# Embarrassment: A Philosophical Analysis

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Some emotions have attracted vigorous philosophical debate and disagreement, not only about their psychology, but also about questions of whether it is rational, appropriate, or desirable, to form them. Love, guilt and shame are the subjects of whole volumes. Envy, anger and compassion have received their fair share of philosophical attention. Embarrassment, by contrast, has been largely neglected by philosophical writers. Not many consider it at all, most of those who do afford it a rather cursory treatment, and the few who offer more substantive analyses disagree considerably about its psychological character. In this paper, I shall attempt to rectify this situation by giving my own account of embarrassment and, in the process, challenging those of various other authors.

## 1 Some Preliminary Points

R. C. Roberts claims that emotions are concern-based construals.[1] When one has an emotion, one construes a person, thing, event or situation in terms of a property that relates to one's concerns. This account of emotions is not universally accepted, and I am not going to defend its overall merits here. The notion of construal is useful for my purposes, however, as a way of individuating one emotion from another. The emotions to which we assign different names, such as fear, anger, pity, and indeed embarrassment, involve different sorts of evaluations of the objects about which they are formed. We can express this, in Roberts' terms, by saying that the subjects of these emotions *construe* their objects in terms of differing properties. Fear, for instance, might involve construing a situation as dangerous; anger, construing an agent as responsible for some offence; and compassion, construing a sentient being as undeservedly suffering. To exemplify this, suppose I am walking in the street, when I am accosted by an aggressive drunk. I could

[1] R. C. Roberts, 'What an Emotion is: a Sketch', *Philosophical Review* **97** (1988), 183–209.



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construe him in various ways; as posing a threat to my physical safety; as culpably offending against my right to civilised treatment; or as the sad and sorry victim of alcohol abuse. These three construals of him may be said to correspond to different emotions: fear, anger and pity. In this paper, I shall seek to analyse embarrassment in analogous terms, by identifying the property in terms of which an embarrassed person typically construes the situation that invokes his emotion. The substance of what I shall say about embarrassment might be accepted by someone who rejected the construal account of emotions, though he would need some other way to characterize the evaluation which, I shall claim, characterizes *this* emotion as distinct from any other.

I shall begin by dealing briefly with two possible objections to the overall project of analysing embarrassment in the manner suggested, and then offer reasons why I still consider such an analysis worthwhile. The first objection concerns whether it is legitimate to explain embarrassment as involving a construal of an object in terms of a property which is specified in *linguistic* terms, when many embarrassed subjects do not consciously think about the circumstances which embarrass them in terms of any linguistic concept(s). Think back to the last time you were embarrassed. Did your emotion involve conceptualizing your situation as having a certain property? Or did you rather have an inchoate sense that there was something you disliked about it? I imagine more people would answer yes to the second question. It might, then, be argued that to describe embarrassment as a construal in terms of a linguistically conceived property is to mistake the essentially inchoate, non-linguistic nature of the relevant state.

We might respond, however, that if this argument is used against giving an account of embarrassment as a linguistically framed evaluation, it holds equally against such accounts of many other emotions. A man falling from a fifty-foot precipice, in a state of abject fear at the prospect of his impending death, is unlikely to rehearse any particular conceptual thought about his situation, such as the thought that he is 'in danger'. But does this preclude our saying that his fear, and indeed fear in general, involves construing a situation as dangerous? I think it need not, provided we stipulate that this is a way of characterizing his emotion from a third-person viewpoint, not a description of how the emotion seems from the inside. Roberts, in fact, goes still further, suggesting that even the emotions of creatures which are incapable of linguistic thought, such as animals and infants, can be characterized as their construing objects in terms that *we* can express using language, even though the



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subjects themselves do not think linguistically.[2] A rabbit that fears a snake, for example, does not think in terms of the concept of danger. Rather, its mental state amounts to its somehow relating the perception of the predator to its instinctive desire for survival. However, it makes sense for *us* to say, from a third-person perspective, that it construes the snake as dangerous; a construal in terms of danger is a plausible linguistic analogue of the non-linguistic state it undergoes. We might give a broadly similar analysis of the man falling from the precipice. Following Roberts, both accounts of fear might be understood as attempts to express how the subjects *would* conceptualize their situations, were they able, and disposed, to do so.[3]

Human embarrassment is typically similar to these cases of fear, insofar as it does not usually involve conceptual thought. This need not, however, prevent our seeking to articulate the terms an embarrassed person *would* use, were he to convey his attitude to the object of his emotion in language. In this paper, I shall do just this, by considering the range of situations we normally regard as embarrassing, and seeking to identify what construal it is plausible to say we might make in all of them. I shall thus arrive at a third-person description of embarrassment as being a construal in terms of a certain property, which we may characterize linguistically, even if we accept that very few embarrassed people actually conceptualize their situations in the way suggested.

The second objection in-principle to the analysis I propose is a more familiar one, which concerns whether we can define an ordinary language term, like embarrassment, by giving criteria for what falls under the concept and what does not. It might be argued that the set of mental states we ordinarily call 'embarrassment' do not share any property which is absent from all states which are not referred to by this term. Hence, there may be no way of construing a situation that is both common to *all* the subjects we deem embarrassed, and associated exclusively with this emotion. Instead, there may simply be a family resemblance between the construals we can plausibly attribute to different subjects of embarrassment.

My response to this objection is that I do not aim to provide necessary and sufficient conditions which encompass *every* state we might ordinarily term embarrassment. This may be an impossible task, given the vagaries of ordinary discourse. What I shall try to do is to find a unifying strand in what we regard as the central, paradigm cases of this emotion. In doing so, I am speculating that

[2] R. C. Roberts, 'Propositions and Animal Emotion', *Philosophy* **71** (1996), 153ff.

[3] Ibid., 152.



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ordinary language may have gone some way towards identifying a specific kind of mental phenomenon, such that at least the majority of states which we deem paradigm instances of embarrassment have some significant psychological feature(s) in common. In this paper, I shall seek to identify precisely the feature(s) in question. I can accept, however, that there may also be more marginal cases of emotions which are sometimes designated by the same term, but which my own account will not fit. Indeed, I shall mention one such case in section 5.

Why, then, is embarrassment of philosophical interest? One reason is that it is a commonly occurring emotion, which affects almost all people at some point in time, and some of us very frequently. Moreover, it can have significant impacts on the way we behave. Have you ever been too embarrassed to put your name forward for a position, to tell someone what you really thought of them, or to enter a social situation where a certain person was present? If so, then perhaps the consequences, for you and for others, were highly significant. Given the frequency with which embarrassment occurs, then, its overall effect on human beings may be quite substantial. This alone may be reason enough to take an interest in it. There is a further motivation for doing so, however, which is that it may help us to understand an important aspect of what we, as human beings, regard as valuable. Michael Stocker argues that our emotional responses sometimes serve an important function in revealing to us certain values that we hold, but of which we may not always be aware of holding.[4] He uses the case of someone who becomes angry upon hearing his nation or religion being insulted. This may indicate to the angry person, perhaps contrary to what he previously believed, that he cares about the object of the insult.[5] By examining the sorts of situations to which we usually react with embarrassment, and analysing what sort of evaluation the emotion, generally speaking, entails, we might similarly gain awareness of a feature of our value-sets that we often tend to overlook. Once we become aware of this, moreover, we can consider various questions about it, such as its relation to other aspects of our psychology, its rational justification, and its ethical status. I shall not pursue these issues at length in this paper, since my concern is rather to establish an account of embarrassment itself. I shall indicate in the conclusion, however, how this analysis might lead to

[4] M. Stocker, *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56ff.

[5] Ibid., 57.



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further enquiries, in particular concerning how we should regard the rationality of the emotion, and of the values which underpin it.

I shall now embark upon my account of embarrassment, first by commenting briefly on how it differs from shame, and then by considering several accounts of its psychology proposed by previous philosophical writers.

## 2 Embarrassment and Self-appraisal

Embarrassment and shame are distinct emotions, though in some ordinary discourse they are wrongly conflated, or differentiated only by the strength of their constitutive evaluations, with shame's assumed to be stronger. It is true that the emotions are often formed concomitantly, with what might, at first glance, appear to be the same objects. There are also undoubted similarities between the affective states associated with each of them. However, by analysing the circumstances in which these states occur, we can see that they involve different sorts of evaluations, and indeed characteristically have different objects. It is also wrong to think that shame necessarily involves a stronger evaluation than embarrassment, since both emotions admit of a range of strengths. It is possible to be mildly ashamed, or extremely embarrassed, and in neither case is anything implied about the presence of the other emotion.

Shame involves a negative evaluation of an aspect of one's own conduct or character. Bernard Williams claims that a shamed person typically conceives of this evaluation as issuing from the perspective of a hypothetical witness, whose opinion he holds in high esteem.[6] He thus sees himself, in Williams' terms, as warranting the disapproval of an individual '…whose reactions [he] would respect, and who would respect those same reactions if they were appropriately directed to him'.[7] There is room for disagreement over whether shame must always involve thinking that one falls short of *another* person's standards. Anthony O'Hear, for instance, has argued that in some instances, shame might entail the thought that one has fallen short of a privately held ideal, which no one else need accept, and which might indeed be irrational.[8] Even, however, in cases where the shamed person *does* think that others would view some aspect of

[6] B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 78ff.

[7] Ibid., 84.

[8] A. O'Hear, 'Guilt and Shame as Moral Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* **77** (1976–7), 77–8.



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himself negatively, he need not perceive, or even imagine, that they actually witness the aspect in question. Shame, in other words, can occur in circumstances where there is no real or imagined contact between the subject and any other individual. It is possible to be shamed by things one does in private, which never reach the attentions of an audience. In these instances, while the emotion might involve thinking that others *would* disapprove of these things, it clearly cannot entail the thought that they actually *do* disapprove of them.

This last point, I suggest, plays a key role in distinguishing shame from embarrassment, and introduces a crucial point concerning the latter emotion. Embarrassment, in contrast to shame, seems only to occur in situations where a subject views himself as actually coming into contact with other human beings.[9] This is admittedly qualified by the fact that like almost any emotion, embarrassment may result from *imagining* the sorts of situations that typically produce it. In other words, it is possible to be embarrassed when imagining a situation involving contact with other people, rather than really being in one. This differs, however, from merely predicting the content of others' hypothetical judgments about oneself; the latter may be enough for shame, but embarrassment requires the former. The following case exemplifies the distinction. Suppose Alexandra visits a friend and is left alone in his bedroom, whereupon she discovers a piece of his private mail and starts to read it. She might be ashamed of the fact she has breached his privacy, without having imagined the possibility of his catching her in the act of reading the mail. On Williams' view, this would involve her evaluating her action as one of which he, or some other person whose judgment she respects, would disapprove. In order to be embarrassed, however, it seems that she must at least imagine her friend, or perhaps someone else, entering the bedroom and seeing her reading the letter. Embarrassment, then, specifically requires her conceiving of an *interpersonal* situation, not simply the adverse opinions that others might hold about her.

There are other important differences between the evaluations typical of embarrassment and shame, suggested by the fact that

[9] This seems true, at least, for the vast majority of cases. There are admittedly odd, and mostly somewhat marginal, counterexamples, one of which I shall discuss in section 5. With shame, however, there seem to be far more central cases that do not involve perceiving or imagining actual interpersonal contact. See, for example, Willliams' discussion (Ibid., 93) of someone who is ashamed about intentions he has but does not act upon, which are thus effectively private phenomena.



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some circumstances seem to be plausible occasions for being embarrassed, but not for being ashamed. One such case is where a subject regards himself as being condemned by others for something that he himself does not consider a failing. Imagine, for instance, I am walking in a busy street, when I trip and fall on a loose paving stone, much to the derision of a group of drunken locals standing nearby. It seems implausible that I would feel shame about this, since I am unlikely to think the incident has any bearing on my personal worth, and certainly no one whose opinion I would respect is liable to condemn me on its account. I may still be embarrassed, however, upon seeing that I have provoked this reaction.

Robert Solomon, in fact, goes as far as to say that the set of thoughts outlined above is *characteristic* of embarrassment, a view echoed more recently by Sabini and Silver.[10] These writers identify embarrassment as involving the view that one is negatively assessed by other people, but that one is in fact innocent of the alleged flaw. This clearly distinguishes embarrassment from shame, which necessitates seeing oneself as somehow flawed. As an overall account of embarrassment, however, I think there are serious problems with the view proposed by Solomon *et al*. To start with, it is doubtful whether a construal of oneself as receiving undeserved censure is exclusively, or even primarily, associated with embarrassment. As Bela Szabados argues, the perception of wrongful criticism is just as likely to issue in anger or indignation.[11]

There are, moreover, several paradigm cases of embarrassment in which it seems implausible that the subject would see himself as receiving unwarranted condemnation. First, it is possible to be embarrassed in circumstances where other people are critical of you, without your considering this criticism unjustified. Solomon may be right to claim that embarrassed people do not always concur with any external censure they may receive, but he is wrong to suggest that this precludes the emotion. Alexandra might surely have been embarrassed, as well as ashamed, if she was caught reading her friend's private letter, though she would no doubt agree with his likely disapproval of her action. Secondly, in cases where someone is embarrassed about another person's appraisal of himself, this

[10] See R. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*, (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 246–7, and J. Sabini and M. Silver, 'In Defense of Shame: Shame in the Context of Guilt and Embarrassment', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* **27** (1997), 1–15.

[11] B. Szabados, 'Embarrassment and Self-Esteem', *Journal of Philosophical Research* **15** (1990), 341–9.



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appraisal need not always be disapproving. It is possible, for example, that someone may be embarrassed when having an honour bestowed upon him at a public ceremony, or upon being privately complimented for an achievement or virtue. In these cases, embarrassment seems to coexist with the view that one is *positively* evaluated by others. Thirdly, there are cases where an embarrassed subject is unlikely to regard himself as the object of *any* external appraisal whatsoever. Suppose, for instance, I climb on board a bus, to discover that all the seats have been taken, and that I am the only passenger who is required to stand. Imagine, moreover, that this results in various people on the bus looking at me throughout the journey, which embarrasses me. It seems implausible, in this scenario, that I should think they are making any evaluations of me. I certainly attract their attention, but not in such a way that they are likely to assess me in positive or negative terms.

There are several examples, then, which suggest that embarrassment cannot adequately be characterized as Solomon *et al* suggest. The existence of such cases might lead us to adopt a different account of the emotion, along the lines proposed by Gabrielle Taylor.[12] She argues that while embarrassment always occurs in circumstances where the subject comes into contact with other people, he does not construe them as evaluating him, but rather, he views their presence as bringing about an interpersonal situation, to which *he* thinks he is required to respond in a certain fashion. For Taylor, then, an embarrassed person is one who sees himself as failing to respond appropriately in an interpersonal scenario, perhaps because he cannot identify the right response, or because he is unable to implement it successfully. Embarrassment thus involves a negative assessment of one's own reactions specifically in a situation where one has to deal with others, but it is irrelevant whether one thinks these others are equally critical.

There are, again, problems with this view. A preliminary one is about causality. It is certainly true that embarrassed people often fail to respond appropriately to their social surroundings. But, it might be asked, to what extent is this failure a *consequence* of their embarrassment, rather than its object? There are reasons for thinking the former is often the case. Embarrassment is associated with affective responses which might hinder the determination or execution of actions, bringing about flustering and indecision. But if such paralysis frequently occurs as an effect of the emotion, the fact that

[12] G. Taylor, *Pride, Shame and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*, (Oxford University Press, 1985), 69ff.



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embarrassed people exhibit it need not indicate that their embarrassment involves construing themselves as socially paralysed. Whatever construal we identify as integral to the emotion must be a plausible response to the circumstances in which its subjects are, *prior* to becoming embarrassed. So, for Taylor's analysis to work, a subject of embarrassment must recognize his inability to respond to a social situation before forming the emotion.

In section 3, I shall argue that Taylor's account of embarrassment is positively undermined by certain instances of the emotion where it is implausible to say that the subject makes a negative assessment of his own social behaviour. These cases will also cast doubt on a more general assumption, present in both Taylor's and Solomon's accounts, that the intentional focus of embarrassment is always on the subject himself, or on aspects of his own conduct or character.

## 3 Witnesses' Embarrassment

The following example illustrates what I consider to be the main problem with Taylor's view. Suppose I organize a dinner-party, the guests at which are my elderly uncle and aunt, and a drinking-companion from my college days. The uncle and aunt in question are both abstemious, puritanical types, he being a quiet, unassuming gentlemen, and she something of a tartar. The college friend, however, is none of these. On the contrary, he arrives drunk on the evening in question, and proceeds to behave in a raucous manner throughout, loudly exalting the pleasures of wine, women and song, and finishing by being sick in the fireplace.[13] It is quite plausible that this incident could be highly embarrassing, both for me, and for my mild-mannered uncle. Equally importantly, we can well imagine that it does not embarrass the drunken guest himself, who is too inebriated to have any such emotion, or my tyrannical aunt, whose response is rather one of anger, directed at both the drunken guest and myself.

Taylor thinks embarrassment is based on a negative appraisal of one's own social behaviour. In the above scenario, however, it is clearly my drunken friend who has performed the most serious social misdemeanour, and he is not embarrassed. Moreover, whatever construals the various other people present make of the situation, they are most likely to be focused upon the drunken guest and

[13] This example was inspired by an episode of the comedy series 'Blackadder II'.



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*his* behaviour, rather than upon themselves and their own responses to it. If Taylor is right, however, the embarrassment of both my uncle and myself must somehow be characterized as our construing *ourselves* as socially failing, on account of the situation which has arisen.

Taylor does acknowledge that this sort of case might be problematic for her account. In response, she suggests various means of explaining the embarrassment formed by witnesses to the socially inept behaviour of others, as consistent with her view that the emotion essentially involves viewing oneself as socially dysfunctional. One reason she proposes for why some such witnesses may be embarrassed is that they *identify* themselves with the people whose social responses they regard as defective.[14] It is plausible that if someone considers another person part of his own identity, he is justified in forming whatever beliefs and emotions he thinks are appropriate to this person's situation. Hence, if I see my drunken friend as an extension of me, then whatever the friend does, I must also attribute to myself. This might result in my construing myself as socially inept, on account of the friend's faux-pas.

It seems fairly unlikely, however, that I *would* identify with my friend in this strong sense. It is more plausible, perhaps, to say that I might consider myself *responsible* for his conduct. This could be a basis for construing myself as socially failing, without actually regarding my friend's actions as, in any sense, my own. For instance, I might see myself as having made a serious social error by inviting clearly incompatible guests to the same gathering. I may also think that the incident in question demands some response from me, to calm the situation and restore my relatives' confidence, which in the circumstances I am unable to deliver. My embarrassment could therefore be explained, along Taylor's lines, as a construal of myself as failing to deal effectively with an interpersonal situation.

Whilst such an explanation may fit my embarrassment, however, it seems far less applicable to that of my mild-mannered uncle. The uncle has no relationship to the drunken man whereby he might consider himself responsible for the latter's actions, or obliged to act in order to rectify them. Taylor does, however, give another possible explanation of the embarrassment felt by a witness to another person's social ineptitude. This is that the witness imagines himself in the situation of the inept agent and forms an emotion appropriate to this situation accordingly.[15] This might be termed an emotional

[14] Op. cit. note 12, 71–3.
[15] Ibid., 71.



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arousal by *empathy*. It is, in fact, possible to distinguish two kinds of empathy which can result in emotions. The first involves imaginatively recreating the mental state which one perceives occurring in another person. It is possible, for instance, that someone who witnesses another agent's social failure may recreate this agent's embarrassment, imagining how he, the agent, must construe the circumstances in which he finds himself. This would explain how such a witness might be embarrassed, with embarrassment being understood as essentially a construal of *oneself* as failing to respond effectively to one's social environment.

This explanation cannot, however, account for instances where a witness of a socially inept action is embarrassed, but the agent himself clearly is not. As Szabados puts it: 'One cannot catch the flu from someone who does not have it. Similarly, one cannot 'catch' embarrassment from the unembarrassed…'[16] My drunken friend is not embarrassed about his own situation, perhaps because he is too drunk to know what he is doing, or because he is generally too insensitive to have the emotion. My uncle's embarrassment cannot, therefore, be the result of recreating the drunken friend's emotional state. There is, however, another possible sort of empathy, which involves a subject imagining himself in a similar external situation to someone else, whilst retaining his own background set of beliefs, desires and dispositions of thought. This offers a more plausible explanation of my uncle's embarrassment. He might picture himself performing the drunken friend's actions while still holding his own puritan social mores. His embarrassment might therefore be said to reflect the negative evaluation of his conduct that he *would* make, were he to behave drunkenly himself.

I doubt, however, whether such an explanation is plausible in all cases of this kind. The reasons for this are twofold. First, empathy necessarily involves one person imagining somehow being in another person's position: undergoing his circumstances, performing his actions, or having his thoughts. It seems likely that in some instances where a subject disapproves of another agent's social conduct, he may be unwilling to engage in such imaginings. My uncle, for example, might refuse to imagine being in the drunken friend's situation, because he is averse to engaging with acts, or a state of character, which he despises or finds offensive. Admittedly, one cannot always control one's exercise of empathy, and it is possible that certain situations may force one to empathize with someone else's circumstances, given the intensity with which they are imposed on

[16] Op. cit., note 11, 347.



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one's consciousness. The uncle's aversion to imagining himself in a state of inebriation might not, then, be enough to prevent him empathizing with the drunken guest, contrary to his wishes. However, empathy also presupposes that the subject has the *ability* to imagine another person's situation. There are, again, some cases where this is doubtful. It might be hypothesized, for instance, that my uncle is so ill-acquainted with the thoughts and behaviour of drunken people that it is impossible for him to picture himself acting in this way, however forcefully the incident is imposed upon his perceptions.

The exercise of empathy, then, is constrained both by the willingness and the ability of a subject to empathize with another agent. This suggests problems for Taylor in claiming that everyone who is embarrassed when witnessing someone else's social shortcomings either identifies or empathizes with this person. A much neater way to deal with potentially difficult cases of embarrassed witnesses is to abandon Taylor's requirement that the typical object of one's embarrassment is oneself and one's own social behaviour. Once this claim is dropped, it is easier to account for witnesses' embarrassment, without having to invoke identification or empathy to explain how they could see themselves as socially compromised when witnessing the social shortcomings of others.

The way in which I shall explain cases of embarrassed witnesses is to say that embarrassment is characteristically formed about an event which occurs *between* the subject and some other person(s), rather than simply an action or aspect of the subject himself. It is possible to make this claim, whilst otherwise retaining an account of the emotion roughly similar to that proposed by Taylor. I shall begin section 4 by examining a view to this effect, namely, that embarrassment involves construing an interpersonal situation as involving a breach of social etiquette, carried out either by oneself, or by another person to whom one is a witness. This account is consistent with the view that some cases of embarrassment result from the psychological mechanisms of identification and empathy, discussed in this section. However, it also provides an alternative way to characterize certain cases of witnesses' embarrassment which, as we have seen, pose problems for Taylor's analysis.

## 4 Social Etiquette, and Unfulfilled Expectations

There is a common intuition that embarrassment has to do with breaches of etiquette. Etiquette is defined in the OED as 'the



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conventional rules of personal behaviour observed in the intercourse of polite society'.[17] A rule of *polite* behaviour, according to F. Ackerman, is '… part of a system […] having the original or current function […] of making social life orderly, predictable, comfortable and pleasant, over and above considerations of survival, health, safety, economy, religion…'[18] Not all social conventions, then, count as rules of etiquette, for some are founded on these other sorts of concerns. They are not merely matters of etiquette, for example, that we should drive on the correct side of the road, refrain from physically assaulting others, or try to be financially self-sufficient. Etiquette, however, demands that we should be respectful when addressing our seniors, correctly use the cutlery provided at formal dinners, and not attend philosophy conferences dressed in swimwear.

It is plausible to say that embarrassment often occurs when a subject perceives a breach of etiquette, carried out either by himself, or by some other individual. In Sweden, there is a tradition of communal sauna bathing, where mixed-sex groups of people are used to seeing each other naked. A visitor from England, invited to such an event, might well regard it as contrary to his internalized rules of etiquette to reveal his body to a group of strangers, and correspondingly, no doubt, would feel highly embarrassed.[19] In the dinner-party example, on the other hand, my uncle might be interpreted as being embarrassed by *another* person's breach of etiquette, namely the drunken guest's. Perhaps, then, we might give a general account of embarrassment as involving the construal of a social situation, in which one is involved, as containing actions contrary to etiquette, where these may be, but are not necessarily, one's own actions. Such an account eschews Taylor's assumption that embarrassment always involves a negative appraisal of one's *own* conduct, hence it can accommodate cases like that of the embarrassed uncle without appealing to the mechanisms of identification or empathy.

[17] OED (2nd Edition) vol. 5, 427.

[18] F. Ackerman, 'A Man by Nothing is so Well-Betrayed as by his Manners? Politeness as a Virtue', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, **13** (1988), 252.

[19] He may, in fact, contravene etiquette regardless of whether he participates in the sauna, or declines Swedish hospitality by refusing. He might, in other words, face what he perceives as conflicting demands of etiquette: to honour his hosts, and to refrain from exposing his body. Correspondingly, he might plausibly suffer embarrassment whatever he decides to do in this situation.



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It is again doubtful, however, whether a breach of etiquette could plausibly be said to occur in *every* situation that is considered paradigmatically embarrassing. For instance, embarrassment often arises when one person is witnessed by others in a different context from those in which they normally interact, even if none of them breaches etiquette thereby. Suppose I am part of an amateur theatrical company which performs light-heartedly to audiences of fellow thespians and friends, and that I also have a group of academic associates with whom I discuss intellectual issues. It is possible that I might be embarrassed if members of either group witness me behaving in the way I usually reserve for the other. It may be embarrassing for me to give a theatrical performance and discover that one of my more erudite acquaintances is watching, and I might also be embarrassed if the extent of my academic concerns is revealed to the thespians, whose interests are more Dionysian. Equally, members of either group who witness me engaging in activities that ill befit their expectations of me might find this embarrassing. It is not, however, contrary to any plausible rule of etiquette that I should have diverse interests, and pursue them in such ways that my various acquaintances witness them.

In addition to embarrassing situations which etiquette seems to *permit*, there are others which it actually appears to *require*. Take the tradition of bridegrooms and 'best-men' making speeches at weddings. An inexperienced speaker, placed in this situation, might well be embarrassed at his faltering attempts at giving a public address, and he may also invoke embarrassment in the guests who are compelled to listen to him. Neither party, however, is likely to construe the speech as contrary to etiquette, when seemingly the only reason why they have to endure such a ceremony at all is that etiquette demands it.

The anthropologist Erving Goffman gives a different account of embarrassment, which might be able to encompass the above counterexamples to the etiquette view. In social interaction, he claims, 'each individual is expected to possess attributes, capacities and information which fit together into a self that is at once coherently unified and appropriate to the occasion.'[20] In other words, we have certain views about what we expect a given person to do or say in front of a particular audience, and of what aspects of himself he will normally present in this context. 'Embarrassment', on Goffman's view, 'has to do with unfulfilled expectations.'[21] It arises,

[20] E. Goffman, 'Embarrassment and Social Organisation', *American Journal of Sociology* **62** (1956), 268.

[21] Ibid.



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that is, when we construe an action or event as contrary to our expectations of how some agent will present himself in a given interpersonal scenario. This account offers a plausible explanation of many of the cases of the emotion I have mentioned so far. In some, the embarrassed subject may view *himself* as presented to others in a manner that is unexpected within the relevant social context. The Englishman in the Swedish sauna, for example, may reveal his body to others in a way which he expects only within a very intimate relationship. In other cases, the embarrassed subject might be said to view another person as presented to him, incongruously with his expectations of *them*. This covers cases in which witnesses to others' actions are embarrassed. My uncle, for instance, may regard the drunken friend's behaviour as breaching his expectations of what will occur at a dinner party.

In both the above examples, situations that involve breaches of social etiquette can equally well be viewed as containing unexpected personal presentations. There are also, however, cases where someone may be unexpectedly presented to others *without* anyone breaching etiquette. This certainly fits the case of the actor-philosopher. He is expected to present himself differently to two groups of people. When faced with both of them simultaneously, he is effectively compelled to behave in a fashion which is contrary to how he is expected to act in one or other's presence. He, or they, might well construe this behaviour in terms of its flouting expectations, which would give a plausible account of their embarrassment according to Goffman's model. In the case of the wedding-speech, moreover, while this is dictated by social etiquette, it may well be at odds with the speaker's usual expectations of himself, and the expectations of the audience-members, who know him as someone who is normally reluctant to speak in public. Alternatively, we might analyse this case, in Goffman's terms, by saying it is socially expected that anyone who gives a public speech will do so with a certain degree of proficiency, associated with the practice of oratory. If he significantly fails to do so, he might plausibly construe himself, or be construed by others, as breaching expectations of the quality of his performance.

Goffman's view that embarrassment is typically about a breach of social expectations seems to account better, then, for the range of circumstances which provoke the emotion, than the social etiquette model. However, there are still problems with Goffman's thesis. First, we may doubt whether construing an action as unexpected always corresponds to embarrassment as opposed to any other emotion. Sometimes, such a construal seems more likely to be



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associated with surprise or amusement. Surprise is a plausible response from those who see the actor-philosopher in an unexpected light, whilst the incompetent wedding speaker may well be considered funny, rather than embarrassing. In order to distinguish embarrassment from these responses, we need to know more about how an embarrassed person, specifically, construes the object of his emotion. His viewing it as contrary to social expectations does not seem enough to characterize him as being embarrassed, rather than, for instance, surprised or amused.

There is an even greater difficulty with Goffman's view, moreover, which is that in some situations, it seems possible to be embarrassed without construing anyone's personal presentation as incongruous with one's expectations. In particular, there are some central cases of the emotion that appear to arise from the sheer *amounts* of attention we receive from others, rather than from our being presented to them in unexpected ways. I briefly mentioned two such cases in section 2. First, take the instance where I am embarrassed upon being presented with an award before a large audience. It seems implausible here to say that my embarrassment amounts to my construing my presentation to others, or indeed their presentation to me, as incongruous with what is expected in the situation. The emotion seems rather to derive from my aversion to having so many people focus their attention on me at once. Secondly, consider the case where I attract attention to myself when standing up on a bus. Again, it appears highly unlikely that I should construe this as my presenting myself to the other passengers in a manner contrary to expectations. In this instance, it is not their perceiving me in an unexpected light, so much as their observing me at all, which seems to invoke my embarrassment.

There do, then, seem to be significant counterexamples to Goffman's account of embarrassment, as indeed there have been to all the views I have so far discussed. I shall now propose my own account of the emotion, which, I shall suggest, is not vulnerable to the sorts of objections I have levelled at others.

## 5 Exposure

Embarrassment, I claim, is essentially about the *exposure* of one person to another. Interpersonal exposure occurs when an aspect of one person, whom I shall term an *exposee*, enters the experience or thoughts of another, the *recipient*. The aspects of the exposee that can be exposed include his physical body, mental states, dispositions



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of character, and actions. Exposure also takes place when one person obtains knowledge about someone else.

I suggest that all the cases of embarrassing situations I have discussed involve the exposure of some aspect(s) of at least one of their participants. Taken together, these examples show that it is possible to be embarrassed when construing oneself as *either* participant in an exposure. The person who receives an award in public, for instance, is liable to view himself as an exposee; his physical appearance, not to mention knowledge of his achievements, are exposed to the attention of a large audience. Other cases which involve the embarrassed subject's exposure to others are those of falling over in the street, being seen naked, and appearing to one's academic colleagues on stage. By contrast, the people who hear an appalling speech at a wedding, or witness the outrageous behaviour of a drunken man at a formal dinner, may see themselves as the recipients of others' exposure. There are other embarrassing situations where it is less clear who is the recipient and who the exposee, and some, indeed, where exposure may be a two-way process. Suppose I declare my love for someone for the first time. This could conceivably be embarrassing, both for me and for my beloved. It is possible, moreover, that both of us might construe ourselves either as exposees, recipients of the other's exposure, or both. I expose something highly significant about my emotions to my beloved; in this sense, I am the exposee and she is the recipient. But my action also suggests that she, and in particular her perceived virtues, have long been objects of my attention; hence, she might also view herself as exposed to *my* consideration and appraisal.

It is clearly not enough for embarrassment, however, that one should construe oneself as participating in an exposure, since such a construal is quite consistent with one's response to the situation being, in evaluative terms, neutral, or even approving. The award recipient, for example, might construe himself as exposed to others' attention and yet feel joy or pride. It is important to emphasize here that embarrassment is a *negative* emotion. To be embarrassed, a subject must not only view himself as taking part in an exposure, but he must be somehow averse to doing so.[22] Similarly, one could

[22] Note that he could be ambivalent to the exposure, and still be embarrassed; in other words, he could both desire and be averse to it simultaneously. This is borne out by the fact that some people voluntarily enter situations they know will embarrass them. I might, for instance, choose to declare my love for someone whilst being embarrassed about doing so. The emotion suggests I have *some* aversion to my beloved acquiring this knowledge, though my choice of action indicates a countervailing desire that she should possess it.



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not define fear simply as involving the construal of a situation as involving *risk*, since this would not specify whether one has a positive or a negative attitude to the risk in question. A positive evaluation of risk may correspond, not to fear, but rather to excitement. Fear, like embarrassment, essentially involves a negative evaluation of its object, and both emotions must be characterized in ways that reflect this.

The main thesis I wish to defend, then, is that embarrassment involves a construal of oneself as involved in an interpersonal exposure to which one is averse. Note that of the various instances of exposure I have outlined, there are some which seem likely to produce embarrassment in both the recipient and the exposee; the wedding speech is a case in point. In other instances, however, there is liable to be asymmetry between the two participants' responses. The person publicly presented with an award may well be embarrassed by his exposure to the audience, but the audience members are unlikely to be embarrassed about seeing him, unless they empathize with his position. By contrast, it is possible for an exposee to embarrass his witnesses, without being embarrassed himself. The drunken guest is one such example, an exhibitionist who enjoys taking his clothes off in public is another. These asymmetries can be explained in two different ways, using the account of embarrassment I have proposed. First, one person may be more likely than the other to construe an event in terms of its being an exposure. Members of the audience at the award-ceremony may not think that their seeing the prize-winner is anything out of the ordinary; hence it may not occur to them that he is, in any significant sense, exposed to their attention. The prize-winner himself, however, sees that the attentions of a multitude are focused on him, and is therefore extremely likely to construe himself as an exposee. Secondly, two people may both construe a situation as involving exposure, but make different evaluations of it. If only one of them is averse to it, and the other views it with indifference or in entirely positive terms, only the former is likely to be embarrassed. Consider the case of the exhibitionist. He may construe his nudity as an exposure to others, but since, for him, such exposure is desirable, he will not construe it in the negative way which typifies embarrassment.

Having proposed an account of embarrassment, I shall briefly consider two possible objections to it. The first concerns whether the construal I have outlined is exclusively associated with this emotion rather than any other. I have stipulated that embarrassment must involve a negative evaluation, which excludes any positive emotions formed about perceived exposures. It may still, however,



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be argued that there are other *negative* emotions which might occur when a subject construes a situation as an exposure to which he is averse. An obvious example is anger. Consider the following case. Ken, a capable and long serving employee, who loathes being the centre of attention, is about to retire from the job he has held all his life, when his colleagues decide to spring a surprise award ceremony for him. Assembling all the people in his workplace, they organize various speeches in his honour and request that he gives a speech in return. It is certainly possible to imagine Ken being embarrassed by the attention given to him. It is also conceivable, however, that he may be angry about it. If we want to defend the view that his embarrassment would correspond specifically to his construing the ceremony as an unwanted exposure, we must show that his anger, in this situation, would involve a different construal.

I think this is possible, and that the distinction can be drawn as follows. If Ken is angry, this suggests that he is averse to being exposed to the colleagues' attention. However, in anger, his construal of the situation is not focused specifically around the fact of its involving interpersonal exposure. Instead, he construes it as being something that is against his wishes, imposed upon him by a group of responsible agents who knew, or at least should have known, he would dislike it. If, on the other hand, he is embarrassed, he construes the situation in terms of the attention that his colleagues focus, and have focused, upon him. In other words, it is the fact of his exposure, rather than his wishes being culpably overridden, that is central to his construal.

It is possible, similarly, to distinguish states of embarrassment and anger formed by *recipients* of exposures. Returning to the dinner-party case, consider the emotions that my aunt and uncle respectively have about the behaviour of the drunken guest. She is angry; he is embarrassed. Again, we might distinguish their responses by differences in the precise ways in which each of them construes the incident. Both are averse to the intrusion, and may also think it reveals aspects of *my* social life of which they do not approve. My aunt, however, construes the guest's conduct primarily as an affront to her wishes, and perhaps as evidence that I have culpably failed to keep the sort of company she thinks appropriate. My uncle, by contrast, construes the guest as making a spectacle of himself, as lacking reserve and as imposing certain acts upon people who have no affinity with them. He may also view the incident as revealing a more debauched side of his nephew's personality. It again appears, then, that anger differs from embarrassment, since it does not involve construing an event specifically as an interpersonal



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exposure, but rather as involving a culpable offence by some responsible agent(s).

Other negative emotions, when directed at incidents of exposure, could also be said to involve different construals from that associated with embarrassment. If, for example, I experience regret that information about me has been exposed to an enemy whom I think will exploit it to my disadvantage, we might say that I construe this as an unfortunate past event that cannot be revoked. The emphasis of this construal is on the irredeemable badness of the incident, rather than on the intersubjective contact it entails. Likewise, if I am frightened, rather than embarrassed, about this event, I construe it as posing danger to my future well-being, rather than specifically as an unwanted exposure.

A construal in terms of exposure seems, then, to distinguish embarrassment from other negative emotions. There is, however, another kind of objection which might be put to my account, which claims that, in a few central cases of embarrassment, the subject does not construe himself as involved in an exposure at all. Szabados discusses one case of this kind, which he uses to deny what I have so far taken as a fundamental assumption, namely that embarrassment is always formed about interpersonal situations.[23] He proposes that, on the contrary, the emotion occasionally occurs in circumstances where the subject has no contact with any other person. If, as this implies, embarrassment is not always about an interaction between self and other, this would cast serious doubt on my suggested analysis of it.

Szabados' example of what he terms 'self-embarrassment' concerns someone who recalls an incident from his past in which he displayed naiveté or awkwardness. The memory of one's first sexual encounter, Szabados suggests, is typically embarrassing. In order for this case to pose a problem for my account of embarrassment, we must be clear on several points. First, the emotion formed in response to the recollection must clearly be embarrassment, rather than shame. Secondly, it must not be a result of the subject imagining the recurrence of an interpersonal situation that he was once in, and construing this imagined situation as involving an unwanted exposure between himself and some other person(s). It is possible, for instance, to explain someone's embarrassment about a past sexual experience as issuing from his imagining what it was like to expose his naiveté to his then partner. Alternatively, he might imagine what it would be like to demonstrate such naiveté *now*, given the

[23] Op. cit., note 11, 345–6.



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amount of sexual experience he now possesses. In either case, he construes an imagined event as involving his inexperience being exposed to someone else, in a context where he wants to exude self-assurance. This analysis of Szabados' example is consistent with my overall account of embarrassment, since it involves the subject construing a situation, albeit an imaginary one, as involving an unwanted exposure. The example does not, then, necessarily undermine the claim that embarrassment is always about some real or imagined interpersonal situation.

Perhaps a different example, however, might make Szabados' point more convincingly. Take, for instance, someone who is embarrassed upon recalling the way he used to look, think, or behave, perhaps when examining old photographs, or reading diaries he has written long ago. Here, the memories that embarrass him might not specifically be memories of past interpersonal incidents which he imagines occurring all over again. Nor need his embarrassment involve imagining anyone else seeing or knowing about the pictures or writings in question. Instead, the emotion might obtain simply on account of his perceiving certain facts about his past self. In what sense, exactly, could this amount to his construing himself as involved in an unwanted exposure?

One possible response is to admit that such a construal is implausible, in these circumstances, but say that one's emotional response to the photograph or diary is more plausibly characterized as shame than as embarrassment. It certainly seems likely to involve a negative appraisal of one's former self. And whilst it would admittedly make sense, in ordinary discourse, to say that one's reaction was to be embarrassed, I indicated in section 2 that not everyone recognizes that these terms have different sets of referents. Hence, it would be unsurprising if their ordinary use was occasionally misleading. Since, moreover, I do not profess to provide necessary and sufficient criteria to identify every state that is sometimes called embarrassment, the fact that my definition does not encompass what seems, in any case, a somewhat marginal use of this term, may not be too serious a problem. My account could still specify a distinct psychological phenomenon designated by the term's more paradigm applications.

There is, however, one other way of dealing with this last example, which is, rather than to deny its importance, to analyse it such that it fits with my overall account of embarrassment. A similar approach is, in fact, proposed by Szabados himself, who claims that in some circumstances, a subject might construe a recollection of his past in terms of a relationship between his present and former



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selves.[24] We might thus explain his emotional response to the recollection as embarrassment, consistently with my account, by saying he construes himself as a recipient of the exposure of certain aspects of his past self. He is clearly averse to having experience or knowledge of these, just as he might be averse to experience or knowledge of another human being. Admittedly, the reasons for his aversions may differ between the two cases. It is plausible, however, that his construals of the situations may be broadly similar: in both of them, he views a human subject as being exposed to him, and evaluates this exposure negatively. This, then, offers a way of encompassing the odd case of self-embarrassment within a general account of the emotion as being, as I claim, about unwanted interpersonal exposure.

My analysis of embarrassment thus seems able to repel both lines of objection I have discussed. Before concluding this paper, I should like briefly reconsider the accounts of embarrassment I rejected in sections 2 to 4. The reason for this is as follows: if I am right in thinking my own account is better than these, it might well be questioned why these other views had such plausibility that, in many cases, previous authors were motivated to adopt them.

I suggest this can be partly explained by a number of contingent links between situations involving interpersonal exposure, and their having the properties which the rejected accounts used to characterize embarrassment. For instance, the temptation to claim that the emotion is typically formed about a perceived breach of etiquette can be explained on grounds that many such breaches are either identical with, or causes of, interpersonal exposures. There are various reasons for this. First, the prescriptions of many rules of etiquette bear specifically on questions of what sorts of exposures are permissible between certain individuals, such that some actions that are deemed contrary to etiquette are precisely those in which certain exposures take place. The obvious example is the Englishman in the sauna. He has inculcated a particular rule of etiquette about the exposure of the naked body, which is breached if his own body is exposed to a stranger, or a stranger's to him. Hence, there is a logical connection between his conception of a breach of etiquette, and exposure of the human anatomy. Admittedly, not *all* rules of etiquette whose breach is embarrassing specifically concern questions of what sorts of exposure are socially permitted. There are other reasons, however, for thinking that breaches of etiquette may often *result* in exposures. They are likely to attract the visual or auditory

[24] Ibid.



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attention of onlookers: it is often hard not to notice someone who acts in what one considers a socially unacceptable fashion. Moreover, such an action can reveal important aspects of its agent's background or personality. Someone who behaves inappropriately at a social gathering, like the drunken guest, might thereby expose something important about his upbringing, his habits, and his attitudes to others' sensibilities.

Many scenarios that entail breaches of etiquette are, then, particularly likely to be construed as involving exposures. The same is also true of the unexpected presentations of individuals which Goffman claimed were typical of embarrassing situations. Social behaviour which flouts expectations, again, tends to grab attention, and to provoke thoughts about the agent and his reasons for acting thus.

Another sense in which many of the rejected accounts of embarrassment may relate to my proposed characterization is that they suggest reasons why certain interpersonal exposures may be objects of aversion. Consider, for example, Taylor's view that embarrassment involves negatively evaluating one's own responses in a social situation. If one fails to react appropriately to an interpersonal scenario, one is likely to want to avoid one's inadequate response being witnessed by others. Someone who is no good at oral communication, for example, is, other things being equal, more liable to be averse to giving a public speech, than someone who regards himself as a skilled orator. Similarly, Solomon's claim that embarrassment involves construing other people as unjustifiably condemning one's conduct or character encapsulates a possible motivation for disliking certain instances of one's exposure to others. Put simply, one may want to avoid exposing an aspect of oneself if one thinks it will invoke external criticism. It is more likely, for example, that I will be averse to speaking before an audience if I think they will be unappreciative of my efforts, whatever my own assessment of the quality of my speech. Both Solomon's and Taylor's accounts of embarrassment, then, suggest reasons why some exposees may be averse to exposures. Goffman's account, moreover, suggests a reason why certain *recipients* may dislike witnessing others' exposure; namely, insofar as they want their social interactions to be orderly and predictable, they may wish to avoid witnessing other people presenting themselves in unexpected ways.

## Conclusion

I have argued for an account of embarrassment which, I claim, improves upon others I have discussed, but also makes sense of the



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fact that these other views might be, or have been, proposed. An embarrassed person, on my account, construes himself as being involved in an exposure, to which he is averse, and in which he may be either the exposee or the recipient. As I said in section 1, this should not be taken to imply that everyone who is embarrassed has the conceptual thought that his situation involves exposure. Rather, this is how we might articulate what is normally an inchoate emotion, while accounting for the entire range of circumstances where it typically occurs.

I also signalled, in section 1, how studying the emotion of embarrassment might reveal something interesting about human values, and thus open up further avenues for philosophical discussion. Now, having analysed embarrassment as involving an aversion to interpersonal exposure, it is easier to see where these avenues lie. The fact that the emotion occurs so frequently in human beings, together with my analysis of its psychology, suggests that it is an important fact about many of us that we wish to avoid certain interpersonal exposures. Not only do we want to avoid exposing certain aspects of ourselves to others, but we also want to avoid being witnesses to certain features of other people.

This raises the question of why we have such desires. I touched on this point at the end of section 5. Clearly, there are various kinds of negative outcomes that can arise from certain sorts of exposures, which may supply grounds for wanting to avoid them. For instance, exposing your deficiencies to others may render you an object of their derision. Exposing your strengths, however, can also lead to undesired responses. There is a phenomenon known as Tall Poppy Syndrome, in which people who exhibit exceptional success or ability arouse envy and resentment in those who compare themselves unfavourably, motivating hostility towards the successful or able people themselves. Exposing oneself to others can, then, furnish them with motivations to harm one's interests. It can also, however, provide them with the means. If an enemy is informed about my capabilities, character or past history, he is probably better equipped to do me harm. I may therefore have reason to be cautious about exposing personal information which could be used to my disadvantage. Even in cases where interpersonal exposures do not lead to direct hostility, they can still have a damaging impact on future interactions between their participants. This may lead to both exposees and recipients being averse to them. For example, if a female friend, to whom I am not romantically attracted, were suddenly to declare her love for me, this may bring about considerable complications in our relationship, which could no longer operate as



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before. The desire to avoid the social upheaval which would result from this exposure could well be a reason for us both to want to avoid it. This might explain why we each may be embarrassed, should such an event take place.

All the preceding reasons for disliking exposures refer to their negative consequences. It is also interesting, however, to examine whether there is any recognized good which we might regard as being *constituted* by avoiding interpersonal contact, such that its loss is implied by, rather than merely the result of, certain exposures taking place. One source that might shed light on this question is the philosophical literature on privacy, and our reasons for valuing it.

To give one example from this literature, James Rachels argues that it is a necessary element in being *intimate* with another person, that one engages with them in certain interpersonal acts which one does not extend to those with whom one is not intimate.[25] So, for example, to be close friends with someone, I must reveal to them aspects of myself that I do not reveal to most other people, and equally, I must be the recipient of certain exposures of theirs, without witnessing the corresponding exposures of others. If I am completely open about myself with everyone I know, or am willing to listen to absolutely anyone's emotional outpourings, I thereby undermine my capacity to realize intimacy, which requires limiting my engagement in these exposures to a select few. This suggests that certain limits upon one's participation in exposures are constitutive of certain intimate relationships, meaning that some exposures might damage the intimacy one attains, by logic rather than by mere causality. Embarrassment about such exposures might thus reflect aversions to them which are ultimately grounded in desires for intimacy. There is clearly more to be said about this argument, especially concerning whether Rachels' criteria for intimacy are plausible.[26] It has, however, been exemplified how one might claim that avoiding exposure is, potentially, a constituent of a widely desired good. It is perhaps unsurprising, given this, that there should be a negative emotion specifically associated with exposure.

These questions about the bases of our aversions to exposure introduce another topic for future discussion, namely, in what circumstances we should regard aversions to exposure, and indeed embarrassment itself, as rationally justified? For instance, which, if any, of the many diverse cases of the emotion mentioned in this

[25] J. Rachels, 'Why Privacy is Important', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* **4** (1975), 323–33.

[26] For a critique of Rachels' view, see J. Reiman 'Privacy, Intimacy and Personhood', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* **6** (1976), 26–44.



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paper can we say is a rational state? There seem to be few strong intuitions, and no common consensus, on this issue. However, by analysing the justifications we could have for wanting to avoid involvement in interpersonal exposures, we might be able to offer some prescriptions about the rational status of embarrassment in various circumstances where it may occur. While I lack space to pursue such arguments here, my account of embarrassment's psychology lays the foundation for addressing them elsewhere.

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