs of 'the typical Mediterranean' manifestations of honour and shame, such as the competition among equals and the elevation of honour over wealth and power (1995: 96).

68. A case could, however, be made in a Mediterranean context, too, for the appropriateness of expressing humility towards someone envisaged as possessing more honour than oneself. Pitt-Rivers writes: 'Respect and precedence are paid to those who claim it and are sufficiently powerful to enforce their claim... The payment of honour in daily life is accorded through the offering of precedence (so often expressed through an analogy with the head) and through the demonstrations of respect which are commonly associated with the head; whether it is bowed, touched, uncovered or covered...' (1977: 4). In the context of Proverbs it might be said that humility is appropriate with regard to those who have more honour or more wisdom, such as God and the sages.

When Domeris examines the roles of women in Proverbs, the differences with the Mediterranean types depicted in anthropological literature become especially pronounced. The woman of the final chapter of Proverbs is firmly located in the framework of a society that values women whose concerns are always unselfish and family-orientated: for instance, her reward lies in being called 'blessed'[69] by her husband and children. She is also, however, 'far more outgoing than her later Mediterranean counterpart': a trader, manufacturer of linen garments and a teacher of wisdom (1995: 97). This woman moves easily in the geographical, economic and educational domains that were later to become masculine zones. Further, while the Mediterranean woman is described as ruled by an acute sense of shame, this woman is ruled by wisdom.

The woman of shame in Proverbs, meanwhile, is framed in the context of a foolish young man and his actions (7.7) and counterbalanced with the feminine Wisdom. While this woman is clearly depicted pejoratively—she is likened to a hunter (7.23) and brings doom upon the young man—it is primarily the *man* who is condemned (7.26-27):

> The woman is a danger to fools, but not to the wise... The real danger is the lust of the man. She is a temptress, but not a demon, a seducer but not a satan. Sadly, it would take a religion like Christianity to make those connections (Domeris 1995: 98).[70]

The story of the adulteress, further, is un-Mediterranean in the sense that the honour of 'the man' (presumably her husband) is ignored entirely:

> In the Mediterranean story his figure would have featured strongly either as the cuckolded husband or the wreaker of vengeance. Here he features only in passing in an assurance to the young man that he may enjoy his lovemaking without fear of interruption—'the man' is in a foreign land (Domeris 1995: 98).

Hence, the women of Proverbs—even the women of shame—are free from many of the negative constructs that appear to bind their later Mediterranean sisters. Further, the dominant value of the book appears to

69. The phrase is קמו בניה ויאשרוה (31.28). Hanson (1996) has suggested a translation of 'how honoured' for אשרי. I do not find this translation necessary or preferable.

70. Camp already finds traces of such notions in Ben Sira. She admits, furthermore, that Ben Sira's focus on concerns of honour and shame is not prominent in Proverbs (1991: 5 n. 17) and that Proverbs generally balances positive and negative female imagery (1985: 115-33).

be wisdom and its contrasting object, folly. It is wisdom and folly, Domeris concludes, which define other values, including shame and honour (1995: 97). This is what one would expect of wisdom literature and negates the claim that honour and shame were core values from ancient times (*pace* Pilch and Malina). Domeris is cautious regarding the value of the honour/shame dichotomy for modern studies and rejects it entirely for the purposes of distinguishing the core values of Proverbs. His arguments provide strong reasons for delineating the context of a text under investigation as much as possible, and for letting the text speak for itself rather than imposing modern models upon it.

Another note of caution comes from Bergant, who focuses on the Song of Songs. Bergant uses what she calls a 'thick description': that is, a highly detailed analysis which seeks to include as far as is possible, the insider's perspective, by means of a process of radical empiricism known as 'participant observation' (1996: 24). This 'insider's perspective' sounds suspiciously like Neyrey and Malina's 'native's perspective' and could again transpire in 'the referential fallacy which claims a direct insight into the ancient world' (Pippin 1996: 52).

Not unreminiscent of Domeris's comments about the woman of Prov. 31, Bergant points out that the Shulammite of the Song is 'quite independent of societal restraints' (1996: 28). Throughout the Song her voice is dominant, she takes initiative, ventures outside alone at night and is not slow to speak erotically of her union with her lover. This leads Bergant to assert that 'the woman depicted in the Song is driven by love, not inhibited by social opinion or by some narrow sense of sexual propriety' (1996: 28). Bergant contrasts this with the Mediterranean anthropological studies, which describe institutionalized conceptions of male power and status that have engendered the monitoring of women's sexual activity and, consequently, such practices as female seclusion and veiling (1996: 33). She agrees that a few features of the Song conform to the gender-based delineation of honour and shame. This includes the protective role of the brothers (1.6; 8.8), which could be regarded as reflecting the customs evident in societies where group cohesion is the primary concern and where male consanguines rather than affines are the protectors of female shame. The woman's spurning of her brothers' protectiveness, however, and the lack of censure regarding such an independent attitude, 'is certainly not consistent with the protocol of honor and shame' (1996: 34). Similarly, reference to the house of the mother (3.4; 8.2) and the exchanges with the daughters of Jerusalem might be

regarded as more typical of a society where women's lives are circumscribed. Yet in other ways this circumscription does not seem far-reaching: the woman wanders the streets and speaks to the watchmen (3.3), meets her lover outdoors (7.12) and visits a wine house (2.4). Bergant therefore concludes that:

> The general tenor of the Song of Songs throws into question most of the characteristics associated with the notions of honor and shame. There is no underlying concern for male power and status and, consequently, there is no interest in controlling what might threaten it. The sexual activity of the woman is neither suppressed nor supervised. The passionate union of the woman and man is sought for the mutual pleasure that it promises and not for the purposes of procreation and the heirs that it might yield. Furthermore, the lovers are not married, nor do they appear to be betrothed. In other words, the patriarchal concern of safeguarding the chastity of the woman for the sake of progeny is not evident here (1996: 36).

Bergant states that one might have expected that the overtly sexual character of the Song of Songs would lend itself to an analysis according to such gender-defined categories as honour and shame. Her conclusion, however, is that 'It does not. In fact, the contrary is true' (1996: 37). She admits that the social relationships of the Song are 'anomalous if the honor/shame model is the norm' (1996: 37) and proposes that they may reflect those of a particular stratum of society, which is exempted from general norms (1996: 36). This, she concludes, could suggest either the Song's idiosyncratic nature, or the inadequacy of the model.

The Song's inclusion in the Hebrew Bible is in some ways surprising. It is indeed an anomaly. Its peculiarity and the probability, in the light of striking parallels with Egyptian love poetry,[71] that it is first and foremost a collection of lyrical poems, do not render it a particularly suitable candidate for an exploration of the actual social values of the community in which it came into being. The fact that it exists, however, none the less leaves an opening for the idea that a so-called honour/shame society may be more multi-layered than the anthropological literature and biblical interpreters using its findings often suggest. Bergant's reading has thus disclosed the possibility of complex and diverse patterns of interactions between men and women.

71. Fox (1985) discusses these similarities very persuasively.

Honour, Shame and Prophecy

There are, to my knowledge, very few honour/shame studies relating to the literature of the Prophets. Yee's short contribution in *The Women's Bible Commentary* on the book of Hosea states that the patrilineal, patrilocal kinship structure and honour/shame value system are the two primary constructs underlying Hosea and Gomer's marriage (1992: 197). She agrees with the findings of Mediterranean anthropologists that honour and shame are divided along gender lines and that, therefore, within the patrilineal kinship structure a large measure of a man's honour depends on women's sexual behaviour (1992: 198). Strategies that prevent women from conferring dishonour through sexual misconduct, she continues, include veiling, segregation and other such restrictions on women's social interactions. Arguing for a degree of continuity between ancient and modern culture, Yee considers Hosea's action of separating Gomer from her lovers (2.6-7a) typical behaviour.

Yee does not mention, however, that there are also passages in Hosea that (perhaps deliberately?) challenge the standards of a classic honour/shame community. A man valuing his honour would, for instance, under no circumstances marry an adulteress (1.3), or take her back following a sexual misdemeanour (3.2). It may be, however, that the story of Hosea and Gomer is calculatedly audacious (cf. Sherwood 1996: 323-24), or that Gomer, rather than signifying a 'fallen woman', represents a subversive counter-voice: she suckles and weans (1.8) the children Hosea rejects and intimates a certain lack in Hosea (and by implication Yhwh) which prompts her to desert him for other lovers and Baal (Sherwood 1996: 254). This counter-voice might be challenging a patrilineal, patrilocal, honour/shame system as described by Yee, thereby affirming the probability of its existence. In practice, the text could also, however, undermine its existence. Once again, the idea that social reality can be readily inferred and reconstructed from a biblical text is called into question.

A second example is an article by Simkins, which interprets Joel's call for the people to return to Yhwh (2.12-14) from the perspective of the anthropological honour/shame model. Both the vocabulary and emphasis of the text of Joel 2 in his view correspond with the honour/shame model. Simkins rejects the idea that this passage is based on the so-called covenant model, which has been derived from biblical (especially Deuteronomistic and prophetic) literature and which is characterized by a pattern of sin-judgment-repentance-blessing (1996: 42). According to this model,

the natural catastrophe is interpreted as the sign of God's judgment for Judah's sin and the 'return to Yhwh' as repentance, while blessing is explicitly referred to in v. 14. As Simkins points out, there is no clue as to whether any specific act or sin has in fact caused the devastation, nor does Joel delineate why the people should repent (1996: 42). Further, returning to Yhwh (2.13) does not necessarily pertain to repenting: Simkins cites Isa. 44.21-23, where Yhwh's forgiveness is not conditional upon repentance. The covenant model, a scholarly fabrication at any rate,[72] is therefore deemed unsuitable. Simkins suggests, instead, that Joel's silence with regard to the people's sin should be simply accepted:

> It is important to note that nowhere does Joel address the people from the perspective of Yahweh's wrath. Nowhere does he declare Yahweh's judgment on the people... Emphasis of the text instead is placed on the people's response to the catastrophe and Yahweh's promised redemption (1996: 44).

From here Simkins goes on to provide what he regards as a more suitable perspective from which to understand Joel's call. In the oracle of Joel 1.11-12 devastation is described as a source of shame, exemplified by ruined harvest. Simkins translates הוביש, which could be a hiphil of either the root בוש or יבש, as 'put to shame' ('for joy has been put to shame by the nations'), because יבש is never used with the preposition מן, whereas בוש is (cf. Isa. 1.29; Jer. 2.36 and 10.14 = 51.17) (*pace* NIV: 'surely the joy of mankind is withered away').

Simkins goes on to explain that 'joy has been put to shame' is best understood if joy is regarded not as primarily emotional pleasure but as a term connoting the particular pleasures associated with the observation of specific rituals. In this sense joy stands in typological contrast to the observation of rituals of mourning (1996: 47). Simkins justifies his interpretation as follows:

> Emotion and behavior have a reciprocal relationship in the world of the Bible and the ancient Near East in general. Emotion is the product of behavior; the ritual behavior elicits the appropriate emotion. Behavior in turn limits and defines emotion by externalizing and objectifying it. Moreover, ...the acts of joy and mourning have a correlation with the presence of God within the life of the individual and the community. In other words,

72. Perlitt (1969) has shown this convincingly with regard to the Prophets. As Perlitt points out, *Bundesschweigen* (a complete silence regarding the covenant) marks the bulk of prophetic literature and such features as the so-called ריב-pattern, or prophetic lawsuit, need not derive from covenant models but could also be drawn from established conventions of judicial practice (1969: 134).

> acts of joy are the proper response to the presence of God, whereas God's absence expects various acts of mourning (1996: 47).

In the context of Joel, joy is, according to Simkins, associated with the pleasures of offering the daily sacrifice. This ritual has been brought to a halt by the locust plague, hence the appropriate response is mourning. As this behaviour also indicates the perception that God is absent, Simkins considers the judgment of shame by the nations appropriate (cf. 2.27, where Yhwh's *presence* is identified with the *absence* of shame) (1996: 48). The honour/shame language is here, however, applied not to individuals in small-scale, face-to-face settings, but to international relations. In consequence, Simkins understands the people's honour as depending on their status in relation to their neighbours. The agricultural destruction, he continues, makes a mockery of Judah's claim to be the people of Yhwh and to enjoy the benefits of loyalty to him:

> If Yahweh was their God, and if the people had properly honored him through obedience to his commandments, then it was incumbent upon Yahweh to bless and protect them (compare Prov 3:9-10). The devastation caused by the locust plague, however, was public evidence against such a claim to honor. Thus, the people of Judah were shamed before the nations (1996: 51).

Simkins's argument is that the mourning instructions accompanying the call to return (2.13) summon the people to engage in acts appropriate to their plight, while also honouring Yhwh by demonstrating allegiance (1996: 51): 'The ritual practice of the cult, having been a reminder of their shame, was easily abandoned [1.13]. To these people Joel addressed a message of hope: Return to Yahweh by honoring him with the appropriate acts of mourning, and Yahweh will restore your honor' (1996: 52).

As Chance in a response to Simkins points out, however, the international focus presents some difficulties:

> Shame, of course, depends on public opinion, and in order to fulfill its potential, the model ought to specify the values and opinions held by the community of reference. This is, of course, most difficult to do at the 'international' level... In this case the other 'nations' are defined only by what they are not: those outside the community of Yahweh. This being the case, one could ask why they should be especially concerned if the people of Judah abandon a cult which the people of these other nations do not share? Conversely, why should the Judeans feel especially shamed in the eyes of other peoples who hold different religious beliefs? (1996: 144-45).

The characteristics of honour and shame, as depicted in anthropological studies conducted in small-scale societies and as summarized by Simkins (1996: 49-51), do not translate well into the larger situation. Instead of using the covenant model, which he has rejected for well-formulated reasons, he imposes the honour/shame model. In so doing he applies the two labels rather loosely, so that 'honouring' consists of joyful activity, while 'shame' represents the inability to fulfil pleasurable activity and the consequent need to perform mourning rituals. Joel 2.12-14 contains no honour/shame terminology and although these notions could be elucidated without employing such words, Simkins does appear to be reading the social values into the text with very little in the way of justification.

More narrowly focused is Odell's examination of Ezek. 16.59-63 (1992). Odell does not use the honour/shame model[73] but explores instead how the references to shame in these verses can be more fully understood. Her approach, like that of Klopfenstein, is philological rather than anthropological. In Ezek. 16, intriguingly, Jerusalem feels shame only *after* Yhwh forgives and, furthermore, is commanded to feel shame *because* Yhwh forgives. This reverse sequence, with consciousness of sin following rather than preceding forgiveness, has sometimes, she explains, been considered a theological problem: ignored by some commentators, explained as a classic paradox of the workings of divine grace in the midst of the human feeling of unworthiness by others (1992: 102). The problem, according to Odell, stems not only from the fact that contemporary readers find the residue of self-loathing after forgiveness unpalatable, but also from a lack of understanding regarding the emotion of shame (1992: 103).[74] Like the majority of commentators describing honour and shame from the perspective of anthropological studies (to which she, however, makes no reference), Odell argues that shame in the Hebrew Bible has less to do with an internal experience of unworthiness than with a loss of

73. In addition to the focused honour/shame studies summarized in this chapter, the alleged centrality of these two social values is apparent, too, in the background of numerous other scholarly works on texts of the Hebrew Bible. See, e.g., Clines with reference to Haggai (1995: 57); Galambush on Ezekiel (1992: 102 and n. 31); and Bal on Judges (1988b: 118).

74. Odell points out that self-loathing following forgiveness is evident also in Ezek. 20.42-44 and 36.29-32. Bechtel considers that self-abasement, with a view to eliciting pity/preventing further shaming by bringing it about oneself/taking control of the shaming process, is a characteristic response to shaming (the other being revenge or 'face saving' in an effort to restore wounded pride) (1991: 50).

status. The references to shame in 16.62-63, she continues, allude to the reduced status of the exiles' condition, which is envisaged as a sign of Yhwh's abandonment. The chapter as a whole, however, refutes the complaint that it is Yhwh's neglect that has produced their predicament.

Shame, Odell elaborates, is more frequently associated with a relationship that has failed than with the result of one's actions. While Miriam's disgrace at Num. 12.14 *is* the result of an action (namely, her failed attempt to challenge the authority of Moses), disgrace is more often the consequence of disappointed loyalty (1992: 104). Thus, when a relationship fails to provide protection and security in return for loyalty one is left vulnerable to shame. This would explain why David's men at 2 Sam. 19.3-7 are ashamed in spite of their actual success: their loyalty has been unacknowledged. Analogously, the psalmists' pleas not to be put to shame are sometimes combined with a statement that they have put their trust in Yhwh (25.2, 20; 31.2). According to Odell, the plea, 'I have trusted in you; let me not be put to shame' appeals to God to honour and reward the petitioner's dependence (1992: 104). The emotion of shame felt by David's men or the psalmists, furthermore, is attended not so much by feelings of unworthiness as by outrage or disappointment because their demands have not been acknowledged (1992: 105).

The book of Ezekiel, Odell explains, is marked by the limitations of divine–human communication. Hence, Ezekiel may speak only when Yhwh speaks to him: he may not, for example, relay the people's complaints (3.25-27) until after Jerusalem's fall when his mouth is opened (24.26-27; 33.21-22). At 16.63 dumbness is a consequence of shame: there will not be again a פתחון פה, literally 'an opening of the mouth'. This expression (which occurs only twice in the Hebrew Bible, both times in Ezekiel) in Mishnaic Hebrew pertains to an occasion for complaint. Adopting this meaning here, Odell translates, 'you will no longer have complaints ["mouth openings"] that are necessitated by your shame [מפני כל מחך]' (1992: 106). The context she envisages, then, is one where a particular type of formal petition is made to Yhwh, wherein the people complain on account of the experiences of humiliation and failure attending the exile.[75] While the specific complaint is not supplied in the text, such a situation would be consistent with 18.25 and 33.17, where the people are described as criticizing their God for his injustice.

75. While in 16.59-63 shame is a future event, it was, Odell explains, already present experience among exiles (cf. the recurrent theme of the reproach of the nations, 5.14-15; 16.57; 22.4-5; 34.29; 36.6, 15, 30).

The image of the foundling child in ch. 16, recounting a family relationship gone wrong, evokes a suitable framework for exploring the context in which shame is, according to Odell, most frequently experienced: namely, a situation where loyalty, expectation of protection and trust have been disappointed (1992: 107). The foundling story makes it clear that Yhwh *did* take care of and bless the infant (16.14) and that any intimations of neglect or unfair treatment are therefore unjustified. The accusation of abandonment is further countered with his willingness to re-establish the covenant (16.62). In consequence, the conclusion of the chapter is an invitation to the people to re-examine their situation and look for the cause of shame in themselves. Their experience of shame, resulting from divine abandonment, may then be seen as deriving not from failure on Yhwh's part (he was initially committed to the abandoned infant) but from Jerusalem's unfaithfulness: she had, in fact, not put her loyalty in Yhwh but in her own beauty, idols and unreliable alliances with Egypt, Assyria and Babylon.

Odell's point that shame vocabulary (which, as philological studies have established, occurs with striking frequency in prophetic literature in particular) may be used to force people into deeper insights concerning their relationship with Yhwh is, I think, relevant and important. As Klopfenstein has pointed out with regard to words of the root בוש especially, shame is prominent in relational contexts. Odell's comment that 'the command to be ashamed turns the claims and complaints of the people back on themselves and forces them to examine their role in the failure of the divine-human relationship' (1992: 111), further, alludes to the fact that shame is an emotion entailing negative self-evaluation. Odell implies but does not develop the idea that shame is in the Prophets often connected with the inculcation of proper conduct. This is a point I will be returning to again.

Summary

The emotional dimension of shame, which receives attention both in the literature of psychology and in Scheff's book of 1990, does not feature prominently in analyses of biblical texts. Huber's thesis of 1983 is notable for considering it alongside the findings of social anthropology. The emphasis in both New Testament and Hebrew Bible studies, has, instead, been on responding to Mediterranean field studies: more particularly, to the honour/shame value complex. In this context honour and shame are

not so much concerned with internal experiences as with public loss of status. Where shame is discussed independently of its alleged binary opposite honour, this bias is also evident. Odell thus argues that shame in Ezekiel is incited to a lesser extent by the people's feeling of unworthiness than by the reduced status of the exiles' condition and the mocking of the nations; and Klopfenstein, that shame terminology is most widely employed to evoke a forensic setting and sense of being publicly disapproved of and degraded.

Anthropologists have not been uncritical regarding the evaluation that the honour/shame value complex represents the core social values of the Mediterranean (cf. Herzfeld 1980; Wikan 1984). The applicability of the model for interpreting biblical literature, however, has, generally speaking, been accepted. Consequently, commentators attempting to reconstruct the social contexts reflected in and by the New Testament and apocryphal texts in particular, have tended to agree that an awareness of such features as gender division, acute sensitivity to public opinion, emphasis on women's sexual purity, or the challenge–riposte interaction (all of which are associated with this complex) is crucial for a fuller understanding (cf. Camp 1991; Neyrey 1991; Malina 1993; Pilch and Malina 1993; and Plevnik 1993; McVann 1995; deSilva 1995a; Hanson 1996).

Domeris argues that shame in its repressive form (especially with regard to women) is more characteristic of modern Mediterranean societies than of much of the Hebrew Bible. He attributes this in part to the impact of Christianity and Islam. Perhaps, then, the case for a degree of continuity between the later literature (such as Ben Sira and the New Testament)[76] and contemporary Mediterranean societies is indeed stronger. Nevertheless, the overall impression that emerges from these studies is that honour and shame vocabulary in biblical texts is very readily identified with the notions of honour and shame depicted in anthropological literature. Further, their presumed centrality has led to 'recognizing' these notions in many other literary contexts—even where the vocabulary is not present at all (cf. Olyan 1996; Hanson 1996). This has sometimes transpired in harmonizing translations in order to reflect a preoccupation with honour and/or shame (Camp 1991; Bechtel 1995; Hanson 1996), as well as in sweeping simplifications (Neyrey 1991; Malina 1993).

76. Torjesen, focusing particularly on the writings of Tertullian and Paul, also asserts the importance of understanding the honour/shame value system in attempting her reconstruction of women's early Christian history (1993: 291).

Some commentators have claimed that an appreciation of the values of honour and shame permits us to view biblical texts from 'the native's perspective' (Neyrey 1991: 64). Alongside such fallacious claims, the problems of imposing a modern theoretical model on to ancient texts have often been understated or disregarded. Even in the context of cultural anthropology, where social dynamics within a community can at least be observed at first hand, valid criticisms regarding generalizations and simplifications have been raised (Herzfeld 1980). Attempting reconstructions of the contexts in which the literature of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament are embedded, however, is even more of a minefield. First of all, the 'evidence' provided by texts is, inevitably, selective and any picture we might derive from them, therefore, incomplete. For instance, with regard to biblical laws prescribing sexual behaviour, Frymer-Kensky has pointed out that while these may illustrate some concerns about sex,[77] they do not show us how these laws were mediated, detoxified, expressed and understood (1989: 99), thereby leaving a vacuum. Connected to this is the notion that the texts cannot be assumed to be reflective of actual social practices. McKeating thus illustrates that while the sanctions forbidding adultery are very clear (Exod. 20.14; Deut. 5.18) and there is repeated mention of the consequences of exclusion from the community (Lev. 18.20, 29) and the death penalty (Lev. 20.10; Deut. 22.22), 'there is no recorded instance in the whole Jewish narrative literature of the biblical period, of anyone actually being put to death for adultery' (1979: 58). His argument is that if there is within the Hebrew Bible a discrepancy between laws and narratives, it is not unlikely that there was also a discrepancy between social reality and textual representation. He concludes that

> We cannot simply read off our assessment of a society's ethical values from the laws which it produced (or rather, from the laws which happen to have been preserved for us)... [because] some 'laws', at least in the Old Testament, are in any case not law as that word is generally understood, but statements of principle, or of ideals, and we confuse the issue badly if we do not recognise them as such (1979: 65-66).

77. They could lead us to conclude, e.g., that there existed at some time a fear of blurring boundaries. This would be one way of accounting for the aversion to sexual acts between men, which is not inherited from some other Near Eastern laws. In a paper co-authored with Walsh (2001), I have explored the notions of honour, shame and abomination with regard to Gen. 19 and Judg. 19. I argue here that male-male sexual acts blur the distinctions between male and female (see also Frymer-Kensky 1989: 96-97).

While the articles of Olyan (1996) and Stansell (1996), for instance, may suggest otherwise, I will argue that interpreters of the Hebrew Bible are not social anthropologists executing fieldwork but readers of ideological productions which do not conform to the thick/thin descriptions of Mediterranean anthropologists. This leads on to the third point: the probability that the biblical texts are agenda-orientated. After all, in Carroll's words, 'Texts are not photographs of social reality, but complex social constructions generated by such a reality in conjunction with various ideological factors controlling their production' (1991: 114 n. 2).

Social-sciences models, furthermore, are ill suited to accommodating the figure or representation of Yhwh. Interpretative literature embracing the value complex tends to ignore the issue of what Yhwh might be equated with in a social system constructed along the lines of honour and shame; or, alternatively, fails to explore whether the notion of Yhwh deconstructs such social arrangements. Pedersen argues that honour is intimately connected with blessing, which presumably originates from Yhwh (cf. 1926: 230); Domeris mentions that honour is a quality associated with and conferred by Yhwh (1995: 95); Bechtel Huber that Yhwh is capable of feeling shame and that this propensity is played upon to bring about an end to such humiliations as the exile (1983: 166-75); while Stone muses whether the prophetic metaphors depicting Yhwh as a husband defending his honour have a literal dimension (1996: 143-44). The role of Yhwh within the allegedly central honour/shame matrix, however, receives no more than scant attention.

As the cultural contexts in which the Hebrew Bible came into being are irrecoverable, continuity with the social dynamics of modern Mediterranean communities cannot be assumed or overstated as it so often has. If we refrain from assuming first, that the literature of the Hebrew Bible has its provenance in social contexts where honour and shame were central and ever-present concerns and secondly, from regarding shame as invariably connected with honour, the legitimacy of discerning these notions throughout the biblical texts disappears. With regard to the Hebrew Bible, the reception of honour and shame has indeed been more muted. Whereas some commentators have argued for their relevance and centrality, especially with regard to the narratives (Olyan; Stansell; Pedersen; Stone; Matthews and Benjamin), they have been shown to be ill fitting with regard to the books of Proverbs (Domeris) and Song of Songs (Bergant).

While shame studies have usually targeted the narratives, it is the Prophets where shame-vocabulary is actually clustered. This concentration

is pointed out by both Klopfenstein (1972: 58-89) and Seebass (1973: 570-71) and requires some explanation. Any discussion of shame in the Prophets, however, has tended to be relatively peripheral.[78] Of the above studies only those of Yee, Odell and Simkins are specifically focused on prophetic literature; Simkins's on Joel, meanwhile, deals with a book containing very little in the way of shame language.

Let it be said that I do believe shame to be a phenomenon with both a psychological and social dimension. With regard to the former, I see no advantage in separating shame and guilt phenomenology (Cairns 1993; Klopfenstein 1972; *pace* Bechtel 1991; Huber 1983; Daube 1969); further, while I consider psychoanalytical interpretation fascinating, I remain sceptical regarding its capacity to decode human complexities, let alone biblical texts, because such notions as the id or superego are abstract constructs, the existence or nature of which remains putative. With regard to the social dimension of shame, I believe that social-scientific perspectives can be illuminating but that caution must be exercised in imposing modern models on to ancient texts, or in assuming that texts faithfully reflect social reality. I certainly find it simplistic to argue that *any* culture is made more accessible by recognizing and then bringing social interactions into line with its two core values! When anthropological observations are used less ambitiously, however, as a fillip for reflection, or for deciding what a culture may deem 'thinkable' (Winkler; Stone) they can be of value.

The two major shame studies in the context of the Hebrew Bible to date are those by Klopfenstein and Huber. Both supply a comprehensive survey of the occurrence and various usages of shame words and their work has greatly eased my task. Klopfenstein is primarily concerned with the semantic development of shame words over time, which is not an angle I choose to pursue. Huber's study, while demonstrating an awareness of anthropological approaches, does not take into account the impact of Mediterranean fieldwork, which has been considerable. Further, her decisive separation of shame and guilt has sometimes obscured her argument. Unlike either of these studies, I wish to concentrate on the Major Prophets, where shame language is actually comparatively prominent. This strikes me as a valid starting point both for re-evaluating

78. This is less true of Klopfenstein and Huber, both of whose approaches are relatively comprehensive. Both cite frequently from the Prophets, though neither study is particularly focused on this body of literature.

foregone observations on shame and for exploring shame discourses from alternative perspectives.

There exists considerable scope for analysing and understanding biblical shame discourses using alternative approaches to the Mediterranean honour/shame model. Chalcraft's comment that 'Old Testament materials are unable...to fight back against the rigid models and courses of social development postulated in some apparently widely accepted social theory' (1997: 16) is, in my view, very important to keep in mind. I agree further with Chalcraft that it is advisable to balance 'science' and 'imagination' and to remember that 'social scientific criticism should not be restricted to the application of models and predictive theories in an effort to reconstruct the world "behind the texts"' (1997: 16-17). Instead, social-scientific consciousness might help us to 'appreciate the highly complex nature of the warp and woof not only of our materials and ancient Israelite worlds, but of our own worlds and productions as well' (Chalcraft 1997: 17).

In the following chapters I will be focusing in turn on the three Major Prophets. With each I will be examining the purposes of shame discourses and exploring a special angle. With regard to Isaiah, I will illustrate the deficiencies of the honour/shame model and discuss shame vocabulary in idolatry discourses; with Jeremiah, the probable existence and effects of ideological influences; and with Ezekiel, the connections and distinctions between shame and impurity and the implications of the existence of shame terminology in the context of bawdy language.

Chapter 2

SHAME AND ISAIAH

The Book of Isaiah and the Deficiencies of the Honour/Shame Model

There are good reasons for rejecting the socio-anthropological honour/shame model when examining honour and shame in the book of Isaiah. First of all, honour (most often rendered כבוד) pertaining to humans, or men in particular, as it is depicted in the anthropological literature, is not well attested in Isaiah and seldom contrasted with shame. Instead, honour in Isaiah is attributed primarily to Yhwh. This is most memorably demonstrated in the vision of ch. 6, where the seraphim flying above Yhwh enthroned call to one another that the whole earth is filled with his כבוד. Where כבוד is alluded to in what might be regarded a context of shame, it is most often where human shortcoming is contrasted with Yhwh's honour. This is in evidence particularly in First Isaiah.[1] In ch. 3, for example, is a description of the people's perverse behaviour, manifesting itself in an inversion of social standards (3.8). Here there is no shame vocabulary as such but an account of deplorable human conduct that defies and is in sharp contrast to Yhwh's כבוד.[2] Another example from First

1. The majority of examples cited pertain to First Isaiah. Shame in Deutero-Isaiah is more complex (see below, pp. 93-94). While I have retained the traditional divisions for the book of Isaiah (chs. 1–39, 40–55, 56–66) I nevertheless believe that the argument (to be developed with particular focus on the book of Jeremiah) that the ideological influences of subsequent editorial processes have had far-reaching effects on the entire body of prophetic literature is noteworthy.

2. In Deutero-Isaiah at 40.5-6, too, Yhwh's כבוד is revealed and any human equivalent dismissed as mere 'grass'. In the Masoretic Text this equivalent is חסד (BDB, 'goodness, kindness'). *BHS*, on the basis of 1 Pet. 1.24, which has δοξα (LSJ, II: 'the opinion which others have of one, reputation, honour, glory'), proposes הדר, which can indeed be rendered 'honour' (BDB). This is another word used in First Isaiah to describe Yhwh's splendour (2.10, 19, 21). When הדר is used of humans,

Isaiah occurs at 26.10-11 where shame (בוש) is the emotion accompanying the realization of Yhwh's majesty (גאות).

An analysis of the usage of words of the root גאה in First Isaiah indicates that they (like words of the root כבד) are used appropriately and approvingly of Yhwh: hence, גאות/גאון pertaining to Yhwh is translated 'majesty', 'glory' or 'splendour' (2.10, 19, 21; 13.3; 24.14; 26.10). Such words are also used in a positive sense when they refer to Yhwh's deeds (12.5), or something concrete associated with him (4.2).[3] When גאה words pertain to people or nations, on the other hand, the sense is by far most often pejorative and usually translated 'pride', 'arrogance' or 'loftiness'. The consequence of humans' גאות/גאון is usually a humbling punishment by Yhwh, the rightful holder of this attribute. Moab is criticized and 'dressed down' for her גאון (16.6-14); as is Babylon (13.19; 14.11); Ephraim's pride (28.1, 3) is crushed by Yhwh (28.2) who emerges as the truly majestic one (28.5); the proud are threatened with being humbled (from שפל) (2.12; 13.11) and dishonoured (from חלל) (23.9). Words of the root כבד, I have argued, often function in a similar way: they are used in a positive sense when they qualify Yhwh and his acts (cf. 4.2, where כבוד is used alongside גאון in its positive sense) and pejoratively when they qualify a human claim that has no divine authority (cf. 23.9, where both words are used in a negative sense).

There are more passages to support this impression. The image of 24.23, where even the moon and sun are abashed (חפר) and ashamed (בוש) in the proximity of Yhwh's כבוד, may also allude to the comparatively pathetic status of human honour: if even the celestial bodies are completely outshone by Yhwh, then humans infinitely more so. While כבד is also used in Isaiah to convey the sense of a person's importance and influence (3.5)[4] this usage is secondary and human honour at any rate is derivative. Honour is depicted as a quality only Yhwh owns and bestows.[5]

however, then in a context which undercuts the claim to honour (cf. 5.14, where the splendid nobles are condemned to Sheol). It is also in Deutero-Isaiah the quality that the Servant of Yhwh is denied (53.2). The denial or taking of honour in the latter example cannot, however, automatically be equated with an increase or presence of shame, as it is in the anthropological studies: at 50.7 the Servant is exempted from shame.

3. In Trito-Isaiah, too, where גאון is conferred upon Jerusalem by Yhwh the word has a positive connotation (60.15).

4. Here the נכבד is contrasted with the נקלה. Presumably, the opposition is between a person of status or means and a person of little status or few resources.

5. This is evident in both First and Deutero-Isaiah: at 22.19-24, where Yhwh

In First and Deutero-Isaiah, then, humans' כבוד, גאון and הדר are regarded negatively. These qualities are described as belonging rightfully to Yhwh alone. Neither status, nor wealth, both of which are associated with the notion of honour in the anthropological accounts and by Pedersen, are depicted as noble aspirations.[6] The social conduct negating shame that should be aspired to instead concerns not honour but knowledge of Yhwh, proper respect and humility. This evaluation of honour indicates quite a different set of principles to those espoused by the so-called Mediterranean personality. The priority of humility over honour, is in contradiction to Mediterranean evaluations. [7]

The competition for honour (the so-called challenge–riposte pattern), aimed at rising within the hierarchy of a highly stratified society, is also absent in Isaiah. Perhaps Schneidau's comment, that the Hebrew prophets do not attribute sacredness to the various systems of differences that constitute a culture's kinship and division-of-labour structures, because Yhwh obliterates preference, goes some way towards explaining this 'absence'. Schneidau asserts that, 'before [Yhwh], all men and their petty distinctions are as the undifferentiated dust of the desert. The privileged have no privilege, the achievers no achievement' (1976: 10). Yhwh's presence might thus be said to have rendered any existent challenge–riposte dynamic irrelevant[8]—(if not actually, at least within the literary context).

deposes Shebna and establishes a seat of honour (כסא כבוד, 22.23) for Eliakim; and at 42.8 where he reserves his honour for the Servant (וכבודי לאחר לא־אתן, 'I will not give my honour to another').

6. Cf. the condemnation of the self-aggrandizing Shebna (22.15-19); of Tyre, noted for her revelry and riches (23.9) and of the Assyrians (37.26-27). Shame is pronounced on all three (22.18; 23.4; 37.27).

7. Cf. Pitt-Rivers 1977: 43. Domeris also makes this observation with regard to Proverbs (1995: 96).

8. Schneidau, while acknowledging that the Hebrew Bible can be viewed as culture-supporting myth, argues that this feature contributes to an unsettling effect that may be regarded as counter-cultural: 'The Bible insists that man is answerable not to his culture but to a being who transcends all culture. Even in his most nationalistic or tribal conceptions, the Old Testament God associates himself with the Children of Israel arbitrarily; he does not choose them because of their merits, nor does he embody their institutions as do other national gods. Instead of praising their culture, he insists that it be reformed; reproaches to Israel are interspersed even among the recountings of the triumphs of Gideon and David' (1976: 2). The Hebrew prophets, he continues, embrace alienation, in spite of fears of making themselves scapegoats, and then spread alienation among the people while showing 'a strange equanimity in contemplating the prospect of social disorder' (1976: 10). If Schneidau is correct, attempting to

The gender focus, attributing honour primarily to men and the capacity for conferring shame primarily to women, is not prominent in Isaiah either. In First Isaiah there *is* horror expressed at the notion of women ruling (3.12), as well as disapproval at female arrogance, lack of modesty and complacency (3.16-24; 32.9-12). Further, there is mention of the daughters of Zion's filth, which may be figurative of iniquity or shame (4.4). Shame terminology, however, appears in none of these contexts; nor is conduct that may be considered shameful associated in First Isaiah with women in particular.[9]

The sole exception may be 4.1 where dishonour *is* associated explicitly with women: here seven women are seizing one man demanding that he take away their חרפה. Klopfenstein argues that this word pertains to 'ashamed, shy, ill at ease, to feel exposed' ('beschämt, scheu, verlegen, geniert sein'), that is, to states tending to embarrassment. It describes, he continues: 'the effect of an embarrassing situation on one's state of being and consciousness...a psychological reaction to particular circumstances, which incite uncertainty in terms of one's social behaviour' (1972: 182).[10]

Elucidations of 4.1 in the commentaries tend to accord with this explanation. Wildberger renders the word *Schmach* (humiliation) and relates it to the women's fear of the socially denigrating consequences of being single, such as childlessness and vulnerability to rape (1972: 149; also Watts 1985: 47). Oswalt relates it to a low legal and social identity (1986: 143); Clements to 'the social stigma' attending childlessness (1980: 52). The experience of dishonour here is one of feeling painfully embarrassed at the prospect of falling short of social ideals. There is no connotation that the women are or have committed anything shameful.

In First Isaiah shame words often pertain to dysfunctional relationships—usually between a disobedient person/people and the deity. Those who glorify or honour themselves instead of acknowledging that כבוד belongs to Yhwh are depicted as deserving shame; among them Shebna (22.18) and the arrogant Assyrians (37.27-35). Shame is also the

reconstruct actual social values from such 'socially disruptive' texts will clearly be problematical.

9. In ch. 3 the people of Judah, not just the women, are criticized: 3.14 singles out men. In ch. 32, again, not only complacent women but foolish and evil men are condemned (32.6-7).

10. 'die Wirkung einer peinlichen Situation auf die Gemüts- oder Bewußtseinslage des Betroffenen...eine psychische Reaktion auf bestimmte Umstände...die Unsicherheit im sozialen Verhalten bewirken.'

consequence of other forms of misbehaviour that may be interpreted as indicative of disrespect towards Yhwh and therewith a fractured relationship. Putting trust in a foreign nation, such as Cush (traditionally Ethiopia but possibly Sudan) or Egypt, occasions shame (20.5; 30.3), as do putting trust in the Canaanite tree cults, which may be alluded to in 1.29.[11] In Deutero-Isaiah trust in idols is particularly pronounced (42.17; 44.9; 45.16), as is rebellion against Israel and her God (41.11; 45.24). Shame in Isaiah is not only the objective state of public disgrace resulting from improper conduct, but also an inner condition, a realization of ignominy. Elliger is one of the few commentators who states this explicitly:

> The flip side is that loss of status entails loss of regard—of self-regard, as well as public regard... In practice the two go together... Most important, however, is not the connection between active and passive reaction but the insoluble relationship between subjective reactions and this objective loss of standing. The two are not distinct—like the German 'sich schämen' (to feel ashamed oneself) and 'beschämt werden' (to become ashamed/to be ashamed by) on the one hand and 'zu Schanden werden' (to become disgraced)...on the other (1970: 134).[12]

11. With regard to 1.29, most commentators identify the oaks and gardens as places for worshipping gods other than Yhwh (e.g. Watts 1985: 25; Clements 1980: 37; Oswalt 1986: 111; Wildberger claims that the similarity between אלה 'goddess' and אלה/איל 'tree' is significant and that here, as well as at 57.5, fertility rites are alluded to [1972: 71]). Fohrer, however, points out that the text, while referring to oaks and gardens, does not specify their deification and also, that v. 31 is concerned with the downfall of the mighty, not with apostates: 'Daher handelt es sich um die Anklage der sozialen Starken, die Baumhaine und Gärten in ihren Besitz bringen' (1960: 49) ('Therefore the accusation is aimed at the socially empowered, those who own arbours and gardens'). Kaiser, while recognizing some support for Fohrer's argument at 5.8, agrees with the mainstream opinion that the venues allude to some form of cultic activity that is manifestly not connected with Yhwh (1983: 46). While there is mention of disapproved of sacrifice in gardens at 65.3 and of deplorable conduct among oaks at 57.5, there is also support for Fohrer's argument in that ch. 1 appears to be directed at the socially exploitative rather than at practitioners of foreign rites. 1.11-17 criticizes the sacrifices (alongside other practices) not because they are for other gods but because they are elaborate (and presumably also costly) outward displays unsupported by the devotional and obedient inward condition of which they should be reflective. The people are urged to refrain from such rebelliousness (1.20) and at 1.17 and 23 reprimanded for their cruel actions in the social realm, where the poor and vulnerable are being neglected, which appears to be representative of this disobedience. At 1.29, then, social injustice rather than apostasy may be at issue.

12. 'Die Kehrseite ist, daß man bei Verlust des Standes auch das Ansehen verliert sowohl bei den anderen als auch bei sich selbst... Praktisch gehört beides zusammen...

Internalized shame and ignominy appear in First Isaiah. The sea (23.4), the sun and moon (24.23) and the proverbially lush Lebanon (33.9) feel shame alongside the כבוד of Yhwh—which is as it should be. It seems that if the people, through objective shaming, could come to feel this subjective shame, they might acquire a proper sense of humility, which would, in turn, redress the relational imbalances and render them worthy of Yhwh's restoration (29.22). It is particularly clear in Deutero-Isaiah that Yhwh can and will redeem from shame in some circumstances (45.17-22; 54.4) but those who are faithful and obedient to him will never incur shame (49.23; 50.6-7; cf. Trito-Isaiah 61.7 and 65.13).

The relational usages of shame vocabulary in Isaiah, highlighting the failure to pay proper respect to Yhwh, fit in well with some of the book's other recurrent themes. Prominent, for instance, is the exposition of Yhwh's power. This is strikingly displayed in the theophany of ch. 6. It is also constantly stressed (particularly in Deutero-Isaiah) in statements about Yhwh's total control over the cosmos (34.4; 40.22-31; 42.5; 44.24; 50.2; 51.13-16), time (41.4; 48.3-11) and political events (42.24-25), all of which may be said to justify his authority and the respect and proper humility which he demands from his people. Their stubborn refusal to 'know' Yhwh and respect his ordinances (1.3) is captured in the frequent use of inversion language: his people call evil good and good evil, mistake darkness for light and sweet for bitter (5.20) and the foolishness of their disobedience is compared to the absurdity of an axe raising itself above him who swings it (10.15), or a pot saying to its potter that he knows nothing (29.16). All of these images describe a lack of respect, obedience and knowledge.

Klopfenstein proposes that the Prophets are using shame vocabulary with a legal nuance (*gerichtstheologisch*). Throughout Isaiah, he suggests, much of the shame vocabulary describes the painful exposure of iniquities in the context of a divine courtroom with Yhwh's role being primarily that of an executor of the Law. With regard to 1.29—'You will be ashamed [<ת>בשו; MT: יבשו] because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced [תחפרו] because of the gardens that you have chosen'—for instance, Klopfenstein envisages the context of the

Die Hauptsache aber bei alledem ist nicht der Zusammenhang von aktiver und passiver Reaktion, sondern das unauflösliche Ineinander von diesen subjektiven Reaktionen und jenem objektiven Bedeutungsverlust; die beiden Begriffe treten noch nicht auseinander, wie das bei unserem deutschen "sich schämen" und "beschämt werden" einerseits und "zu Schanden werden"...andererseits der Fall ist.'

divine court in which the disobedient are publicly disgraced for their apostasy (1972: 60-61). Klopfenstein's claim, that most shame vocabulary functions within a wider forensic context, is, I think, too strong. Rather than identifying shame language as legal language, both shame language and language that may arguably be considered appropriate of or borrowed from judicial procedures are used in Isaiah to inculcate proper conduct[13] in a time when mores are perceived as having broken down, entailing calamity.

It emerges from Deutero-Isaiah that when one's inner condition is sound (which appears to be the aim of the inculcation of shame) one is, ultimately, preserved from being shamed. The Servant of Yhwh, therefore, says that he has opened his ears to Yhwh and not been rebellious: an expression of proper faithfulness and obedience (50.5). He goes on to say that he has been beaten, had his beard pulled out, been mocked and spat at (50.6): all of which are public forms of humiliation.[14] In the following verse, however, the Servant says, 'because Adonai Yhwh helps me I will not be disgraced [לא נכלמתי], because I have set my face like flint and I know that I will not be put to shame [לא אבוש]'. As Young points out, the idea that even public degradation does not truly shame the Servant can best be explained with recourse to his inner condition (1969: 233). Babylon's humiliation is depicted by means of the metaphor of a woman stripped of her veil (47.3) and her displayed nakedness as a fitting correlative of her shameful inner condition.[15] Punishment here is preceded

13. 'Proper conduct', that is, as evaluated by the authors, who were seemingly struggling to make sense of contemporary upheavals and to find a way of attaining restoration. Klopfenstein's claim that shame language is characteristic of a forensic context does not account for its paucity in the Torah, the preoccupation of much of which is legalistic. The sole occurrences of words of the root בוש appear at Gen. 2.25 and Deut. 25.11. The former is not a prescriptive text, while in the latter the word has the concrete sense of 'genitals'. Words of the root כלם occur at Num. 12.14 and 25.3 and of the root קלה at Deut. 27.16. At Deut. 32.5a NIV translates, 'They have acted corruptly towards him [Yhwh]; to their shame they are no longer his children…' The word here is מומם. The noun מום, in the Torah and elsewhere, usually refers to a physical defect (Lev. 21.17-23; 2 Sam. 14.25; Song 4.7). Here and at Job 11.15 (NIV again translates 'shame') the image, while drawing on the idea of stigma attached to physical imperfection, seems to have the figurative nuance of moral blemish (cf. Prov. 9.7, too, where מום is in a parallel syntactic relationship with the abstract noun קלון). RSV has 'blemish' at Deut. 32.5 and Job 11.15.

14. Cf. Huber's detailed discussion (1983: 58-93).

15. The same might be said for the haughty women whose ornaments will be

by reasons for its justification, shame is the consequence of disobedience and public shaming exposes inner shamefulness. The Servant, who has been dutiful, on the other hand, is not shamed precisely because there is no such perverse inner condition to expose. It seems, then, that while painful experiences may befall even the righteous and obedient, shame is withheld from those whose conscience is clear.[16]

Shame entails a feeling of personal shortcoming and negative self-evaluation, often with regard to moral culpability. The relative preponderance of shame vocabulary in Isaiah may be aimed at an inculcation of conduct that is less ritual and more conscience-driven. Whereas onus-free impurities and pollutions can be amended by rites of purification entailing separation for one day for minor, for seven days for major impurities, or by offering sacrifices (Frymer-Kensky 1983), shame resulting from onus-charged transgressions is only alleviated through Yhwh's mercy which may be elicited by restoring one's inner condition and exercising proper respect and obedience. The emotion shame, characterized both by the self judging the self and finding it to be wanting (be it due to wrongdoing or a sense of inadequacy before a significant other) and by the construction of internal sanctions may be said to be particularly apt for inducing such behaviour.

In the context of Isaiah, then, shame is not particularly well elucidated in terms of its alleged relation to honour. Neither Pedersen's discussion, which resorts to defining shame as little more than the negative of honour without paying closer attention to where shame vocabulary actually occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor the anthropological studies of the Mediter-

removed and scalps shaved and afflicted with sores, their ugliness thereby revealing an inner unwholesomeness (3.17). The men, too, will fare no better: Yhwh has commissioned the King of Assyria with shaming them by shaving the hair of their heads, bodies (or possibly genitals) and beards (7.20).

16. The prime example is Job. Job loses status (19.9; ch. 29) and is justifiably outraged at the misfortunes which befall him and aggrieved at being publicly mocked and ridiculed (12.4; 17.6; 19.18; 30.1, 9-10) but he is not, I would argue, ashamed. While he complains of his miserable condition (קלון) at 10.15 and humiliation (חרפה) at 19.5, his inner condition (like the Servant's) is maintained. Job thus continually asserts his blamelessness (9.21; 12.4; 27.6; ch. 31), attributes his misfortune not to his own deeds but to Yhwh's superior power (6.4; 10.3, 7; 12.9; 17.6; 27.2) and accuses his comforters for tormenting and shaming him unfairly (19.3, NIV: 'shamelessly you attack me', תכל ימוני לא־תבשו תהכרו־לי). Dobbs-Allsopp describes Job as an archetypal tragic hero whose role it is to refuse to accept the tragic event: 'The hero must act with hubris and in defiance' (1997: 43).

ranean, with their gender-political focus, prove particularly fruitful for an examination of shame in Isaiah. If we understand honour as a primarily divine attribute and shame as a consequence of relational breakdown between humans and God, we can connect the two notions. Honour, however, is not the opposite of shame in so far that God's people should strive for honour as a means to overcoming shame. Honour is a quality Yhwh will give to whom he chooses (his Servant, for instance). What he demands and seeks to inculcate through shame is humility and obedience. The emphasis is on internal disposition rather than public enactment; although shaming public exposure can manifest inner shortcoming.

Honour/shame societies as described in anthropological studies are not reflected in Isaiah. Honour, represented by status (כבוד, הדר) or pride in one's claim to honour (גאון), is not depicted as a social value to be striven and competed for but as a quality to be humbly conceded to Yhwh. In First Isaiah wealth, sometimes regarded as an outward correlative of honour,[17] is condemned or devalued: those endowed enough to sacrifice fattened cattle are rebuked for giving effusive offerings in place of behaving charitably to the socially disadvantaged (1.11-17); pursuing wealth is connected with corruption and cruelty (1.23) and riches are at any rate ephemeral (14.11). In the case of Shebna, furthermore, striving for social elevation is despised and brought to a swift end by Yhwh (22.15-19). Shame, meanwhile, is not associated with or conferred by women's sexuality but, generally speaking, generated by Yhwh, or by a sense of ignominy alongside or of wrongly invested loyalty in, someone or something other than him. It might, therefore, be said that *if* the texts of Isaiah *were* produced in honour/shame societies they promulgate a counter-cultural set of values where honour is no longer the social ideal.

While it may be the case that the authors of Isaiah are reacting against social values considered normative, I would nevertheless reiterate that it remains impossible to reconstruct the societies in which the texts were embedded and stress that the anthropological model is defective with regard to Isaiah for two reasons. First, Yhwh is represented as the wielder of honour and shame. His control over giving and taking honour eliminates the notions of inter-human challenge–ripostes and the claiming and acknowledging of honour. Yhwh's presence, one might say, deconstructs the social arrangements advanced by interpreters using anthropological data. Secondly, in so far as social patterns *are* evident in Isaiah, they

17. At 10.3 the riches that cannot avert disaster are referred to as כבודכם.

pertain not to ordinary day-to-day life in small face-to-face societies (such as are typical of the Mediterranean field studies) but to extreme conditions and the turbulence of invasion and war (5.26-30; 7.17; 8.7; 29.1-3; 36.1), destruction and siege (1.7-8; 3.25), violence, devastation, exile and starvation (3.1-5; 5.9-10, 13; 33.7-9): to a world where social values are depicted as inverted (5.20-23; 10.15; 29.16; 32.5). The rhetoric describing this context is often vivid and emotively charged.

If these *are* accounts approximating a social reality, then it is a social reality in extreme circumstances where social values are more likely to have been compromised. For instance, if the societies in which the texts of Isaiah were produced were ordinarily societies in which, as in the communities of the modern anthropological studies, women behaved in public in a passive and submissive, modest and restrained way, what the text actually describes at 4.1 is a situation quite contrary to such conduct. Here seven women seize one man and demand that he marry them. This is most likely to be atypical conduct and reflective of unstable social conditions. The rhetoric of First Isaiah tries to make sense of a situation of extremity, described at 14.3 as one of suffering (from עצב), turmoil (רגז) and harsh servitude (העבדה הקשה). While ultimately the verity of these circumstances can only be guessed at, it still seems unhelpful in my view to project a social-sciences model on to, or to attempt to discern the core social values of texts which not only feature Yhwh, the representation of whom has a crucial impact on the social dynamics portrayed, but which are at pains to stress a most untypical state of affairs.

Excursus
Shame and the Role of Yhwh

Yhwh's role in the context of the prophetic construction of shame is significant but not, to my knowledge, adequately discussed in the interpretative literature. Where the anthropological honour/shame model is applied to biblical texts the issue of the representation of Yhwh is conspicuously absent. Perhaps the reason is that in the field studies honour pertains above all to competition among men who are relative equals, whereas Yhwh is an all-powerful and competition-eliminating super-force, who sits uneasily within such a social arrangement. Alternatively, Yhwh, much like a monarch (as described by Pitt-Rivers 1977: 15) may be above criticism, with the consequence, that shame cannot apply to him. Yhwh's function in the honour/shame dynamic, or his connection with shame in particular, at any rate, rarely receives mention.

Domeris has pointed out that in the book of Proverbs honour is depicted not as the social, status-conferring commodity disputed for among men but as a quality of Yhwh's alone, which he distributes as he pleases; shame, on the other hand, is associated with the foolish or godless, never with Yhwh. DeSilva (1996) identifies honour with 'devout reason' as exemplified by fidelity to Yhwh and the Torah, while shame is a quality incurred when such fidelity is compromised. Honour thus belongs to Yhwh, whereas shame belongs to humanity.

Huber, however, argues that Yhwh *is* capable of a sense of shame and that this can be deduced in the Psalms. Yhwh, she claims, on the one hand *confers* shame on his people, usually by means of abandonment and consequent exposure to suffering (1983: 164); while on the other, incongruity is exploited with a view to *arousing* shame in Yhwh himself. When, for instance, there exists incongruity between what Yhwh has promised and what he is actually doing, his failure to achieve or fulfil an ideal or promise is implied and in that failure shame is aroused (1983: 172-73). In Ps. 74, Huber expands, an incongruity between Yhwh's promises and the present shameful condition, which is perceived to be unjust, is made more acute by juxtaposition with former acts of honour and creation (1983: 170). Her conclusion is that Yhwh, too, is vulnerable to shaming. While his worshippers have an obligation to honour him, their dishonour may reflect on his honour, too, and may be appealed to in order to influence his behaviour (1983: 175).

Sherwood's depiction of Yhwh in Hos. 1–3 could also be connected with Huber's comments. Sherwood illustrates that Yhwh, represented as an abusive figure, forces his people into submission by humiliating them (1996: 212). He is also, however, susceptible to the competition from another compelling god, namely Baal, alongside whom he does not wish to appear deficient. Citing Ugaritic parallels, Sherwood illustrates that 'Yhwh not only competes with Baal for the role of provider, but competes using the same lexis' (1996: 233) and that he has 'responded to peer pressure' (1996: 225). This could be associated with a sense of shame: that is, the feeling incited by a perception of shortcoming, or of being seen to be inadequate, alongside a significant other.

Hobbs, too, implies that Yhwh can be shamed. Recognizing a patron-client social pattern in the background of a significant portion of biblical literature, Hobbs explains that both parties are dependent on each other for honour:

> The patron gains honor through the widespread knowledge that he can sustain a large body of clients or retainers through his 'generosity,' and clients gain honor by being associated with such a figure. The breaking of this bond by one or the other results in shaming the opposite partner (1997: 502).

The people of Israel/Judah through disobedience infringe on their bond with Yhwh and thus suffer the shaming punishments of exile and ridicule but, according to Hobbs, a further implication is that exile is also 'a result of their Patron *par excellence*, Yahweh, not being able to sustain his clients' (1997: 503). This incisive shame experience, which affects both participants of the relationship, culminated, Hobbs continues, in the creative theological activity of the exilic and postexilic prophets, where shame language is so prominent.

None of these commentators addresses Yhwh's relationship with shame in any detail. These excerpts do, however, suggest two alternative positions:

1. Yhwh is represented as the generator of shame but as exempt from it, with shame pertaining to humans only (Domeris). His Torah might be regarded as some kind of means to attaining honour and avoiding shame (deSilva), in which case Yhwh may have a role loosely equated with society's superego.
2. Yhwh is represented as conferring shame but also as susceptible to it; he is rather like an extra-powerful human being (Sherwood; Huber; Hobbs).

In First Isaiah, as we have seen, the former position applies: shame is here primarily indicative of human conduct. In Deutero-Isaiah, however, the latter is also implied. This may be seen at 48.9-11 and 52.5. In 48.11, following a reprimand for disobedience, stubbornness (48.4) and idolatry (48.5), Yhwh declares that his interventions in history are motivated by his concern for his name (48.9) and honour (כבוד) (48.11). He announces that he will not yield his כבוד to another (וכבודי לאחר לא־אתן) and that he will not let himself be defamed (איך יחל, from חלל, 'to pollute, defile, profane'). Similarly, at 52.5, following a call to Jerusalem to arise and preceding a promise to protect his people, Yhwh again alludes to a concern for his name (היום שמי מנאץ, 'all/by day my name is blasphemed').[18] Both of these suggest Yhwh's regard and protective concern for his status and—by implication—sensitivity to the emotion of shame.

18. The word translated 'to blaspheme' is from the root נאץ, 'to revile, spurn'.

Women, Shame and Referred Metaphor[19] *in Isaiah*

One prominent prophetic metaphor that sometimes incorporates shame discourses is that of a city cast in the role of a woman.[20] Schmitt argues that speaking of a city as a בתולה (often translated 'virgin'), for instance, is part of 'traditional Israelite language' (1991: 387).[21] The word is not to be understood as 'virgin' in modern English usage is (i.e. *virgo intacta*) but primarily as '(young) woman'. At Isa. 47, for example, as Schmitt (1991: 368) draws attention to, the city of Babylon is simultaneously בתולה, daughter (47.1), mother and widow (47.8). It probably connotes a young woman who is under the protection of either her father or husband—just as the capitals Samaria and Jerusalem were perceived as being under Yhwh's protection. In Amos 5.2 and Jer. 18.13, where the word occurs in a construct relationship with 'Israel', that protection is coming to an end. In Isa. 47 the disempowerment of unprotected Babylon (בתולת בת־בבל, 47.1) is described as the uncovering of a woman's nakedness and a making visible of her shame (חרפה, 47.3). (In Jeremiah and Ezekiel, too, where the city/woman metaphor is linked with shame discourses, such voyeuristic sexualized language is prominent.)

Setel claims that 'the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve "shorter" prophets...seem to be the first to use objectified female sexuality as a symbol of evil' (1985: 86). She also argues that they contain pornographic features (1985: 87). Ezekiel, as I will go on to argue, portrays women's sexuality as a symbol of sin and impurity; Isaiah, on the other hand, strikes me as decidedly less condemning. The degrading treatment of women in Isaiah, further, may not be aimed at arousing voyeuristic titillation (as pornography does) but, rather, shame and outrage, as in Lamentations.

19. I found the articles in Johnson's edition (1981) to provide a useful introduction to the complexities of metaphor.

20. Arguably, this metaphor permits some scope for illuminating the role of women in ancient Israel, which could then, in turn, be compared to the role of women depicted in the Mediterranean studies. I would emphasize, however, that such attempts have tended to be obstructed by an unhelpfully literal reading of metaphorical 'women' (see below, pp. 146-51).

21. This was argued in an earlier article by Fitzgerald (1972), who traces the image back to the Canaanite notion of representing capital cities as the consorts of patron deities.

In Lamentations, I believe, the personification of Jerusalem as a desolate and weeping woman affects the tone considerably. While Yhwh is called righteous (Lam. 1.18) and is humbly acquiesced to in expressions of repentance, he is also a wreaker of fierce vengeance (1.5), who sends fire, spreads a net and tramples on the Virgin Daughter of Judah (1.13-15); he is pitiless (2.2) and 'like an enemy' (2.4-5). I would say that this could justifiably be called emotive imagery that shows Yhwh in a less than edifying light. Alongside this brute the Virgin or Daughter of Zion (a title referred to insistently) appears as particularly vulnerable, as an easy target. Though she is not guiltless, the punishment seems appallingly fierce. The chorus describing her tearfulness and the plea for Yhwh to relent (2.20) only heighten the sense of her victimization. Whereas in Deut. 25.3 humans are instructed to restrict flogging so as not to deprive even a wrongdoer of human dignity,[22] Yhwh seems here (and in the case of Job also) to be indulging in viciousness. Such an abuse of power and severity might be said to promote the impression that humiliation is excessive, which might transpire in outrage rather than shame.

In a similar vein, Dobbs-Allsopp describes the situation of the personified Zion of Lamentations, where 'the consequences [are] out of proportion with the deed' (1997: 35), as typical of the genre of tragedy. Ultimately, tragedy is a matter for the gods whose power 'is not questioned, but their sense of justice and goodness certainly is' (1997: 35). Dobbs-Allsopp agrees that Zion is more sinned against than sinning, pointing out that the sin is referred to infrequently and imprecisely; in sharp contrast to the abundance of vivid images of suffering (1997: 37-40). Even the note of hope in 3.19-39 does not achieve a counter-balance, due to 'the defiance, the hubris that emerges in Lamentations, demanding recognition of human integrity and expressing the anger and despair of a community that has suffered greatly' (1997: 53-54). It provides, rather, 'a choric frame of reference', of traditional sentiments, much like the words

22. Weber points out that such attention to 'the ethical problems of the resentment of repressed and sublimated revenge' is even more in evidence in the Talmud: 'For nothing is more impressively emphasized than the commandment: not to will the "shaming" of others' (1952: 404). See also Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah, Deot* 6.8): '"If anyone shames his fellow man in public," declared the rabbis, "he forfeits his share in the next world." Consequently, one should be very careful not to humiliate another human being publicly, whether he is young or old.' This, incidentally, represents a sentiment contrary to that of the Psalter, where shame is repeatedly wished upon the enemy.

of Job's counsellors (1997: 49), that 'must ultimately be read ironically' (1997: 50).

Westermann interprets the accusing of God (*Anklage Gottes*) differently, as a characteristic element of the lament genre and an expression of faith in adversity. Pointing to Lamentations, Ps. 13 and Job as examples, he denies the existence of any criticism of the deity. The accusations in these texts are not, he argues, indictments of God in the legal sense, because the idea of a judicial forum before which God could be held accountable 'is impossible in the Biblical understanding' (1994: 92). The genre arises, he claims, from suffering of such intensity that it can neither be comprehended, nor envisaged as resulting from a deliberate act of God. While one psychological response to catastrophe might be private and public denial of God, the lament and accusation of God actually integrate faith into suffering: 'In the place of turning away from God...the Bible knows of another possibility: the one who holds up the incomprehensible against God manages still, in that very process, to hold firmly to God' (1994: 93).

Both Dobbs-Allsopp and Westermann acknowledge that Lamentation's Zion is an object worthy of pity. Westermann denies that this depiction implicates and criticizes Yhwh as perpetrator of shame and cruelty, whereas I am more inclined to agree with Dobbs-Allsopp that Yhwh's actions are met with a sense of shame so profound as to incite feelings of both abasement and outrage. This could again suggest that Yhwh himself is capable of shame (as suggested by some passages of Deutero-Isaiah): if he has no (positive) shame, then accusing him and drawing attention to the excessiveness of his anger and punishment is to no avail.

Returning now to Isaiah, the positive image of restored Zion is feminized (54.1-8): she is depicted as a woman who will not suffer shame, disgrace, humiliation or reproach (בוש, כלם, חפר, חרף).[23] Elsewhere, female qualities, in particular maternal love, are extolled—again balancing any impression that women might be regarded as somehow more prone to shamefulness.[24] The prophetic metaphor of military defeat as a woman

23. With Ezekiel, female imagery is prominent in descriptions of sin and impurity but not in descriptions of restoration (see below, pp. 138-51).

24. Mollenkott points out that maternal imagery is used several times of Yhwh in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah (42.14; 46.3; 49.15; 66.13) and suggests, 'Clearly the comparison of God's love with the love of a nursing mother [49.15] indicates that in the author's eyes, such motherlove is the *most* constant, *most* reliable, and *most* consistent of all forms of human caring' (1986: 20).

stripped and humiliated (Isa. 47; and also Jer. 13.22-27; Ezek. 16.37-41; 23.10, 26, 29; Nah. 3.5)[25] could possibly have resulted not from a value-system associating women with an inherent capacity for signifying and conferring shame but from a combination of the familiar notion of depicting cities as women, on the one hand, and the painful images of immediate experience on the other. Prostitution and violence against women, both of which feature in the feminized metaphors, are likely to have belonged to the ugly reality of warfare: they are described in passing in various prophetic texts (e.g. Amos 1.13; 7.17; Joel 3.3; Hos. 13.16; Lam. 5.11; Jer. 8.10) and such is the case to this day. The metaphor may thus be referred in the sense that it incorporates actual experience into the metaphor. In this context shame discourses, much like the so-called Janus paronomasia,[26] may be said sometimes to look back to concrete humiliating circumstances and forward to the inward experience of shame, which is capable of effecting proper respect and preparing for a restoration where shame is eliminated.

Washington has argued that both the biblical laws of war (Deut. 20.1-20; 21.10-14) and prophetic imagery inscribe 'the discursive positioning of the feminine as object of violence' (1997: 346). This, he continues, characterizes ancient Israelite society as a rape culture, where 'a relatively high incidence of sexual violence is supported by social mechanisms ranging from the tacit acceptance of sexual assault to the ritual celebration of rape' (1997: 352 n. 108). Washington concedes that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a cultural record such as might be gained from direct

25. In Hosea a parallel is drawn between Gomer and faithless Israel—in this instance, between a woman and a nation, rather than a city. Gomer, like the woman representing Babylon, is stripped publicly (2.12) and נבלתה ('her shamefulness'?) is revealed before the eyes of her lovers. The noun נבלה pertains elsewhere in a non-concrete sense to 'disgraceful folly' (BDB) of a sexual kind (Gen. 34.7; Deut. 22.21; Judg. 19.23; 2 Sam. 13.12; Jer. 29.23), or to sacrilege (Roth 1960: 406). It seems to refer to churlishness in a more general sense at Isa. 32.6. Whether the stripping of Gomer is also a metaphor for Israel's punishment through military defeat is less clear. Israel's sin here is apostasy and it is true that in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel also the worship of idols is a resonant theme and often cited as grounds for judgment through military conquest. Restoration in Hos. 2, further, is associated with a termination of battles (2.20). A link between stripping and military action, nevertheless, is not explicit and cannot be assumed.

26. The designation 'Janus pun' is used by both Fox (1985) and Snaith (1993), who attribute it to Cyrus H. Gordon. They give this name to an image which looks both back to an image occurring earlier in a text and forward to another occurring later.

ethnographic observation but, instead, literary constructs. None the less, he claims that the prevalence of rape in biblical narrative might be said to indicate a rape culture. He points for evidence to the depictions of Hagar, whose 'sexual subjugation to Abraham and Sarah can scarcely be regarded as consensual'; Dinah; the Midianite women (Num. 31.18); the Levite's wife (Judg. 19.25); the women of Jabesh-gilead and Shiloh (Judg. 21.12-14; 19-23); Rizpah; Bathsheba; Tamar; and David's wives, who 'all make clear that sexual assault and coercion were considered commonplace in ancient Israel' (1997: 353 and n. 110). This claim strikes me as too strong. Even if rape was 'considered commonplace', it does not follow that it was not strongly condemned, or that raped women were not regarded with compassion and empathy (as, according to the text, Tamar was). Washington also points for support to the figurative depiction of the conquered city as a raped woman and the punishing God as vengeful rapist (1997: 354). With this prophetic metaphor, he claims, the reality of violence against women is erased through 'facile images of redemption, such as the improbable restoration of the devastated woman to the status of a cherished virginal bride (Isa. 62.3-5), or the unproblematic renewal of relationship once the deity-husband's murderous sexual rage has been spent (Hos. 2.16-17...)' (1997: 356).

I would agree that the images of Ezek. 16 and 23, where the brutally punished woman inaugurates restoration, have disturbing implications (see below, pp. 138-51). It none the less remains important, however, to stress what Washington has admitted: namely, that neither the depiction of raped women in the narratives, nor the imagery of the prophets, can be said to encapsulate social reality. Washington's reflections on the focalization of rape depictions in biblical texts do disclose a tendency to reify raped women, but there exists scope, too, for a more moderate and compassionate regard. Washington's claims, for instance, that 'Tamar's desolation quickly fades from view' and that 'her memory as a delectable rape victim (in the masculinist mind's eye) is preserved in her niece and namesake, Absalom's daughter Tamar, "a beautiful woman" (2 Sam. 14.27)' (1997: 353) betray his personal slant on the story. I would argue that Tamar emerges as a vivid and emotionally affecting figure who is not easily forgotten: her direct speech and entreaties, wailing and desolation, are recounted in the story (2 Sam. 13.12-19); she is referred to again later (13.32) and she lives on in her namesake, Absalom's daughter, who was possibly named after her as a mark of affection. The reference to her niece's beauty, furthermore, seems to be harking back to the description of

Tamar in 13.1. I do not see here an allusion to delectability for rape but a note of hope that the young Tamar, so like her aunt, may go on to live a life that was denied her aunt through an act of unmitigated brutality.[27] In Lamentations, too, there is grief felt for the women of Jerusalem (Lam. 3.51) and rape is cited in the catalogue of misfortunes preceding an entreaty to Yhwh to remember Jerusalem (5.11). This seems either to indicate or to be aimed at inciting compassion and perhaps, also, identification with the woman as victim of violence, as opposed to a man's defiled possession.

A negative feminized depiction of sinning Jerusalem receives scant attention in Isaiah.[28] Described as having become impure (1.22), Jerusalem is likened to a city of faithfulness that has become a prostitute (1.21) (Galambush 1992: 52-53). This metaphor, which is considerably more elaborate in Ezekiel, is amply counterbalanced with positive feminine imagery pertaining to restoration (54.1-8; 62.1-5). While Washington has dismissed prophetic rhetoric pertaining to women's sexuality as 'facile' and as perpetuating violence against women (1997: 356), I would say that this is less true of Isaiah than of Ezekiel. Rape may well have been in

27. Washington accuses Bechtel of erasing the forced sexual subjugation of Dinah by choosing to focus on Shechem's loving (אהב) and bonding with her (דבק, Gen. 34.3) as well as on Jacob and Hamor's willingness to arrange their marriage, while neglecting Shechem's taking (לקח), sexually penetrating and humiliating her (שכב, ענה, Gen. 34.3) (1997: 357 and n. 127). While I find Washington's comments valuable in this particular instance, I would argue that his insistence that rape is inscribed in biblical literature only insofar as it offends men, thereby entirely erasing the reality of violence against women (1997: 356) is too strong. The rape of Tamar and (though less directly) the personified Jerusalem of Lamentations, is vividly conveyed and identification with the victim is sympathetic.

28. This image is used of foreign cities: of Babylon, who is publicly stripped (47.3) and of Tyre, who is likened to a forgotten prostitute (23.15-18). Babylon, unlike Jerusalem in Ezekiel, is not rebuked and put to shame for a crime depicted as adultery but, instead, for her pride. Galambush comments: 'Remarkably, Queen Babylon's sexual integrity is never impugned' (1992: 43). Sidon, too, is told to be ashamed (23.4) without any allusion to negatively evaluated sexual conduct. While foreign cities may thus occasionally be depicted as women who are sexually promiscuous (Tyre), proud (Babylon) and exulting (Sidon, 23.12), they are not, like Jerusalem in Ezekiel, accused of adultery. Galambush explains: 'Presumably Yahweh was not as concerned with the sexual conduct of other gods' wives as he was with that of his own wife' (1992: 27 n. 5). In the background of these metaphors lies, she argues, the ancient Near Eastern conception of the city being not only mother to her inhabitants but consort of the patron deity (cf. Fitzgerald 1972).

ancient Israel (as it is nowadays) one of the brutal and widely practised consequences of military invasion. Rape may for this reason have infiltrated the figurative imagery of the prophets as a referred metaphor. The existence of this metaphor, however, need not signify a rape culture that condones rape and regards women solely as vessels capable of containing or threatening male power and prestige.

Shame, Wealth and Idolatry

The sexualized woman metaphor associated with apostasy and shame is more prominent in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In both First and Deutero-Isaiah shame is most often associated (in a non-feminized way) with idolatry. Foreign religious practices and extravagant idols are much lambasted. At 2.6 Israel is rebuked for being 'full of the East', for practising divination 'like the Philistines' and for having dealings with foreigners (נכרים).[29] The following verses describe that the land is full of silver, gold, treasures and idols. In the light of the announcement that a humbling of the arrogant and lofty will ensue (2.9, 11-17), bringing about abandonment of idols (2.18, 20), this abundance is indicative not of reward but of something that is regarded negatively.

In chs. 40–48 this topos is particularly prominent and here shame language appears repeatedly. As in ch. 2, the power and glory of Yhwh are stressed (2.10-21; 40.5-31) and contrasted with the insignificance of idols (40.18-20). Israel is small and weak but Yhwh will help her (41.14), while shame (41.11: יבשׁו ויכלמו) befalls all who oppose him. Elsewhere, shame is the consequence of trusting in idols (42.17: יבשׁו בשׁת הבטחים בפסל), making idols (44.9-11; 45.16), or of raging against Yhwh (44.24). The idols are again described as costly—they are decorated with gold and silver (40.19; 46.6)—and as associated with foreigners from the East (41.2, 7). Neither Babylon's religious practices (47.9, 12-13), nor her wealth can assist her and she is shamed (47.3). Only Yhwh can preserve from shame (45.17, 24-25). In the latter chapters shame is only referred to in the context of being erased (54.4; 61.7). Yhwh's servants are exonerated from shame—unlike those who fail to honour him (65.13; 66.5).

29. NIV translates the word 'pagans', whereas Van der Toorn claims that נכר can also pertain to Israelites who are considered outsiders (1989: 199). In this context of Eastern practices and Philistines נכרים probably refers to foreigners. The tone is pejorative.

At 30.22 the idols of silver and gold are also depicted as repulsive. Here the pejorative tone is struck not by an association with foreigners, excess and arrogance but with an unclean thing (דוה).[30] The association of valuables with defilement and shame appears to be characteristically prophetic. This is particularly clear at Ezek. 7.14-22, where during the outbreak of panic attending the siege of Jerusalem, the people in their shame (בושה) throw their silver into the streets and consider their gold repulsive (נדה). The reason is that silver and gold were the stumbling block for their evil (כשול עונם, 7.19). Galambush likens the urgency and revulsion of the people's reaction (presumably contrary to their usual regard for money) to the treatment of a defiled person. At Ezek. 18.6 and 22.10 (and perhaps also at 36.17) נדה refers to a menstruating woman. The role of silver and gold as the occasion for עון ('guilt'), however, is not immediately apparent: 'Although greed could have been the cause of dishonesty, or wealth a source of inordinate pride, these are never cited by Ezekiel as the cause of the city's destruction' (Galambush 1992: 132). The crux of the revulsion is, according to Galambush, that it is the silver and gold of *the temple* that are used for making idols (Ezek. 7.20). This interpretation, while not implausible, is not explicitly supported by the text. In Isaiah, too, the temple origins of the defiling silver and gold are not specified. At Ezek. 7.24 there is, however, as in Isaiah, a foretelling of the fall of the proud and mighty (גאון עזים). The allusion to menstruation, here more explicit than at Isa. 30.22, is, according to Galambush, so poignant because:

> The temple was not only protected from contact with the unclean, but also was the place where blood was employed as a purifying agent. The image of the temple becoming 'like a menstruant' is shocking, both because of its implied juxtaposition of holy with unclean and because of its juxtaposition of the most clean (holy) *blood* with the most unclean (1992: 133).

The people entering and profaning the treasured place at Ezek. 7.21-22 are probably foreign. As there is mention of handing over plunder to strangers (7.21, זרים) and of the wicked of the nations seizing Jerusalem's houses (7.24), it is not unlikely that it is foreigners who defile Yhwh's צפון, a place which, according to Galambush, 'evokes both the holy of holies and its symbolic status as the womb of Yahweh's wife' (1992: 134).

30. Cf. NIV 'menstrual cloth'. The word דוה pertains to menstruation at Lev. 15.33 and 20.18 and is regarded as defiling. On menstruation and impurity see also Be'er 1994.

In Isaiah, idolatry and menstruation are associated less directly and the foreignness of the repugnant silver and gold is stressed; in Ezekiel, the emphasis is cultic and the metaphor links impurity with sexual profanity.

Gold and silver, in the context of the Hebrew Bible, generally speaking have positive denotations of being valuable and desirable in both a concrete and figurative sense.[31] In prophetic rhetoric, however, they are sometimes associated with things foreign, extravagant, repulsive and shameful. Israel stands in contrast to wealth and power, being small (41.14). Israel is encouraged to strive not for power, splendour and possessions but for humility and obedience to Yhwh. The experience of destruction and humiliation, furthermore, has effected not so much outrage or implicit accusations aimed at the deity[32] but, instead, shame. This shame looks back, on the one hand, to the causes of humiliation—namely, arrogance (claiming כבוד, גאון and הדר, instead of acknowledging that these rightfully belong to Yhwh), disobedience, apostasy and putting trust in earthly splendour and riches—all of which are linked, in what may be a polemical twist, to other nations and foreigners. Yhwh is not indicted but constantly extolled as all-powerful. Shaming punishment, it seems, is not perceived as excessive in the way it is in Job or Lamentations. This, in turn, gives rise to (or is intended to effect) not outrage but a humbling self-evaluation. The restoration envisaged is one where shame is eliminated. Shame, then, seems to be a mechanism here that both signifies punishment but is capable also of looking forward to respite from punishment.[33]

31. Cf. BDB, זהב and כסף. Both are costly gifts at 1 Kgs 15.18-19. Silver is contrasted with dross at Prov. 25.4-5, where it is emblematic of righteousness; gold metaphorically describes Job's integrity (23.10).

32. As Dobbs-Allsopp illustrates, the opposite is true of Lamentations. Here the lack of specificity concerning Judah's sin is in sharp contrast to the vivid portraiture of suffering which 'effectively plays down the sin theme, which does not seize the reader with anything like the intensity of the images of suffering' (1997: 37). The gruesome images of children dying from starvation and being cannibalized by their mothers (2.11-12; 4.2-4, 10), for instance, 'stand as paradigms of innocent suffering for which there is no justification and for which Yahweh's actions are directly and indirectly responsible' (1997: 38). Further, imprecations aimed at the enemies implicate Yhwh who sent them and the invocations for Yhwh to see the injustice suffered by the community take on a tone of indictment against the background of 2.20-22 (1997: 38).

33. The effectiveness of such a shame mechanism in the context of deploring idolatry could be illuminated with recourse to what in the discipline of sociology is referred to as 'deviance'. Chalcraft has discussed deviance with regard to the book of Judges (1990) and has claimed more recently, too, that the areas of law and deviance

Summary

While the book of Isaiah contains a lot of honour and shame vocabulary, it is difficult to argue for it reflecting the social patterns of honour/shame societies. Honour is not associated primarily with men or actively sought and contested for but belongs to Yhwh; the value of humility, which emerges as an ideal, is at variance with the Mediterranean notion of honour; shame, furthermore, is depicted as belonging above all to humanity but not to women in particular. While the prophetic woman/city metaphor is used of Babylon to describe public shaming (ch. 47) and of Jerusalem to depict moral corruption (ch. 1), such negative feminized imagery is balanced with positive woman metaphors pertaining to restoration.

Neither the challenge–riposte interaction, nor a political gender focus, then, features prominently in Isaiah. This does not necessarily negate the provenance of this text in a culture where such features did affect social dynamics, but discerning social structures in Isaiah is nevertheless problematic. This is due both to the dominant role of Yhwh and the ostensibly extreme circumstances. Yhwh, being both source of honour and generator of shame, is difficult to accommodate in the honour/shame matrix. The upheaval in social conditions associated with the exile, meanwhile, while it may have had an impact on imagery in the form of referred metaphors, is likely to have subverted more usual social patterns.

When the shame vocabulary is examined apart from the anthropological model, it emerges that shame in Isaiah pertains to an unsound moral condition, to the disapproved of practice of idolatry and to a dysfunctional relationship between humanity and deity. It is inculcated in order to

(criminal and stigmatized) are a rich vein to mine (1997). According to 'labelling theory', no act is 'naturally' right or wrong, deviant or normal; instead, acts are socially defined. Behaviour labelled 'deviant', therefore, is socially relative and constitutes that which in a circumscribed social context is considered unacceptable. The texts of Isaiah might thus be said to be using shame discourses with a view to labelling idolatrous conduct as deviant and socially stigmatizing behaviour. Further, it could be postulated that the prophetic adultery and impurity images pertaining to idolatry are examples of 'deviance amplification', whereby 'the extent and seriousness of deviance is distorted and exaggerated, with the effect that social control agencies take a greater interest in the purported existence of the phenomenon and thus uncover, but actually "construct", more examples of it, giving the impression that the initial distortion was actually a true representation' (Jary and Jary 1995: 163-64).

redress these shortfalls, to facilitate self-examination and, eventually, to procure restoration. Having both a subjective and objective dimension, shame is an apt emotion for such inculcation. On the one hand it looks out at the humiliating circumstances, on the other, inward to negative self-evaluation, which might transpire in restoration without shame. Idolatry is linked with both shame and foreignness, which may point to an anti-foreign ideology. The presence of ideological nuances in shame discourses will be explored in the ensuing chapter.

Chapter 3

SHAME AND JEREMIAH

Ideological Criticism

Social-scientific criticism—be it the appropriating of concepts and models, or the interpreting of literature and history through categories borrowed from sociology or anthropology—can only be combined with biblical criticism with caution. As I have tried to illustrate in my review of interpretative articles appropriating the honour/shame model and in the preceding chapter with reference to Isaiah, projecting a carefully defined modern research practice or taxonomy on to an ancient text is often unsuccessful. One reason is that the model may cease to be used as a heuristic pattern for organizing data, becoming instead a means of filling in inconvenient gaps where evidence is lacking. The 'findings' are, therefore, often little more than inventions, or imaginative reconstructions and likely to be anachronistic.[1]

One achievement of poststructuralist criticism[2] has been the questioning of the surface level of texts and the acknowledgment that the notion of 'meaning' is elusive. Such a suspicion of the surface meaning of a text is, I think, essential. Rather than reading biblical texts at 'face value' and assuming that they mirror social reality, it is important, I believe, to interrogate the evidence they do provide and to attempt to probe the operations of power they may reflect. This may loosely be called ideological criticism.[3] Such an approach by no means denies the influence of social forces

1. My approach is at odds with that of Neyrey: 'I take these models and test them. Do they apply to the first century? By and large I find that, yes, the honor and shame system described by anthropologists does apply to the ancient texts. This is not anachronistic, imposing a twentieth century phenomenon' (cited by Martin 1993: 108).

2. I found both Abrams's (1988: 203-207) and Beardslee's article (1993) useful and succinct introductions to the complex phenomenon of poststructuralism.

3. Pippin's definition admits to the complexity of the word 'ideology': '[It is] the political manifestation of the repressed/oppressed imagination of the biblical writer,

on texts. One advantage of the poststructuralist ideological approach is that it questions texts and their gaps with a view to probing the machinations of social power, and that it admits to (even stresses) the impossibility of providing a clear-cut picture. A functionalist or close empirical approach, meanwhile, often tends to regard what is written as providing actual insight into a bygone social reality. It is not the case that interpreters using social-scientific methods are *inevitably* impervious to these problems or limitations but rather, that poststructuralist criticism foregrounds them. Like source criticism, a poststructuralist approach breaks up a text's pretensions to unity; it does not, however, unlike source criticism, pursue the reconstruction of coherence. Instead, the futility of reconstruction is explored, or, as Beardslee puts it: 'Its function is rather to lead readers to live without absolutes, in a world of process that is not directed to a goal' (1993: 225). While such a pursuit may be less 'satisfying' than the critical approaches that make definitive claims and purport to distil statements of fact, it is, I think, more honest.

The texts comprising the Hebrew Bible are, I believe, enigmatic and in offering my interpretation of a selection of them, I acknowledge that my own biases will inevitably encroach, exacerbating rather than resolving the situation of unknowability. Such an admission in the context of biblical criticism is, of course, far from novel (what is?). Penchansky, for instance, examines Judg. 2.10-23 from the standpoint that both textual production

narrator, character, ancient readers/hearers and/or contemporary readers. Or, ideology is false consciousness...imposed on the masses by the dominant political or religious forces. Or, ideology is blindness... There is no neutral or objective place the reader can claim; degrees and types of privilege always linger—on the lips, the page, the political relationships. More often, ideology stands for the value system and cultural mores of a biblical writer or text. In brief here is how this language of ideology in biblical studies sounds: there is "the ideology of" the Chronicler and the Priestly writer(s), but also of the narrator and the characters. In sociological (and some literary) criticism, locating these ideologies can help reveal the historical context of the text. (These methods often slip into the referential fallacy which claims a direct insight into the ancient world...)' (1996: 52). See also Carroll, who admits that the word can be confusing because it has various meanings, among them a pejorative Marxist one and a positive one pertaining to 'a system of ideas which is capable of motivating behaviour, can be used to criticise false ideas and practices within the community and is a method of analysing the social structures operating in any society' (1981: 17). Aware of 'the ambiguities and less than satisfactory aspects of the term', Carroll persists in using it, because 'few other terms convey the possibility of the distortion inherent in all systems of thought used to impose political control on communities as well as it does' (1981: 17). With the qualifications of Pippin and Carroll in mind, it remains, I believe, a useful designation.

and interpretative or critical analysis are 'a violent grabbing to obtain and maintain the privileged interpretive position' (1992: 35). His conclusion, hence, is that,

> It is my selection and hierarchization of the material I encounter, influenced by the readings of others, that determine my reading. Although I might claim to be presenting 'just the text,' I am adding my connections, my clarification of ambiguities, and whether consciously or not, I am concealing or clouding over elements that don't fit my thesis (1992: 39).[4]

Sometimes articles purporting to be ideological readings take much at face value and do not refer explicitly to the complexities of interpretation Penchansky describes as inevitable. Let me use Wessels's 'Jeremiah 22,24-30: A Proposed Ideological Reading' (1989) as an example of this, in order to (1) illustrate that 'ideological criticism' is a broad label and (2) indicate how I propose to use it. Wessels accepts that ideology[5] underlies all human activity and therefore all of the biblical texts and attempts to, 'throw light on the relationship between reality (the situation in Jerusalem round about 597 before Christ) and knowledge (Jeremiah's judgment on Jehoiachin)' (1989: 233). He admits that this is daunting, that 'the coherence of [Jeremiah's] thought in the book as a whole' must be taken into consideration, that careful attention must be paid to a reconstruction of the society in which the prophet found himself and that this task is too great for a short article (though he does not claim that it should be impossible per se) (1989: 233). Wessels's first step in indicating ideological elements in the prophet's concept of kingship is 'to isolate the genuine Jeremianic words from the demarcated pericope [22.24-30]' (1989: 233). All of these introductory comments disclose huge assumptions: for instance, that there was an original Jeremiah who was a prophet

4. I agree with this sentiment, that it is advisable to keep in mind that one can write only 'under erasure'—an expression of Derrida's to express the tension of recognition that interpretative discourse is necessary but philosophically impossible (cf. Penchansky 1992: 40; Beardslee 1993).

5. Wessels uses the definition of Deist: '[Ideology is the] ideas of thinking characteristic of an individual or group, shaped by political, social, religious and other factors (conscious, unconscious and subconscious) and providing the frame of reference within which he or they judge and act (an ideology is true if the ideas in it are in accordance with reality, false if they are at variance with it)' (1989: 233). This definition is extremely wide and somewhat dependent on the nature of 'reality', which is, again, notoriously difficult to determine. If we speak of a 'true' and a 'false' ideology we are again in the realm of absolutes.

who lived at around 597 BCE and who composed some of the words contained in the book which bears his name; that his encounter with Jehoiachin really occurred and that his opinions and the environment which shaped him can, in part at least, be inferred and reconstructed from these words.

Wessels, then, takes rather a lot at face value. In spite of his title ('...A Proposed Ideological Reading'), this tendency may be regarded as somewhat inconsistent with ideological criticism. As Carroll explains, characteristically, such an approach is suspicious of reading the accounts in the book of Jeremiah as depicting historical facts and reporting the prophet Jeremiah's words (1996a: 126). While this might be considered non-conventional, such suspicion is attuned to the possibility of the existence of alternative agendas, such as the ideological contributions that are likely to have influenced the process of the book's construction. It is possible, for instance, that editors of the book of Jeremiah—the existence of whom Wessels in his search for 'genuine Jeremianic words, as opposed to a later edited copy' acknowledges (1989: 236, cf. also 245)—did not so much focus on reporting past events as on producing a representation of Jeremiah (Carroll 1996a: 126-27). Of the two camps—those preferring to read texts at 'face value' with some minor adjustments on the one hand and on the other, those preferring to read texts as if they have undergone major rewriting and reinterpretation—I would be more inclined to align myself with the latter. Unlike Wessels, who speaks of the book's coherence as a whole, I am more struck by the fragmented, confusing state of the text[6] and would say that such a text is less likely to have been substantially put together by one single author than by a series of authors and editors. This does not deny the one-time existence of a prophet called Jeremiah per se, or the possibility of one author using a huge diversity of images and voices, but it does allow for the likelihood that such an ancient text has a lengthy and complex process of production and editing behind it, which may have muffled any original voice.

Returning to the ideologies that might be in the background of prophetic texts, Carroll, examining Jer. 32, alongside Lev. 25–27, 1 Kgs 21 and 2 Kgs 9.17-26, all of which, he argues, 'highlight certain features of the Second Temple period' (1991: 110), points out that such elements of Jer. 32 as the restoration of the land and Jerusalem being the object of divine

6. I have some sympathy for Meier, who is cited by Carroll: '[Jeremiah] is the most varied, unpredictable, and quite simply, chaotic of any book in the Hebrew Bible' (1996a: 129).

wrath since its foundation, feature in other Second Temple literature. Taken together with other strands, such as the biblical polemic against inter-marriage with Canaanite people (Ezra 9.1-2; Neh. 13.23-27), this body of literature points, he claims, to a particular ideology. This ideology appears to single out the people who have been dispersed by exile for the prospect of a brighter future (cf. Jer. 32.37-44), while those who have remained behind belong to the 'desolate waste' identified with Yhwh's anger (Jer. 32.30-35, 43). It could be argued that they are polluted by, among other things, inter-marriage. Carroll's probing of these texts gives rise to a gap: the silence regarding the offensiveness of the foreignness of Babylonian or Persian wives. In fact, they do not appear to be an obstacle to success at all. Carroll's question, 'Now who could possibly benefit from such an ideology of prohibited relations and permissible marriages?' leads on to the answer:

> The books of Ezra and Nehemiah represent their eponymous protagonists (whether fictional, textual or historical is neither here nor there) as coming from Babylonia (Ezra 7.6) and Susa the Persian capital (Neh. 1.1). The chances of men from those areas having Canaanite wives did not apply to them or their like. I do not want to turn literature into history,[7] so I will simply draw attention to the functions served by an ideology of negative and positive foreignness. Any pressure group in the Jerusalem of the Second Temple period whose roots were in Babylonia or Persia could control land and property there with an ideology which outlawed those with Canaanite wives and which exempted other kinds of foreign wives from such a control (1991: 123).

Further to this, Carroll argues that 'the myth of the empty land' should be read as 'an ideological story controlling membership in the new community' (1992: 79). The text in Jeremiah recounting the event of the deportations is, he argues, much concerned with the ideological representation of the past as corrupt and corrupting (e.g. Jer. 2–25) (Carroll 1992: 81). Here the deportees associated with Jeconiah (traditionally dated as leaving Jerusalem in 597 BCE) are represented as 'good figs', the

7. See also Bourdieu, regarding the matter that rules and ideologies cannot be assumed to depict what social reality is/was like in practice: 'I was very pleased one day to come across a text by Weber which said, in effect: "Social agents obey the rule when it is more in their interest to obey it than to disobey it." This good, healthy materialist formula is interesting because it reminds us that the rule is not automatically effective by itself and that it obliges us to ask under what conditions a rule can operate' (1990: 76).

Jerusalem-Judah remnants associated with Zedekiah as 'bad figs'. Then, in ch. 29, those living in Babylon are represented as no longer under Yhwh's fierce anger: they are redeemable and will be brought back by Yhwh (1992: 82). The 'bad figs' of the Zedekiah deportation, meanwhile, belong to the past of divine anger not to the plans of restitution and prosperity. Such stories taken together, Carroll argues, in symbolic terms reflect

> an ideology of occupation and control of the temple community in the reconstructionist era of the Persian period. Not only are there exclusivist claims to possession of and power in the land, but there is also such a denigration of all opposition that no rival claim has any legitimacy whatsoever. Where once deportation may have been a sign of divine anger and rejection, here it has become a foundational element in the warrants for empowerment in the land (cf. Ezek 11.14-21) (1992: 83).

One aspect of this—again evident in Ezra and Nehemiah, books explicitly concerned with the return from exile and the resettlement of Jerusalem by the returnees, he continues—is the avoidance of intermarriage with peoples of the land (cf. Ezra 10; Neh. 13.23-27):

> Such avoidance could only be maintained by exclusivist relations within the community of the returning deportees (i.e. among the descendants of those who had been deported originally from the land with Jeconiah). Thus a sharp distinction was developed between those who had always lived in the land and those who had recently 'returned' to the land (1992: 84).

Carroll's argument, then, is that much of the material in Jeremiah, too, can be understood as 'a legitimation claim retrojected to the beginning of the Persian empire rather than as necessarily a genuine historical fact' (1992: 88) and it is worthwhile to keep this probability in mind. Whereas Wessels speaks of his long-term aim to reconstruct 'the coherence of Jeremiah's thought' and 'the historical and socio-cultural context of his thought, as well as the ideological content of Jeremiah's concept of kingship' (1989: 247), I would tend to want to emphasize the possible effects of the text's development. As Carroll mentions, texts as complex as Jeremiah are seldom found in the ancient world and hence, some account is necessary as to how it was produced, or how it evolved (1996a: 127). In the course of this, the possibility, even probability, of infiltration of ideological features through the ages should not be disregarded. It strikes me as less likely that in such a complex book the words of Jeremiah can be discerned on the basis of suffixes and 'characteristic' style, than that much was 'written in' over time, quite often either deliberately or unintentionally reflecting a particular agenda. Carroll's claim that 'Much—in some

sense perhaps all—of the literature of the Hebrew Bible must be regarded as the documentation of [the Second Temple community's] claims to the land and as a reflection of their ideology' (1992: 85) has a lot to recommend it—even if it only provokes one into a strategy of constant *Hinterfragen* (questioning what is behind the apparently transparent face value) and being on the lookout for how texts manipulate.

This is not to say, however, that the biblical texts reflect but one ideological mindset—that of the Second Temple community, for instance. Carroll, too, moves from the proposal that there is a discernible ideology encompassing claims to the land to questioning how this may have been received and whether there is evidence also of resistance.[8]

> But what about all those who did not recognize the rebuilt temple as the focal point of the new age dawning under the aegis of imperial power? What about the people who lived in the 'empty land' and who were denied their share in the temple cult? What about the many voices which can still just about be heard in the writings of the second temple period? Elements in Isaiah 40–66, especially 56–66, seem to oppose the temple or implicate those who serve the temple in practices of a dubious nature... What voices are these? A trawl of the biblical literature associated with the second temple period—and in a very real sense what in the Hebrew Bible cannot be associated with that period?—will reveal many different voices speaking out against the temple complex or representing an anti/non-temple set of attitudes (1992: 88-89).[9]

The subtleties of subversiveness should not be underestimated. Bourdieu, for instance, who writes of the literary field as existing within and reflecting a field of power (1996: 214), discusses a coexistent scope for subversion. Hence, he describes Berber poets who pass time appropriating

8. LaCocque (1990), meanwhile, argues for a whole body of subversive literature dating from the Second Temple period, including the books of Ruth, Esther, Susanna and Judith.

9. Gottwald's 'Eagletonian reading' of Isa. 40–55 (1992) is aimed at discerning the ideological background of the text and argues for a subversive counter-voice. Gottwald holds that chs. 40–55 is a coherent whole addressed to the descendants of the Jewish deportees in Babylonia at around 550–538 BCE, with the oppressed servant figure signifying 'Israel as mirrored and modelled in the author's own relationship to his audience' (1992: 44). Its intended aim is, he continues, to enlist the audience in a programme of return to Judah—which was attained at about the time of the text's completion. Gottwald claims that the text was not state-originated or approved and that it is 'highly probable that it was produced and consumed under clandestine and subversive conditions' (1992: 45).

sayings which everyone knows by making small displacements of sound and sense; and also such pre-Socratics as Empedocles who would completely renew the meaning of a saying or a line of Homer by subtly making the meaning of φως slide from its most common sense of 'light' or 'brilliance' to the less frequent, more archaic sense of 'the mortal'. Bourdieu explains that,

> by appropriating the common meaning they ensured a power over the group that, by definition, recognised itself in this common meaning; and this, in certain circumstances, in time of war or in moments of acute crisis, could assure them power of a prophetic type over the group's present and future (1990: 97).

Such overturning of 'the ordinary hierarchy of meanings' (1990: 97), Bourdieu argues, can be capable of putting into action 'a symbolic revolution which may be at the root of political revolutions' (1990: 97).

While recognizing prophetic literature as complex and as having evolved over an extended period of time, during which it was infiltrated by ideological, agenda-driven features, one should remain open, I think, to the possible existence of such subversions of language that might counteract dominant ideologies. Furthermore, there is much of merit, I believe, in the argument of Sherwood that deconstruction is an approach suited to the Hebrew Bible, because the texts within it so frequently work against themselves (1996: 190). As she explains, the punning and allusive language and overt sexual metaphors of Hos. 1–3, for instance, often seem to delight in inverting the text's precepts (1996: 203). Her concluding proposal is that the analogy between prophecy and postmodernism warrants a study in itself. Such a study, she suggests, would explore the confusion of boundaries evident in the writings of prophetic and postmodern authors. Both, she argues, mix the 'world' outside with fiction by, for example, inserting real names into fantastic fiction; both distort temporal sequence and syntax for special effect and both employ 'lexically and sexually exhibitionistic' terms in order to 'get past the reader's hardworn armour' (Barthelme, cited in Sherwood 1996: 329 and n. 32).

Before returning to the prophetic shame discourses, let me stress once more that I believe it to be impossible to be conclusive: all I can put forward is my own attempt of making 'my sense' of the texts. In focusing on shame in Jeremiah, or Isaiah, or Ezekiel, furthermore, I am aware that while there is a *comparative* preponderance of shame vocabulary in these books, it is not the case that they are preoccupied with shame. I have attempted to illustrate that prophetic texts are ideologically influenced

productions. In the following section I will argue that shame language in Jeremiah functions, sometimes insidiously, in discourses suggesting, as in Isaiah, an anti-foreign ideological position. There exists, too, an association between deviant (in this case bestial) sexuality and shame.

Shame Language and its Implications: Sexual Metaphor

The dominant purpose of shame discourses in Jeremiah seems to be to draw attention to the people's misconduct that has transpired in a fractured relationship between them and Yhwh, and to inculcate a sense of shame with a view to redressing this situation.[10] In Hebrew, as in English, then, there exist a proper and an improper shame. Camp has distinguished between them as follows: 'the shame-by-which-one-must-be-bound in order to avoid the shame-that-destroys' (1991: 5). In Jeremiah the people incur (improper) shame (from בוש as a consequence of transgression (e.g. 2.26) but they are rebuked, too, for not having (proper) shame (also from בוש) in the face of their loathsome conduct (e.g. 6.15).

The first occurrences of shame terminology are in ch. 2 of Jeremiah, which contains a caustic and prurient account of Jerusalem's transgressions. The חסד (NIV 'devotion'; BDB 'goodness, kindness') of her youth, when she was like a loving bride, following her lord even into an uncultivated land (2.2), as holy to Yhwh as the first-fruits of harvest and protected in return (2.3), has become wilful, brazen and persistent apostasy (2.17, 19, 23-25). There is mention of the forefathers turning from Yhwh (2.5); of priests, those concerned with the Torah, leaders and prophets straying (2.8) and of the land becoming defiled (טמא) detestable (תועבה) (2.7) and a plundered place (2.14), a wasteland of deserted towns where

10. Scheff has argued persuasively that shame features prominently in situations involving conformity, as a sanction that protects or otherwise promotes the status quo. He cites Asch's conformity study of 1959, which indicates that 75 per cent of subjects facing what seems to be a unified majority, accord with the majority response, even if it is blatantly erroneous (Scheff 1990: 89-95). Asch's study shows that most people find the experience of being in the minority extremely painful. The comments collected by Asch indicate that being seen to be non-conformist often gives rise to acute embarrassment and shame. Scheff argues that such shame responses are often barely visible but that they none the less function continuously. I would argue that those seeking to promote a particular agenda or ideology could utilize this social mechanism by prescribing what constitutes the 'proper' conduct that must be adhered to and exploiting the idea that non-conformity with this agenda will incite shame.

lions roar (2.15). Neither foreign gods (2.11) nor the nations (2.18, 36) can rectify this devastation.

At 2.20 the Masoretic Text has: כי מעולם שברתי עלך נתקתי מוסרתיך, 'for long ago I broke your yoke; I tore away your bonds'. In the Septuagint the verbs are in the second person feminine singular (cf. NIV and RSV). As carrying a yoke is usually a sign of oppression (e.g. Isa. 47.6) or punishment (Jer. 28.14) and removing it a metaphor of liberation (cf. Isa. 9.3; Yhwh removes Israel's yoke at Hos. 11.4), can the people be reproved for ridding themselves of it? Perhaps, it is indeed, as in the Masoretic Text, Yhwh who removes the symbols of bondage and it is once Israel has more scope for choice that she abandons him and decides to serve no more (2.20). In the light of Jer. 5.5-6,[11] the bonds may symbolize some kind of ethical check (not unlike proper shame) that may not always be comfortable and easy but which is perceived as maintaining social control and equilibrium.

In chs. 2 and 5 the abandonment of the yoke unleashes behaviour that is metaphorically depicted as an unabashed display of bestial sexual promiscuity. At 2.20 Israel lies down as a prostitute (זונה) on *every* high hill and under *every* spreading tree,[12] whereas at 5.7 the children of Jerusalem throng (hithpolel of גדד) to the house of a prostitute. There are also vulgar comparisons with animals:

> How can you say, 'I have not defiled myself! I have not pursued the Baals'? Just look at how you behaved in the valley; acknowledge[13] what you have done. You are a swift she-camel of warped ways, a wild donkey accustomed to the wilderness: in accordance with its desire, panting, it sniffs the air. When in heat, who can restrain it? Those seeking it need not exhaust themselves in the time of its oestrus[14] they will find it (2.23-24).[15]

11. Here the leaders' ignorance of Yhwh's way and judgment is manifested in their breaking the yoke and bonds. This rebellion leaves them vulnerable to attack. The yoke, then, is depicted as having a positive function.

12. Cf. Holladay (1961), who argues that Jeremiah standardized this phrase, which he believes to be descended from Hosea (4.13) and descriptive of the location of fertility practices. The hyperbolic tone may constitute another instance of deviance amplification.

13. Feminine singular imperative of ידע, usually translated 'to know'.

14. The Masoretic Text has בחדשה, very literally 'in her new moon'. The word חדש can refer to a religious festival, such as at Hos. 2.13, where an end is put to the unfaithful woman's חדש along with other festivities. Given the connectedness between fertility and the lunar cycle, it is not unlikely that the חדש-festival celebrates fertility or harvest. In Hosea the word might be alluding to both Gomer's sexuality and to the

> They are greedily desirous[16] horses, each man neighing for his neighbour's wife (5.8) (my translations).

The imagery of insatiable sexuality described in ch. 2 (and also ch. 3) is (again) feminized, and 2.33 adds that evil women can learn from Israel's depraved ways. The metaphor, however, applies to the house of Israel, the kings, officials, priests and prophets (2.26), that is, to men. At ch. 5, meanwhile, the hyperbolic lustfulness is characterized as male.

As Carroll points out, the difficulty of determining whether this language, which is often claimed to have arisen out of the involvement of the Israelite community in the fertility cults of Canaanite religion, is descriptive or metaphoric, should not distract attention from its essential bawdiness (1981: 61). In both of these examples from chs. 2 and 5 the language is, he explains, tantalizingly ambiguous and it is not easy to discern whether the community is being berated for involvement in sexual activity or indulgence in the Canaanite cult:

> The strong emotions behind the language are apparent, and the oracles share the same atmosphere of outrage, pain and jealousy as may be found in Hosea. The roots of the metaphoric language are probably to be found in the cult of the incomparable Yahweh, the jealous God, who did not permit other gods to be associated with his worship (cf. Ex. 20.3; Deut. 5.7). As a man did not permit his wife to take lovers or go off after other men, so the deity did not permit the community to go worship other gods. That is the force of the metaphors, but the precise interpretation of some of the metaphors is difficult (1981: 63).

The expression at 2.25—'keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst' (RSV), or, 'do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry' (NIV)—for instance, is tricky. There may be a euphemistic allusion to sexual activity here ('feet' being a standard biblical euphemism for 'genitals'), which is how Carmichael takes it (1977: 329 and n. 27). As Carroll points out, however, 'the strong language of the poems suggests

apostasy of attributing fertility to Baal instead of Yhwh. In this passage the word describes heightened sex-drive at the fertile time of oestrus.

15. Brenner has referred to this animalization of the metaphorized woman as '[an] original contribution to prophetic pornography' (1995b: 262).

16. The words מיזנים משכים are difficult. BDB suggests that the root יזן might mean 'to weigh' or 'furnished with weights'. Reading משכים as מאשכים (cf. אשך, 'testicle', e.g. Lev. 21.20) this could refer to large testicles (cf. Ezek. 23.20). Alternatively, deriving the first word from זון, 'to feed', the horses may be sleek, or well fed.

that euphemistic terms would be out of place' (1981: 296). The phrase 'well-fed, lusty stallions' (5.8, RSV and NIV) is also difficult. It may refer either to horses with large testicles (*kethibh*), or to well-fed or sleek horses (*qere*). Carroll acknowledges that the image raises questions:

> It is a graphic image—but of what? Is the prophet (enviously?) abusing the citizens of the community who are handsomely equipped on their way to the brothel to participate in fertility rites? Or is he using bawdy images to ridicule their involvement in a heathen cult and describing the place of worship as a brothel? (1981: 63-64)[17]

In ch. 2 (but not ch. 5) the removal of the yoke and consequent revolting and unrestrained behaviour, depicted in sexual terms, culminates in shame. The text at 2.26 reads: כבשת גנב כי ימצא כן הבישו בית ישראל, 'like the shame of a thief when he is found out, so will the house of Israel be ashamed'. Following on from the imagery of very public, exhibitionist wantonness, of prostitution on *every* hill and under *every* tree, the simile of the thief's *covert* activity seems a little surprising. Like thieving, the sexual activity is criminal but with the latter the brazenness is dwelt upon.[18] The thief is disgraced when his activity is discovered—the sexual conduct (or better, the disapproved-of conduct which is depicted using sexual imagery) does not seem to require discovery but occurs open to

17. In a later article Carroll (1995) proposes that the notion of an antilanguage (see below, pp. 151-61) may hold some promise for analysing such strongly emotive and diffuse texts.

18. Compared to this may be ch. 3, where Israel is described as having been ravished everywhere (3.2) (the word 'ravished' is from the root שגל, which was considered too profane for articulation by the Masoretes and in the spoken tradition is replaced with the euphemistic שכב, 'to lie') and as sitting by the roadside 'like an Arab in the desert' (3.2). This is probably where prostitutes would wait for their clients (cf. Gen. 38.14). The allusion to the Arab is in this context less than complimentary. Again, the audacity of the public flaunting of the apostasy is rebuked: Israel is likened to a brazen prostitute (cf. NIV, 3.3); the text reads, 'and you have the brow of a prostitute woman'. What exactly this expression pertains to is unclear to me. The forehead is the place where leprosy becomes visibly apparent in 2 Chron. 26.19-20 and also of other distinguishing marks (cf. Ezek. 9.4). Obstinacy can be 'seen' on the brow (Ezek. 3.7) and a 'brass forehead', too, seems to be an idiom for stubbornness (Isa. 48.4). Possibly, then, the feature was not so much a visible trademark and the expression is rather an idiom, much like German, 'man sieht es ihm/ihr an der Nase an', or 'es ist vom Gesicht abzulesen' (You can tell by his/her nose', or 'it can be read from the face'). The undisclosed prostitution is also rebuked in terms of Israel's refusal to be ashamed: מאנת הכלם, (NIV has 'you refuse to blush with shame') (Jer. 3.3).

view. One of the primary impulses of proper shame is concealment of the genitals, attended by an acute concern to confine sexual practices to a private domain and demarcated conventions.[19] If this was also the case in the social contexts in which the texts of Jeremiah came into being (which I think is likely), the accusation that Israel is so debauched that even such a primary impulse has been perverted would be especially poignant.[20]

What seems to be at issue in particular is that Israel does not recognize, or refuses to recognize, the wrongfulness of her apostasy. At 2.27-28 she is described as ignorantly and defiantly pursuing idols; in a state of denial (cf. also 5.21), she disputes her defilement and guilt (2.23, 35). The aim of the sexual imagery appears to be to startle Israel into the awareness that she is entirely morally depraved: without the yoke of Yhwh she is like an animal on heat, ignorant, misguidedly trustful of other nations and defiled. As Sherwood points out, sexually exhibitionist terms are capable of penetrating a reader's hard-worn armour (1996: 329 and n. 32): startled by the imagery and readily able to identify the sexual excesses as shameful behaviour, the hearer/reader might thus be inculcated to examine also the idolatrous conduct with which it is metaphorically linked.

While restoration is promised in Jeremiah (31.20, 23-34; 33.8-16), the need for inward purging is stressed. The point that a dispositional rather

19. Cf. Freud's argument that shame functions to constrain such sexual impulses as exhibitionism in the young child (see above, pp. 7-8). As we have seen, the Eden story has also been interpreted in such a way that shame initiates and signifies maturation (e.g. Bechtel 1995).

20. Exposed nakedness usually encounters disapproval in biblical literature. Shem and Japheth's covering of the naked Noah is approved of (Gen. 9.23-27) and priests are instructed to wear a special garment to ensure that their genitals are not bared in the holy place (Exod. 28.42-43). In the Prophets shame and nakedness are linked repeatedly (e.g. Isa. 20.4; 47.3; Ezek. 23.29; Mic. 1.11, עריות־בשת; and Jer. 13.26, קלון). The *Community Rule* (1QS) stipulates: 'whoever has gone naked before his companion, without having been obliged to do so, he shall do penance for six months... Whoever has been so poorly dressed that when drawing his hand from beneath his garment his nakedness has been seen, he shall do penance for thirty days' (vii.12-15) (Vermes 1995: 79). 'Hand' (יד) may be a euphemism for male genitalia (cf. Delcor 1967). The Akkadian poems cited by Halperin (1993: 93-97) depict female genitalia as locus of danger but also as a place of honey (1993: 95). In the Hebrew Bible praise of the naked body is found only in the Song of Songs. According to Pope (1977: 617-20) and, most explicitly, Eslinger (1981) this extends to praise of the beloved's vulva. If they are correct, this instance of praise of a sexual organ is singular and contrary to what can be inferred from Deut. 25.11, for instance, where a man's genitals are referred to as מבשיו, 'his shameful parts' (cf. Latin *pudenda*).

than an outward state is at issue is clear from 2.22 where washing (כבס), even with soda and soap, cannot remove the stain of guilt (עון). There is further support at 4.4, where the heart is called upon to be circumcised, suggesting a bond with Yhwh that consists of more than an outward display (cf. also 9.25-26), as well as 4.14, where Jerusalem is implored to wash the evil from her heart. Self-reflection and the realization of having committed shameful acts are depicted as preceding restoration. Alongside the explicit sexual imagery, other forms of humiliation also serve to bring about this sense. One of these is a loss of status: as a consequence of transgression, the people are threatened with losing wives and possessions (8.10), husbands (15.8-9), homes and children (10.20). At 6.15 and 8.12 humiliation is directly attributed to a lack of proper shame; at 22.22 the disgrace of exile brings about shame. The way to attaining restoration and re-establishing a relationship with Yhwh is by doing what he is depicted as ordering: the people must turn from evil (26.3), follow Yhwh's law and the words of his prophets (26.4-5) and admit to and confess their sense of shame. While confession cannot in itself avert the need for purging punishment (cf. 14.20–15.2) it is none the less depicted as an introduction to Yhwh's programme of resettlement. At 31.18-19 Ephraim's repenting and shame (from נחם, בוש, כלם, and חרפה) elicit a statement of compassion from Yhwh (31.20) and are a prelude to restoration and a new covenant. Repentance entailing shame is also prominent at ch. 3. The people are implored to acknowledge their guilt (3.13) and at 3.22-25 they admit their apostasy (3.23) and the shamefulness of idolatry (3.24) before determining to lie down in shame and let disgrace cover them: נשכבה בבשתנו ותכסנו כלמתנו (3.25a).

To summarize: shameful conduct, apostasy in particular, is depicted using extended sexual metaphors in chs. 2, 3 and 5.[21] In chs. 2 and 3 this metaphor is associated with shame terminology; in chs. 2 and 5 with a discarded yoke, which could be a figurative image for a broken-down ethical check, resembling proper shame. The imagery of these chapters is graphic. The reason for this could be that sexual exhibitionism is particularly apt for arousing impulses of shame. Alongside the outward humiliations associated with the exile, vulgar language thus functions as a shock-tactic to inculcate shame. Shame is inculcated, it seems, because it entails negative self-evaluation, which is portrayed as a necessary

21. Aside from these chapters, apostasy is also metaphorically linked to prostitution (זנה) at 13.27; to adultery (נאף) at 9.2, 13.27 and 23.10; and to unfaithfulness (בגד) at 9.2.

prerequisite to restoration. Idolatry, condemned in the above examples by exploiting condemnation of sexual impropriety with which it is linked metaphorically, is widely associated with shame language. As I will go on to discuss, this may function as part of a wider anti-foreign polemic.

Shame and Anti-Foreign Ideology

Prophetic reproof for immoral conduct repeatedly mentions the profound effect on the land as a whole[22] (2.7; 3.2; 16.18; 44.22). Apostasy is prominent from ch. 1 onwards, where Jeremiah the prophet is depicted as commissioned to call the people to account for their wickedness (רעתם) of forsaking Yhwh and worshipping other gods (1.16). Idolatry renders Israel worthless (from הבל, 2.5) and detestable (7.30; 32.34-35); idolatry also precipitates disaster (11.17) and because of it the people cannot remain in the land (25.5) but must leave it desolate (44.2-3). The gods Israel has turned to instead of being obedient to Yhwh are, of course, foreign and foreignness throughout is depicted in decidedly pejorative terms. The ערבי ('Arab'/'nomad') is mentioned in the context of prostitution (3.2) and loving foreigners or foreign gods (זרים) is linked to bestial lustfulness (2.25), neither of which is edifying. Further, the despicable qualities of idols are described in terms of being worthless and foreign (הבלי נכר, 8.19) and it may be telling that the root זור can mean either 'to be a

22. Forsaking Yhwh is a significant aspect of the condemned conduct and mentioned frequently (2.17; 11.10; 13.10; 16.11-12, 18; 32.29-30, 34; 44.3-4, 8). It is metaphorically linked with marital infidelity and is described in the proclamatory verse 17.13 as transpiring in shame: יהוה כל־עזביך יבשו ('all who forsake you, Yhwh, will be put to shame'). It is interesting to note Sherwood's observation regarding an extended metaphor linking adulterous woman and land in Hosea: 'Gomer gives birth in quick succession, and her fertility is emphasized, but conception is ascribed to her lovers, just as the land's fertility is accredited to Baal. Yhwh threatens to "strip her naked...and set her like a parched land" (Hos. 2.3), and equates the demise of the woman with terrestrial aridity. Threats to punish the oversexed female merge with threats to cut off material provision and to "lay waste her vines and her fig trees" (2.13), and in 9.14 the threat is repeated in terms of female sterility and miscarrying wombs and dry breasts' (1996: 206 n. 253). Genesis 4 also links crime and lack of fertility: the soil that absorbs Abel's blood is contaminated and withholds its crops (4.10-12). In Jer. 3.2-3, too, transgression transpires in a cessation of showers, that is, in infertility (cf. also 14.3; 23.10). The repercussions of disobedience to Yhwh are thus depicted as extremely far-reaching.

stranger' or 'to be loathsome'.[23] Foreignness and improper shame are linked prominently, suggesting, I think, an anti-foreign polemic, such as has been associated with Second Temple period ideology.

In terms of how shame language is used in Jeremiah, 'shame' occasionally refers to a foreign god or idol in a concrete sense; such as at 3.24,[24] 11.13[25] and perhaps 7.19, where 'the shame before them' could pertain to an actual idol. Making an idol, by association, also occasions shame (10.14; 51.17). Disobedience usually pertains to worshipping other gods but can also involve political loyalty to a nation such as Egypt (42.18; 44.12) when loyalty to Yhwh alone is called for. Such misplaced loyalty also transpires in shame (2.36). A topos linking shame and the nations is most prominent in the late chapters of Jeremiah. Here there is mention of Egypt's irredeemable shame (46.11-12, 24) and of Moab's disgrace (48.1, 13, 18, 20, 26, 39), which is described in vivid and abject terms (48.26). Like Israel, however (48.13 and 27 draw a comparison between the two) Moab will be restored (48.47). Edom is disgraced (49.13, 17), as is Damascus (49.23); Babylon is put to shame (50.2, 12; 51.47) but unlike with Israel and Judah (50.20) there is no forgiveness (50.35-40) and no remnant (50.40).

Israel's apostasy and consequent punishment provide another context for shame language. Her incapacity to recognize her shamefulness (6.15; 8.12), which is so prevailing that even the wise are affected (8.9), brings about a state of shame that occasions departure from the land (9.19; 22.22). In one passage Israel's shame (from בוש, חרפ and כלם) is directly attributed to foreigners: 'because foreigners entered the holy places of Yhwh's house', כי באו זרים על־מקדשי בית יהוה (51.51). Foreignness, then, is depicted as both shameful in itself and as occasioning shame. It is, furthermore, described as contaminating, as capable of polluting the whole land and affecting its fruitfulness (e.g. 23.10)[26] and as defiling the

23. BDB *ad loc.* mentions that זור II, 'be loathsome' is possibly derived from זור I, 'be a stranger': i.e. 'become *strange* and so *repugnant*'.

24. *BHS* textual note *ad loc.* suggests הבעל 'the Baal' in place of הבשת 'the shame', in order to stress this interpretation.

25. Here the phrase מזבחות לבשת (absent in the Septuagint) appears to balance the phrase מזבחות לקטר לבעל. Maybe a tradition preserved in the Masoretic Text identified Baal as 'the shame(ful one)'.

26. At 12.13 and 14.13 a lack of fertility occasions shame. The punishment of Babylon entails shaming, which is manifested by the dryness of the land (50.12). Yhwh alone is called the spring of life at 2.13 and 17.13 (the latter relates the forsaking of Yhwh to being put to shame) and as controlling the waters (10.13), something which

sanctuary. The association of foreignness with pollution, punishment and infertility using shame language appears to be aimed at inciting or enforcing anti-foreign feeling.

Shame and Wordplay

Apostasy, infertility and shame are linked in a network of associations. On a subtle linguistic level, too, a connection between a lack of fertility, manifested in dryness, and shame is played upon and both seem to indicate the absence of or rejection by Yhwh, the spring of life. A pun on the similarity between the roots בוש and יבש has been discussed by Nielsen with regard to Isa. 1.29-31 (1989: 210-11). She argues that יבשו at v. 29 should not be emended to תבשו[27] because the Masoretic Text's form may have been selected deliberately to evoke the connotations associated with both בוש 'to be ashamed' (correlating with חפר in the second half-verse) and יבש 'be dry' (correlating with v. 30 and its image of the withered tree and garden lacking water). Such a pun, she continues, may also be discerned at 2 Kgs 19.26, Isa. 19.5-9, 42.15-17, Ps. 129.5-6 and Joel 1.10-17 (cf. also Ps. 37.19).

In Jeremiah, too, a case can be made for the existence of such wordplay.[28] The rebuke of the prophets (23.9-40) describes the land as thoroughly defiled by the godless (from חנף) prophet and priest who have practised wicked deeds (23.11, 15). The land is said to be *full of* adulterers (23.10: מנאפים מלאה הארץ) and entirely contaminated (23.15: יצאה חנפה לכל־הארץ). The extremely polluted state is alluded to several times more: there is mention of repulsiveness (תפלה, 23.13; BDB: 'moral unseemliness'); of horridness (שערורה, 23.14), as well as similes likening Jerusalem to Sodom and Gomorrah (23.14). This grandiloquent depiction of

other gods are incapable of (14.22). Yhwh's restoration, meanwhile, is associated with planting (31.28)—that is, a promise of fertility.

27. *BHS* textual note *ad loc.*: some Hebrew manuscripts and the Targum have the second-person masculine plural of בוש; RSV and NIV follow this reading, not the Masoretic Text.

28. I agree with Barr that two words of similar, or even the same, root need not suggest or evoke one another. Citing the example of לחם, 'bread', and מלחמה, 'war', he points out that it is fanciful to connect the two because they are mutually suggestive, 'as if battles were normally for the sake of bread or bread a necessary provision for battles' (1961: 102). His qualification that words may be deliberately juxtaposed for assonance or semantic effect in special cases may, however, be relevant in this instance.

corruption might well be said to warrant shame. There is mention at any rate of a curse (אָלָה) and of mourning or drought (the verb from אבל could reflect either meaning), shaming or dryness of the land (23.10). At 12.4, too, we have a context of persistent wickedness. The land is affected by the people's evil conduct (from רע), leading bird and beast to perish and the land to mourn or dry up (again, אבל) and be shamed or withered (יבש).[29] The idea of drought is most probably the primary meaning here but the command to bear the shame of the failed harvest, occurring later in the same passage (12.13), seems to allow for the possibility that shame and mourning form an undertone in the theme of dryness. At 14.2-3, too, drought, mourning and shame are linked directly. The reason, possibly, is that the connection of cause and effect (shameful conduct transpiring in the shame of calamity) is reinforced through punning wordplay. Words from the root נבל may also have such a double-edged nuance (cf. Nielsen 1989: 272). A passage rebuking the people for their lack of shame is followed by the pronouncement of a withered (נבל) harvest (8.13). This root can also pertain to the action of dishonouring, such as at 14.21 (אל־תנבל כסא כבודך, 'do not dishonour your throne of honour') and to a crime paralleled with adultery at 29.23.[30]

Summary

As with Isaiah, such a social-scientific model as the honour/shame matrix is unsuitable for examining shame discourses in Jeremiah. The various texts comprising this book are not field studies, reporting social interactions. They were shaped by and may reflect social factors but the reconstruction of these is impossible. Ideological criticism, I have argued, may be more suited to textual study. This approach challenges reading texts at face value, questions the idea of an absolute meaning and acknowledges that writers and editors may have agendas. It is an approach that need not

29. While the Masoretic pointing and translation in the versions suggest that יבש is from the root meaning 'to be dry', it is not unlikely that in this context of abhorrent conduct and alongside the ambiguous אבל, the יבש/בוש wordplay, familiar from other passages, is being alluded to.

30. Cf. Roth (1960). Also Sherwood, who argues that the *hapax legomenon* נבלתה at Hos. 2.12 is derived from both the root נבל, 'to be foolish', and נבל, 'to wither', thereby alluding 'to her genitalia (her foolishness or shame) and her degeneration'. She claims that the meaning is ambiguous with *both* meanings colluding in the contrivance of a special nuance of destruction and humiliation (1996: 212 and n. 267).

exclude social-scientific methods but which tends to concede, even stress, subjectivity and the elusiveness of meaning, as opposed to objectivity and social reality.

One agenda, which might be said to be discernible in Jeremiah (as well as in Ezra and Nehemiah, concerned with the return to Jerusalem from exile), is an anti-foreign polemic, asserting the returnees' claim to the land. The land, according to Jeremiah, had to be left due to pollution and infertility resulting from idolatry. As in Isaiah, shame and idolatry are linked repeatedly, but so are shame and infertility. The associations are often explicit but sometimes also take the form of subtle wordplay; they reinforce the perception that foreign contamination has dangerous, shameful, even life-threatening consequences. Again, too, sexual metaphor is a feature. Effusive and (notable in Jeremiah) bestial sexual activity is a vehicle for condemning apostasy and is linked to foreign practices. It appears to be aimed at effecting revulsion and restraint in the form of proper shame. Jeremiah attests both a positive and a negative meaning of 'shame'.

Chapter 4

SHAME AND EZEKIEL

Impurity and Shame

The themes of purity and holiness are central to the book of Ezekiel. Demarcation, scrupulously separating that which is holy from that which is defiled, is prominent especially in chs. 40–48 (cf. 40.45-46; 41.4; 42.13-14, 20; 43.7, 12, 26; 44.17-19, 23; 45.3, 6; 48.11-14, 20). Elsewhere, too, however, such concerns are evident. Yhwh explains that his drastic punishments for Judah's sin and the subsequent restoration stem from a concern for his holy name that has been defiled (20.41, 44; 36.22-23; 43.7-8) and the strikingly hesitant descriptions of the prophet's divine visions, too, could be interpreted as reflecting a heightened regard for the deity's holiness. Isaiah also feared the consequences of setting eyes on the 'holy, holy, holy Yhwh of hosts' (Isa. 6.3-5) but his account is none the less candidly direct: '*I saw Yhwh* sitting on a throne, high and exalted, and his robes filled the temple'. Ezekiel's description, in contrast, is considerably more oblique (1.26-28):

> above the firmament which was over their heads was something that appeared like a stone of lapis lazuli; something like a throne and on the apparent throne was something that appeared like a man. And I saw something like a spring of *hashmal* appearing like fire all around it. Emerging from what looked like his hips and upwards and below his hips I saw something appearing like fire and a gleam all around him. Like the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the gleam around him. That is the appearance of the likeness of Yhwh...[1]

In this context of holiness and purity the dazzling gleam around Yhwh's hips delicately circumvents any allusions to sexual organs. Isaiah 6, again less oblique, does mention the seraphim's genitals in the context of the divine vision (using the euphemism 'feet') but only in order to explain that

1. Cf. also Ezek. 8.1-4 for comparable hesitancy.

these are covered in Yhwh's proximity (v. 2). Contrastingly, the dominant metaphor of Ezekiel which signifies Israel's sin and which procures divine punishment in the form of exile, focuses on sexuality and its attendant impurities in very graphic (far from euphemistic) terms. Israel's activities are characterized as defiling sexual infidelities and occasionally called תועבה (e.g. 6.9; 8.6; 16.51), which in the Torah designates something abominable and polluting in the extreme (cf. Lev. 18.22; Deut. 17.4-5). Further, Israel is clearly regarded as culpable and the need that she recognize and pay for her sin is stressed. Israel is described as rebellious (2.3) and as agent of detestable acts (8.6) and just as a wicked man who does not turn from his wrongful ways will die for his sin—if he has been warned and ignored the warning he will, furthermore, be held fully accountable (3.18-19)—so Israel, forewarned by the prophet and the recipient of a covenant (16.8) and laws enabling life (20.11-12), is inculcated to abstain from her rebelliousness (3.27-28). Yhwh's judgment will be in accordance with her conduct (7.3-4, 8; 9.9-10; 11.21; 21.24; 22.31; 36.19; 39.23-24).

Divine punishment is entirely the result of deliberate sinful conduct. Israel is metaphorically depicted as of highly impure provenance (16.3-6) but it is not this antecedent or inheritance which excludes her from blessing and a covenant relationship with Yhwh (16.8). In ch. 18, too, the onus of sinfulness is not inherited; instead, everyone is responsible for their own (mis)deeds. Hence, a wicked man will die for his own sin while his son, should he prove good and obedient, will be untainted by anything like an *Erbschuld* (inherited debt of guilt) (18.17-18). An association between Israel's intentional sin (for which she is culpable) and impurity appears repeatedly: the guilt from which the Israelites expire (4.17) is traced back to and signified by the defilement incurred through eating unclean food (4.12-15); rebellion and disobedience (5.6) are described as תועבות (BDB, 'abominations') and an offence (from שקץ) against holiness (5.9-11); rejection of Yhwh's laws and desecration of the Sabbath entail defilement (20.26); the sins of Jerusalem, depicted as of an unethical nature (cf. 22.6-12), render her impure (cf. 22.8-10, 15-16) and the priests are singled out because their acts of violence to the Torah consist of a failure to distinguish between holy and profane (22.26) (cf. also 24.13; 33.25-26; 36.17-18; 39.23-24). Elsewhere, Israel's defiling sin is memorably characterized as prostitution and adultery (6.9; 16.15-52; ch. 23).

Frymer-Kensky (1983) describes two forms of pollution: one that could be eradicated by rituals of purification and another that could not. The

former category is subdivided in the Levitical laws into major pollutions, rendering one contagiously impure for (usually) seven days, and minor pollutions, where contagion lasts a single day. If the contagiously impure person avoids the sacred realm, waits out the period of pollution, participates in a purification rite and readmission ritual, he or she is able to return to the community with no onus or guilt attached to the pollution. Many of the pollutions are indeed necessary (e.g. contact with corpses—if only to remove them from the proximity of living quarters), even prerequisites of blessing (e.g. emissions of sexual intercourse and childbirth), or at any rate inadvertent (e.g. menstrual bleeding, leprosy) (cf. Ezek. 45.20, for the necessity and possibility of atoning for unintentional sin). The second category, however, concerning pollution resulting from intentional sin, Frymer-Kensky explains, could not be purified by ritual but entailed instead catastrophic retribution and a 'purging' by destruction and exile.[2]

Milgrom distinguishes between physically generated impurity and morally generated iniquity, pointing out that when they are rectified different vocabulary is employed: physical pollution is purified (טהר), while moral shortcoming needs to be forgiven by Yhwh (נסל ח)[3] (1989: 107). He stresses, however, that the two concepts are sometimes amalgamated:

> it should be noted that the holiness of God is associated with His moral attributes (cf. Exod 34.6-7). It therefore follows that the commandments, Israel's ladder to holiness, must contain moral rungs. It is then no wonder that the quintessential program for achieving holiness, Leviticus chapter 19, is a combination of moral as well as ritual injunctions. Conversely, impurity, the opposing doctrine to holiness, cannot be expected to consist solely of physical characteristics. It must *ipso facto* impinge on the moral realm (1989: 106).

Milgrom's conclusion is that 'the concept of impurity was broadened to denote the violation of...moral values' (1989: 108). Ultimately, then, he acknowledges a distinction between the concepts, while allowing for the possibility that the language and notions of holiness and purity may reinforce what he calls moral impurity.

2. Cf. Be'er (1994: 156-60) on the features of curable and incurable impurities. She points out that while menstruation is considered a curable impurity, deliberate intercourse with a menstruating woman is depicted as a sinful and incurable pollution. Both sin and impurity damage the sought-after state of holiness and distance Israel from her God; deliberate sinning, however, is considerably more defiling and frequently irreparable.

3. The verb סל ח is used only with a divine subject.

In Ezekiel, the process of restoration for the sake of Yhwh's holiness following deliberate moral violations is depicted as a purification ritual: a period of separation and purgation preceding re-entry into the sanctuary and a resumption of the relationship with Yhwh.[4] Israel's sin was clearly not inadvertent; therefore, in spite of the prominence of purity and holiness language, it cannot be atoned for by a purity ritual that is merely external. Due to its intentional quality, sin conferred onus and guilt and the purging described is consequently of a quite different kind. Yhwh's restoration is unconditional and promised even amid catastrophe (11.16-20; 16.59-63; 39.25-29). The process of restoration requires, however, a cleansing of the inner condition and it is in this context that shame appears to function. Humiliating public exposure incites objective shame (German *Schande*) (cf. the recurring theme of the mocking of the nations, e.g. 5.14-15; 22.4; 36.3, 6, 15, 30), but shame has also a subjective, self-examining dimension. Shame is not presented as a necessary prerequisite of restoration—it is a *consequence* of restoration at 16.59-63—nor as an ongoing condition (cf. 39.26), but it is none the less an important attendant factor. Recognition of wrongdoing and a feeling of self-loathing, which is characteristic of subjective shame, are thus prominent.

At 6.9 the people's experience of self-loathing (from קוט) is a case of 'too little too late' and punishment is not averted.[5] At 20.43 and 36.31, however, self-loathing follows restoration and seems to be an appropriate, inwardly purging response and at 16.61, too, the people—already atoned for and recipients of a new covenant with Yhwh—experience shame (from כלם). Verse 39.26, while envisaging the people as eventually forgetting their shame (also from כלם), also implies a period of shame, possibly a kind of liminal purging phase prior to entering a restored condition. Subjective or internalized shame is connected with self-loathing (both signify intense negative self-evaluation) but neither actually effects restoration. Restoration is not bound to feelings or admissions of ignominy or to prior repentance. At 36.16-32, for instance, the people's impurity is likened to that of a menstruating woman (36.17) and they are described as idolatrous and profane (36.18). In spite of this (apparently, for the sake of his holy

4. Cf. the cleansing language in the process of restoration at 20.38, where Yhwh 'purges' (from ברר); 36.25, where the people are sprinkled with water and purified (from טהר) of all defilements (טמאות); 37.23; and 39.12-16, where the land is cleansed prior to utopian restoration.

5. Cf. also 7.18, where the people's experience of shame (בושׁה), while consonant with their deplorable sins, cannot turn back punishment.

name), Yhwh brings the people back to their land, cleanses, feeds, renews and renders them obedient (36.24-29). It is only then, and although humiliating circumstances (חרפה) have been removed (36.30), that the people feel self-loathing (36.31) and are invited to express shame (בוש והכלם) (36.32). These negative self-evaluations appear to be an important part of restoration, possibly an inward correlative of the external purging and cleansing.[6] Ezekiel, it appears, attempts to inculcate this necessary sense of shame and self-loathing by stressing a sense of personal responsibility (e.g. 3.16-27; 9.10; ch. 18; 33.10-20) alongside pronouncedly repulsive, even grotesque sexual imagery that may be regarded as evoking strong disgust and justifying punishment (chs. 16 and 23).

Woman Jerusalem in Ezekiel

Sherwood comments on the 'disturbing and disorienting effect' of Hos. 1–3 and compares it to that of Shakespeare's problem plays which also 'shock and perplex the reader on a linguistic, generic, ethical and conceptual level' (1996: 12-13). The methods of Hosea might, she continues, be regarded as 'ethically questionable' (1996: 14). She points for support to the daring and resonant sexual image of the אשת זנונים, 'wife of harlotries' (1996: 13), the catalogue of indignities to which the prophet is subjected (1996: 50), a 'bold disrespect for sanctity of logic and religion' (1996: 80) and a veritable delight in the inversion of signs and meanings (1996: 120-21, 203-204).

Some of Sherwood's comments could be applied to Ezekiel. Hence, we have in Ezek. 16 and 23, both of which use vulgar sexual imagery, a surprisingly lengthy and detailed feminized account of Jerusalem's abominable conduct, justifying, possibly even making inevitable, the need for feeling shame. The depiction of the personified cities and use of the marriage metaphor, furthermore, are altogether more shocking than Hos. 1–3, and I agree with Galambush's evaluation that these chapters have a 'visceral power' and 'particular intensity':

> Ezekiel 16 is somehow more offensive than the same metaphor in Hosea and Jeremiah. The metaphor occurs in many forms in the Hebrew Bible, but only Ezekiel 16 was banned by the rabbis from public reading (*Meg.* 4.10). A key element in Ezekiel's uniquely visceral rendering of the marriage

6. Cf. the pure inward condition of the servant of Deutero-Isaiah, who cannot ultimately be shamed although outwardly he is mocked and degraded. In both of these texts the subjective and objective manifestations of shame are clearly distinguished.

> metaphor is his focus on the woman and especially on the female body as both defiled and defiling (1992: 102).

Two approaches which have attempted to account for this striking and disturbing depiction are first, the psychological and secondly, the feminist. Both have some applicability to the phenomenon of shame, as I will illustrate in the next two sections. Following on from this I will explore a third approach, that of an antilanguage.

The Psychological Approach

Broome and Halperin have argued that the bizarre imagery of Ezekiel becomes meaningful when viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective. Both recognize clues in the text, which, they believe, point to a disturbed personality. Broome identifies Ezekiel as a paranoid schizophrenic displaying symptoms typical of psychotic experience that has its origins 'in some kind of unconscious conflict involving narcissistic and masochistic tendencies' (1946: 277 n. 1). Regarding female imagery, Broome describes Ezekiel as suffering a form of 'feminist masochism' in which he identifies himself as a woman (1946: 288-89). Eating the scroll (2.9–3.3) is, therefore, 'a crass sexual symbol' and the sharp sword (5.1) 'of course symbolic of the castration wish and fancy, while the beard and hair of the head [are] suggestive of genital hair growth' (1946: 289).[7] If Ezekiel felt alongside such masochistic desires for his emasculation a conflicting sense of shame, the horrific female images of chs. 16 and 23 could be regarded as projections of what he despises in himself and their abuse and killing as an expurgation of his shame.

Halperin's fascinating reconstruction of Ezekiel's biography depicts a profoundly disturbed man who was abused in early childhood and whose 'stylistic wilderness' points not to 'the piling up of editorial accretions, but to the ill-disciplined outpourings of a human being in nearly unbearable psychic pain' (1993: 157). The details of chs. 16 and 23, Halperin argues, while not entirely detached from the history they purport to represent, are neither controlled nor confined by that history because Ezekiel created

7. A symbolic connection between hair and male virility is argued for by Stone with regard to 2 Sam. 14.26-27, where mention of Absalom's profusion of hair precedes an account of the birth of sons and daughters (1996: 124). The shaving of the hair of the head, legs (genitals?) and beard by the king of Assyria, could also be said to signify a display of power of one group of men over another and, perhaps, an act of symbolic castration (Isa. 7.20).

these stories of wicked women from his own intense pain: 'He interpreted and justified his pain by projecting his experience outward, onto the history of Israel' (1993: 144). Halperin locates the origins of this pain in the Oedipal conflict between male child and father over the love of the mother. The child Ezekiel, he explains, discovered that the woman, who was his first and best love, 'preferred to sleep with another male... [and h]is rival's genitalia, compared with his own, will have seemed like those of a horse or of an ass [23.20]' (1993: 147).[8] His mother's preference for the father would have appeared as a stunning betrayal that could be explained only as a mark of heedless promiscuity (1993: 148). However, the intensity of Ezekiel's 'vindictive loathing [and]...puritan pornography of revenge' (1993: 2) requires, Halperin continues, something more than this relatively standard Oedipal complex. One clue, he claims, may be Ezekiel's fixation on the repugnance of menstruation, which might be explained by a common element in the many societies with menstrual taboos:

> In societies where women are kept from having sex for long periods after they give birth, they are apt to behave seductively toward their children. As a result, young boys 'become sexually attracted to their mothers. This generates lasting fears and avoidances'... One such fear is the fear of castration; one such avoidance is the avoidance of sex with menstruating women. The link between the two is that 'the sight or thought of a person who bleeds from the genitals...is frightening to a person who has intense castration anxiety. It is a reminder of genital injury' (1993: 105-106).

According to Halperin, then, the loathsome women of chs. 16 and 23 signify Ezekiel's mother who was for him a locus for feelings of both horror and desire. This is very clear, he argues, at 16.6-22:

> With the twice-pronounced *In your blood live!,* Ezekiel conveys the fullness of his mingled desire and loathing. The female is immeasurably appealing to him, with her firm breasts and flowing hair (verse 7), her jewelry and her lovely clothes (verses 10-13, 18). Yet beneath all these seductions, she is a creature of blood—wallowing in blood, growing in blood, spilling blood.
>
> This enticing being is irresistibly powerful. She is the source of ominous and terrifying fluids. She can arouse the little boy. Yet she will abandon him to sleep with another male with whose genitalia he cannot hope to compete. In his rages he wants to slaughter her and gobble her up.

8. Using this argument, a similar Oedipal conflict and inferiority complex could, in the light of Jer. 5.8, be claimed for the child Jeremiah also!

> Projecting his murderous feelings onto her, he imagines her doing the same to him (1993: 164).

The allusions to child sacrifice express, according to Halperin, Ezekiel's perception that his mother sacrificed him to her lover's appetite; in other words, that Ezekiel was sexually abused as a young child, probably by his own father, and that he believed his mother to have colluded in this (1993: 165). Abuse by a more powerful male also explains, Halperin claims, why Yhwh in the book of Ezekiel is such 'a monster of cruelty and hypocrisy' (1993: 170). Yhwh, not motivated by any genuine concern for his people's welfare, only restoring errant Jerusalem to humiliate her and make her perpetually miserable (16.59-63), is identified with the abusive father: 'Ezekiel's childhood wounds were vastly more cruel than Jeremiah's. The image of the ideal adult male that he incorporated, therefore, could not be other than debased and vicious' (1993: 171). Halperin suspects that Ezekiel hated his father and his God, who bound and gagged him, made him prisoner and tried to force him to eat excrement (3.24-26; 4.4-8, 12-15)[9] but he could not allow himself to be consciously aware of his God as hateful being, nor could he hate his father:

> In reality, the child must have envied and admired, even loved, the potent male who took his beloved woman and lovelessly used him. His hatred, unacknowledged, was split off and turned in other directions—toward pagan cults, toward foreign peoples, and most vigorously toward Judah and her elders (1993: 172).

Ezekiel's inability to mourn for his wife, a 'healthy and appropriate response to loss', stems, according to Halperin, from his displacement of the longing and rage he *originally* felt for his mother on to his wife (1993: 177) and indicates perpetual entrapment in his unconscious pain (1993: 179). Ezekiel's keen sense of shame and guilt feature prominently in Halperin's depiction of his tormented personality. His 'paralyzing ambivalence' in response to his wife's death, for instance, suggests, he claims, the contradictory emotions of real grief and unconscious glee and guilt:

> However much he loved his wife as an individual, he cannot have failed to transfer to her his ancient and powerful image of the female as seductive monster, with all the murderous fury that image aroused in him. His eager expectation of the gruesome deaths of Oholah and Oholibah thus became a wish for his wife's death as well (1993: 181).

9. Halperin argues that these passages echo Ezekiel's own 'dreadful infantile experience' (1993: 174).

The mutism affecting Ezekiel, Halperin speculates, could have resulted from fear or shame (1993: 202), while the experience of captivity would have affected him acutely, as he: 'could not have failed to contrast his own impotent misery and shame with the power and splendor of his captors. The sexual humiliation of the child became fused with the physical humiliation of the adult' (1993: 148).

Halperin counters the criticism that psychoanalytical interpretation offers only abstruse or farfetched explanations for phenomena which can be accounted for in more straightforward ways, by arguing that in the case of Ezekiel 'straightforward ways' lead to confusion (1993: 3). Ezekiel's loathing for female sexuality, then, is attributed to Oedipal drives, his mother's sexually ambiguous disposition towards him and to sexual abuse by her lover, which the child regarded as taking place with her consent. Ambivalence toward dominating male figures is attributed to a combination of admiration and envy for the sexually successful father, coupled with the pain of abuse. Female figures, the metaphorical women of chs. 16 and 23 as well as Ezekiel's wife, reveal Ezekiel's complex feelings of love and loathing for his mother; the uncared for infant, kicking in its blood and not attended to by Yhwh until he becomes sexually interested in it is Ezekiel, abused in childhood (1993: 173); the violent punishment by both Yhwh and the mob of angry men constitute Ezekiel's 'barely repressed fantasy' of revenge on his mother (1993: 158).

Halperin's vivid portrait of Ezekiel as deeply wronged and tormented by rage and shame offers a compelling explanation for the disturbing images of chs. 16 and 23. As is alluded to in Chapter 1, however, the psychoanalytical provenance of shame, while fascinating, is entirely unverifiable. Due to its inherent complexities, psychoanalytical criticism can account for all manner of contradictions. In Broome's definition, for instance, either one of the two conflicting drives of narcissism or masochism can explain both Ezekiel's grandiose statements and his self-abasements. Halperin, meanwhile, speaks of the co-existence of love and loathing for the mother, wife, father and God, which again account for the entire range of images. For the purposes of underlining the argument, Ezekiel's wife can thus become a projection of his mother, or Yhwh a projection of both Ezekiel's father and himself. When there arises a gap, such as an experience of the infant's ambiguous desire and fear, compelling him to consume his mother, that too is accounted for by resorting to projection: hence it becomes the *mother* who wishes to consume her child. The psychoanalytical approach, therefore, is somewhat unsatisfactory, as it

requires of its reader to accept the existence of such unverifiable and abstract constructs as the Oedipus complex and latent infantile sexuality.

Feminist Approaches

Some feminist readings also encompass the concept of shame in the attempt to account for the sexual metaphors of Ezekiel. Halperin proposes that the imagery of Ezekiel has 'effected the subjection and humiliation of the female half of our species' (1993: 5) and it is such an evaluation that has shaped several feminist interpretations of the female imagery of Ezekiel. The imagery tends not, however, to be regarded as the product of a single damaged individual but as reflecting a societal ethos that has (had) a decidedly negative influence on women. In terms of shame, shame is not the private experience of one abused person but something that is attributed to women with a view to effecting their subjugation.

Galambush is one commentator who describes several ways in which the marriage metaphor of Ezekiel functions to stress the woman/city's thoroughgoing defilement and shamefulness. This, in turn, is considered reflective of misogyny. First, the metaphor, which in the ancient Near East depicted the city as goddess-consort of the patron deity (Fitzgerald 1972)[10] has been demoted from divine to mortal status. The personified city, consequently, conveys not a positive image of a goddess ruling with wisdom and power; instead, she is a condemned woman.[11] Secondly, the unfaithful city is portrayed very negatively not just as a prostitute but also as an adulteress. Galambush explains that the verb זנה refers to illicit sexual activity and, at the second metaphoric level, to violations of the obligation of exclusive fidelity to Yhwh, thereby linking idolatry and

10. Fitzgerald's link between personified cities and female deities has been challenged, particularly with regard to their having common titles (cf. Franzmann 1995: 3) but, as Galambush postulates, the metaphor may have been so deeply embedded as to be virtually invisible but nevertheless the source of everyday assumptions and speech about capital cities (1992: 20).

11. Galambush notes that at Isa. 47.1 Babylon is referred to as a queen, while Jerusalem at Ezek. 16.13 is said to be fit to be queen. Nowhere, however, does the Hebrew Bible refer to a city, Israelite or otherwise, as a goddess. Further, condemnation of apostasy is virtually the only reason for the existence of the woman/city marriage metaphor in depicting cities of Israel and '2 Sam. 20.19 is probably the only instance where a fully personified Israelite city is not said to have committed adultery' (1992: 26-27 and n. 5).

adultery (1992: 31). Prostitution as a profession, as reflected in the Hebrew Bible, she comments, has relatively little stigma attached to it:

> While priests are forbidden to marry prostitutes (Lev 21.7), there is no prohibition against such marriages for lay Israelites. The lack of overt condemnation of prostitution may reflect a relative lack of concern as to the sexual conduct of the (rare) woman who was not under male authority. When, however, the root זנה is used of anyone to whom it does not apply literally (sexually disobedient females or idolatrous males), it describes a violation of authority, and is a term of strong opprobrium. Thus, males are forbidden (Lev 19.29) from making their own daughters prostitutes, and the sons of Jacob consider Shechem's act of treating their sister 'like a prostitute' (Gen 34.31) sufficient justification for murder (1992: 31 n. 19).

Galambush alludes to the social background that may have fuelled the sense of horror at the image of the adulteress in terms reminiscent from the Mediterranean studies:

> Although adultery did not defile the name of the husband, the shame created by Yahweh's failure to keep his subjects 'at home' would have found powerful expression in the image of the god as a cuckolded and therefore shamed husband. The intense emotional and cultural sanction surrounding female adultery would have provided an appropriate vehicle for venting the powerful rage and shame of the humiliated god (1992: 34-35).

> ...[I]n a world in which male honor is bound to female sexual behavior, female infidelity is both socially and personally threatening to the male... [B]ecause the cuckolded husband of the metaphor is no mortal, but Israel's male, warrior god, the entire male community is threatened by its god's loss of honor (1992: 102).

Rage at marital infidelity is not confined to societies where male honour is bound to female continence. Within the context of the root metaphor of marriage, however, adultery is a necessary image for expressing betrayal and indignation. This metaphor depicts a situation between land/city/people and deity but the shamefulness and defilement of the former tends to be associated in Ezekiel with female images in particular. This is conveyed not only in the vulgar feminized imagery of chs. 16 and 23[12] but

12. Carroll points out that while the women fulfil a metaphorical role, figuratively depicting Jerusalem's transgressions, concrete women also enter the discourse in a few places (16.38; 23.44-45, 48; perhaps also 23.10), displaying a shift from the allegorical to the social (1996b: 76). This might indicate that the author is not just using a relatively commonplace woman/city metaphor but justifying it with recourse to his

also in the use of hypothetical women as examples of defilement (18.6, 11, 15; 22.10-11). As Galambush points out, women symbolize *male* defilement in these passages:

> Ezekiel describes male sexual transgression exclusively in terms of female uncleanness. Thus the evil man approaches 'a woman who is a נדה' or he 'pollutes' his neighbor's wife (rather than himself!) through intercourse... The woman's uncleanness symbolizes the male's transgression (1992: 144).

Men, too, are accused of harlotry and infidelity and the image of Jerusalem as a defiled and shameful woman is intended to be inclusive. The intention of inclusivity can occasionally, though, be lost sight of. As Darr points out, 23.48, for instance—'thus I will put an end to lewdness in the land, *so that all women may take warning and not commit lewdness as you have done*'—admonishes women but not men to refrain from illicit sexual behaviour (1992a: 189; cf. 1992b: 115). Furthermore, female imagery, while used extensively in Ezekiel to illustrate Jerusalem's transgressions and punishment, is virtually abandoned with regard to the (positive) state of restoration. Whereas in Isaiah (54.2-8), Jeremiah[13] and Hosea (2.19-23) restoration is likened to Yhwh's reconciliation with his wife, Ezekiel only obliquely alludes to female imagery in the context of restoration. Galambush argues that the earlier prophets 'overlooked or did not notice the marriage metaphor's implicit tendency to jeopardize Yahweh's purity and honor' (1992: 150-51). Envisaging the author of Ezekiel as concerned primarily with the purity of the temple, Galambush claims that once the dynamics of temple pollution had been fully explicated in terms of female sexual pollution, with its attendant danger of defiling the male, no personification of the restored temple as a woman could be tolerated. As the requisite purity of the new city does not permit the explicit personification as a woman, the metaphor depicting Jerusalem as Yhwh's wife is abandoned almost entirely. Only symbolically speaking does the renewed city fulfil a feminine role:

observations from the social context. All these observations reflect negatively on women.

13. In Jeremiah the image of Jerusalem as wife of Yhwh is not as developed as in Ezekiel. In ch. 31, however, the Virgin Israel is beckoned to return (v. 21) and later on there is mention of a time when Yhwh was husband (or master) of his people (v. 32) and of the need for a new covenant that will never again be broken (vv. 33-34). This image of restoration thus has some reminiscences of marriage themes.

> a walled, protecting and protected space, from which defiling elements (specifically, foreign men) are excluded, but within which the mysterious power of life resides and from which fertile streams flow out to produce fruitbearing trees. The pure, safe, and fertile city is a fitting consort for the male god. Unlike the personified woman Jerusalem, this city performs the function of the 'eternal feminine' without the attendant risks of pollution (1992: 156).[14]

Most vivid, however, in terms of sustained pejorative female imagery, are chs. 16 and 23. Here Jerusalem is given a detailed biography[15] and depicted as defiled from her youth. While Hosea is able to appeal to an ideal past when the relationship between Israel and her God was 'pure and reciprocal' (Sherwood 1996: 208), Ezekiel depicts Israel's entire history as marked by defilement; a treatment which, according to Galambush, is consistent with the book's depiction of Jerusalem as inherently other, unclean and unworthy and of the marriage as an act of Yhwh's supreme kindness (1992: 82). The woman/city begins her life in the land of the Canaanites and is of Amorite and Hittite parentage (16.3); that is, she was not only homeless but descended from races that feature in some biblical literature and possibly in the public consciousness as traditional opponents of Israel (Exod. 33.2; Deut. 7.1) who introduced her to evil practices (Judg. 3.5-8). Israel is, furthermore, described as unclean (16.4), neglected (16.5) and as defiling herself in blood (16.6). Blood reappears as pejorative signifier of pollution at 16.9, where Yhwh washes the blood

14. Cf. also Darr: 'Within Ezekiel's great vision of restored Israel (chaps. 40–48), female imagery and women have little role to play. Unlike his anonymous prophetic successors, the so-called Second and Third Isaiahs, he does not adopt wife/mother metaphors to depict Jerusalem's future restoration. Such imagery suited Ezekiel perfectly when he was lambasting Jerusalem and Samaria for their abominations and shamelessness' (1992a: 189). Female imagery in the context of restoration is by no means explicit and limited, she continues, to the waters of life (47.1-12): 'ground water is an image of female fertility (see Song 4.15; Psalm 87; Jer. 31.12; Isa. 51.1-3)... Did the amniotic fluid that bursts forth just prior to birth suggest the imagery's appropriateness? Ezekiel did not choose to develop female dimensions of the life-giving...they remain, as it were, an undercurrent, part of water imagery's network of cultural connotations' (1992a: 190).

15. Galambush notes that Ezekiel's usage of the marriage metaphor differs from previous treatments in length, coherence and degree of detail. Ezekiel devotes 112 verses to the depictions of the unfaithful wife. Hosea, by comparison, has 39 (if all of chs. 1–3 are included) and Jeremiah, though it is more difficult to determine what should count as personification, no more than 60 (1992: 79 and nn. 8, 9).

from the matured Jerusalem's body,[16] and of blood-guilt at 16.36, where she is accused of child-sacrifice. Despite her inauspicious beginning she grows up under Yhwh's protection richly blessed. While Ezekiel deletes the idea of a honeymoon stage of initial fidelity, Yhwh is proud of his wife (16.14). She, however, neither responds (cf. Hos. 2.17), nor follows (cf. Jer. 2.2). Instead, she is first passive and then actively and excessively rebellious, repaying Yhwh's gifts with lewd conduct (of the root זנה) (16.15),[17] and child sacrifice. Here the 'uncontrollably perverse' nature of the woman/city is stressed:

> At the level of the tenor, literal fathers would in fact have offered their children as sacrifices. The metaphorical transfer of the act to 'mother' increases the horror of the act in several ways. First, the image works against the commonplace of mother as a nurturer. Second the metaphor depicts the mother usurping the prerogative of the father; the woman is taking the fruits of her sexual obligation [from] her husband and transferring them to idols, who as 'lovers' at the level of the vehicle, are the husband's sexual competitors (Galambush 1992: 84 n. 24).

Ironically, Jerusalem's obscene behaviour offends even the Philistine daughters (16.27). Presumably, the Philistines were considered proverbially uncouth. In much of the biblical literature they are depicted as traditional enemies and God's tool for chastisement (e.g. Judg. 3.2-4; 10.6-8). The Philistine women feel shame (from כלם)—the very response Ezekiel appears to want to elicit among the Israelites. Instead, Israel's offensiveness is spelled out in yet more appalling detail. She is insatiably promiscuous and brazenly public with it (16.28-31). Worse than a prostitute (זונה), furthermore, who was, presumably, an ostracized but tolerated woman whose sexual activity violated no man's right, Israel is accused of adultery (v. 32, from נאף) (Bird 1989b: 77), an offence depicted in biblical literature as unequivocally intolerable and punishable by death

16. The word is in the plural (דמיך) and may refer to birth blood, or menstrual blood, or both: there is no mention of the birth blood being cleansed off (cf. 16.6) (Galambush 1992: 94 n. 16). Shields proposes that 'the hymenal blood associated with her marriage to Yahweh' is also being alluded to (1998: 9).

17. Cf. Bird 1989a, 1989b. She explains that זנה describes illicit or criminal activity, usually of a sexually promiscuous rather than a cultic kind, which is capable of tainting honour. Bird describes that in Hos. 4.11-14 men are accused of cultic, women of sexual impurity: men dishonour Yhwh and זנה is used metaphorically (v. 12b), while women dishonour their lords and זנה is used literally (v. 13b). Galambush points out, further, that the verb is never used of a זונה, 'because the sexual activity of the prostitute, while outside formal bonds, is in fact, licit' (1992: 28 n. 9).

(Lev. 20.10). Highlighting the unnaturalness of her conduct, she does not act promiscuously in return for payment but actually gives payment to her lovers (16.34). Jerusalem's perversity and unnaturalness are stressed also in ch. 23, where transgression is signified in terms of sexual depravity, particularly in the active pursuit of foreign lovers (23.5, 12).

While not singular in employing the metaphor personifying Jerusalem as an unfaithful wife, Ezekiel's usage is especially vivid and compelling. Jeremiah 3.20 draws a parallel between a deceitful woman and the conduct of Israel, which Hos. 1–3 develops more fully. Ezekiel 16 and 23, however, are considerably more detailed and sustained. Both are lengthy accounts outlining Jerusalem's abominations and predicting and justifying her punishment. Galambush argues that here the full emotional implications of the cuckolding of Yhwh, the metaphorical husband of the city Jerusalem, are played out (1992: 57 n. 96) and that the adultery theme has been recast to focus on the pollution that precipitates Yhwh's abandonment of the temple (1992: 78). To a much greater extent than in Isaiah, I would argue, women's sexuality is metaphorically linked with shame and impurity.

Also, pathos, which I have argued is detectable in Lamentations, for instance, is entirely absent in Ezekiel. In Lamentations, too, there is no question of Jerusalem's having sinned. Again personified as a woman in chs. 1–2, she admits to her rebelliousness (from פשע, 1.14, 22) and stubborn action (from מרה, 1.18). The narrator confirms that her sinful conduct (רב־פשעיה, 1.5; חטאה חטא, 1.8) has brought about pollution—she is called a נידה and נדה (both are nominal) (1.8, 17) and described as afflicted by טמאה 'uncleanness' (1.9)—and possibly shame (literally ערות, 'nakedness', 1.8).[18] Nakedness is used to elucidate shame elsewhere (cf. Isa. 47.3). None the less, as Dobbs-Allsopp illustrates, Jerusalem's sin in Lamentations is referred to relatively infrequently and imprecisely when compared to the abundance of images of punishment and torment. This effectively plays down the sin theme and produces the impression that whatever the sin might have been, it 'in no way can justify the extent and degree of suffering she has experienced' (1997: 37).

In Lamentations even such gruesome acts as child-murder and cannibalism are presented in terms that incite pathos (4.10). Here the mothers eating their own children are called tender-hearted (from רחם), because in

18. Galambush claims that 'The nakedness of Jerusalem metonymically signifies her shame... Jerusalem gives away her clothing along with the honor it represents' (1992: 105).

the atrocious conditions death is preferable to living with hunger, violence and deprivation (4.9). I agree with Dobbs-Allsopp that these women 'stand as paradigms of innocent suffering for which there is no justification and for which Yahweh's actions are directly and indirectly responsible' (1997: 38). In Ezekiel, by contrast, the woman/city's sin is depicted in hyperbolic images and her promiscuity and act of child-murder (16.21; 23.37) epitomize her perversity.[19] The depravity and unnaturalness of the woman/city in Ezekiel is presented as fully justifying the extravagant violence with which Yhwh, who initially cared for and who will eventually restore her, threatens her.[20] In Lamentations, however, the punishment of Jerusalem is not only presented as excessive but Yhwh emerges here as somewhat sinister: he has sent fire into the woman/city's bones and spread out a net for her (1.13), put a yoke upon her neck and trampled on the Virgin Daughter of Judah (1.14-15). These descriptions are recounted by the woman/city in the first person, which appears to give us direct insight into the suffering she endures. The punishment of the woman/city in Ezekiel, on the other hand, is in the third person, allowing no possibility of insight into either her motivations, or her pain. She is only an 'other' and therefore regarded with more detachment, which makes condemning her considerably easier than is the case with the woman/Jerusalem of Lamentations.[21] The contrast, furthermore, between the powerful deity and

19. At Ezek. 5.10 fathers and sons are described as practising cannibalism. It is unclear whether this is one of the 'detestable practices' (תועבות, 5.11) being rebuked, or a desperate consequence of famine and hunger (5.12).

20. Galambush mentions that 'The city's situation as described in Lamentations is remarkably like that *predicted* in Ezekiel', but she does not provide a more detailed comparison, because she considers the book to post-date Ezekiel. Her comment in passing that '[t]he city [in Lamentations] is depicted as a "widow," abandoned by her lovers, betrayed by her friends (1.1-2), and deprived of children taken (1.5)', using such emotively charged words as 'abandoned', 'betrayed' and 'depraved', could, however, be interpreted as alluding to a recognition that the woman/city of Lamentations is regarded and depicted in terms arousing pity rather than criticism (1992: 58; my italics).

21. Cf. van Dijk-Hemmes's comments on Hosea: 'A comparison between Hosea 2 and similar passages from the Song of Songs reveals what difference it makes when the woman-in-the-text is presented not as the focalizer but, on the contrary, as the object of focalization. A woman who, like the woman in the Song of Songs, expresses her desire for her lover is, in the Hosean context—where she is presented through his eyes and where her words are "quoted" by him—transformed into a harlot who shamelessly goes after her lovers (in the plural!)' (1995: 245-46).

the trampled upon virgin daughter, weeping profusely with no one to comfort her is, I would say, emotive and intended to provoke sympathy. A virgin daughter might be said to be entitled to protection; instead she is brutalized by Yhwh who is said to be without pity (חמל, 2.2) and who is likened to a murdering enemy (באויב, בצר, 2.4). Yhwh is even asked directly to re-evaluate his treatment of Jerusalem, with the rhetorical questions, 'should women eat their offspring, the children they have cared for? Should priest and prophet be killed in the sanctuary of the Lord?', which imply, I would say, criticism; or at any rate, resistance to the extent of suffering endured.

O'Connor interprets Jerusalem's uncleanness in Lamentations as originating from adultery and menstruation. She goes on from this to claim that 'a natural condition of the female body becomes a metaphor for shame and humiliation' and further, that the consequence of using feminized imagery to depict human sinning generally, 'symbolically blames women alone for the destruction of the city, and...teaches disdain for women and for their bodies. Most disturbing of all, chap. 1 indirectly justifies abuse of women by portraying God as abuser' (1992: 180).

I find these comments considerably more apt for the depiction of the woman/city in Ezekiel than of that in Lamentations. As Dobbs-Allsopp comments, the role of woman/Jerusalem in Lamentations is much like that of a tragic heroine: she is partly responsible for her suffering and there *is* guilt but the consequences are depicted as out of proportion to the deed and the context of suffering must ultimately be laid at the feet of the deity, whose power cannot be questioned but whose sense of justice and goodness is (1997: 35). While woman/Jerusalem's transgression and uncleanness are mentioned, the prominent impression is not, I believe, of women's shamefulness and the text not focused on teaching disdain for, or blaming women, as O'Connor suggests. The image of the city as a young, grieving, agonized woman, who is speaking in the first person and recounting her violent fate, is aimed, rather, at inciting sympathy and pathos. Yhwh's actions, furthermore, while definitely depicted as abusive, are far from justified. I would argue, instead, in agreement with Dobbs-Allsopp, that Yhwh is being criticized for the harsh treatment of Jerusalem in various ways. Yhwh not only sent the enemy (1.5; 1.12), he is compared to the enemy (2.4-5) and imprecations at one (the enemy), implicate the other (Yhwh). Invocations for Yhwh to acknowledge the suffering of his people, articulated by both the personified city (1.9, 11), and the poet (3.59, 60; 5.1), furthermore, take on a note of indictment when read

against the background of 2.20-22, which describes suffering of a scale for which there is no justification (1997: 38-39).

Not so in Ezekiel. Here punishment is also virulent and violent but it is presented as appropriate and proportionate. Still drawing on the woman/city metaphor, which served to illustrate transgression, Yhwh's punishment entails public stripping (16.37), destruction of property (16.39; 23.46-47), murder of offspring (23.47), stoning (16.40; 23.47) and dismemberment (16.40; 23.47). In the light of the preceding catalogue of the city's sinning, juxtaposed with Yhwh's extravagant care and the statement that her treatment is deserved due to breach of covenant (16.59), this brutality is, by implication, in order. Ezekiel presents the coming destruction of Jerusalem not as capricious act but as fitting consequence on account of human culpability. As the punishment anticipated is extreme, so the sin is depicted as suitably gruesome (cf. Darr 1992b: 111). Yhwh, meanwhile, emerges as just.[22]

The punishment of Jerusalem described in Ezekiel is brutal but unlike with Lamentations, the disturbing nature of this does not receive acknowledgment. Lamentations, like Job, challenges a deity who could treat his people thus; Ezekiel, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, vindicates Yhwh's action. Perhaps because of the disturbing potential of the divine sanctioning of and tacit agreement with such brutality, some feminist commentators have sprung to the defence of the woman/city of Ezekiel. Just as O'Connor, in the citation above, discerns in the feminized metaphor of Lamentations a blaming of *actual* women, others have argued for nuances in the Prophets that they label 'misogynistic' and 'pornographic'. Again, there is a claim for negative and damaging repercussions for real women.

22. Franzmann describes the depiction of Yhwh as warrior-rapist as a scandal and argues that it supports men in their victimization of women by the authority of the metaphor (1995: 17-19; see also Shields 1998: 9, 16-17). Washington points out that punishment depicted as rape of the woman/city by 'God as vengeful rapist' is a resonant and disturbing motif of prophetic literature, directed both at foreign cities (Isa. 47.1-4; Nah. 3.5-6) and at Israel-Judah. With regard to the latter, he cites Jer. 13.33; Lam. 1.8-10; and 4.21-22, Ezek. 16.35-39; 23.9-10, 26-29; Hos. 2.3-17; and Zech. 14.2 (1997: 354-55). Of these, Jer. 13 has some similarity with Lamentations: weeping is a theme in this poetic passage also (v. 17) and the city is depicted as a woman who is punished for sinning (v. 22) and who is unclean (v. 27). Unlike Lamentations—and according more with the tenor of Jer. 2 and 5, as well as Ezek. 16 and 23—Jeremiah alludes to the sexual depravity that justifies the punishment (v. 27). Lamentations may have avoided the metaphor depicting Jerusalem's transgressions as sexual excesses so as not to dilute the tragic pathos.

Setel (1985) has referred to female sexual imagery in Hosea as pornographic. Agreeing with her, Brenner has claimed that 'It is difficult for any reader, even a resisting or suspicious reader, not to be affected by the recurrent, negative images of woman which are coded into the religio-political propaganda' (1995a: 34). Graetz, more fully and emotively, links the imagery of Hosea with real-life domestic violence:

> I argue, along with other feminist commentators, that the language of Hosea and the other prophets and rabbis who use 'objectified female sexuality as a symbol of evil' has had damaging effects on women. Women who read of God's relationship with Israel through the prism of a misogynist male prophet...and have religious sensibilities, are forced to identify against themselves (1995: 138).
>
> Israel has to suffer in order to be entitled to this new betrothal. 'She' has to be battered into submission in order to kiss and make up at the end... The premise is that a woman has no other choice but to remain in such a marriage. True, God is very generous to Israel... But despite the potential for a new model of a relationship between God and Israel, it is not a model of reciprocity. It is based on suffering and the assumption that Israel will submit to God's will. Hosea, however, rejoices in this transformation and in the 'ordeal [which] has fit the woman for a new, enhanced relationship with God'.
>
> The reader who is caught up in this joyous new betrothal and renewed covenant overlooks the fact that this joyous reconciliation between God and Israel follows the exact pattern that battered wives know so well. Israel is physically punished, abused and then seduced into remaining in the covenant by tender words and caresses (1995: 141).[23]

A similar leap from metaphoric depiction to real women (oftentimes modern-day women) is made with regard to the imagery in Ezekiel. Darr expresses her uneasiness at the woman/city's degradation, public humiliation, battery and murder constituting a means towards *healing* a broken relationship and has sympathy for her woman student who rejected chs. 16

23. Other commentators argue along comparable lines. Washington draws together diverse strands of biblical literature and concludes: 'As foundational texts of Western culture [the Deuteronomic laws] authenticate the role of violence in the cultural construction of gender up to the present day' (1997: 344). These laws and also much of prophetic literature are, he argues, 'problematic for a female-identified reader, who soon finds herself aligned with the object of violence' (1997: 346). Shields agrees that Ezek. 16.35-43 'is easily passed over, until one realizes that it uncannily resembles the cycle of spousal abuse that is only now, in our time, being discussed openly' (1998: 15).

and 23 (1992b: 115). Galambush argues that these two chapters qualify as pornography in the literal (*pornographos* = writings of/about prostitutes), as well as the modern sense, as defined by Dworkin and MacKinnon—'the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures and or words' (1992: 125). Both seem to be affected by the text as woman reader, identifying or empathizing to an extent with the woman of the metaphor.[24] This tendency is particularly clear with van Dijk-Hemmes. Agreeing with Setel that pornography is often characterized by misnaming female experience, she designates Ezek. 23.3 an example of pornographic writing. Following an elucidation of this designation, she attempts to liberate the woman of the text. In the NIV this verse reads, '[Samaria and Jerusalem] became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed'. Van Dijk-Hemmes points out that this event is one not of activity but of receptivity, which has for her particular implications:

> As an F [Female/Feminine] reader I have some difficulties in naming such a being-acted-upon situation as 'playing the harlot', so I suggest... [i]t would have been more adequate to describe the events during the sisters' youth in the following manner: 'They were sexually molested in Egypt, in their youth they were sexually abused'. This way, justice would have been done to the fate of these metaphorical women, and the audience would not have been seduced into viewing women or girls as responsible for and even guilty of their own violation. In short, there would have been no question of 'blaming the victim' (1995: 250-51).

She accuses the text, furthermore, not only of misnaming but distorting female experience. The image of Oholibah's desire for stallion-like males with animal-like members, she argues, 'Instead of reflecting female desire...betrays male obsession', the alleged intention being 'to stress that [women's] sexuality is and ought to be an object of male possession and control' (1995: 253).

24. In some recent critical writing, the emphasis on the perspective of woman-reader sometimes adopts a personal, almost confessional tone. Brenner, for instance, writes in her article on Jeremiah, 'I am a woman, white, Western, Jewish, and Israeli, middle class, heterosexual, divorced, a mother, with an academic education' (1995b: 272). While I agree that one's background and experiences are bound to have an impact on the reading and interpreting process, I think it is fair to say that from this distance in terms of time and space the images of Ezek. 16 and 23 would strike most readers, male and female, marginalized or otherwise, as offensive, strange, even deranged.

I have some affinity with the feminist commentators cited above, insofar that I would agree that the images of Ezek. 16 and 23 when they are visualized trigger unpleasant and unsettling responses. Also, it may be true, as Graetz argues, that 'it is no longer possible to argue that a metaphor is less for being a metaphor' (1995: 135). Certainly, metaphors if they are to be decoded by their audience and effective, rely on certain presuppositions, or knowledge. A clichéd metaphor such as 'Mother Earth', for instance, depends on the recognition of qualities which are stereotypically associated with motherhood (such as fertility, nurture and nourishment), which are then transposed on to the earth. This is not to say, however, that such a metaphor actively facilitates such a perception of motherhood, or that it is capable of blinding those who understand how it functions to the fact that mothers can be anything but nurturing and caring—for instance, neurotic or neglectful. The feminized metaphor of Ezekiel is very evocative and gives rise to vivid mental pictures but whether it reflects and perpetuates a misogynist reality is more difficult to establish. On the one hand an effective language device, a metaphor is on the other 'just a metaphor' (*pace* Graetz 1995: 135; Brenner 1995: 264; Franzmann 1995: 18)[25] and it should not be forgotten that the, admittedly often repellent, feminized metaphors are aimed at the entire community.

The effusive, vulgar and violent rhetoric *does* require some explanation. This may not, however, necessarily be best sought for by reading the figurative layer in a literal manner and applying it to actual women. This, after all, is not the purpose of figurative language: 'Mother Earth' does not signify that the earth is like an actual human mother in every respect, with a literal womb and the capacity to breastfeed. Carroll's comments, in response to articles by van Dijk-Hemmes and Brenner—who argue for pornographic and misogynist features in Ezekiel and Jeremiah respectively—provide some balance to the somewhat emotive responses to

25. Wicker claims that metaphor is capable of 'organic development' and that theological metaphor goes further than this in that it is capable of 'doctrinal development'. It is rooted, he argues, in cultural tradition and has 'certain preordained validity' for its author: 'Theological metaphors are not chosen; they choose us. They come from the web of the language itself...and its stock of available ideas' (1975: 88). I do not disagree with this position or wish to dispute the idea that metaphors are dependent on certain cultural suppositions and knowledge in order to be understood. What I am resisting is the argument that they reflect social reality rather than stereotypical or otherwise distorted perception, or that their power inevitably exceeds the generation of vivid mental pictures and emotional arousal to the extent of shaping social conduct.

sexualized female imagery in the Prophets.[26] Carroll stresses that the representations of Oholah and Oholibah are metaphoric and that their referential force is therefore symbolic as opposed to concrete:

> The images may well be drawn from male perceptions of female behaviour (whether actual or male fantasy must be left for the social historian to determine), but they are applied to the community as city and not to real women in the community. That is how metaphors work. What the Ezekiel text denounces is the behaviour of male society throughout its history. The notion that the narrative is seeking to reinforce male dominance over actual women is imposed on the text by certain forms of contemporary radical feminist ideology (1995: 283).

Carroll attributes the extrapolation of misogynistic messages from such texts as Hos. 1–3, Jer. 2, 3 and 5 and Ezek. 16, 20 and 23 to a feminist ideology that refuses 'to treat metaphor as metaphor when it suits a predetermined argument' (1995: 288). Unsurprised by Brenner and van Dijk-Hemmes's outrage at such texts—he describes the 'fantasies' of Ezek. 16 and 23, for instance, as 'bizarre and incoherent...like the ravings of a drug-crazed fanatic' (1995: 300)—Carroll prefers not to read them as reflecting the actions of real people, calculated to oppress and control real women, but as literary discourses:

> Real people do not appear in these fantasies and the stereotypical nature of the abuse confirms this non-appearance of the real.[27] There are no real

26. I am referring here especially to the connections made by Graetz and Shields between prophetic imagery and wife-beating and to van Dijk-Hemmes's rewriting of the sexual history of the sisters Samaria and Jerusalem, as one of suffering sexual abuse in early adolescence (see above, pp. 146-48). As regards the label of 'pornographic', the comments of Kuhn, writing of the tensions between feminism and the representation of female sexuality in the cinema, are insightful. Kuhn acknowledges the capacity of pornography 'to provoke gut reactions—of distaste, horror, sexual arousal, fear—[which] makes it peculiarly difficult to deal with analytically... [T]he intellectual distance necessary for analysis becomes hard to sustain: and also feminist...politics around pornography tend to acquire a degree of emotionalism that can make the enterprise quite explosive' (1985: 21).

27. Halperin has taken issue with this stance. He argues that stereotypes far from obscuring actuality, disclose something about its contours: '*Precisely because the language [of Hosea and Ezekiel] is so stereotypical*...its verisimilitude will suggest that it is derived from the timeless quarrels of husbands and wives.' He continues: 'Endless recurrent human situations—"timeless quarrels," sexual yearning and betrayal, loss of a beloved object—are the stuff of which stereotypes, and stereotypic language, are made' (1993: 180 n. 46).

> women...only metaphorized descriptions and representations of imaginary communities and imagined past histories. It is all in the imagination, in the metaphors and in the ideology (1995: 303).

It is correct, I would say, that the imagery of Ezekiel, which inculcates shame, portrays women in a negative light. Female imagery is vividly and insistently associated with defilement and immorality and it is legitimate to describe particularly the metaphors of chs. 16 and 23 as disturbing and offensive. This should neither detract from the fact that the metaphor calls all Israel to account, nor should such extremist language be regarded as necessarily reflecting a more generalized extremist misogyny that uses a form of pornography to oppress real women. Carroll, pointing out that pornography, while being one form of representation of sexual existence is by no means the sole one (1995: 297), has proposed instead that Ezekiel might be employing an antilanguage (1995: 297; 1996b: 81).

Ezekiel 16, Shame and Antilanguage

Antilanguages,[28] the languages of antisocieties seeking self-consciously to create a different kind of society from the one which either has been or is dominant, are often characterized by extremity.[29] As Carroll points out:

28. Antilanguages are discussed by Halliday (1978: 164-82) with particular reference to 'Pelting', the tongue of the counterculture of vagabonds in Elizabethan England; the language of an antisociety of modern Calcutta; and 'Grypserka', the language of the subculture of Polish prisons and reform schools. All three are spoken by antisocieties existing within other societies and as conscious alternatives to them and all represent modes of resistance. An antilanguage, furthermore, not only realizes and expresses an alternative subjective reality but also actively creates and maintains it. They are often but not inevitably symptomatic of social resistance and protest: the 'arcane languages' of sorcery and mysticism also qualify, according to Halliday.

29. Gubar, alluding to the features of pornographic visual art which render it subversive, postulates that pornography is in part a revolt against authority, aimed at psychic disorientation and a step ' "in the dialectic of outrage" so as to speak about the forbidden, be it the extinction of the self associated with physical death, with mystical attempts to transcend the personal, or with rebellious efforts to transgress the boundaries of conventional consciousness' (1987: 727). Such tendencies have some affinity with those of antilanguages. It remains, however, preferable to examine Ezekiel in terms of an antilanguage than in terms of pornography, because the latter is not only notoriously difficult to define (one person's erotica is another's pornography) but also because pornography is concerned ostensibly with sex and sexual titillation, whereas antilanguage is primarily concerned with subversion and establishing a counter-reality, which, I think, may be closer to the agenda of Ezekiel.

'The attempt radically to alter everything inevitably involves violent language, overcharged rhetoric and grotesque parodies of reality. It is not difficult to recognize such features in the Ezekiel material' (1995: 302).

Tendencies of antilanguages, as described by Halliday, are vulgarity and cunningly subversive wordplay[30] and such exaggerations as overlexicalization.[31] These 'larger than life', somewhat ostentatious characteristics of antilanguages arise, Halliday explains, from a response to the cumulative pressure of the dominant society, which threatens to disintegrate the alternative-reality-generating system of the antilanguage (1978: 168).[32] Certainly, I would agree that the hyperbolic imagery of Ezekiel's invectives is unlikely to be referring to real women or social reality. Such language may indeed be more suited to a radical re-evaluation of norms or to generating or maintaining a counter-reality.

Another typical feature of antilanguages is the phenomenon of metaphor. Halliday is quick to mention that metaphor is a feature of *languages*, not just antilanguages, but prefers to specify that it signifies the very element of antilanguages that is present in all languages. Antilanguages, he

30. Halliday describes antilanguages as 'inherently comic' (1978: 182). The classic antilanguage Rotwelsch (which Halliday makes no reference to), once spoken by the criminal fraternity of Germany and Austria, for instance, used the word 'mezuzah' rather blasphemously, to signify a prostitute: because prostitutes could be found lingering in doorways waiting for clients. Commentators have recognized various sexual witticisms in prophetic writing, too. Magdalene, to name one, speaks of the rape language in Isa. 3.17 and 26 as follows: ' "Opening", פת, typically translated "secret parts", is a word play on the word for "gate", פתח, or the opening of a city. Thus the metaphor operates to equate both the city with the person of the female and the gate of the city with the vaginal opening of the female body. Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is the military metaphor of the ravaged city as ravished female seen more clearly' (1995: 333). The humour of antilanguage wordplay may be regarded as somewhat 'warped' but its quirkiness and wit are often striking.

31. Halliday explains overlexicalization by pointing out that the antilanguage of the Calcutta underworld has not just one word for 'bomb' but 21, as well as 41 for 'police' (1978: 165). The hyperbolic catalogues of crime in Ezekiel, citing a wide range of deviant behaviour, might be considered as having some affinity with such a phenomenon.

32. Bourdieu, while not referring to antilanguages as such, describes a similar process that attends political resistance, whereby pressure groups attach their self-interest to one or other possible meaning of a word. He compares this to the inversion of a chord in music and explains that such an activity can overturn the hierarchy of meaning and trigger a symbolic revolution (1990: 97).

explains, are themselves metaphorical entities and hence metaphorical modes of expression are the norm: 'we should *expect* metaphorical compounding, metatheses, rhyming alternations and the like to be among its regular patterns of realization' (1978: 177). Ezekiel 16 and 23 with their violent and vulgar metaphors may indeed hold some promise for the existence of antilanguage features. These 'lengthy harangues' (Carroll 1995: 302), after all, could well be described, in Halliday's words, as appearing 'oblique, diffuse, metaphorical' (1978: 181). He explains this effect of antilanguages on the angle from which they are viewed, arguing that on their own terms they are directed constructors of counter-reality. Further validation for our purposes of viewing Ezekiel as an antilanguage discourse, or text, is Halliday's following concession:

> The languages of literature are in a certain sense antilanguages—or rather, literature is both language and antilanguage at the same time. It is typical of a poetic genre that one or other mode of meaning is foregrounded. At times the effect comes close to that of an antilanguage in the social sense, for example in competitive genres such as the Elizabethan sonnet... A work of literature is its author's contribution to the reality-generating conversation of society—irrespective of whether it offers an alternative reality or reinforces the received model—and its language reflects this status that it has in the sociosemiotic scheme (1978: 182).

One of the most surprising twists in the metaphor-laden text of Ezek. 16 in particular concerns the role of shame. Brenner argues as follows concerning prophetic sexual imagery generally and that of Jeremiah in particular:

> how does the erotic metaphor work beyond securing the audience's attention? It certainly stimulates sexual fantasy. It does something else as well. The eager presentation of deviant female sexuality—and details are liberally supplied—can have one purpose only: to *shame the audience.* The more blatant the presentation, the more shocking and shameful its referent, namely the people's fickleness in forming alliances. The result of this strategy is a contrast between the metaphor and its designated purpose: pornography is expected to promote religious and political reform... Indeed, male sexuality is attacked too; however, the description of male adultery and animalistic desire in 5.7-8 is a single occurrence. All other passages which belong to the divine husband-adulterous wife metaphor are resolutely devoted to inducing shame by reference to female sexual behaviour (1995b: 259-60).

According to Brenner, then, the sexualized metaphor is used in the Prophets for ideological purposes[33] and aimed at shaming the audience, which, presumably, consists of both men and women. Shame is aroused, however, she continues, by singling out women. In the background of this claim, though this is not stated explicitly, may be the argument prominent in much of the anthropological literature, that women's sexuality is especially closely identified with shame. Certainly, Brenner implies a connection between the text and social reality. She argues, therefore, that the woman-metaphors in Jeremiah are pornographic and capable of having adverse effects on actual women:

> Disgust and shame will not be produced unless the listeners recognize the validity of the description for female sexual behaviour in general. That is imperative if they are to dissociate themselves from similar behaviour outside the sexual sphere... A recognition that women are (like) animals will make the metaphor work. This recognition need not be conscious. It will be as effective, perhaps more so, if it stimulates desire unconsciously... Does this new development express fear of the female and misogyny? If we readers feel that the textual voice disapproves of women as wild and (un)natural animals; that the target audience is drawn into sharing this disapproval; that the pornographic fantasy feeds on the view that female sexuality is uncontrollable—then, yes, misogyny underscores this dehumanized, animalized depiction. This is not 'just a metaphor' (1995b: 263-64).

I disagree with Brenner that either the animal imagery of Jer. 2, or the metaphor of the sexually depraved woman/city in Ezekiel, is referring to or exclusively aimed at real women.[34] Both are vivid and shocking and quite probably, I think, written to incite shame and subsequently self-examination and to instil particular behaviour in the audience.[35] Perhaps the author was a disturbed individual; perhaps male fantasy is in the background of the imagery—this must remain conjectural—but the

33. Brenner stresses this explicitly at the outset of her article: 'Let us agree that the Hebrew Bible is a political document. It contains ideologies of specific interest groups. It is used for achieving political ends' (1995b: 256).

34. Jer. 2.26 makes it quite clear who is being addressed, criticized and singled out for shame: not women but the 'house of Israel' (the Septuagint and Syriac versions reflect בני ישראל, 'sons/children of Israel'), the kings, officers, priests and prophets.

35. Davis argues that this is achieved by an ironic inversion of the *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history), which 'forces the people's attention away from the immediate and calls them to a task of self-evaluation on a scale never previously undertaken' (1989: 117).

women portrayed do not bear any realistic features: they are the stuff of hyperbole and stereotype, stock-characters of vice.[36] While an interpretation or assumption that such a portrayal typifies women could, potentially, be damaging to real women this is not an inevitable conclusion. Although images of prostitution and women's sexuality are abundantly present in Ezek. 16, I do not think real women, their subjugation and the incitement of sexual titillation are the primary concerns here. Instead, exploring the shame discourse of Ezek. 16, from the perspective of an antilanguage strikes me as more promising because antilanguages, as we have seen, are concerned with promoting a counter-reality, have affinities with literary language and are characterized by extensive use of metaphor and somewhat extreme and seemingly disjointed language—all of which strike a chord with this chapter.

The closing verses of Ezek. 16, where shame attends atonement, are enigmatic. Darr points out that 'This is a miraculous restoration and reconciliation, to be sure, particularly considering the extent and varieties of violence inflicted upon the city' (1992b: 106). She considers the presence of dumbness and shame amid restoration as contributing a muted note: Yahweh is merciful and just but the people have acted despicably and this is not forgotten. Odell, meanwhile, explains that the 'theological problem' of 16.59-63, where Jerusalem feels shame only *after* God forgives and is, furthermore, commanded to feel shame *because* God forgives, is often entirely overlooked in commentaries. Where it is addressed, she continues, it is explained variously, as illustrating the author's inferior understanding of divine grace, as a classic paradox of the workings of divine grace in the

36. This could suggest some affinity with the grotesque, not unlike the depiction of the seven deadly sins, for instance, in mediaeval literature. Bakhtin claims that the grotesque mode has prevailed in art and creative forms for thousands of years (1965: 318) and Boyarin argues for its presence in Talmudic literature (1993: 200-204). Among the attributes of the grotesque style are exaggeration, hyperbolism and excessiveness, which are focused especially on the body and bodily life. This focus, however, conceals a cosmic dimension, often a catastrophe, the terror of which is made bearable through the degraded, humanized and transformed characteristics of the grotesque (Bakhtin 1965: 336). The excessive and sexualized depiction of Jerusalem in Ezek. 16 and of Oholah and Oholibah in ch. 23 might be said to have some commonalities with other depictions of the literary grotesque. These metaphors, further, describe a situation of catastrophe: destruction, violence and exile. However, the essentially comic quality of the grotesque is, I would say, lacking. While in the grotesque terror is conquered by laughter, laughter is absent in Ezekiel. I would agree that humour in Ezekiel is 'a contradiction in terms' (Carroll 1990: 186).

midst of human feelings of unworthiness, or as 'one of the most profound biblical insights into the affective logic of reconciliation' (1992: 102).

The shame language appears in the final 12 verses of the chapter, following the biographical account of the woman/city's unprecedented transgressions[37] and punishment. I have translated these verses below.

> Yes, bear your humiliation[38] because[39] you mediated for your sisters through your own sins, which you performed so abominably. They appear downright righteous compared to you. Yes, be ashamed, you, and bear your humiliation at having made your sisters look righteous.
>
> But I shall restore their fortunes, the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters—and your fortunes along with theirs in order that you bear your humiliation and feel humiliated at all you have done in consoling them.[40] Your sisters, both Sodom and her daughters and Samaria and her daughters, will be restored to their former state and you and your daughters will also be restored to your former state. Sodom, your sister, was not mentioned by you in your proud days.[41] This was before your own evil ways were disclosed.[42] At this time the daughters of Aram and all who were around her abused you[43] and the daughters of the

37. Samaria and Sodom are called the sisters of Jerusalem (16.46). Although they are depraved, Jerusalem is considerably more so (16.47, 51).

38. The phrase is שְׂאִי כְלִמָּתֵךְ. I have translated כלמה as 'humiliation', verbs of the root כלם as 'to be humiliated' and of בוש as 'to be ashamed'.

39. I have translated אֲשֶׁר in the less common causal sense (cf. Williams 1986: 77 par. 468).

40. This action (בְּנַחֲמָךְ אוֹתָן), as it is conducted by Jerusalem, who is being rebuked, appears to be viewed pejoratively. Elsewhere in Ezekiel נחם applies to human emotions that are regarded favourably, such as comfort or relief: at 14.22-23 it conveys the consolation felt in response to Yhwh sparing some people from disaster.

41. Or, following *BHS* and reading the verse in the interrogative, 'was not your sister Sodom talked of by you [lit. 'to be heard in your mouth'] in your proud days?' The word for 'pride', גָּאוֹן, used not of Yhwh but of Jerusalem, is likely to be pejorative. Either, Jerusalem is rebuked for neglecting her sister Sodom by not so much as mentioning her, or she may have slandered her while being yet more sinful herself. Cf. Galambush who translates, 'was not your sister Sodom the object of your gossip...?' (1992: 68).

42. Some Hebrew manuscripts have עֶרְוָתֵךְ, 'your nakedness', which could be a signifier of shame. Cf. Landy, who argues for an association between the uncovering of the body with the uncovering of something 'anarchic and subversive' (1995: 148) and Bassett, who argues that the phrase 'to uncover nakedness' may pertain to the disclosure of some major transgressions, such as incest (1971: 232).

43. The word for 'abuse' is the construct of חֶרְפָּה, which is sometimes translated 'disgrace'.

> Philistines scorned you from all around. Your infamy and your abominations you yourself shall bear, declares Yhwh. For this is what the Lord Yhwh says, 'I will do to you as you did, when you despised a curse and broke the covenant. But I will remember my covenant (and) you[44] in the days of your youth and I will establish an eternal covenant for you. And you will remember your ways and feel humiliated when you take in[45] your sisters, those older than you along with[46] those younger than you. And I will give them to you as daughters—but not on the basis of your covenant.[47] And I will establish my covenant with you and you will know that I am Yhwh. On account of this you will remember and be ashamed and there will not again be for you, in the light of your humiliation, a mouth opening[48] when I make amends for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord Yhwh' (16.52-63).

I find it far from clear what is actually going on in this passage. My overall impression is that it is somewhat disjointed with no internal logic. Are Jerusalem's actions of consoling and taking in condemned because she is so corrupt that even her apparent goodness is wicked? Is Yhwh's re-

44. Or, 'I will remember my covenant with you', as the editors of *BHS* propose.

45. From the root לקח. NIV has 'when you receive your sisters'. Perhaps this verb, which most often means 'to take', has a menacing nuance here.

46. I am interpreting the preposition אל as expressing accompaniment.

47. The phrase is ולא מבריתך. Galambush points out that this could refer to either Jerusalem's broken covenant (16.59 and see 17.13), or to Yhwh's covenant with her (16.8, 60, 62) (1992: 68). 'Your covenant' may be Jerusalem's subversion of the covenant with Yhwh.

48. This renders פתחון פה very literally. The phrase may hark back to v. 56 where Jerusalem's פה could be referring to slander, i.e. 'you will never again slander/gossip'. Given the wider context, there may be a sexual allusion here, such as was claimed for פח alongside פתח by Magdalene with regard to Isa. 3.17, 26 (1995: 332-33; and n. 30 above). *If* the cessation of a פתחון פה is alluding to an end to sexual promiscuity (cf. Shields 1998: 12 n. 27), this could be said to be entirely in line with what Halliday has described as the inherently comic quality of antilanguages, which often wittily and bawdily subvert the surface meaning of words. Bakhtin comments that the mouth features prominently in imagery of the grotesque and that the nose sometimes signifies the phallus (1965: 316-17). The mouth, then, could possibly signify the vagina. (Broome's argument that Ezekiel is identifying as a woman and that his swallowing of the scroll constitutes receiving a phallus [1946: 288] could also imply an association of mouth and vagina.) Most commentators interpret this expression as Jerusalem being struck dumb. Odell argues for the cessation of a complaint ritual (see below, pp. 158-59). In another Ezekiel passage (29.21) Yhwh gives פתחון פה to Israel along with a horn (which generally symbolizes strength) so that she may know that he is Yhwh. In the context of restoration in ch. 16, the reward of 29.21 seems to be withheld.

establishment of the covenant and making amends not indicative of restoration at all but the final straw, with Jerusalem's humiliation and shame constituting the climax of the litany of punishments? What is meant by Jerusalem's covenant: her subversion of the covenant with Yhwh, or something entirely different? What is meant by the deprivation of a mouth opening: is Jerusalem silenced by awe and gratitude and a sense of unworthiness, or battered into total submission and unable to speak? Why are Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem restored prior to any intimations of reparation? Why is Yhwh resurrecting the covenant? Satisfactory answers to such questions are difficult to discern from the text itself and, as Carroll has pointed out, the restoration of Sodom stands as one of the most peculiar and subversive of intertextualities: 'Sister Sodom is saved by sister Whorusalamin's whorings!' (1996b: 81).

Odell explains the expression פתחון פה, which occurs but twice in the Hebrew Bible, on the basis of Mishnaic Hebrew, as 'an occasion for complaint, a pretext for accusation' (1992: 106). At 16.63 the allusion is, she argues, to a public complaint questioning Yhwh's reliability. While a specific complaint does not occur within the chapter itself, Odell proposes that it would be consistent with those quoted at 18.25 and 33.17, where the people protest that Yhwh's way is unfair (לא יתכן). The premise of this complaint is refuted at 16.63 because the people are recipients of Yhwh's grace: any complaint that he abandoned his people is countered by the re-establishment of the covenant. Instead, Jerusalem is encouraged to feel shame, which Odell interprets as a process of intense self-examination. This in turn will transpire in the realization that 'none of her behavior exhibits the kind of trust on which she could have made any kind of appeal to God' (1992: 108). Odell's conclusion is that the commands to feel ashamed are best understood in the context of complaint rituals which incorporate confessions of trust and appeals to Yhwh to live up to his promises and which remove shame by examining and addressing the reasons for failure of the divine-human relationship. Any complaint with regard to the exile is undercut in ch. 16 by vindicating Yhwh's action and asserting the people's extreme shortcomings. Their complaint, therefore, is met by a counter-challenge that forces them to examine their own role in bringing about their situation of failure. This gives rise to the recognition of responsibility: shame, formerly the basis for blame and accusation, is thus transformed into self-recognition. The primary significance of Jerusalem having no mouth opening on account of her shame, then, is, according to Odell, that there will be no basis for her complaint against God.

If Odell is correct it must nevertheless be said that the existence of a complaint ritual in the background of these verses has been obscured. Why should Jerusalem even consider voicing a complaint *after* she has entered into an eternal covenant with Yhwh and been atoned for? Also, Odell inadequately addresses the fact that the only other time a פתחון פה is mentioned the translation of 'an occasion for complaint' is entirely inappropriate. She does refer to 29.21 in a footnote, explaining that the context of this expression is one of proclaiming salvation to exiles, indicating that several types of mouth-openings were performed in the cult. The one in 29.21 is distinct from that in 16.63 pertaining to occasions of shame; the latter meaning, she argues, survives in Mishnaic Hebrew while the meaning of 29.21 recedes (1992: 107 n. 19). The expression occurs only twice and it seems peculiar (though it is of course not impossible) that it would have such disparate meanings. I find it more likely that the expression pertains not to a formal complaint ritual on the one hand and a formal proclamation of salvation on the other but, simply, to speech—possibly with the more specific slant of speech which has divine sanctioning. The denial of a mouth opening in 16.63 would thus be indicative of divine silencing. Speaking, perhaps even vaunting, is also one appropriate response to being in a position of strength (29.21), while hiding or keeping silent is an appropriate response to feeling shame (16.63). I agree that the chapter, vividly contrasting Jerusalem's sins with Yhwh's generosity and capacity for forgiveness, could be said to vindicate Yhwh[49] and also that shame may be aimed at inciting self-examination and fulfilling a preparatory role for restoration. However, I think that shame is here, primarily, along with the aphonia, a form of divine coercion and punishment.[50]

49. It is important, however, to remember also Yhwh's cruelty (cf. Halperin 1993; Shields 1998).

50. Aphonia is a theme elsewhere in Ezekiel, where it signifies not divine punishment but divine control. Cf. Ezek. 3.26-27, where Yhwh prevents the prophet from speaking until he chooses to give him back his voice: אפתח את־פיך (also 24.27, יפתח פיך; 33.22, ויפתח את־פי). Wilson explains these passages as glosses: 'in order to explain the prophet's failure to plead with Yahweh for the salvation of Jerusalem, the editor added the notes on Ezekiel's dumbness. He thus indicated that immediately after the prophet's call he was forbidden to plead for the city. The destruction of the city was already decided by Yahweh, and the judgment inevitable. So the prophet could be absolved of any laxity in performing his office' (1972: 104). Whether editorial or authorial, the silencing is depicted as brought about by divine force.

The author of this passage appears to be of the view that Jerusalem deserves her fate, cruel as it may be, and that Yhwh is fully in control and justified in his actions. There is no indication that the deity is in any way criticized or accused, as is discernible in the Wisdom literature, for instance. Perhaps this is a response to the complaints of the citizens of Jerusalem who are bemoaning their plight. Perhaps it was composed in the Second Temple period at a time when a complete break with the past was felt to be necessary before a 'better way' could be embarked upon. The precise context, however, has been obscured. Furthermore, what we are left with is obscure too and difficult to account for. I am in agreement with Carroll that such writing is unlikely to be 'the quiet, controlled, articulated and highly structured literary [discourse] of a sedate ideologue' (1995: 300).

It would be going too far to call the writings of Ezekiel examples of a fully-fledged antilanguage. I am not suggesting, for instance, that the authors of Ezekiel have entirely re-lexicalized the Hebrew language, or that their language represents a fission from the established language. The antilanguages Pelting, Grypserka and that of the Calcutta underworld, discussed by Halliday, are considerably more evolved and sophisticated than what might be described as the antilanguage tendencies of Ezek. 16. The features I am referring to are first, the insistent use of metaphor: in the passage cited and throughout the chapter, Jerusalem is depicted as a reprehensible female person, with much emphasis on her sexual misdemeanours. Secondly, hyperbole: Jerusalem is described as even worse than her sister Sodom, the sinner *par excellence*. Thirdly, there is an inexplicable development from Jerusalem being deplored and commanded to bear her humiliation, to a re-establishment of the covenant and her subsequent feelings of humiliation. Further, Jerusalem is given her sisters as daughters: is this a reward? Does it signify Jerusalem's over-lordship of Samaria? If this is a reward why is she also silenced? Is she, perhaps, 'punished with kindness', as in the ritual of *abutu*, described by the anthropologist Epstein, whereby an opponent is shamed by presenting him with food of such abandon that he cannot make return?

This bizarre, disjointed and exaggerated language is not intended, I think, to recount social reality—the medium strikes me as entirely inappropriate. Furthermore, the images of promiscuous women are not, I believe, drawn from assumptions about female behaviour and then distorted a little with a view to justifying the control over real women—this would be taking the metaphor at face value. The authorial intention

remains puzzling to me. While it is not an answer to the questions arising from the text, the notion that the language of Ezekiel has affinities with an antilanguage may explain at least its lack of perspicuity. Antilanguages, after all, are insiders' languages and therefore, from the standpoint of established language, diffuse, oblique and somewhat impenetrable (Halliday 1978: 180-81). The idea that there are antilanguage tendencies behind the enigmatic text of Ezek. 16 while not clarifying the text, may account for its lack of clarity.

Summary

One prominent theme of the book of Ezekiel is purity. In the context of the Hebrew Bible impurity is usually depicted as a state that is incurred inevitably, rectified by means of a ritual and with no onus attached to it. In Ezekiel, however, as it is linked with deliberate transgression, impurity has an ethical dimension. Restoration is granted by Yhwh and entails not only outward cleansing but also acknowledgment of guilt and inward purging. The inculcation of shame appears to be central in bringing about this internal purging process.

As in the book of Jeremiah, vulgar sexual imagery is used to evoke the realization of defilement and shame. As sexual discharges are linked to impurity and nakedness to shame, such imagery is particularly suitable for this dual aim. Whereas Jeremiah has bestial sexual images pertaining to men as well as women and Isaiah prominent positive female imagery, the book of Ezekiel is characterized by a thoroughly negative depiction of both actual and metaphorical women. Particularly memorable, vivid and insistent are the woman/city metaphors of chs. 16 and 23. Various explanations have been proposed for accounting for these extreme and bizarre metaphors. Feminist critics, often taking them at face value, have argued that misogynist writers have labelled women as shameful. The sexual images are interpreted as titillating for the male audience and oppressive and damaging for women, which justifies the claim that Ezekiel contains pornographic writing. The accusation of pornography, however, is anachronistic and sexual imagery may well have a purpose different to that of pornography. Furthermore, a preoccupation with the surface meaning of the feminized metaphors has sometimes ignored that they are aimed at all Jerusalem.

The psychoanalytical approach has attributed the vile sexual imagery to Ezekiel's abnormal personality, which may have been shaped by

childhood trauma. Halperin has argued that Ezekiel was sexually abused and held his mother responsible. Consequently, his profound psychic pain manifested itself in a loathing for female sexuality. As this loathing coexisted with a conflicting desire, however, Ezekiel was burdened with a constant sense of guilt and shame that effected mutism and self-punishment. While the prominent presence of blood, of excrement and such (arguably) phallic objects as the scroll which the prophet must swallow are reminiscent of Freudian symbols, the entire argument is based on the acceptance of the universal and timeless existence of the Oedipus complex, id and oral phase—all of which are unverifiable.

Sexual imagery is prominent not only in pornography and Freudian symbolism but in the realm of the grotesque and in such extreme deviations from language as antilanguages. The grotesque, focused on bawdy depictions of bodily life, has a comic dimension that is not evident in Ezekiel. Antilanguages, however, have some affinity with Ezekiel's harangues, in that both are characterized by metaphor, extremity and impenetrability. Shame, in the context of an antilanguage, would constitute neither the repressed sexual drive of a damaged individual (psychoanalytical), nor would it be inculcated by misogynist ideologues with a view to subjugating women (feminist); instead, it would be inculcated to subvert and resist the values of a ruined culture and to construct an alternative counter-reality. Like the grotesque mode, with which antilanguages have some affinity, this would suit a situation of catastrophe, such as the time after the exile when a complete rejection of the past might have been considered necessary to inaugurate a new beginning. Ultimately, however, this is just another proposal in attempting to explain extreme and perplexing prophetic sexual imagery, which remains difficult to account for satisfactorily.

Excursus
Shame and the Psalter

Shame language is relatively prevalent in the Psalms and a comprehensive discussion would require a separate study. Summarily, it can be said that shame in the Psalter is generally an outward condition: a state of humiliation, rather than the self-conscious, subjective emotion of personal shortcoming. As emerged, too, in the discussion of shame discourses in the Prophets, shame is generated by Yhwh but pertains to humanity. It

stands in contrast to Yhwh's honour (4.3, כבוד/כלמה)[51] and appears most frequently in requests for his punishment on the wicked (6.11; 31.18; 40.15; 44.8; 53.6; 70.3; 71.13, 24; 83.17-18; 86.17; 97.7; 109.28-29; 119.78; 129.5; 132.18). Further, shame is linked to losing face in public (127.5)[52] and to idolatry (97.7) and בוש is used in a punning allusion to יבש (37.19).[53] Shame language in the context of sexual imagery is absent in the Psalter.

Faithfulness to and dependence upon Yhwh are appealed to in order to avert shame (22.6; 25.2, 20; 31.2, 18; 71.1) and obedience is described as protecting from shame (22.6; 25.3; 34.6; 119.5-6, 31, 46, 80). The mocking and scorning of enemies, sometimes citing their inference that the psalmists' lowly condition can be attributed to Yhwh (22.7-9; 71.11; 74.10, 18, 22; 109.25-29), as well as steadfast adherence to Yhwh in adversity (69.1, 14-20), often from youth (22.10-11; 71.5-6), are recurrent themes. Where shame afflicts the faithful this is perceived as unjust (Pss. 44, 74 and 89).

Psalm 44 opens with a concession that all past military conquests are Yhwh's (44.2-10) and that he put to shame adversaries (44.8). This is contrasted with the present condition where the psalmist's community is humbled by Yhwh (ותכל ימנו, 44.10), defeated, scattered and scorned. This has transpired in shame: 'all day my disgrace is before me and my face is covered with shame' (כל־היום כלמתי נגדי ובשת פני כסתני, 44.16). The

51. The כלמה appears to be identified with vanity (ריק) and falsehood (כזב) and the way to overcoming it is through introspection: אמרו בלבבכם על־משכבכם ודמו, 'speak to your heart when at rest and be silent' (4.5). There is too little to go on, but this may be an exhortation to examine one's conduct and find it to be wanting (i.e. cultivate proper shame) as a means to recognizing and eliminating shameful conduct. This would have some similarity with prophetic inculcation. Shame in its objective guise, however, is considerably more prominent in the Psalms.

52. Here a man who has many sons is described as blessed, because they will not be shamed when they debate with (or, drive out) enemies in the gate. The context is possibly forensic but above all public. Shame in the Psalter is predominantly a visible, ignominious condition, which is sometimes exacerbated by the mocking of adversaries. In this psalm the outward display of strength prevents such shame.

53. In the Masoretic Text the verb of the first half-verse (לא־יבשו בעת רעה) is pointed as a third-person masculine plural imperfect qal of the root בוש, suggesting a rendering of 'they will not be ashamed in the time of disaster'. The second half-verse (ובימי רעבון ישבעו, 'and in the days of famine they will be sated') might also suggest survival in spite of a bad harvest and withering crops. The NIV translates the first verb as though it was from the root יבש: 'In times of disaster they will not wither.' The KJV follows the Masoretic Text. It is likely that the verb captures both meanings.

injustice of this is expressed in a statement of steadfast obedience (44.18-19) that is juxtaposed with Yhwh's infliction of an oppressive situation (44.20). The psalmist denies worshipping foreign gods (44.21), which would have justified punishment, before appealing to Yhwh's חסד with a view to redressing matters.

In Ps. 74 the present situation is also one of adversity and again the psalmist is maintaining faithfulness. Yhwh is implored to act against the enemy who is destroying and defiling his sanctuary (74.3-8) and reviling his name (74.10, 18, 22). Alongside the question of why Yhwh has rejected his people (which could imply desperation or reproof), Yhwh's deeds from of old (74.2), in creation (74.13-15) and time (74.16-17) are recounted, and there is a statement of faith in his capacity to crush the enemy (74.11, 22-23) and remove the disgrace (נבלם) of the oppressed (74.21). In Ps. 89, meanwhile, a proclamation of Yhwh's glory (89.6-9), power over creation (89.10-14), justice and faithfulness (89.15-38) precedes the accusation that he has rejected his anointed in contravention with his promise to David (89.39). There follows a description of the anointed one's humiliations, which are summarized as: העטית עליו בושה, 'you have enveloped him in shame' (89.46). Shame is here understood as generated by Yhwh and as difficult to comprehend in the light of both its severity and the broken promise.

To generalize, the Psalms are expressions of faith in and praise for Yhwh. Yhwh is understood as all-powerful and therefore as the creator and wielder of shame. Shame is associated with mocking and humiliation and regarded as an appropriate punishment for adversaries. The identification of shame with punishment suggests that the faithful and obedient should be exonerated from shame and, in the case of Ps. 69, that the shame of one should not affect others seeking Yhwh (69.6-7). Where Yhwh's worshippers describe their dismal condition alongside expressions of supplication, the implication is that Yhwh should evaluate the situation as unjust and provide relief from shame for his obedient servants. He alone is depicted as capable of doing so. Where the shame of the faithful is mentioned alongside the mocking of enemies, who sometimes revile Yhwh's name too, there may be an indication of an appeal to Yhwh's sense of obligation to his people. This could be read in analogy with a vassal–suzerain/patron–client relationship (protection in exchange for loyalty), or imply that Yhwh himself is capable of feeling shame in the light of shortcoming or incongruity.

Conclusion

The review of critical literature reveals that in the context of biblical studies discussions on shame have tended to focus particularly on its alleged binary opposite honour. The honour/shame matrix has been regarded as representing pivotal social values in accordance with which the societies reflected in and by biblical texts were constructed. This development can be attributed above all to the absorption of anthropological models, which are associated primarily with a series of field studies conducted in small, face-to-face, agricultural communities of the circum-Mediterranean. The anthropologist Pitt-Rivers's essay of 1977, in which he proposes that the book of Genesis contains stories that recount the emergence of the honour/shame value system, was decisive in facilitating this absorption. Certainly, in the 1990s the relevance and pertinence of this model for biblical studies was generally speaking accepted and cautioning voices (like that of Domeris) have been few.

I have tried to show that shame in the Hebrew Bible is not well elucidated from the parameters of the honour/shame model. The reasons for this are various. The texts of the Hebrew Bible are not field studies, their provenance is often difficult to establish, the events described are removed from and strange to us and recounted in a language not our own. All of these factors exacerbate the valid reservations already raised within the discipline of anthropology itself (where societies are at least observed at first hand), as regards the capacity for understanding other cultures as an outsider. The fact that the bulk of shame language occurs in the wider context of tumultuous social conditions in the wake of the exile, where more usual social patterns are likely to have been disrupted, makes the application of observations from 'static' societies somewhat inappropriate.[1] Not to be disregarded, too, is the probability that the texts of the

1. Perhaps sociological studies focused on millenarian eruptions or on social revolt (cf. Gottwald 1979: 210-19) might provide more suitable models. As far as I am aware, such models have not been used in attempts to elucidate shame in the context of the Hebrew Bible.

Hebrew Bible evolved over time and may reflect not (only) actual occurrences but ideology, even flourishes of fantasy or subversive rhetoric. Further, the figure of Yhwh complicates matters, as his presence renders social processes more opaque than transparent. A prominent figure in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is difficult to determine what Yhwh represents in socio-anthropological terms. Is he, for instance, another player, an ideological sweep or distortion, or a value system? Commentators using the honour/shame model rarely allude to this matter, let alone supply answers.

Observations from modern Mediterranean settings do provide a fillip for reflection as we attempt to understand unfamiliar cultures. Furthermore, the social dynamics recounted in the narratives of Genesis or the Deuteronomistic History have some affinity with those described in the anthropological studies. The limitations, or better impossibility, of reconstructing social reality on the basis of biblical texts should, however, be kept in mind and the claims of some commentators that the anthropological studies have provided us with a 'native's perspective' must be dispelled. Even though anthropologists have justified their claim that honour and shame are central Mediterranean social values by pointing to the frequency with which they are mentioned (a frequency which Peristiany has characterized as a constant preoccupation), few biblical interpreters have chosen to focus on the texts where such vocabulary actually occurs. Camp's article focusing on the Wisdom of Ben Sira (1991) is a notable exception. The majority of interpreters, however, have tended to assume the centrality of honour and shame, more often examining texts where such vocabulary does not occur prominently and sometimes adopting unconventional translations which reflect the language and notions of the anthropological studies.

Honour/shame does not emerge as a useful binary pairing for the purposes of examining human interactions in biblical literature. As Domeris has pointed out, honour is primarily a divine quality and shame is associated not so much with women in particular as with disobedient humanity more generally. Shame, as was already indicated long ago by studies with a philological focus, such as the dictionary entry by Seebass and Klopfenstein's monograph, is, moreover, strikingly prominent in the literature of the Prophets and the Psalter. In spite of this indisputable prominence, shame studies focusing on either have been few in number. The reason for this is probably that other features of the honour/shame value complex, concerning kinship issues and exchanges of women for

political purposes, are not as much in evidence here as in Genesis or Samuel, for instance. My aim has been to redress the paucity of shame discussions on the Prophets and, as the anthropological honour/shame model is inadequate, to propose alternative approaches for doing so.

Aside from social anthropology, the other subject area where shame is widely discussed is psychology. Psychological shame studies have made much less of an impact on biblical interpretation than anthropological shame studies. To my knowledge, Huber alone offers anything approaching in-depth attention to both psychological and anthropological research on shame.[2] Of interest concerning the psychological description of the emotion is the observation that shame is a universal, self-conscious human emotion, often triggered by an awareness of being seen to fall short of personal and/or societal standards or ideals but with negative *self*-evaluation being the crucial defining factor. Negative self-evaluation is also integral to guilt. Guilt is sometimes characterized as generated by the conscience rather than external sanctions, by tensions between ego and superego rather than ego and ego-ideal, or as related to agency as opposed to states of being. While there exists, conceivably, a 'pure' case of shame or guilt, in practice the two are difficult to distinguish and I have sided with Cairns and Klopfenstein in stressing the overlap and phenomenological similarity between the two emotions. Biblical texts are no more case studies than field studies and in probing the psychological aspects of shame I have tended to veer away from psychoanalytical interpretation (as explored by Halperin, for example). I regard such theories as those of Freud, Schore, Nathanson or Kristeva, which locate the origins of shame in infantile or early childhood experience, with some reservation, due to the fact that any claims concerning the burgeoning of the ego, or the infant's perception of its mother and father, are unverifiable.

I have steered away from the possible origins of shame and rejected a rigorous distinction between shame and guilt (*pace* Huber/Bechtel) and, consequently, such psychoanthropological classifications as shame or guilt culture (*pace* Daube and Jemielty). Instead, I have used the psychological definition to explore what shame is, how it makes one feel and how and for what purposes prophetic literature employs shame vocabulary. Shame pertains on the one hand to a reprehensible thing or act and on the other to an ethical check, a regard for propriety or decency, a restraint on behaviour. In other words, there exists both a shame that offends and a

2. Her overview of anthropological shame studies (1983), however, neglects to mention any Mediterranean ones.

shame by which one must be bound in order to evaluate and avert what is offensive. Incidentally, this is also true of shame phenomenology as reflected in English language usage. The expression 'child of shame' would be an instance of the former, 's/he has no shame' of the latter usage. In the Prophets the shame that offends is vividly described, often employing sexual imagery, while the shame occasioning restraint is inculcated. Shame has both subjective/self-evaluating and objective/outwardly imposed features, an inherent ambiguity recognized by several commentators (e.g. Klopfenstein and Elliger).

The situation of the exile forms the background of much of prophetic shame language;[3] possibly because it was an event perceived as acutely humiliating, which also gave rise to soul-searching. As regards objective factors, circumstances depicted as contributing to a sense of humiliation and disgrace are the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, dispossession of the land, deportation, stripping, raping of women and the topos of the mocking nations. Rape and public stripping, very probably gruesome realities of warfare, may have contributed in a referred sense to the prominent sexualized metaphors signifying transgression.

Subjectively, shame also has an internalized, conscientizing dimension. While sometimes described in terms suggesting analogy with impurity, shame clearly has an onus attached to it—which is not necessarily the case with pollution. A sound inward condition, as exemplified by humility and obedience to Yhwh,[4] rather than the fulfilment of rituals or pursuit of material wealth and social rank, meanwhile, while it may not confer immunity to humiliation, is depicted as protecting against shame in this

3. While the exile was one major catalyst for shame, giving rise to a literature where shame language is singularly prominent within the transmitted writings which have since been termed biblical, it is probably the case that much prophetic literature was written or edited not during or immediately after the exile but later, possibly in the Second Temple period. The fact that a substantial portion of prophetic shame language pertains to foreigners, foreign nations or their religious beliefs, for instance, has some affinity with the anti-foreign polemical cast of the book of Ezra. I would like to stress, however, that I am not wishing to imply that shame is in any way *limited* to the postexilic era.

4. Yhwh's role in the scheme of shame is complicated. He is generator of shame and also not entirely unlike a superego: while his law may be considered an external sanction and while sensitivity to the scorning or disapproval of others exists within it as a mechanism exacerbating feelings of humiliation, Yhwh's capacity for gauging his people's inward condition and motivation seems to play on the internalized sanctions identified with the conscience.

conscience-affecting sense. This is evident in the example of the Servant of Yhwh in Isaiah: though mocked and degraded, it is said that he is not ultimately shamed.

Circumstances concurrent with the exile are one context for shame language and sexual imagery, which is also particularly associated with the Prophets, often features prominently. Several reasons for this prominence have been suggested. Klopfenstein argues that the original semantic context of the verbal root בוש is the sexual realm and that this can still be discerned in its earliest occurrence in the Yahwist's (J) creation story of Gen. 2. Undertones of this Ur-meaning are, he claims, still evident in the writings of the Prophets by which time, however, the root has acquired a distinctly forensic nuance. I find Klopfenstein's case for a gradual semantic development of shame terminology over time, the thread of which can be followed through various literary strands, unpersuasive. It may be so that shame is initially aroused by an awareness of one's nakedness or sexuality and that this awareness is experienced negatively (i.e. as shameful exposure).[5] This primal association, arguably, is sometimes reflected in prophetic imagery. As with Halperin's intriguing proposal that the especially virulent sexual imagery of Ezekiel stems from the prophet's personal childhood trauma, this is, however, impossible to establish.

Sexual imagery is associated, too, with both the grotesque/burlesque and pornography. The animal metaphors of Jeremiah and particularly the effusive, vulgar accounts of Woman Jerusalem and the sisters Oholah and Oholibah in Ezek. 16 and 23, might thus be said to have affinity with the former, which is typified by hyperbolized depictions of bodily functions. The purpose of the grotesque is to make traumatic circumstances bearable by humanizing and 'jollifying' them, so that terror may be conquered by laughter. While the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile would certainly qualify as traumatic events, laughter is not, I would say, a ready response to such chapters as Ezek. 23—and nor is titillation, the desired aim of pornography: shocked surprise or revulsion seem more apt responses.

Feminist interpreters have considered the imagery of Jeremiah and especially Ezekiel as witness to an ideology that is damaging to women. This could be said to have some parallels with those Mediterranean studies that portray men as suspicious of female sexual continence, consequently rendering women potent conduits of shame. I am in agreement with the idea that prophetic literature is infiltrated by ideological agendas and also

5. This might be inferred from the story of Gen. 2.25–3.24 (cf. Bechtel 1995).

concur that Ezekiel is much more negative in its depiction of women (metaphorical or otherwise) than Isaiah, for instance. I do, however, find these interpretations prone to applying modern ideas on pornography to ancient writings in anachronistic fashion, or to be reading the metaphorical layer both very literally and selectively.

Certainly, psychologically speaking, shame and matters sexual seem to be closely associated. Possibly, because demonstrative display of sexuality was condemned and readily recognized as shameful, metaphors of sexual promiscuity, which most commonly pertain to apostasy and idolatry, were a particularly effective vehicle for depicting the tenor as reprehensible. Shame, moreover, having a subjective as well as an objective dimension, lent itself very well for inculcating a realization of despicable conduct. Shame discourses not only describe shameful actions and states but also point to the inward sense of shame required for eventual restoration. While it is sometimes implied that Yhwh grants restoration without condition, and while, in the case of Ezek. 16, shame is still present *after* restoration, shame generally speaking does have a role to play in bringing restoration about. It may be understood as something of an inward correlative to purification. The notion that purity of land and temple attends restoration is integral in much prophetic literature, as is a sound inward condition. Shame may be considered an appropriate emotion for effecting internal purity.

Being a universal, poignantly felt, self-reflecting and evaluating emotion, shame is also particularly appropriate for inculcating disgust and self-reproach at matters central to the prophetic agenda. The psychological dimension of shame is therefore important when probing the ideological purpose of shame discourses. In some of the prophetic literature foreigners and also the people who remained in the polluted land are depicted in a very negative light and as defiling. The extent of this is vividly conveyed by the image of rejecting even the gold that was once of the highest value, after it has become associated with foreigners. Shame discourses seem to work within all three of the Major Prophets in ideological contexts characterized by xenophobic polemic and advocating the precedence of returning exiles.

In the Prophets where shame language occurs with relative frequency, shame emerges as a complex phenomenon. On the one hand a mechanism of social control, exploiting sensitivity to humiliating exposure, it has also an internalized self-reproaching and an ethical self-restraining dimension. In prophetic literature, which, ostensibly, seeks to address a situation of

unprecedented calamity, the aim appears to be to ensure social stability, in the course of which shame is evoked. While I would maintain that it is impossible to reconstruct social reality from these texts, a trawl of shame discourses has none the less disclosed what might be called implications about ideological agendas, perceptions of sexuality and, possibly, subversive uses of language.

Following on from these observations, I have tried to argue that explanations for the sexual imagery characteristic of prophetic literature, in the context of which shame language regularly occurs, might be better illuminated by approaches which focus not as much on social or personal reality as on literary/ideological-critical elements. The vulgar and startling tirades of Ezekiel above all are puzzling. These are not really convincing depictions of social reality. Shame is, rather, inculcated here in a context of distorted and exaggerated rhetoric. One explanation that could account for their sexual preoccupation and also for such features as disjointedness, metaphorical effusion and impenetrability, is to consider them in the light of antilanguages. Antilanguages are the spoken languages found in some counter-cultures and characteristic, too, of subversive literary modes of discourse. Ezekiel 16, for instance, may contain antilanguage tendencies, which could have arisen in response to and protest against the society considered responsible for the exile. It could also be the case that elements of social reality infiltrated the language: in a time of war and consequent poverty, prostitution is likely to have been more prevalent and more public, which could have influenced figurative language in a referred sense. As discussed with regard to the application of the honour/shame model, it is again extremely difficult to speculate about any contours of social reality on the basis of such texts.

As regards the way forward for shame studies on the Prophets, an insistence on treating social anthropological field studies, on the one hand, and the reading of texts, on the other, as quite separate activities should, I think, be maintained. Further, it is important to acknowledge the probability that ideological factors have influenced biblical writing. Antilanguages, as I have tried to show, offer some scope for exploration, as they are particularly associated with both politicized rhetoric and literary modes of discourse. On a related tangent, some of the extreme, even offensive, prophetic imagery might also be profitably explored from the perspective of what in the discipline of sociology is called 'deviance amplification'. Deviance is delineated by specific contexts and therefore a socially relative phenomenon, much like purity and pollution, which are also

defined within the context of a total structure of thought and which have already been discussed with regard to biblical literature (cf. Douglas 1966; Houston 1993). Dirt, or everything unclean, is a matter out of place (e.g. earth in the kitchen); it cannot occur as a unique, isolated event but only within a system characterized by the ordering and classification of matter. The same is true of deviance.

With deviance amplification a social group wishing to promote and enforce its agenda will distort and exaggerate that which it labels deviant with a view to justifying and bringing about its containment. The resulting 'amplification spiral' is described as follows:

> For whatever reason, some issue is taken up by the mass media of communication—this may be glue sniffing, football hooliganism, the activities of 'lager louts', child abuse, or anything else which makes 'news'. The sensationalized representation of the event makes it appear that there is a new and dangerous problem which must be taken seriously. In practice, the problem, however dangerous or socially threatening, will not be new, but some dramatic example will have caught the attention of the media. Their distorted and sensationalized coverage creates a moral panic which also leads to increased police action and to more arrests of offenders. The higher arrest rate is seen as a confirmation of the growth of the problem. Judges and magistrates give exemplary sentences, to show 'society's' disapproval of this supposedly new problem. The sentences make news in themselves, and serve to keep the issue public. The police respond to this evidence of public concern with yet more arrests, and so on (Jary and Jary 1995: 164).

Conceivably, such texts as Ezek. 16 and 23 are early examples of such deviance amplifying, inflammatory literature, labelling and exaggerating the offensiveness and allegedly dangerous consequences of idolatry. Shame language could be regarded as facilitating the impression that certain conduct should incite feelings of disgust, or that such conduct might stigmatize an individual within his or her social group. The behaviour that is labelled 'normal'—meaning, socially acceptable or 'right and proper'—seems to be associated particularly with Yhwh and his Torah. Certainly, the role of Yhwh requires more attention in analyses of shame language in the Hebrew Bible.

As shame in the Hebrew Prophets has not yet received much focused attention in academic literature, I have tried in this overview of shame discourses in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to highlight the need for considering the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of shame. This complexity necessitates, I think, a variety of approaches for elucidation. While I cannot make such claims as some biblical commentators appropriating

anthropological models have made—that an understanding of shame propels us to understand social constructions of the time when these texts were produced—I hope to have shown that shame in ancient times was understood as a complex and somewhat ambiguous emotion. It is described as such, too, in modern psychological literature and I have drawn attention to the psychological definition, which has tended in interpretative writing to be neglected in favour of definitions from social anthropology. This definition suggests, on the one hand a degree of universality. However, the universal grain is, on the other hand, enmeshed in and cannot be separated from social, ethical, theological and ideological factors. There remains (more is the shame) too much which separates us from the societies in which these texts were written and too much which the texts themselves withhold ultimately to claim more than plausible reconstruction.

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