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Moral Emotions and Prosocial Behaviour: It May be Time to Change our View of Shame and Guilt

Ilona E. de Hooge

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

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Correspondence can be addressed to Ilona E. de Hooge, Department of Marketing Management, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Email: IHooge@RSM.nl. Phone: 0031 10 408 14 87. Fax: 0031 10 408 90 11.

Abstract

From the eighteenth century onwards, moral emotions are perceived as a specific group of emotions that generate prosocial behaviours. Yet, a stream of recent empirical research demonstrates that moral emotions may not always have positive interpersonal consequences. The current chapter focuses upon two exemplary moral emotions, namely shame and guilt, to question the definition of moral emotions. In emotion literature, shame has been understood as a negative feeling with negative interpersonal consequences such as withdrawal and avoidance behaviour. This negative view of shame seems in direct contrast with the view of shame as a moral emotion that motivates prosocial behaviour, and with empirical findings. I present a new view of shame, one in which this moral emotion is focused upon dealing with a damaged self. As a consequence, shame motivates performance and approach behaviours to restore this damaged self, and withdrawal or avoidance behaviour when it is too risky or too dangerous to restore the damaged self. The existing image of guilt in emotion literature is one of a negative emotion with very positive interpersonal consequences. On the contrary, with empirical studies I demonstrate that guilt can have many negative interpersonal consequences, such as promoting prosocial behaviour towards the victim of one's actions at the expense of others around, and withdrawal behaviour. Together, these findings reveal that, even for such exemplary moral emotions as shame and guilt, subsequent behaviours can vary from antisocial to prosocial. Therefore, there might be nothing intrinsically moral about moral emotions.

Keywords:

Emotions, Guilt, Interpersonal Behaviour, Moral emotions, Prosocial behaviour, Shame

Introduction

Moral emotions play a pivotal role in our daily lives. They can influence how we interact with other people (Haidt, 2003; Smith, 1759), and can have an impact on for example whether we listen to the advice of others, buy big birthday gifts for our friends and family, act socially towards strangers, or behave unethically in the workplace (e.g., De Hooge, 2012a, 2012b; De Hooge, Verlegh, & Tzioti, 2012; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Nelissen, Dijker, & De Vries, 2007). Indeed, a lot of theories and empirical research support the notion that moral emotions such as pride, gratitude, and guilt are the social mortars of human societies, motivating people to behave in socially good ways and to avoid "doing bad". However, the distinction between moral emotions and "normal" (or non-moral) emotions is not well-defined. For instance, non-moral emotions may motivate people in some situations to behave in socially appropriate ways, but this does not make them moral. Also, moral emotions may sometimes provoke unethical or anti-social behaviours, which suggests that these emotions should not be defined as moral emotions. The current chapter discusses the idea of moral emotions and aims to provide some provocative thoughts on the definition of moral emotions. I will start with the typical view on moral emotions, and reveal how these emotions are thought to motivate prosocial behaviours. Then, I will focus on the two most exemplary moral emotions: shame and guilt. Emotion literature on these specific emotions does not always converge with the view of shame and guilt as moral emotions, and recent empirical research shows that shame and guilt may motivate both prosocial and anti-social behaviours. Together, the research on these two examples suggests that our view and definition of moral emotions may need some reconsideration.

Moral emotions

Already in 1759, Adam Smith talked about how moral sentiments play a role in people's lives. Smith explained that moral emotions motivate people to focus not only on their own well-

being, but also on the well-being of other people and on how one's own behaviours can affect the well-being of others. Later on, multiple researchers theorized about moral emotions, and nowadays most researchers agree that moral emotions originate in social relationships and concern the evaluations of one's own and others' behaviours (Emde & Oppenheim, 1995; Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Moral emotions are linked to the interests or welfare of other people and of society as a whole (Haidt, 2003), and help us understand why people adhere to their moral standards (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007a). Examples of such emotions are not only the self-conscious emotions shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride, but also elevation, gratitude, moral anger, remorse, regret, and compassion (Haidt, 2003; Zeelenberg, Breugelmans, & De Hooge, 2012).

Moral emotions thus motivate people to pay attention to others in their surroundings, but how do they motivate prosocial behaviour? Moral emotions are thought to provide the motivational force – the power and energy – to do good and to avoid doing bad things (Kroll & Egan, 2004), such as engaging in risky, aggressive, delinquent, or criminal behaviours (Stuewig & Tangney, 2007). People are often positioned in social dilemmas, situations where they have to choose between immediate self-interest (also called defection) and long-term group-interest (also called cooperation or prosocial behaviour) (Camerer, 2003). A choice for defection rewards people in the short run, but is costly for the group and for people themselves in the long run. For example, keeping quiet about having received too much change at the cash register is beneficial for the receiver, but may damage the cashier or the shop in the long run. On the contrary, cooperation or prosocial behaviour is costly for people themselves in the short run, but beneficial for the group and people's self-interest in the long run. Examples of these cooperative choices are paying taxes, or doing what one's partner prefers on a Saturday night. People's selfishness usually seduces them to choose the attractive immediate reward at the expense of long-term benefits. Moral emotions may provide a solution to

this problem by acting as commitment devices (Frank, 1988, 2004). A choice for the defection option elicits unpleasant moral emotions such as shame, embarrassment, or guilt. As a consequence, this behavioural alternative becomes less attractive. People are aware of the fact that they will feel bad about choosing the immediate self-interest option, and that by choosing the cooperative or prosocial option they will avoid feeling bad. In this way moral emotions commit people to the long-term group interest, and motivate prosocial behaviours.

Recently, empirical support has been found for the suggestion that moral emotions elicit cooperative or prosocial behaviours. For example, Ketelaar and Au (2003) studied the effects of the moral emotion guilt on cooperation in social dilemma situations. They found that after recalling guilt experiences or after making unfair offers in first rounds of a social dilemma game, people acted more prosocially in subsequent social dilemma situations. These findings were replicated by Nelissen et al. (2007), who studied the influences of fear and guilt on cooperation in a one-shot give-some dilemma game. They hypothesized and found the moral emotion guilt to increase cooperation, but the non-moral emotion fear to decrease cooperation. Also, Miettinen and Suetens (2008) measured the experience of guilt in a prisoner's dilemma experiment that allowed for pre-play communication, and revealed that guilt was experienced strongest when players had initially agreed to cooperate (thus, when people behaved immoral by both lying and choosing egoistically).

In sum, both theories and empirical findings on moral emotions seem to suggest that moral emotions motivate people to care about and act in accordance with their own long-term self-interest and the well-being of others. This should then especially be the case for the two most well-known moral emotions, shame and guilt, which are closely tied to ethics of community and divinity (Tangney et al., 2007a). Both shame and guilt are categorized as moral emotions because they arise when people fail to meet the right, appropriate, or desirable standards (H. B. Lewis, 1971; Wong &

Tsai, 2007), and they "help keep us on the moral path by avoiding temptation, inhibiting aggression, and doing the right thing" (Stuewig & Tangney, 2007, p. 372). Yet, as will be revealed below, the picture for these two moral emotions may not be as clear-cut as suggested.

Shame

Shame is a very negative feeling that arises after a moral or social transgression or defeat (Barrett, 1995; Keltner & Buswell, 1996). Losing an important sports match, not keeping one's word, or making mistakes at a work task are some examples in which most people would experience shame. After such a mistake or transgression, people experience threats to their self-image (Gruenewald, Dickerson, & Kemeny, 2007; Tangney et al., 2007a), and they have the feeling that their whole self is flawed (Izard, 1977; H. B. Lewis, 1971; Sabini & Silver, 1997; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007b). Ashamed people may feel worthless, powerless, inadequate, incompetent, and unworthy (Izard, 1991; M. Lewis, 1992; Tangney, 1999; Tangney et al., 2007b). In total, the experience may generate feelings of pain and discomfort (Gilbert, 1997; M. Lewis, 1992), and people may feel disgusted at themselves (Keltner & Harker, 1998).

When experiencing shame, people do not just suffer from a heightened self-awareness (Izard, 1991; Sabini & Silver, 1997). Shame also makes people more sensitive to the words and opinions of other people (Izard, 1991). For example, shame generates feelings of being small (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Wicker, Payne, & Morgan, 1983) and inferior to others (Keltner & Harker, 1998; Nathanson, 1992), and it stimulates a focus on how one would appear to and be evaluated by others (Fessler, 2004; Gilbert, 2007; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Thus, after losing an important sports match, shame may motivate people to worry about what team members and the audience of the sports match would think. Similarly, experiences of shame after making mistakes at work may motivate people to feel inferior to their colleagues. Shame also activates a

bodily display that can easily be perceived by other people: ashamed people generally exhibit a gaze aversion, have their head tilted to the side or downwards, and show a slumped posture (Gilbert, 1997; Gruenewald et al., 2007; Keltner & Buswell, 1996; M. Lewis, 2003).

Finally, shame is thought to have very negative effects on intentions and behaviour. Shame would disrupt ongoing activities and motivate an inability to think clearly, to talk, or to act (Gilbert, 1997; M. Lewis, 1992). Also, there is an extensive amount of literature claiming that shame motivates people to withdraw and isolate themselves from other people (literally to hide or disappear), to reduce their social presence, and to inhibit social interactions (Barrett, 1995; Dickerson & Gruenewald, 2004; Ferguson & Stegge, 1995; Haidt, 2003; Keltner & Harker, 1998; H. B. Lewis, 1971; M. Lewis, 1992; Nathanson, 1992; Probyn, 2004; Tangney, 1991; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney et al., 2007b; Wong & Tsai, 2007; Wurmser, 1987). The function of these withdrawal behaviours would be showing appeasement: by withdrawing from social interactions, ashamed people signal to their group members that they are aware of their norm-violating behaviours and that they will conform to group standards (Gilbert, 1997; Izard, 1977; Mills, 2005; Nathanson, 1987).

Even though shame literature is fairly clear on the behavioural effects of shame, for at least two reasons the empirical support for these ideas is largely lacking. First, findings that suggest relationships between shame and withdrawal or avoidance behaviours primarily stem from research on chronic shame or shame-proneness (e.g., Gilbert, Pehl, & Allan, 1994; Harder, Cutler, & Rockart, 1992; Tangney, 1990; Thompson, Altmann, & Davidson, 2004). Shame-proneness is the general tendency of people to experience shame (Harder et al., 1992; Tangney, 1990). Research on the correlates of shame-proneness compellingly shows that people who are likely to experience shame, or who experience shame very frequently, are also prone to feelings of inferiority, anxiety,

lessened empathy, shyness, interpersonal distrust, and depression (Gilbert et al., 1994; Harder et al., 1992; Tangney and Dearing, 2002). Nevertheless, these findings of shame-proneness as a trait cannot be generalized to experiences of the emotion shame as a state. For instance, while shame-proneness has been empirically related to depression and social dysfunction, experiences of shame have only been related to feelings of inferiority and anger at self and others (Allan, Gilbert, & Goss, 1994). Also, Rüsch et al. (2007) showed that shame-proneness is negatively related to self-efficacy and empowerment, and positively related to psychopathology, while experiences of shame are merely related to state anxiety.

Second, the few existing studies on the effects of state experiences of shame report inconclusive evidence. For example, Scherer and Wallbott (1994) found that shame was characterized by stronger withdrawal tendencies compared to other emotions such as joy, anger, disgust, sadness, and fear, but Wicker et al. (1983) showed that shame experiences received neutral ratings on an item ranging from *wanting to hide* to *making restitutions*. Frijda, Kuipers, and Ter Schure (1989) even found that shame activated *both* a stronger desire to disappear from view and a stronger desire to undo the situation compared to guilt and regret. Finally, possible empirical evidence indicating that shame might motivate prosocial behaviour instead of withdrawal behaviour has sometimes been interpreted differently. For instance, after having found that children experiencing shame showed both a tendency to withdraw and a tendency to repair the situation, M. Lewis (1992) interpreted the withdrawal tendency as an indication of shame feelings and the repair tendency as an indication of guilt feelings. Past research has also found shame-experiencing participants to indicate a higher tendency to make amends than to withdraw (Tangney et al., 1996). Comparing these findings with participants remembering a guilt experience, however, lead the researchers to the conclusion that shame motivates more withdrawal behaviour than guilt.

In summary, even though there are many theories on the behavioural effects of shame, empirical evidence is scarce. While theories on moral emotions suggest that shame would motivate prosocial behaviour, shame theories suggest that shame would motivate withdrawal behaviours. What behaviours do actually follow from shame? And how can these different theories be reconciled? Recently, my co-authors and I developed a more elaborate view on shame that might provide an answer to these questions.

A new view on shame

Our approach is based on the assumption that emotions signal changes in people's environment on which people have to react (Frijda, 1986; Zeelenberg, Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Pieters, 2008; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2006). In general, people have different goals that they want to reach in their lives. Whenever the environment changes with respect to one of these goals, emotions may arise that indicate whether the goal is approached or not. Because different changes need different reactions, specific emotions have been designed that indicate different changes and thus motivate different behaviours to deal with these changes.

Importantly, the behaviour that is activated by the emotion may address the change immediately (and solve the problem if there was a problem present), or may occur in situations that are actually unrelated to the change or problem at hand (Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Zeelenberg et al., 2008; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2006). Emotion influences on behaviour are labelled integral or endogenous when the activated behaviour addresses the change or problem immediately. In this situation, the emotion experience is relevant to the decision at hand, and the emotion is thus an integral part of the goal setting and goal striving process. For example, feelings of happiness after having discovered that one is pregnant may motivate people to buy baby clothes. Likewise, feelings of disgust when receiving a plate with terrible looking food in a restaurant may motivate people to

avoid that restaurant in the future. But, the happiness over being pregnant may also influence people to donate more money to a charity, and the disgust may activate people to avoid seeing horror movies after the dinner. In these cases, the impact of the emotion is not directly related to the inducing situation or to the motivations that were relevant then. Such influences of emotions are labelled incidental or exogenous influences, and are influences that are not related to the current decision. They are external to the actual goal setting and goal striving process. By and large, emotion research has most often studied exogenous effects of emotions, because these show the fallibilities of humans. Indeed, when reviewing the empirical research that has been done on shame, one may discover that these studies mostly focus upon exogenous influences of shame. But to understand the functioning of emotions, and in our case to understand shame, one also needs to focus upon endogenous influences.

In the case of shame, the signal that is provided concerns a damaged self (H. B. Lewis, 1971). One of the fundamental goals that people have in life is gaining and keeping a positive self (Alexander & Knight, 1971; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). People compare themselves to others, make self-serving attributions, and react defensively or act assertively to achieve and maintain a positive self (Gibbons, 1990). When this positive self is threatened, feelings of shame arise that indicate that the self is threatened, and that something should be done about this problem. We suggest that shame first and foremost motivates behaviours that are aimed at restoring the positive self (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010). These behaviours may be labelled approach behaviours, and the specific approach behaviour depends upon the situation. For example, losing a sports match may motivate people to restore their positive self by exercising harder, and making mistakes at work may motivate people to restore their positive self by accepting new and challenging work tasks. Indeed, our studies revealed that shame motivated participants to prefer and engage in new performance

tasks, such as giving a second presentation when they previously had failed at giving a good presentation (De Hooge et al., 2010).

Yet, there are situations where trying to restore the self may be impossible or too risky. In those situations, ashamed people will prefer to protect their self from more possible damage, instead of trying to restore their self in ways that may hurt the self even more. For example, if there is no time to practice before the next sports match, or if there are only top-level work tasks to fulfil, people will probably not enter those performance situations in order to avoid further losses. In support of this view, our studies found shame to activate both a motive to restore the self, and a motive to protect the self (De Hooge et al., 2010). The activation of those two motives can change over time: the restore motive of shame is initially strongest, but when restoring the self appears to be too difficult or risky in a particular situation, the restore motive diminishes in strength and approach behaviours become less apparent (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2011). In contrast, protecting the self does not involve risky endeavors, which means that the protect motive does not depend on the situation. Consequently, in situations where restoring the self is too risky or difficult, the relative strength of the restore and protect motives change, and withdrawal behaviours become more apparent.

What about prosocial behaviour and the view of shame as a moral emotion? As one might remember, shame not only makes people sensitive to what they think about themselves, but also more sensitive to the opinions and evaluations of other people (Izard, 1991). This suggests that when people experience shame, they not only may want to restore their own self, but also the view that others have of them (their social self) (De Hooge et al., 2010). One way to restore the social self is by acting prosocially towards others. But after a shame event not everybody may have a negative view of the actor. For instance, the audience of the lost sports match and team members may have a

negative view of the actor, but people encountered in the train back home may not know anything about the shame event. Also, colleagues may have a negative evaluation after the failed work task, but one's family may not know about the failed work task and thus may not have a changed image. Therefore, only the evaluation that the audience of a shame event has needs to be improved. In other words, shame might motivate people to prefer to interact with others who know about the shame event, and to act prosocially towards those others (endogenous influences of shame). When ashamed people interact with others who know nothing about the shame event, no social selves need to be improved, and thus shame may not motivate prosocial behaviour (exogenous influences of shame). In support of this reasoning, we found that when participants experiencing shame could choose between being alone and being together with the audience of their shame events, they preferred being together with the audience above being alone (De Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2012). In addition, shame motivated prosocial behaviour in both social dilemma situations and on an everyday measure of cooperation only towards audiences of shame events (endogenous influences of shame) and not towards people who knew nothing about the shame event (exogenous influences of shame) (De Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008). Further support for this view has recently been provided by studies on group-based shame feelings (Gausel, Leach, Vignoles, & Brown, in press).

To summarize, the moral emotion shame seems to be completely focused upon dealing with a damaged self. It activates performance behaviours to restore this damaged self, and prosocial behaviour to restore the damaged image that the audience of a shame event may have. When these approach behaviours are too risky or impossible, shame converts to withdrawal behaviour to protect the damaged self from further possible harm. Together, these two shame motives (restoring the self and protecting the self) may explain how shame theories and moral emotion theories can have

developed such seemingly opposing images of shame. Our view on shame also clarifies why this emotion, even though it is considered to be a moral emotion, not always activates prosocial behaviour and sometimes even motivates withdrawal behaviour.

Guilt

Just like shame, guilt may be one of the most well-known moral emotions. The view on guilt that exists in emotion literature is fairly straightforward, and seems to converge with the view of guilt as a moral emotion. Guilt arises from a wrongdoing, such as a moral transgression, a violation of internal standards, or a betrayal of trust (Barrett, 1995; Izard, 1991). The two most common causes of guilt feelings are neglecting partners in close relationships, and failing to live up to commitments or obligations to others (Baumeister, Reis, & Delespaul, 1995). In all those cases, the actor has hurt another person (the victim) intentionally or unintentionally (Fessler & Haley, 2003; Izard, 1977; Tangney, 1991). For instance, forgetting the birthday of one's sister or cheating on one's partner are situations in which most people would experience guilt feelings. When experiencing guilt, people often feel tense, remorse, and regret for what they have done (Ferguson, Stegge, & Damhuis, 1991; H. B. Lewis, 1971; Tangney et al., 2007b), and they have the tendency to perceive themselves as being a bad person (H. B. Lewis, 1987). Actors are preoccupied with the bad behaviour, and experience a lot of cognitive rumination (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Izard, 1991). In contrast with shame, guilt thus focuses upon a specific behaviour and does not generalize to a negative image of the whole self (Barrett, 1995; H. B. Lewis, 1971; Tangney et al., 2007b).

Even though guilt is a very negative feeling, the consequences of this emotion are thought to be very positive. Guilt theories presume that this emotion stimulates better perspective taking and feelings of empathy (Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). There is also a large

amount of literature suggesting that guilt motivates people to make amends and repair their actions, to confess and apologize, and to improve their social relationships by staying actively engaged in social situations (Baumeister et al., 1994; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1995; Barrett, 1995; Ferguson & Stegge, 1995; Fessler, 2007; Haidt, 2003; Izard, 1991; Keltner & Harker, 1998; H. B. Lewis, 1971; M. Lewis, 1992; Tangney et al., 2007b; Thrane, 1979; Wong & Tsai, 2007). The function of this reparative behaviour is to preserve and strengthen the hurt relationship with the victim in particular and social relationships in general, by making up the past transgression and by stimulating more appropriate behavior in the future (Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Baumeister et al., 1994). On a more general level, guilt is thought to enforce the communal norms of mutual concern and nurturance by evoking feelings of caring and commitment (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). There is no known bodily expression for guilt.

The idea that guilt has positive consequences is also supported by empirical research. For example, guilt has been found to motivate a heightened sense of personal responsibility, compliance, and forgiveness, and to generate more constructive strategies to cope with anger (Freedman, Wallington, & Bless, 1967; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Strelan, 2007; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). In different studies, guilt has been related to reparative intentions (Schmader & Lickel, 2006; Tangney, 1993): guilt-experiencing participants have been found to report higher desires to make amends, to apologize, and to undo their actions than shame-experiencing participants (Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994; Tangney et al., 1996). Finally, as discussed previously, a recent series of studies on prosocial behavior in dyadic relationships has found guilt to motivate prosocial behavior in social dilemma games (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Miettinen & Suetens, 2008; Nelissen et al., 2007). Importantly, cross-cultural studies have shown that these characteristics of guilt are quite

similar across a wide array of cultures (Breugelmans & Poortinga, 2006; Fontaine et al., 2006), which is testimony to the universal moral character of guilt.

All in all, guilt appears to be a good and moral emotion. Both guilt theories and theories on guilt as a moral emotion suggest that guilt would have positive effects for the well-being of others, and empirical research indicates that guilt produces beneficial consequences for people in one's social surroundings. This image of guilt is nicely summarized as guilt being "an adaptive emotion, benefiting individuals and their relationships in a variety of ways" (Tangney et al., 2007b, p. 26). But can we consider guilt to be as positive and social as is currently assumed? My co-authors and I suggest that this view on guilt may be too positive, and that associated with its prosocial corollary a less prosocial side of guilt can be found.

A new view on guilt

As stated previously, every emotion provides a specific signal that indicates the progress towards people's goals (Frijda, 1986; Zeelenberg et al., 2008). Usually, people experience guilt when they feel responsible for damage to a (close) relationship with another person (Baumeister et al., 1994). The central signal of guilt thus concerns the negative impact of people's actions on their relationship with a specific other (the victim) (H. B. Lewis, 1971). As a consequence, people are preoccupied with the damaged relationship, and they intend to repair the situation and make up with the victim as soon as possible. Every action undertaken to improve the relationship with the victim in such a dyadic situation (i.e., situations where the actor is together only with the victim) can be interpreted as prosocial behaviour because it displays "helping another person at some sacrifice to oneself" (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005, p. 369). Empirical research indeed reveals that when guilt-experiencing people are together only with the victim, they engage in behaviours that improve the outcomes of the victim at the expense of their own outcomes, such as giving

money or buying presents (De Hooge 2012a; De Hooge et al., 2007; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Nelissen et al., 2007).

But in their daily lives, people are not just together with the victim. Instead, they often interact with multiple other people at the same time. For example, after having forgotten their sister's birthday, people will probably still interact with other family members. Also, after having cheated on their partner, people may continue talking to and mingling with colleagues and friends. Theories on moral emotions mostly assume that moral emotions such as guilt improve the well-being of others in people's social surroundings, suggesting that guilt would motivate prosocial behaviour towards all those others (Frank, 1988; 2004; Haidt, 2003; Smith, 1759). Likewise, guilt theories suggest that the function of guilt is to protect and enhance social relationships in general, which implies that this emotion would have positive consequences for everybody in the actor's surroundings (Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney et al., 2007a, 2007b). In three different ways, my co-authors and I have recently shown that this is not the case.

First, guilt may have negative consequences for others in people's surroundings by motivating reparative behaviours towards the victim at the expense of others present (so-called third parties) (De Hooge, Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2011). When people experience guilt, they are preoccupied with repairing the damage caused to the victim. As a result, guilt-experiencing people temporarily pay less attention to or even neglect the well-being of third parties. This can have important consequences for the well-being of those third parties: in situations where guilt-experiencing people interact with multiple others at the same time, they will try to improve the well-being of the victim, at the expense of third parties present. Why would this occur? Behaviour can be considered in terms of limited resources such as time, energy, or money. When providing resources to one person, this comes at the expense of another, be it oneself or other people. While prosocial

behaviour would mean at the expense of oneself (Penner et al., 2005), guilt motivates providing resources to the victim at the expense of third parties. For example, people may make up with their sister by spending more time with her; time that is created by canceling appointments with others. Or people may try to make amends with their deceived partner by putting more energy into that relationship and less energy into relationships with friends. Thus, guilt does not so much evoke a disregard for people's personal well-being (as is often assumed), but rather a neglect of the well-being of non-victimized others. We tested this theory in situations where guilt-experiencing participants interacted with two different partners, the victim and a non-victim, at the same time. Participants decided how to divide resources between themselves, the victim, and the non-victim, without the victim or the non-victim having any influence on the division. In line with our reasoning, guilt motivated participants to spend more resources (such as money or time) on the victim, but less resources on non-victims compared to a neutral emotional state and compared to shame. Interestingly, guilt-experiencing participants did not differ from participants in neutral states in how much resources they kept for themselves (De Hooge et al., 2011).

Second, guilt may have negative consequences for social relationships by motivating withdrawal behaviour (De Hooge et al., 2012). According to most guilt theories, one of the positive consequences of guilt is that this emotion would motivate people to interact with others (Baumeister et al., 1994, 1995; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney et al., 2007a;), and would "keep people constructively engaged in the interpersonal situation at hand" (Tangney, 1995, p. 119). However, one may question whether this would really be the case. Up until now, empirical research on guilt has focused upon how guilt-feeling people behave when they find themselves within a social situation. This research has shown that guilt can motivate prosocial behaviour towards the victim, sometimes with negative consequences for others (De Hooge et al., 2007, 2011; Ketelaar & Au,

2003). Yet in daily life people often can choose whether they prefer to enter a social situation in the first place. Following the reasoning that guilt motivates a preoccupation with making amends with the victim, it would only seem logical to suggest that guilt motivates a preference for being together with the victim (in order to create chances to make up), but not a preference for being together with non-victims (in order to solve the problem with the victim before entering new situations in which new problems might arise). Indeed, in multiple experiments we found that guilt-experiencing participants preferred being together with the victim when given a choice between being together with the victim and being alone. In contrast, when given a choice between being together with a non-victim and being alone, the majority of guilt-experiencing participants preferred being alone (De Hooge et al., 2012).

Finally, guilt may even have negative consequences for the well-being of victims, because this emotion is less relationship-oriented than originally thought (De Hooge, 2012c). Guilt signals that the relationship with the victim has been hurt, and that actions should be undertaken to change the relationship with the victim. Thus far, we have assumed that these actions should be focused upon the well-being of the victim (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994, 1995; Izard, 1977; Tangney et al., 2007a), but this might not necessarily be the case. In fact, I claim that *any* reparative action that is aimed at solving the harm done to the victim might reduce guilt feelings, even when these changes for example do not improve the well-being of the victim, or are not undertaken by the actor. For instance, in daily life third parties may undertake reparative actions as well: the actor’s mother may buy a more expensive birthday present for the actor’s sister than she would normally do in order to address the forgotten birthday. Or friends may spend a lot of time with the partner when they find out that the partner has been cheated upon. My hypothesis is that such reparative actions undertaken by third parties may reduce actors’ guilt feelings and reparative tendencies (De Hooge, 2012c).

After all, reparative actions undertaken by third parties are also aimed at fulfilling guilt's signal of changing the guilt-causing situation. In order to test this hypothesis, I ran two studies that focus upon guilt feelings, repair intentions, and prosocial behaviour after third parties have undertaken reparative actions. If the hypothesis is correct, then reparative actions of a third party would reduce participants' guilt feelings, reparative intentions, and prosocial behavior compared to a guilt situation in which no reparation by a third party had taken place.

Study 1

Method. Thirty-three students from Erasmus University (15 males, M_{age} = 22.28) were randomly assigned to the No-repair or the Other-repair condition. All participants read the following scenario:

> Imagine together with your friend Bart you take a course, for which you have to write a thesis. Unfortunately, due to many events you are not able to write the thesis on time. Bart does finish the thesis on time, but gets ill two days before the deadline and asks you to hand in the thesis for him. You agree, and then you realize that this is your final chance: you can copy Bart's thesis. You make some textual changes, and hand in both Bart's thesis and your (copied) thesis. A couple of weeks later the teacher contacts you and Bart. He has noticed the similarities in your theses and accuses both of you of plagiarism. As a consequence, you and Bart will be expelled from the course.

As an emotion manipulation check, participants then indicated (0 = not at all, 10 = very strongly) how much guilt, pride, anger, shame, happiness, regret, relief, and fear they would feel in the described situation. In the Other-repair condition, participants then read: "To discuss the matter, you, Bart, and the teacher have a meeting. At the meeting, a friend of you both, Tim, is also present. Tim explains that he has seen you copying Bart's thesis without Bart's knowledge. The teacher then

decides to drop the charges for Bart. Bart is evaluated as if nothing has happened, and he passes the course.” They also answered the emotion manipulation checks again.

Next, all participants read: “A week after the event with the thesis it is the birthday of Bart.” As a dependent measure for prosocial behaviour, participants indicated how many euros they would spend on the birthday of Bart. In addition, to measure the motivation underlying their prosocial behaviour, participants indicated for multiple offered reasons (1 = not at all, 7 = completely) to what degree it reflected their reason to buy that present for Bart. These motivations included three items, namely “I wanted to make up with Bart”, “I wanted to improve the situation for Bart”, and “I wanted to apologize in that way to Bart”, to measure Repair motivation ($\alpha = .90$). Finally, participants indicated with the emotion manipulation check how they would feel after having given the present.

Results - Guilt feelings. I hypothesized that repair done by a third party would decrease guilt feelings, repair motivations, and prosocial behaviour compared to a situation without repair done by a third party (see Table 1 for results). Directly after the transgression, participants reported more guilt ($M = 8.09$, $SD = 2.97$) than the other emotions, all ts(32) > 4.70, all ps < .01. There were no differences in reported guilt between the two conditions at this point, $t(31) < 1$. Supporting the hypotheses, after receiving information about the repair actions, guilt feelings decreased in the Other-repair condition, $t(15) = 2.32$, $p = .04$. After Bart’s birthday the Repair condition also differed from the No-repair condition in guilt: No-repair participants reported more guilt feelings than Other-repair participants, $t(31) = 3.14$, $p < .01$.

Results - Repair motivation and Prosocial behaviour. Tim’s repair behaviour influenced repair motivations and prosocial behaviour. Other-repair participants were less motivated to repair than No-repair participants, $t(31) = 2.88$, $p < .01$. Also, Other-repair participants spent less on Bart’s

birthday than No-repair participants, $t(31) = 2.31$, $p = .03$. These findings suggest that behaviours by third parties may influence one's guilt feelings, reparative intentions, and prosocial behaviour. Yet, one may question whether the findings are dependent on the scenario that was used in this study. Therefore, I conducted a second study that made use of a different scenario, and that included a control condition.

Study 2

Method. Seventy six students from Erasmus University (32 males, $M_{age} = 21.24$) were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (Transgression: Transgression vs. Control) × 2 (Repair: No-repair vs. Other-repair) between-subjects design with Repair motivation and Prosocial behaviour as dependent variables. Participants in the Transgression condition read:

> Imagine you are in a hurry because you want to get a special offer at a shop just before closing time. You do not have a means of transportation but you know that your friend Robert has a bicycle. This bicycle is very special to him because it is the last present given to him by his grandmother before she died. Nevertheless, he lets you use the bicycle. You cycle to the shop and get the special offer. When you leave the shop you find out that the bicycle is stolen; you forgot to lock it. You inform Robert about this and he is very sad.

Participants in the Control conditions read: after leaving the shop "you give the bicycle back to Robert. The following day you hear that the bicycle of Robert is stolen: he loaned it to Dylan who forgot to lock it. Robert is very sad about this". Mind that the outcomes in the Transgression and the Control conditions were exactly the same, but that the person responsible for these outcomes differed. Participants then answered the emotion manipulation check of Study 1.

In the Other-repair condition, participants next read: "Afterwards your friend, Tim, hears about the event. He works in a bicycle shed and there recognizes the bicycle of Robert, which he

offers to Robert. Robert is glad that he got his bicycle back." They then answered the emotion manipulation checks. Subsequently, all participants answered the birthday scenario, the motivation items, and the emotion manipulation check of Study 1. In the Transgression conditions, participants also indicated whether they thought, after Robert's birthday, that everything was solved and whether they had the feeling that they had made up for everything (0 = not at all, 10 = very strongly).

Results - Guilt feelings. I hypothesized that the repair done by a third party would decrease guilt feelings, repair motivations, and prosocial behaviour (see Table 2 for results). The findings supported the hypotheses. Directly after the transgression, participants in the Transgression conditions felt more guilt than participants in the Control conditions, $t(74) = 13.91$, $p < .01$, and felt more guilt than other emotions, all $ts(36) > 3.20$, all $ps < .01$. There was no difference in reported guilt between the two transgression conditions at this point, $t(72) < 1$. However, after receiving information on Tim's repair behaviour, guilt decreased in the Other-repair transgression condition, $t(18) = 6.62$, $p < .01$. After Robert's birthday, Other-repair transgression participants reported less guilt than No-repair transgression participants, (72) = 5.42, $p < .01$. There were no differences between Control conditions on guilt at all three moments, all $ts(72) < 1.61$, all $ps > .11$.

Results - Repair motivation and Prosocial behaviour. Importantly, Tim's repair behaviour influenced repair motivations and prosocial behaviour. A 2 (Transgression: Transgression vs. Control) × 2 (Repair: No-repair vs. Other-repair) ANOVA with Repair motivation as dependent variable showed main effects of Transgression, $F(1, 72) = 13.22$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, and of Repair, $F(1, 72) = 6.30$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. More importantly, the results showed a two-way interaction, $F(1, 72) = 8.28$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Replicating previous guilt research, No-repair transgression participants had a higher repair motivation than No-repair control participants, $t(72) = 4.55$, $p < .01$. However, Other-repair transgression participants had a lower repair motivation than No-repair

transgression participants, $t(72) = 3.76$, $p < .01$, and did not differ from Other-repair control participants, $t(72) < 1$. There was no difference between control conditions, $t(72) < 1$.

Similar results were found for prosocial behaviour: A 2 (Transgression: Transgression vs. Control) × 2 (Repair: No-repair vs. Other-repair) ANOVA with Prosocial behaviour as dependent variable showed main effects of Transgression, $F(1, 72) = 6.13$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, and of Repair, $F(1, 72) = 5.31$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. More importantly, the results showed a two-way interaction, $F(1, 72) = 6.48$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. No-repair transgression participants spent more on the birthday than No-repair control participants, $t(72) = 3.51$, $p < .01$. However, Other-repair transgression participants spent less than No-repair transgression participants, $t(72) = 3.39$, $p < .01$, and did not differ from Other-repair control participants, $t(72) < 1$. There was no difference between control conditions, $t(72) < 1$. Finally, participants in the transgression conditions also differed on whether they thought everything was solved after the birthday and whether they had the feeling that they had made up for everything. Other-repair transgression participants thought more that everything was solved than No-repair transgression participants, $t(72) = 3.41$, $p < .01$, and had more the feeling that they had made up for everything, $t(72) = 3.75$, $p < .01$.

In summary, the findings of these two studies suggest that guilt feelings, repair intentions, and prosocial behaviour can be influenced by actions of other people. As soon as another person undertakes some reparative actions that might address the guilt-causing situation, people feel less guilt, and have a lower tendency to act prosocially towards the victim. This suggests that guilt, or the regulation of one's guilt feelings, is not focused upon the well-being of the victim but rather upon the reparative actions that have been undertaken. Together with the recent findings that guilt may promote prosocial behaviour towards the victim at the expense of others around (De Hooge et al., 2011), and that guilt may promote withdrawal behaviour (De Hooge et al., 2012), these results

suggest that guilt is not such a positive and moral emotion as suggested by guilt theories or by moral emotion theories.

Conclusion

Shame and guilt play a central role in people's lives, influencing how people feel, what they think, and how they behave. In addition, the present chapter shows us that shame and guilt can influence how people deal with their social relationships. These behavioural consequences, however, might differ from existing views on shame and guilt. After reviewing all recent research on shame and guilt, it appears that it might be time to move towards a new view of shame and of guilt. For shame, the view of it being a very ugly emotion might change into something more positive. It now appears that the negative feelings that accompany this emotion motivate people to undertake actions to restore their damaged self. As a consequence, shame can activate performance behaviours, motivate people to enter social situations, and stimulate people to act prosocially towards the audience of a shame event (De Hooge et al., 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012). This more positive view is more in line with the idea of shame as a moral emotion, and helps us understand the function of this emotion. For guilt, the view of it being a very adaptive emotion with positive consequences might change into something more negative or more realistic. We now know that guilt is less focused upon the well-being of others in general and of the victim in particular. As a result, guilt feelings can motivate prosocial behaviour towards the victim at the expense of others around, can stimulate people to avoid new social situations, and can be regulated by reparative actions of others (De Hooge, 2012c; De Hooge et al., 2011, 2012). This more negative view suggests that the exemplary moral emotion does not always motivate prosocial behaviour, and might generate a discussion concerning the definition of moral emotions.

The present chapter not only has implications for the view on shame and guilt. It also reveals

that a distinction between exogenous and endogenous influences of emotions is essential in emotion research. Previous research has made this distinction theoretically (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2006), but most scholars do not take this distinction into account when empirically studying the effects of emotions. Accordingly, they may find different or even contrasting results depending on the used methods, and subsequently may draw incorrect conclusions about the effects, goal or function of an emotion.

Furthermore, the current chapter shows us that emotions can best be studied in multiple-person situations. Surprisingly, most, if not all, research concerning the behavioural effects of emotions has focused upon emotions in intrapersonal or dyadic settings (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2007; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Nelissen et al., 2007; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). While research on intrapersonal and dyadic situations provides useful insights into the understanding of emotions, it might not necessarily capture a complete picture of how emotions relate to (prosocial) behaviour. Using the emotion guilt as a case in point, the present chapter revealed that a wider range of behavioural responses to emotions may be uncovered if researchers start looking beyond dyadic interactions to multiple-person interactions. In contrast with the view of guilt as an adaptive emotion with many positive consequences (Baumeister et al., 1994; Haidt, 2003; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Smith, 1759; Tangney et al., 2007a), three different lines of research conducted in multiple-person situations demonstrated that guilt might be less moral or prosocial than is currently assumed. On a more general level, the three lines of research show that a focus on multiple-person situations in emotion research might have important implications for the understanding of the role of emotions in social behaviour.

More generally, I believe that the study of guilt in multiple-person situations can also expand social psychological research. Social psychological concepts such as negotiations, social influence,

attitudes, nonverbal communication, and social comparisons are often studied in situations where the participant is alone, interacts with one other person, or interacts with a group as a whole. These settings are also used in related research areas such as consumer behaviour, advertising, or communication research (e.g., Luce, 1998; O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Van Swol, 2009). The studies highlight for example if and when people listen to advice (from family members or salespeople), donate money to charities, help others in need, or indulge in eating delights. Yet, these decisions and behaviours nearly constantly occur in the presence of multiple other people, and it might be the case that the presence and behaviours of those others also exert an influence. Future research is needed to uncover the role of third parties in these social psychological concepts.

The finding that behaviours by other parties may influence people’s feelings and social behaviours brings about broad practical implications. For example, advertisers, governments, and companies often make use of emotion appeals and of Cialdini’s social proof principle exclaiming that many others (consumers, donors, neighbours) have already engaged in the social behaviour. Similarly to third parties repairing transgressions in guilt situations, perceiving other people acting in for example charity friendly or environmentally friendly behaviours might convey the message that the actor’s own reparative actions are no longer necessary. Thus, researchers and marketers should be more careful in their attempts to motivate people towards such social behaviours.

The final question that can be raised after reviewing the literature on shame and guilt is: to what degree are moral emotions really moral? When can emotions be defined as moral emotions, and when should a moral emotion no longer be perceived as a moral emotion? In my opinion, the central question should not focus upon the division of emotions into moral emotions and non-moral emotions, but should address the question whether moral emotions are of a special kind or not. Do moral emotions require special theory to understand them, or do they behave like any other emotion

that can be understood with general emotion theory? The review of two moral emotions, namely shame and guilt, revealed that even these two exemplary moral emotions motivate prosocial behaviour in some situations, and anti-social or immoral behaviour in other situations. It was possible to understand these emotions and predict their influences on behaviour by applying general emotion theory. This seems to suggest that there might be nothing intrinsically moral about moral emotions. In other words, there might be nothing in an emotion itself that can qualify it as moral, but rather the behavioural consequences of emotions should be qualified as moral or immoral. And for every emotion, I can state: a thorough understanding of the central signal and the motivational function of an emotion is necessary to be able to specify which particular moral behaviours will be observed.

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Table 1

Guilt feelings, Repair motivation, and Prosocial behaviour Means (and Standard Deviations) as a Function of Repair in Study 1

	Repair condition		
	No-repair		Other-repair
	M (*SD*)		*M* (*SD*)
Guilt feelings			
before repair	8.53 (2.38)	=	7.63 (3.52)
after repair			5.19 (4.20)
after birthday	7.24 (2.33)	>	3.94 (3.61)
Repair motivation	5.18 (1.39)	>	3.53 (1.87)
Prosocial behaviour	34.12 (28.24)	>	16.56 (11.65)

Note. Guilt feelings could range from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very strongly), motivation scores could range from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely). Prosocial behaviour reflected the amount in euros spent on the birthday present. There were no significant differences between means separated by an "=" mark, with $t < 1$. Means separated by a ">" or "<" mark differed significantly with all ts > 2.46, all ps < .02.

Table 2

Guilt feelings, Repair motivation, and Prosocial behaviour Means (and Standard Deviations) as a Function of Transgression and Repair in Study 2

	Transgression condition					
	Transgression			Control		
	No-repair		Other-repair	No-repair		Other-repair
	M (*SD*)		*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)		*M* (*SD*)
Guilt feelings						
before repair	8.78 (2.39)	=	8.84 (1.21)	0.58 (1.92)	=	1.80 (3.37)
after repair			4.58 (2.91)			0.30 (1.13)
After birthday	5.61 (3.13)	>	2.00 (2.57)	0.05 (0.23)	=	0.15 (0.49)
Repair motivation	4.04 (1.93)	>	2.11 (1.71)	1.70 (0.94)	=	1.83 (1.52)
Prosocial behaviour	57.06 (60.98)	>	19.73 (13.59)	18.42 (9.13)	=	20.28 (25.98)
Thoughts after behaviour						
Think everything resolved	2.00 (1.09)	<	4.00 (2.08)			
Feel everything made up for	2.50 (1.34)	<	4.58 (2.01)			

Note. (Guilt) feelings and thoughts could range from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very strongly), motivation scores could range from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely), and Prosocial behaviour was measured in euros. There were no significant differences between means separated by an "=" mark, with all *t*s < 1.63, all *p*s $> .11$, and the means separated by a ">" or "<" mark differed significantly with all *t*s > 2.62, all *p*s $< .02$.