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Exploring the Role of Shame in Design Strategies

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Abstract

Shame is an emotion most of us are well familiar with and has taken an increasing role in public discourse in the last couple of years. While design literature has seen a strong tradition for evoking positive emotions, shame seems to be somewhat neglected. As a step towards a more practical understanding of shame in design, this article combines design literature with studies from other disciplines in an attempt to give an overview of designers' current notion of shame, and discuss if and how this notion could be further explored into concepts and tools that may benefit future designers.

Keywords: behavioural design, emotional engineering, value-driven design, shame, negative emotions

1. Introduction

Lowered head, blushing cheeks, shame, embarrassment, taboo and stigma. Albeit well hidden in most societies, these are all concepts that most of us are familiar with, and therefore almost a natural part of our everyday life. We avoid embarrassing discussion topics, wrinkle our noses in disgust, and feel guilty for doing something bad and shameful when our wrongdoings are made visible to others. On the bright side, we also indulge ourselves with guilty pleasures, laugh at awkward movie scenes, entertain our friends with embarrassing stories and feel a sense of excitement when a dirty secret is about to be revealed. This article attempts to capture some of these experiences and visualise how emotions such embarrassment, guilt and affect us in more tangible ways. Besides our personal understanding of these emotions, they also play a role in society. Examples such as the "MeToo" movement, Greta Thunberg's announcement of "flight shame", satirical sitcoms and intimate body care products illustrate how these emotions act out in pop-culture, media discourse and mass consumption. At first glance, South Park might have little in common with AXE body spray or Greta Thunberg, but what links them together is that they, through humour, body ideals or environmental ethics, all play with elements of shame, and also elicit a message about right and wrong, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate.

Despite the longevity shame might have, it seems to have had a revitalisation in the recent years together with social media and rising concern for social challenges and environment. Unsustainable behaviour such as overconsumption, plastic pollution, eating meat and traveling by airplane are being connected to shame (Claeys, M., 2020). In addition to green-shaming, new shades of shame and ostracism have made their appearance. In the last few years, we have become familiar with words like online shaming, covid shame, cancel culture, victim framing, toxic masculinity, new puritanism, body shame, slut-shaming, smoking stigma, food shame, and toxic shame, to mention a few. As some are questioning if all this shaming is a sign of the next moral revolution (Claeys, M., 2020), the implications of understanding the mechanics of shame seems highly relevant for designers.

Design literature has a strong tradition for understanding and evoking positive emotions, which appear in a large variety and are extensively used as a design tool. This cannot be said about negative emotions

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and in particular shame, let alone with the same nuances in which positive emotions are conceptualised in design literature. Apparently, such nuances are necessary to make it possible to deal with particular emotions in a variety of design contexts. Should we want to use shame as a design tool in the same manner as designers have made positive emotions useful, perhaps a similar granulation is needed. And by this, not only shame in comparison to other emotions, but a conceptualisation of shame that covers the granularities of shame in itself. Although shame generally seems to be a poorly studied emotion (Scheff, 2003), more elaborate theories and frameworks for shame, but also for closely related concepts such as stigma, shaming, morality and taboos have been developed within other disciplines than design, including psychology, sociology and ethnography. In contrast to design research, this literature emphasises theory, rather than a hands-on or practical understanding and applications which could benefit designers. Thus, as a step towards a more useful understandings shame in design, this article combines existing design literature with literature and studies from other disciplines in an attempt to give a brief overview of designers' current notion of shame and discuss if and how this notion could be further strengthened and/or explored through concept and tools that may benefit future designers.
First, a brief overview is given of conceptualisations of shame and correlated negative emotions in design, followed by a brief summary of perspectives on this emotion from other, non-design disciplines. Next, it is discussed how shame and related concepts such as embarrassment, awkwardness, guilt, shaming, stigma and taboo have been used across different areas of design as well as in environmental behavioural science, marketing and art. Other related concepts such as aversive emotions, moral emotions, social emotions, vicarious shame and embarrassment, guilty pleasures and satire are also included as a part of shame as a notion and its implications for design, as well as to give room to discuss potential missed opportunities.

2. Shame as it Seemingly is Understood in Design Literature

In recent years, design researchers have contributed to extend the design vocabulary of emotions, as a repone to the statement that the "present-day focus on generalized pleasure is rather narrow" (Desmet, 2003), indicating that designing for emotion requires a granular understanding of several different emotions. Thus, emotional nuances have been explored through concepts such as granularity (i.e., the ability to differentiate between emotions) and typologies (i.e., different ways to classify emotions) (Desmet 2021). Understanding how emotions can be combined as mixed emotions, presenting dilemmas or rich experiences is one approach to understanding granularity. Other approaches have focused on giving a detailed description of various positive emotions, positioned emotions according to product experiences or classified emotions according to certain properties. Distinguishing between instrumental, aesthetic, social, surprise and interest emotions is one such classification introduced by Desmet (2003). Here, the group of social emotions (indignation, contempt and admiration) relate to whether one experiences something to comply with social standards or not. Although not explicitly mentioned, this seems to follow other understandings of social emotions (e.g., Hareli and Parkinson, 2008), where shame and guilt also are included. Shame is more explicitly mentioned in another article by Desmet (2008), this time as a self-reflexive emotion, together with pride and guilt, representing social standards, norms and conventions of how we think things should be. This definition is similar to Tangney et al. (2007) description of moral emotions (shame, embarrassment, guilt, pride, gratitude, elevation, empathy, contempt, anger and disgust). Furthermore, much of the literature on emotions within design, HCl and marketing relies on theories developed by Ekman and Russel (Desmet 2003, 2008). Ekman (2019) defines basic emotions as anger, contempt, disgust, enjoyment, fear, sadness and surprise, which can all be captured by universal facial expressions. A perhaps more nuanced way of structuring emotions is through Russell’s (1980) circumplex model for affect: a multidimensional scaling system distinguishing emotion based on pleasure/displeasure and excitement/relaxation. It often includes Ekman's basic emotions, but rarely emotions such as shame, pride, guilt or embarrassment. Other scientists from the non-design literature seem to overlook the work done by Ekman and Russel, and classify emotions based on different properties, such as if they are directed toward oneself or others (Tangney et al, 2007).
A few designers have focused specifically on negative emotions. Fokkinga (2017) presents a "Negative Emotions Typology" with 36 negative emotions in 15 groups, in which shame and

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embarrassment are grouped under "social failing", and guilt and embarrassment under "self-blame". This overview explains how shame occurs, how it feels and how it differs from emotions such as embarrassment, guilt and regret, but mainly in relation to shame as self-experienced. Others have focused on using negative emotions to create richer user experiences (see section 3.1). As the totality of emotion research in design has become more granular and extended its vocabulary, it has made it more practical to apply emotions in a variety of design contexts. Still, the amount of research focusing on negative emotions, and in particular on shame, seems scarce, which becomes particularly evident when comparing with typologies and affect theories that have been developed across areas such as psychology and sociology. Although these theories are less practice oriented, they still elaborate on the mechanics and nuances of shame to a much larger extent than which is found in existing design research. Some of these interpretations represent shame as a social emotion closely linked to social behaviours and social action tendencies (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008). Tangney et al. (2007) claims that moral emotions such as shame often are overlooked, and that "*they represent a key element of our human moral apparatus, influencing the link between moral standards and moral behaviour*". She further distinguishes two groups, the other-focused emotions (e.g., anger, contempt, disgust, compassion and elevation) and self-conscious emotions (pride, shame, guilt and embarrassment), whereas the self-conscious emotions are "*evoked by self-reflection and self-evaluation, provide immediate punishment (or reinforcement) of behaviour, and thereby function as an emotional barometer on our social and moral acceptability*". Although the triad of negative self-conscious emotions (shame, embarrassment and guilt) carry common traits, there are also nuances in how they appear separately, in combination with each other, or combined with other emotions such as anger and fear. In addition, there are studies that distinguish subgroups of shame, such as toxic, false, vicarious and anticipated shame (Welten and Breugelmans, 2012; Boudewyns et al. 2013).

3. Design and Shame

Most approaches within design research focus on evoking positive emotions and avoiding negative experiences. Although this aligns well with psychological understandings of shame as a painful and sometimes harmful emotion (Scheff, 2003), it leaves little room to explore shame in a more nuanced manner, which may be a missed opportunity to explore its effect in other (and potentially positive) ways. As designers make it their aim to improve peoples' lives, emotions often form a dichotomy between desirable and undesirable and pleasurable and unpleasurable (Fokkinga and Desmet, 2013). Still, there is a subset of design researchers focusing on the role of negative emotions in design, acknowledging that our emotional spectrum is more nuanced than solely feeling good or bad, happy or unhappy; often, we feel a bit of both, due to a combination of many different, and sometimes conflicting positive and negative emotions - including shame. As a further introduction to the topic Design and Shame, and by using a review of scientific, artistic, activist and popular culture sources, the next paragraphs present and illustrate five different ways of how shame can be used in design interventions.

3.1. Using Shame to Evoke Mixed Emotions

Guilty pleasures, schadenfreude, dirty secrets, risqué behaviour and dark comedy are some notions which show how negative and positive emotions can pose dilemmas and conflicting desires. "Cards against humanity" is a popular, but controversial card game that takes advantage of mixed emotions through allowing its players to express dark or taboo humour (see figure 1). This concept of mixed emotions has been researched in advertisement (Colin and Droulers, 2017), as well as in design (Zang et al., 2016), for its ability to create positive and rich experiences. Some design methods have also been suggested by purposefully involving negative emotions to enrich user experiences. Fokkinga and Desmet (2013) suggest ten different ways of using negative emotions to create rich experiences, including "indulging" which combines shame and desire as a way to create an experience of giving in to pleasures that usually are restricted by ethics and conventions, for example overeating where the pleasure of eating conflicts with values of moderation. Their approach also considers other related emotions such as maliciousness, pride, indignation and disgust, as well as a protective frame that reverses the negative emotion so that it can be enjoyable for the user. Lemke et al. (2021) explores the concept of emotional nuances and how disgust can be used in different ways to prompt attitudes of

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aversion and attraction. Guilty pleasures are a quite commonly used term for describing something pleasurable that induces a feeling of guilt, such as indulging yourself with junk food, binge watching Netflix, consuming reality television or enjoying poorly rated music or trashy art. Although guilty pleasures have not been conceptualised in design, other disciplines have studied different types of guilty pleasures as an approach to understand personal norms, social expectations and narratives. Some corners of marketing seem to have understood our attraction towards guilty pleasures, as there are more and more guilt-free products helping us to get the things we want, but in a less guilty, more healthy and more sustainable manner (Haynes and Podobsky, 2016).

Figure 1. Guilty pleasures and guilt-free branding (from left): Keeping up with the Kardashians (reality show), Card against humanity (game), a more "green(washed)" McDonalds-logo

3.2. Inducing Shame as a Tool for Behaviour Change

Although already present in ancient societies to punish disobedient citizens, in the last decade social media and online communication seem to have given new life to the concepts of (public) shaming, shunning and ostracism, increasing its reach and magnitude. Online shaming, call-out culture or cancel culture can be understood as ways of using social media to engage others to express disapproval and put social pressure on an individual or a brand. The cancelation of the Harry Potter author J.K Rowling for her transphobic beliefs and the ice cream brand Ben and Jerry's for its accusation of antisemitism, and twitter hashtags such as #meetoo, #blacklivesmatter and #itsoverparty are just some of many examples of online shaming and hashtag-activism which demonstrate the cultural impact of shame and the internet. These modern forms of public shaming have received criticism for their mob mentality, impulsive and harsh judgements, and for preventing the exchange of contrary ideas, but the concept of using shame to promote behaviour can also have prosocial side-effects. Shame, guilt and embarrassment have attracted many researchers for their moral and social properties. Scheff (2003) considers shame as the key social emotion, signal of a threat to the social bond and belonging and a motivation for prosocial behaviour. Hareli and Parkinson (2008) emphasise how social emotions necessarily depend on social concerns, such as other people's actions, norms or conventions. Tangney et al. (2007), on the other hand, describes shame as a moral emotion and a motivational force for moral behaviour, to do good and avoid bad. Despite some variations in these theories, they all share the view of shame as socially important emotions that are connected to our sense of morality and as an important behavioural agent.

3.2.1. Evoking Aversive Emotions in Social Marketing and Design

Although many design approaches utilise persuasive techniques which often rely on reducing cost and/or effort, and on increasing gratification to the individual in performing behaviours, some corners of design and marketing point out the aversive effect of shame, guilt and embarrassment in response to promoted pro-social behaviour change. In the realms of environmental discourses, a new and green shade of shame has emerged, referred to as "*the shame one feels when knowingly behaving in ways that have a severe negative impact on the environment, like flying or eating meat, while other options are available at a financially and socially non-debilitating cost*" (Claeys, 2020). While green shaming in some cases is merely used as a rhetorical tool used by journalists, activists and politicians', studies also show that shame-inducing messages can be effective to promote green-based consumption (Brosch, 2021), as well as in discouraging unhealthy behaviours (Brown-Johnson and Prochaska, 2015). Similar studies have investigated the impact of shame, as well guilt and pride, in environmental message framing effects.

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Baek and Yoon (2017) found evidence for the interplay between shame and guilt and pro-environmental behaviours concerning water conservation and recycling. A similar result was found by Bao et al. (2019) when investigating the correlation between sustainable behaviour and emotions which arise from users' interactions with eco-feedback products. Comber and Thieme (2013) designed a recycling system (BinCam) where Facebook were appropriated to leverage social influence. The system used the presence of others to evoke aversive emotions (guilt or shame), which was framed as coercive forces that motivated users to change. Although these research examples on shame induced messages and design do not distinguish between the different aversive emotions, in some contexts shame and guilt can also have opposing effects. Boudewyns et al. (2013) found a correlation between shame and guilt appeals for getting tested for STDs, but that shame had an aversive effect as it was more closely related to manipulation and anger while, guilt appeals that did not contain elements of shame, did not. This result aligns with Tangney et al. (2007) research on guilt-proneness and "shame-free" guilt and emphasises the risk of not distinguishing the psychological and behavioural consequences of shame and guilt in framing health related messages, as well as understanding how these emotions act out in different contexts and among different user groups (Baek and Yoon (2017).

Figure 2. Shaming: (from left): MeToo Hashtag activism, "flight shame", anti-smoking campaign

3.2.2. When Aversive Emotions Work in the Opposite Direction

Although there is research supporting the use of shame and guilt to promote pro-social, -environmental or healthy behaviour or discourage anti-social, -environmental or unhealthy behaviours, there are also studies that challenge these findings. Brennan and Binney (2010) conducted a study among low-income support recipients where fear, guilt and shame appeals were more likely to invoke self-protection and inaction rather than a response of compliance. Others have concluded that it is pride and not guilt which is positively related to pro-environmental behaviour (Bissing-Olson et al., 2016). This is further supported by findings where advertising design with self-reference and positive moral emotion (e.g., pride parade) shows the best effect (Kao and Du, 2020). These research findings point to an aversive effect of emotions such as shame, guilt and embarrassment, but with no clear right or wrong, as the emotion-based messaging seems to rely on contextual and individual differences. Current marketing research on guilt is diverse and fragmented due to the multidisciplinary interest in this emotion. It shows that the effectiveness of guilt appeals is contested, as well as ethically questioned (Antonetti and Baines, 2015). Although research on emotional climate change interventions has made substantial progress in the direction of understanding how perceptions and actions can be altered, it still would benefit from a stronger integration of theoretical concepts from affective psychology (Brosch, 2021). Figure 3 illustrates this uncertainty. Assuming that these plastic bags were designed as part of a plastic-shaming scheme rather than a promotional stunt, the purpose of using embarrassing logos (e.g., "wart ointment") would be to shun consumers to choose reusable bags. Instead, the concept backfired, as the bags caused humour instead of shame and turned out to be in demand as collector's items (Schaverien, 2019).

Figure 3. Backlash of aversive emotions (from left): pride parade flag, "embarrassing" bags

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3.3. Emphasising Shame as a Technique to Attract and Create Attention

Although shame can be used in discouraging manners, the last plastic bag example shows how shame also can create certain forms of attraction. Many examples of pop-cultural artifacts illustrate how something shameful can become a source of humour, attraction or excitement. For instance, Parental Advisory labels (PAL) are flagging "forbidden fruits" and politically incorrect comedy shows, such as South Park, relies on taboo humour to engage their audience. Juvenile forms of humour (e.g., sexist jokes, scatological humour and pranks) are other examples of how we utilise embarrassment as entertainment in our social interaction. Also, product advertisement is known for purposefully playing up taboos (but also covering up taboos) for commercial advantage, for instance using sexual innuendos to create humour and maximum commercial advantage) (Freitas, 2008).

Figure 4. Taboos and attraction (from left): Burger King ad, South Park, PAL

In art, exaggerating or over-emphasising shame are used as ways to create ridicule, parody, to provoke or offer critique. Duchamp's "Fountain" (a misplaced toilet in an art museum) is a famous example illustrating this. Although, not clearly stated, this use of shame also appears as a technique in critical design through the use of satire as a provocative lens and a tool for social criticism. By using exaggeration, irony, anti-climax, obscenity, distortion, understatement, innuendo, simile and metaphor. the designer creates ridicule and evokes attitudes of amusement, indignation or scorn. Unlike the South Park example, the intent here is not to entertain, but rather "*shaming individuals, the discipline, and society into improvement*" (Malpass, 2017). The "Human Poo Energy Future, Poo Lunch Box" by Dunne and Raby uses satire and paradoxes to question social embargos on energy production and human waste, and the "Andro chair" (designed for men but based on women's experiences) use analogies and norm creative tactics to draw attention to issues of marginalized user (Nilsson and Jahnke, 2018).

Figure 5. Satire (from left): Fountain, Human Poo Energy Future, Poo Lunch Box, Andro Chair

Others have also investigated taboos and humour as a powerful tool to afford critical reflection and engage a user audience. Helms investigates humour as a strategy to provoke discourse and reflection around sustainability, using speculative design, playful aesthetics, puns, parody and pastiche as an invitation to closely consider a taboo topic, inciting empathy and understanding, as well as provocation, alienation and disengagement (Helms and Fernaeus, 2018; Helms, 2020). Almeida et al. (2016) also uses humour to mediate engagement with topics we often feel uncomfortable with using the Labella underwear and mobile app that embodies intimate interaction and works as a tool discovery.

3.4. Mitigating Shame to Reduce Embarrassment and Stigma

As opposed to emphasising shame to make products or messages more interesting, reducing undesirable shaming is also used as a strategy to create attraction. Advertisement uses humour as a coping mechanism and a strategy to attenuate the negative effects of shame and increase message persuasion (Freitas 2008). Humour can function as a joke, giving the listener a moment of lightness where

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something serious is expected. Canesten uses a comedy group to create a humorous musical and soften embarrassment around thrush. AXE body spray focuses on masculinity and sexual attraction, as opposed to avoiding embarrassing body odours. Other products dealing with bodily taboos use other tactics: toilet paper packaging depicts cute animals, clouds or feathers, female sanitary products and diapers ads have been known (and criticized) for using blue (and not red or yellow) ink to demonstrate the product. Also, in everyday talk, euphemisms and metaphors are used to allude or downplay words and meanings that we find too embarrassing or inappropriate to express explicitly. "Meat packing company" for "slaughter-house", "adult material" for "pornography and "special needs" for "disability" are some examples.

Figure 6. Softening taboos (from left): Canesten video, AXE ad, toilet paper, sanitary pad

Other product design examples which aim to reduce shame and avoid eliciting stigma include assistive, protective or medical products, such as hearing aids neatly designed to look like jewellery or a fart-filtering "banana" to pop in your pants on plane trips to defuse embarrassing smells (Fig. 7). Thus, in addition to humour, other aspects such as aesthetics, subtlety, and functionality can help to reduce shame, fight stigma and remove taboo from sensitive topics such as menstruation (Almeida et al., 2016, HIV (Maestre et al., 2021) and bodily excretion (Wilde, 2021; Helms 2020). More generally there are also designers who emphasise the importance of recognising stigma and shame, as ethical considerations in the practice, and to design in a socially sustainable and inclusive manner. Torkildsby and Vaes (2019) explored how critical design and a "stigma free" toolkit can be used to identify and battle stereotypes, discrimination, stigma and public shame related to existing products, services and environments. Desment and Roeser (2016) emphasise the role of emotions in value-driven design processes and the ability of emotions to stimulate us to reflect on moral implications. Here moral emotions such as compassion and sympathy are emphasised for their social relevance and guilt is used to exemplify how our emotions make us aware of how a personal value might be morally unacceptable.

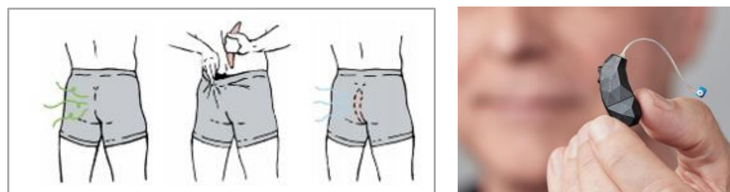

Figure 7. Mitigating shame (from left): "Carbonara" by Shreddies, "Facett" hearing aid by Heiss

3.5. Disclosing Shame as a Way to Uncover Blind Spots

Today design practice is much concerned with social issues, exemplified by the emergence of subareas such as critical design, design activism, participatory design, co-design, discursive design, social design etc. (Fuad-Luke, 2013). Shameful topics, specifically related to women's intimate technology (Almeida et al., 2016; Søndergaard, 2020), have received much attention. These authors investigate technology and taboos in female health by challenging social norm, problematizing how "*women's health topics being tabooed and stigmatized in medical, political, and cultural contexts (...) producing feelings of embarrassment, shame, and disgust*" (Søndergaard, 2020). Such critical and explicit expressions of social discrimination and unjust shame are also evident in design activism and efforts to apply design thinking to create a "*counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change*" (Fuad-Luke, 2013). Gender neutral toilet signs designed to include transgender, the "free the nipple" social media campaign fighting for women's right to bare their nipples in public and the "Riot Pant Project" combating the practice of manspreading (men sitting in public transport with legs wide apart) are examples of design activism in

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response to sex- and gender discrimination. Others working with shame and taboos have done this in a more discourse-oriented manner, considering how shame in norms and politics take place through discourse, set boundaries and empower social mechanisms (Ahmed, 2013).

Figure 8. Blind spots: "Free the nipple" campaign, "Riot Pant Project" by Bonakdar and Buscaino), gender neutral toilet sign

4. Discussion

The above review illustrates that shame, in its many disguises, has been discussed in many corners of design, as well as marketing, art and environmental studies. From design literature concerning pleasurable product experiences to literature emphasising the social role of designs, there are explicit and implicit signs of shame playing an important role in identifying challenges, opportunities, room for empathy, as well as critical thinking. On the other hand, no clear nor consequent understanding of shame seems to have been made to the same extent as for many positively valanced emotions, and no dedicated design tools exist for this purpose. Although, there are many ways in which designers (subconsciously) avoid shame, being able to articulate and make this knowledge explicit could potentially enable designers to see discourses more clearly, think even further "outside the box" and include certain ethical considerations. Although the aim of this article is mostly to introduce "design and shame" as a worth wile research field, rather than concluding on how it should be defined and used in design, some aspects uncovered so far give immediate rise to a more systematic exploration of how designers can play with mechanisms such as 1) coupling shame together with positive emotions to create rich experiences, 2) adding shame as an aversive emotion to avoid unsustainable behaviours, 3) remove shame as an uncomfortable emotion to mitigate discrimination and stigma, 4) emphasising it to create attraction, humour and excitement, and 5) over-emphasising it to raise awareness, reflection and critical thinking. Seeing that shame can both be added and removed in different contexts to both create aversion and attraction, experimenting with these mechanisms in different contexts could be a fruitful way to start exploring this emotion in a more designerly way. As with the disgust study by Lemke et al. (2021), shame has the same tendency to carry connotations to specific domains, as well as juxtapose personal desires with social taboos. Topics such as sexuality, food, body, religion, age, language, hygiene, wealth, death, race and gender, all have had a long tradition of carrying social rules that, when broken, can cause shame and embarrassment. Using bridging concepts, connecting shame theory with practice, could be a promising approach to further explore design and shame. For example, playing with hygiene shame in an environmental context, sexual shame in a food context or vice versa, could give a more practical understanding of how shame affects us in design and users' uptake of proposed solutions. The increased awareness of public shame and disclosure of new taboo domains such as mental health care, poverty and sustainability, suggests that there is a higher demand for designers to gain insights and intervene in areas where shame plays an influential role. Although the nature of shame is to avoid, conceal it or make it invisible (Büttner, 2020), making it more challenging to discover, more researchers have already made note of the current awareness on shame, and a few designers have highlighted the need for better design tools (Nilsson and Jahnke, 2018; Torkildsby and Vaes, 2019) and improved design education (Lillegård et al., 2021; Boks and Trondsen, 2021). Currently we are prototyping and testing various design tools for this purpose, such as an inspiration card deck with 64 social manifestations of shame, guilt and embarrassment, a tool based on memes, and an inverse empathy mapping tool. Preliminary feedback on the tools suggests that they improve understanding of the shame phenomenon at hand, facilitate empathizing with both who shame and who gets shamed, and spur creativity towards design solutions.

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5. Conclusion

This article illustrates how shame comes in many disguises and shades, stretching from embarrassing personal experiences to greater challenges of social injustice, from personal deodorants to public health care. Shame is everywhere, and with no clear boundaries as it is discussed differently among disciplines and in public discourse. It takes shape as a single emotion, but also as a social concept that determines what we show and what we hide. Shame is considered an important social emotion, but also an extremely complex one and the increase of public shaming in news and social media is only complicating this entanglement. Still the research is scarce. As opposed to many affect theories, most design literature focus on the emotional component of shame, as self-experienced and not so much on its role in expressing social behaviour and moral values. Though, increased awareness of public shaming and new focus on shame in domains such as mental health care and sustainability, suggests that there is a higher demand for designers to gain insights and intervene in areas where shame is non-avoidable.

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