

Philosophical and Ethical Concepts of Shame and Pride

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Abstract:

This article delves into the philosophical and ethical dimensions of shame and pride, tracing their historical significance and cultural interpretations across various philosophical traditions. It examines how these concepts relate to human morality, self-awareness, and societal values. Through the perspectives of ancient philosophers like Hesiod, Protagoras, and Plato, as well as modern thinkers such as Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Tolstoy, the text explores the complex interplay between shame, pride, virtue, and human behavior. It also highlights the evolution of societal attitudes towards these emotions, from antiquity to the Enlightenment and into modern times, reflecting changing moral frameworks and cultural norms.

Keywords: Shame, Pride, Philosophical Concepts, Ethical Dimensions, Human Morality, Cultural Interpretations, Historical Significance, Virtue, Self-awareness, Societal Values, Ancient Philosophy, Human Behavior, Self-esteem, Humility.

Introduction. The concepts of shame and pride characterize the linguistic personality and the corresponding linguistic worldview, and are also connected with the spiritual essence of a person, which explains the necessity of semantic analysis of these concepts with the aim of "identifying their distinctive features, allowing to fix the boundaries of its subject area, and essential features with subsequent hierarchical systematization". The study of the concepts of "shame" and "pride" in philosophical discourse helps to comprehend and expand their semantics, and to trace changes in society's attitude towards shame and pride. Professor A. V. Razin provides the following ethical definition of shame: "Shame is a moral feeling that arises in connection with condemning one's own action, motive of behavior, or some personal shortcoming. Unlike conscience, which is exclusively an internal reaction of moral self-awareness to the violation of moral requirements, shame is associated with the fear of condemnation of actions or shortcomings by others. The feeling opposite to shame is pride, which arises as a result of positive moral self-assessment".

Methods. The history of philosophy contains numerous examples of attention to the problem of shame and its positive evaluation. In ancient tradition, the first philosopher who considered the moral significance of shame was apparently Hesiod. His poem "Works and Days" appeals to the sense of shame of the Greek people in connection with their loss of the customs of the "golden age." According to Hesiod, among his contemporaries, there are almost no moral individuals left. Soon, "Conscience and shame will fly from Olympus altogether ...". Protagoras, in his myth about the origin of culture, views shame as the foundation of human morality. One of the heroes of the myth, Zeus, wanting to save the human race, sends Hermes to instill shame and truth among people: "And I have laid down the law, that whoever cannot share in shame and truth, let him die as a pest of the society".

Democritus considered the highest form of shame to be shame before oneself. He introduced the concept of shame into ethics as an internal regulator of behavior: "Do not speak or do anything bad, even when you are alone. Learn to be much more ashamed of yourself than of others". He regarded shame as a virtue and one of the most important mechanisms of social upbringing. For Plato, shame is a virtue, an element of another virtue—temperance. While pride is characterized by excessiveness, according to Plato, this feeling brings turmoil to the soul and is associated with suffering.

Aristotle, when examining moral issues, considers pride and shame as categories of virtue, although he notes that every virtue is a mean between two extremes, each of which is a vice. Courage is a mean between cowardice and recklessness; generosity is a mean between prodigality and stinginess; genuine pride is a mean between vanity and humility; wit is a mean between buffoonery and boorishness; modesty is a mean between shyness and shamelessness. Aristotle associates shame with virtue because this passion or emotion is evoked by moral reasons, fear of dishonor: "Beautiful and opposite to what people are ashamed of because they feel shame if they say, do, or intend to do something shameful; in this sense, Sappho expressed herself in verse about Alcaeus' words: 'I wish to say something, but shame holds me back. If you wished for something noble or beautiful, and if your tongue did not intend to express anything bad, then shame would not overshadow your eyes, you would speak about what is just'.¹ Aristotle emphasizes that a person experiences shame both before themselves and before others, whose opinion is important to them. In addition, he provides examples of shameful actions, i.e., indicates what one should be ashamed of and avoid in their life: "... a person must necessarily be ashamed of all those evils that seem shameful to him or to those whom he pays attention to. Firstly, all actions arising from bad moral qualities, for example, to drop a shield or run away because it is a consequence of cowardice; to appropriate entrusted deposit because it comes from injustice; to associate with people with whom one should not, where one should not, or when one should not, because it comes from licentiousness. It is also shameful to seek benefit in insignificant or shameful things or from defenseless persons". The philosopher notes that "a person is ashamed of those whom he respects. People are more ashamed of what they do in the eyes of others and openly, hence the proverb 'shame is in the eyes'. Therefore, we are more ashamed of those who will always be with us and who pay attention to us". Aristotle points out the dual attitude towards shame. On the one hand, "shame is not characteristic of good people because they are ashamed of bad actions, and a good person will not commit them". On the other hand, "conditionally, shame can be something good, because it is said: 'If someone does something wrong, then they should be ashamed'. Aristotle also reasons about pride, and in his work "Nicomachean Ethics," the word "magnanimous" or "great-souled" is used concerning a proud person. The renowned philosopher B. Russell, in his study on Aristotle's ethical views, notes that "the Greek word used by Aristotle literally means 'magnanimous' and is usually translated as such, but in the Oxford translation, it is rendered as 'proud'. "A magnanimous person is considered one who deems themselves worthy of great things, being truly worthy of them. For only a fool considers

¹ Аристотель. Собр. соч.: в 4 т. — М.: Мысль, 1998. - Т. 1. - 552 с.

themselves worthy of great things without a basis for it".² Aristotle contrasts the proud or magnanimous person with the boastful person: "The one who is called boastful is one who values themselves highly without a basis for it". Aristotle characterizes the extreme manifestation of pride as follows: "Boastful people are truly foolish and do not know themselves, and this is quite evident: considering themselves worthy, they undertake great and honorable deeds and are found in them.

They adorn themselves with clothes, assume an important look, and the like, and wish for their wealth to be evident to all; they speak much about themselves, as if by this they are honored". Therefore, the magnanimous person values themselves appropriately, "one who values themselves too little is pusillanimous, and one who values themselves too much is boastful". Aristotle specifies: "The pusillanimous person is one who values themselves beneath what they are worthy of". Thus, the ideal individual as Aristotle envisioned, differs significantly from the Christian saint. They must possess genuine pride and not diminish their worth. Ancient culture was predominantly an embodiment of the type of morality in which "shame" and "pride" were the most characteristic forms of self-esteem. A person judges themselves based on the objective result rather than the motives of the action. Shame often was not recognized as shame before oneself; it was as if externalized and embodied in the form of evil spirits chasing the one who committed evil.

The main theme of medieval philosophy is the question of man and God. The interpretation of biblical texts forms the basis of any philosophical-moral reflections of that time. The thesis of the sinfulness of man formed the basis of Christian morality. Sin evoked shame. The morality proclaimed by Christ rejected the egoistic "self" with its self-assertion, ambitions, and immoderate pride. The idea of overcoming human pride as a sin, as well as the desire to move away from a shameful life outside of God, permeates the text of Augustine of Hippo's Confessions - one of the representatives of early Christian philosophical-ethical thought.

In medieval society, there was a transition from understanding morality as a set of virtues to understanding it as a system of super-individual norms. Historically, this transition was linked to the religious interpretation of morality. For the philosophy of the New Time, there is a distinctive understanding of man's place in the world, which changed the view of the essence and nature of human emotions and behavior. Benedict Spinoza, analyzing human emotions, or affects, wrote about pride and shame: "Pride is pleasure accompanied by the idea of some action of ours which others, in our imagination, praise. Shame is displeasure accompanied by the idea of some action of ours which others, in our imagination, condemn". Spinoza also distinguished concepts such as pride-vainglory and pride-self-satisfaction: "Vainglory easily makes the person praised proud. If we see that someone, out of love, places us higher than we deserve, we easily become proud".

Results. Regarding pride-self-satisfaction, the philosopher said the following: "Pride, called empty, is self-satisfaction, finding its support solely in the high opinion of others, and when the latter is destroyed, then the self-satisfaction is also destroyed. And since this self-satisfaction is increasingly increased and strengthened by praise, and, conversely, is increasingly embarrassed by condemnation, hence it is understandable why we are more attracted to glory and why we can hardly lead a life in disgrace". In critiquing self-esteem, Spinoza also considers self-deprecation unacceptable. He notes: "The greatest self-esteem or self-deprecation is the greatest ignorance of oneself; self-esteem or self-deprecation indicates the greatest impotence of the spirit". Spinoza does not consider shame as a virtue, although he asserts that the state of shame experienced by a person may indicate that the person experiencing shame "has the desire to live honestly, just as pain is called good because it shows that the injured part has not yet decayed. Therefore, although a person who feels ashamed of a certain action actually experiences displeasure, yet he is more perfect than the shameless person who has no desire to live honestly". Contrasting pride and shame, Spinoza describes the manifestation of these two affects in human behavior: "We usually call someone who

²Fenichel O. The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis. - New York: Norton, 1945.-219 p.

thinks too much of himself the one who is too proud, who only talks about his virtues and other people's vices, who wants to stand out from everyone else, who, finally, behaves with such importance and pomp as others, who are usually much higher than him. Conversely, the diminished one is called the one who often blushes, admits his shortcomings, talks about the virtues of others, yields to everyone, finally, walks with his head down and does not care about his appearance". The author of the "Ethics" also discusses the difference between two such concepts as shame and bashfulness: "Shame is the displeasure following the act of which we are ashamed; bashfulness, on the other hand, is the fear or dread of shame that prevents a person from committing anything shameful. Bashfulness is usually opposed to shamelessness".

One of the greatest philosophers of the New Time, Thomas Hobbes, equates pride with nobility: "Since words, as I observed earlier, are too weak to make people fulfill their agreements, for increasing their coercive force human nature has only two means. These means are either fear of the consequences of breaking one's word, or desire for glory and a sense of pride, prompting a person to show that he is capable of not breaking his word. The latter is nobility". The ambivalent view of the emotion of pride is connected with the idea that "every person must recognize others as equal to himself by nature." Hobbes considers the violation of this rule as the extreme manifestation of pride. According to him, a person's behavior should conform to the rules accepted in society: "... no one should demand the granting of any right to himself, the granting of which he would not agree to give to any other person. Those who observe this law are called modest, and those who violate it are called arrogant". As for the philosopher's thoughts on shame, according to Hobbes, shame is called sadness caused by the discovery of some personal defect and the representation of something shameful. Additionally, Hobbes notes blushing as a symptom of shame: "This passion manifests itself in a person blushing with shame". Hobbes associates positive or negative attitudes towards the emotion of shame with age: "In young people, this passion is praiseworthy and is a sign of love for a good reputation. In elderly people, it is the same sign, but since it came too late, it is blameworthy". Here we also find an explanation of shamelessness, which the philosopher defines as a disregard for a good reputation. Philosophical, ethical, and social views of Bernard Mandeville were formed in the late 17th to early 18th century. It was a time of selfish calculation, where ideas and moral principles often became commodities. However, English society remained quite religious. "This religiosity, combined with pragmatism and a thirst for enrichment by any means, gave rise to the hypocrisy that deeply permeated the affluent layers of society and became one of the distinguishing features of British respectability". Mandeville was probably one of the first English philosophers and moralists to sharply criticize and satirize this duplicitous consciousness of his compatriots.

This is evident in his work "The Fable of the Bees." At the center of Mandeville's attention are, naturally, moral issues. As a satire, "The Fable of the Bees" represented an allegory of a certain theoretical point of view on the nature of man and society. Within his concept of the affective nature of man, Mandeville described many psychological traits of personality and defined its moral qualities. Here is how Mandeville defines and describes the affects of shame and pride, in which, as he believes, moral virtue is rooted: "Shame is a feeling of one's own unworthiness, associated with the fear that others either rightfully despise you or could despise you if they knew everything about you".³ Mandeville also notes that "we often experience shame and blush for others". He considers pride to be the opposite of shame, "however, no one can experience the former (feeling) if he has never experienced the latter, for our extraordinary concern about what others will think of us can only stem from the immense self-love we feel towards ourselves...". Discussing the emotions of shame and pride, Mandeville provides a detailed psychological description of these human feelings: "When a person is overwhelmed by shame, he feels that his spirit is dropping; his heart seems cold and constricted, and the blood rushes away from him to the periphery of the body; his face burns,

³Nathanson D. L. Shame and Pride. Affect, Sex and the Birth of the Self. — N.Y.: Norton books, 1994. — 496 p.

his neck and part of his chest burn too; he feels heavy as lead; his head is bowed down, and his eyes, through the fog of confusion, look only at the ground; no insults can touch him; he is tired of his very existence and passionately wishes to become invisible. But when, satisfying his vanity, he triumphs in pride, he experiences directly opposite symptoms: his spirit plays and drives the blood through the arteries; warmth, greater than usual, strengthens and expands the heart; his limbs are calm; he feels lightness throughout his body and imagines he could walk on air; he holds his head high, and his eyes look around cheerfully; he rejoices in his existence, is inclined to anger, and would be glad if the whole world could notice him". Mandeville views pride as a natural ability given by nature, "thanks to which every mortal... values himself higher and thinks better of himself than any impartial judge would allow". Mandeville rehabilitates pride, which is no longer seen as a mortal sin: "We have no other quality as useful to society and as necessary to make it rich and prosperous as this one, and yet it is usually the one most hated of all".

Discussion. The 18th-century English philosopher David Hume understood pride as "that pleasant impression that arises in our mind when the consciousness of our virtue, beauty, wealth, or power gives us self-satisfaction". As the opposite of pride, Hume considered humility. He noted that "despite their direct opposition, pride and humility have the same object, i.e., our self". Explaining the emotion of pride, Hume specifies that "this affect always has as its source beauty, strength, agility, or some other useful or pleasant quality". Criticizing religious ethics, Hume regards pride as a virtue and aligns it with a sense of self-worth: "in the journey of life, nothing is as useful for us as a proper degree of pride, accompanied by the awareness of our own worth, giving us faith in ourselves and confidence in the success of all our plans and endeavors". David Hume, characterizing the various degrees of manifestation of the emotion, divides pride into positive and negative. Obviously, pride as self-respect has a positive degree: "genuine, sincere pride, or self-respect, if well concealed and at the same time genuinely justified, should undoubtedly be characteristic of a person of honor, and that there is no other quality of the soul that is more necessary to gain the respect and approval of humanity". However, excessive pride often leads to vanity and self-conceit, the desire of a person to show off those qualities that he "values most in himself". In society, explains Hume, "excessive pride, or excessive self-esteem, is always considered vicious and arouses universal hatred, whereas modesty, or due awareness of one's weakness, is recognized as virtuous and evokes goodwill in everyone".

The era of the Enlightenment is characterized by a view of pride as a quality that, as David Hume notes, "makes us capable of activity and at the same time gives us immediate satisfaction". A person no longer feels humiliated and sinful; he can take pride in his successes and achievements, affirming his dignity not only in ascetic feats and spiritual service but also in worldly pleasures, in fully experiencing life. The 19th century did not change much in the understanding of pride and shame; these concepts no longer occupied the minds of Western philosophers to the same extent. Let us note the figurative descriptions of these concepts in the works of the famous German writer and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. He wrote about vanity: "Just as bones, muscles, entrails, and blood vessels are surrounded by skin, which makes the appearance of a person bearable, so the impulses and passions of the soul are covered with vanity: it is the skin of the soul". Friedrich Nietzsche distinguishes between pride and vanity, explaining the essence of these synonyms as follows: a person strives "to achieve real superiority and wants it to be publicly recognized. If the former is absent, and yet a person still craves the latter, then it is called vanity. If the latter is absent and there is no need for it, then it is called pride".⁴ The idea of pride as an unpleasant, tormenting feeling is manifested in Nietzsche's following example: "It must be that some devil invented morality to torment people with pride: and another devil will deprive them of it one day to torment them with self-contempt".

⁴Nathanson D. L. Shame and Pride. Affect, Sex and the Birth of the Self. — N.Y.: Norton books, 1994. — 496 p.

F. Nietzsche expressed his attitude towards shame as follows: "Whom do you call bad? Those who constantly want to shame. What is most human for you? To spare someone from shame. What is the stamp of achieved freedom? To no longer be ashamed of oneself". For the new worldview, the characteristic feature becomes the desire to rid oneself of the emotion of shame, and pride is often considered a positive attribute of modern man, as Nietzsche wrote: "he proudly stands at the pinnacle of the pyramid of the world process; laying the final cornerstone of his knowledge, he as if wants to shout to the listening nature: 'We are at the goal, we are the goal itself, we are the crown of nature!' The arrogant European of the nineteenth century, you rage!". Russian religious philosophy regards shame as one of the fundamental ethical categories, and V. S. Solovyov places it alongside compassion and reverence as "primary data of morality". Shame for him is what separates a person from the lower, understood as their animal nature. The feeling of shame is remarkable because it cannot be explained by any biological or physiological reasons, for the benefit of the individual or for the species. It has another, more serious significance: it testifies to the higher moral nature of humans compared to animals; if a person is ashamed of their animality, therefore, they exist as humans; if a person is ashamed, therefore, they exist not only physically but also morally. According to V. S. Solovyov, the essential significance of the feeling of shame lies in the fact that it is precisely this feeling "that determines the ethical relationship of humans to the material nature".

A person is ashamed of the dominance of material nature within themselves, they are ashamed to be subjugated to it, and thereby they recognize, relative to it, their dignity and inner independence, by virtue of which they must possess material nature, and not vice versa. Furthermore, in the first part of "Justification of Good," the philosopher connects the feeling of shame with the principle of asceticism. It is characteristic for humans to have an awareness of their moral dignity, which semi-consciously and unstably manifests in simple shame. Through the action of reason, it is elevated to the principle of asceticism. Thus, in the opinion of V. S. Solovyov, shame restrains humans from immoderate sensual pleasures and makes them ascetics. As it develops, shame transitions into the feeling of conscience, understood as sublimated shame. Analyzing V. S. Solovyov's reflections on the feeling of shame and its role in the development of human morality, one can conclude that the feeling of shame is a foundational factor that distinguishes humans from animals. It shapes the ethical perception by humans of the material nature. The feeling of shame is a means to subordinate the elemental life of humans to spiritual life. S.N. Bulgakov noted: "We have the ability to feel proud and ashamed for humanity, i.e., to feel on behalf of humanity. We feel satisfaction for humanity when we observe the creative flight of human genius and the beauty of human endeavor, and we feel ashamed and pained - again, for humanity - when we dwell on the falls of humanity". A negative attitude towards pride is characteristic not only of medieval society but also of the modern era in Russian ethical thought. For example, D.S. Anichkov, a Russian thinker of the 18th century, saw pride as an "obstacle to knowledge". P.Y. Chaadayev believed that all the forces of the mind rest on the humility of man. N.A. Berdyaev emphasized that pride is a source of errors in understanding; "humility, in the profound sense of the word, is nothing but liberation from fantasies created by egocentrism, the opening of the soul to realities". This issue was given great attention by L.N. Tolstoy in his work "The Path of Life," asserting that only the humble of heart grasp the truth. "Foolishness," he writes, "may exist without pride, but pride cannot exist without foolishness <...> Pride always entails falsehood, and vice versa". L.N. Tolstoy also has a negative view of national pride: "Nothing divides people more than pride, whether personal, familial, or national. <...> And as harmful as individual pride may be, national pride is many times more harmful".⁵ For L.N. Tolstoy, pride is not linked to a sense of personal dignity: "Pride is not at all the awareness of human dignity. Pride increases with false honor and false praise from humans; on the contrary, the awareness of dignity increases from false humiliation and condemnation of people". Furthermore, L.N. Tolstoy emphasizes that pride is destructive even for its bearer, as it deprives them of the love of others:

⁵Толстой Н. И. Язык и народная культура. Очерки по славянской мифологии и этнолингвистике. М.: Индрик, 1995. - 512 с.

"There are many punishments for a proud person, but the main and most severe punishment is that, no matter what virtues one may have and how hard one may try, people do not love him". In justifying the negative attitude towards pride, Russian ethical thought used arguments such as the collective responsibility of all people for global evil, the helplessness of man, his mortality, and the insignificance of human nature. Even medieval thinkers emphasized the baselessness of the claims of a person prone to pride. They believed that this stemmed from the very insignificance of human nature (man is created from dust), from his helplessness - humans can do nothing without God's help. Finally, the role of the main argument demonstrating the absurdity of human claims was attributed to the fact of human mortality: "and all the merriment of this world ends in weeping: for today they celebrate a wedding, and tomorrow they mourn the dead. Today we grow, and tomorrow we decay... Today we are glorious, and tomorrow we are consumed by worms. Therefore, let us fear and tremble". Vladimir Monomakh, whom O.V. Ryabov notes belongs to the "optimistic direction" in Russian Christianity, uses the same argument: "Above all, do not have pride in your heart and mind, but let us say: we are mortal, today alive, tomorrow in the grave...". From the statements of philosophers of the modern era, the following sentence of L.N. Tolstoy is expressive, who, while condemning pride, noted: "There is nothing more beneficial for the soul than remembering that you are a tiny speck in terms of both time and space, and that your strength lies only in understanding your insignificance and therefore being humble".⁶ L.N. Tolstoy calls for humility, contrasting it with pride.

Conclusion. Humility, being a peculiar compensatory mechanism, protects a person from such manifestations of pride as excessive self-love. "Self-love is the main wound inflicted on humanity by original sin...", writes N.A. Berdyaev, noting that Christian humility is "a strength that protects from painful self-love". Reflecting on the necessity of stepping out of the "shell of one's self-love," I.A. Ilyin ponders: "Pride knows nothing of humility, which is why many cruel humiliations await it... True dignity is born of humility and cannot be humiliated. <...> Pride bewitches and devalues. Humility awakens love, enhances human worth, and elevates one spiritually". Self-love, individualism, and selfishness were often interpreted as synonyms of pride. "With certain reservations, it can be said that the criticism of individualism is a kind of calling card of Russian social philosophy. At the same time, in a certain context, pride and selfishness were considered as different concepts, and the humble egoist was seen as less sinful than the proud altruist". N.A. Berdyaev, commenting on the peculiarity of the Russian mentality, noted that for the Russian person, "it is better to sin humbly than to strive proudly for perfection. The Russian person is accustomed to thinking that dishonor is not a great evil if one is humble in the soul, not proud or boastful". Similar life views have parallels with the ideas of other thinkers. For example, L.N. Tolstoy remarked: "The awareness of sin is often more beneficial for a person than a good deed: the awareness of sin humbles a person, while a good deed often inflates their pride". Excessive faith in one's own abilities also indicated that a person is prone to the "Satanic sin." In medieval Russian writings, there is a very curious linguistic formula - authors see the main goal of their works not in glorifying humanity, as in Renaissance historiography, but, on the contrary, in fixing its insignificance. The author of "The Tale of the Battle on the River" writes: "I have written this so that the foolish do not become proud in their madness, saying, 'We have saved the Russian land with our weapons.' But let them give glory to God and His most pure Mother, who saved us". Mandatory "etiquette formulas of self-abasement by authors, whether monks or princes, also reflect this fear of being suspected of sin". As is known, in the "Russian idea," the essence of Russia was understood through its comparison with Europe. From the very emergence of the idea of the humility of the Russian people, it was supplemented by the thesis of Western pride. "Meek Slavs" were opposed to "proud Germans," Orthodox humility was contrasted with "the pride of Latin temptation". The

⁶ Толстой Н. И. Язык и народная культура. Очерки по славянской мифологии и этнолингвистике. М.: Индрик, 1995. - 512 с.

evolution of the concepts of shame and pride in the context of different philosophical systems can be presented as follows:

Philosophical doctrines		SHAME	PRIDE
Ancient philosophy		Virtue	Virtue
Medieval philosophy		Consequence of sin	Sin
Modern philosophy		Negative emotion	Noble quality deficiency
19th-century philosophy	Western European	Negative emotion, desire for liberation	Positive human quality
	Russian	Positive quality of spiritual personality	Sin

The attitudes towards shame and pride in philosophical ethics reflect socio-historical experience. The functioning of moral attitudes can be viewed as a result of social determination, which finds its reflection in the language of the ethnic group. The analysis conducted shows that attitudes towards shame and pride have changed along with the changes in the era and human thought.

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