6

PROBLEMATIC SOCIAL EMOTIONS: SHAME, GUILT, JEALOUSY, AND ENVY

JUNE PRICE TANGNEY AND PETER SALOVEY


Shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy are common human emotions that everyone experiences on occasion in the course of daily life. Although people may not welcome these feelings, they are quite normal and serve useful functions for individuals and their relationships. At the same time, these negatively valanced emotions can pose problems for social and emotional adjustment, particularly in cases of chronic or excessive experiences of shame, guilt, jealousy, or envy. In this chapter, we examine adaptive and maladaptive aspects of these potentially problematic emotions, drawing on current psychological theory and recent empirical work. We consider the implications of these emotions for both individual adjustment and interpersonal behavior.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN OFTEN-CONFUSED EMOTIONS: SHAME VERSUS GUILT AND JEALOUSY VERSUS ENVY

In everyday conversation—and in significant portions of the psychological literature too—people are somewhat imprecise in their use of emo-
tion terms. It is not uncommon to see the terms shame and guilt used interchangeably. Similarly, the distinction between jealousy and envy is often unclear. But a growing body of emotions theory and research underscores important differences between these often-confused pairs of emotions.

What Is the Difference Between Shame and Guilt?

Historically, the terms shame and guilt have been used rather loosely by clinical, social, and developmental psychologists. Often, shame and guilt are mentioned in the same breath as "moral" emotions that inhibit socially undesirable behavior and foster moral conduct (e.g., Damon, 1988; Eisenberg, 1986; Harris, 1989; Schulman & Mekler, 1985). Other writers use guilt as a nonspecific term to refer to aspects of both emotions.

When people do make a distinction between shame and guilt, they often refer to differences in the content or structure of shame- and guilt-eliciting events. The notion is that certain kinds of situations lead to shame, whereas other kinds of situations lead to guilt. Most notably, it has long been suggested that shame is a more "public" emotion than guilt, arising from public exposure and disapproval whereas guilt represents a more "private" experience, arising from self-generated pangs of conscience (Ausubel, 1955; Benedict, 1946). Gehm and Scherer (1988), for example, recently asserted that

shame is usually dependent on the public exposure of one's frailty or failing, whereas guilt may be something that remains a secret with us, no one else knowing of our breach of social norms or of our responsibility for an immoral act. (p. 74)

From this perspective, you would not feel guilty over "lashing out" at a romantic partner at home in private, but you would feel shame over doing so at a party with family or friends.

As it turns out, there is little empirical support for this public–private distinction. Tangney, Marschall, Rosenberg, Barlow, and Wagner (1994) took a close look at children's and adults' descriptions of personal shame and guilt experiences. Among both children and adults, there was no difference in the frequency with which shame and guilt experiences occurred when people were alone, namely, not in the presence of others. Shame and guilt were each most often experienced in the presence of others. Similarly, in an independent study of adults' narrative accounts of personal shame, guilt, and embarrassment experiences (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996), there was no evidence that shame was the more public emotion. In fact, in this study shame was somewhat more likely (18.2%) than guilt (10.4%) to occur outside of the presence of an observing audience.

Shame and guilt do not differ substantially in the types of the trans-
gressions or failures that elicit them either. Analyses of personal shame and guilt experiences described by both children and adults revealed very few, if any, "classic" shame-inducing or guilt-inducing situations (Tangney, 1992; Tangney et al., 1994). Most types of events (e.g., lying, cheating, stealing, failing to help another, disobeying parents) were cited by some people in connection with feelings of shame and by other people in connection with guilt. There was some evidence that nonmoral failures and shortcomings (e.g., socially inappropriate behavior or dress) may be more likely to elicit shame. Even so, failures in work, school, or sport settings and violations of social conventions were cited by a significant number of children and adults in connection with guilt.

So what is the difference between shame and guilt? The weight of evidence now appears to support Helen Block Lewis's (1971) influential distinction between shame and guilt. From Lewis's perspective, the crux of the difference between shame and guilt lies not in the type of transgression or circumstances of the situation that elicits these emotions but rather in the way in which these events are construed. Is one's focus on one's self or on one's behavior? According to Lewis, when one feels guilt, one's key concern is with a particular behavior. Feelings of guilt involve a negative evaluation of some specific behavior (or failure to act)—a feeling that "I did that horrible thing." With this focus on a specific behavior comes a sense of tension, remorse, and regret. People in the midst of a guilt experience often report a nagging focus or preoccupation with the specific transgression—thinking of it over and over, wishing they had behaved differently or could somehow undo the bad deed that was done.

When one feels shame, one's key concern is with one's self as a person. Feelings of shame involve a painful negative scrutiny of the entire self—a feeling that "I am an unworthy, incompetent, or bad person." People in the midst of a shame experience often report a sense of shrinking or of "being small." They feel worthless and powerless. They feel exposed. Although shame does not necessarily involve an actual observing audience present to witness one's shortcomings, there is often the imagery of how one's defective self would appear to others. As with guilt, feelings of shame can arise from a specific behavior or transgression, but the processes involved in shame extend beyond those involved with guilt. The bad behavior is taken not simply as a local transgression, requiring reparation or apology, but rather the offending or objectionable behavior is seen as a reflection, more generally, of a defective, objectionable self (Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1995a).

In summary, what matters is not so much what was done (or not done). Instead, what matters is whether people focus on themselves (their character) or their behavior. In turn, this differential emphasis on self ("I did that horrible thing") versus behavior ("I did that horrible thing") is
associated with very different phenomenological experiences that are called shame and guilt, respectively.

There is now an impressive body of research supporting Lewis’s (1971) distinction between shame and guilt, including qualitative case study analyses (Lewis, 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Lindsay-Hartz, de Rivera, & Mascaro, 1995), content analyses of shame and guilt narratives (Ferguson, Stegge, & Damhuis, 1990; Tangney, 1992; Tangney et al., 1994), participants’ quantitative ratings of personal shame and guilt experiences (e.g., Ferguson, Stegge, & Damhuis, 1991; Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, et al., 1996; Wallbott & Scherer, 1995; Wicker, Payne, & Morgan, 1983), and analyses of participants’ counterfactual thinking (Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994). Together, these studies underscore that shame and guilt are distinct emotional experiences, differing substantially along cognitive, affective, and motivational dimensions.

What Is the Difference Between Jealousy and Envy?

An important distinction can be made between jealousy and envy as well. The word jealous is derived from the same Greek root as that for zealous—a fervent devotion to the promotion of some person or object. Jealousy refers to the belief or suspicion that what has been promoted is in danger of being lost. Envy is derived from the Latin invidsere—to look on another person with malice. Envy represents a discontent with and desire for the possessions of another (Salovey & Rodin, 1986, 1989).

When we perceive that a rival threatens the stability of a close relationship and subsequently feel a combination of anger, fear, and sorrow as a result, we usually say that we are jealous. Mere displeasure at the advantages of another and the desire to have those advantages for oneself result in envy (DeSteno & Salovey, 1995; Salovey, 1991). In examining situations that provoke envy or jealousy, we do not envy just anyone’s random attributes that we have not attained ourselves. Nor are we invariably jealous when our lovers threaten to leave us for just any other person. Instead, envy is most likely experienced when comparisons are made in domains that are especially important and relevant to how we define ourselves (Salovey & Rodin, 1984). Likewise, jealousy is most likely experienced when an important relationship is threatened by a rival, and we worry that we do not measure up in domains that are especially important to us (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; Salovey & Rodin, 1991).

Following Heider (1958), we can conceptualize differences among these terms as well by using the familiar triad of Persons P and O and Object or Person X (Bryson, 1977; Salovey & Rodin, 1989). The crucial factor discriminating among definitions of jealousy and envy is whether there is a previously established sentiment relationship between two elements in the triad. Jealousy is said to exist when Person P believes that
his or her previously established unique relationship with \( X \) is threatened by real (or imagined) attempts between \( O \) and \( X \) to form an equivalent relationship. Envy is said to exist in Person \( P \) when Person \( O \) has a previously established relationship with \( X \), and \( P \) attempts to supplant \( O \) in that relationship or tries to denigrate \( O \), \( X \), or the relationship between \( X \) and \( O \).

Laypeople commonly use the words *jealousy* and *envy* synonymously but asymmetrically; they often use jealousy when they mean envy but rarely use envy to mean jealousy. The term *jealousy* is used generically in both romantic and social comparison situations whereas envy is not because there is generally a part–whole relationship between the two. When one compares oneself with another and does not measure up, one experiences envy. But when one's relationship with another person is threatened by a rival, one experiences jealousy as one imagines the loss of that relationship and envy when one reflects on the relatively superior attributes of the rival that have allowed him or her to threaten the relationship. Jealousy is thus used generically because jealousy often includes envy with the addition of other distressing elements. Jealousy is the whole, and envy is a part. Jealousy's power lies in the simultaneous threat to a valued relationship and threat to self-evaluation through negative social comparison (see Spinoza, 1675/1949).

**SHAME, GUILT, JEALOUSY, AND ENVY:**
**SOME COMMON THEMES**

We group shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy under the common umbrella of "problematic" emotions. These negatively valanced emotions are well known to counselors and clinicians who frequently encounter clients distressed by them. At the same time, these emotions are part of people's normal "repertoire" of human affective experiences. Everyone experiences these feelings at times, and there is good reason to suspect that in the normal range, each of these emotions has adaptive functions. They are not, by their nature, necessarily pathological. In subsequent sections of this chapter, we discuss in greater detail the adaptive aspects of shame, guilt, jealousy and envy as well as the conditions under which these emotions are likely to go awry.

These emotions share several other notable features. First, each emotion arises from a comparison with some sort of standard—a comparison in which the individual comes up short. The nature of the comparison varies across these four emotions, but in each case, an aspect of the individual or his or her behavior is found wanting. Feelings of guilt arise from a negative evaluation of the behavior. One compares one's actions (or failure to act) with a guiding set of norms or moral standards and finds a
significant discrepancy. These standards and norms may be solidly internalized (one's own code) or may be externally imposed (e.g., parents' rules of conduct); but in either case, the individual experiencing the guilt acknowledges the standards as worthy of regard. Having transgressed (or having failed to act when standards instead dictate action), the individual feels a sense of tension, remorse, and regret, which is the hallmark of guilt. In the case of shame, the comparison centers not on a specific behavior but on the self. A failure or transgression is seen as reflecting a bad or defective self which does not "measure up" to some ideal self. This negative comparison of the perceived actual with the ideal self leads to a sense of shrinking, of feeling small, which is the hallmark of shame. The comparisons involved in jealousy and envy are more explicitly interpersonal than those involved in shame and guilt. One's attributes or possessions are compared not with some internalized or socially prescribed standard but with the attributes or possessions of another person—someone specific. In the case of jealousy, the person with whom one compares oneself is perceived as a rival threatening an important established relationship.

Second, as a result of these negative comparisons, each emotion involves a threat to the self. The degree of ego threat may vary. For example, shame experiences typically involve the most profound threat to the self because the global self is painfully scrutinized and negatively evaluated. As discussed shortly, in the case of jealousy and envy, the degree of ego threat hinges greatly on the personal relevance of the dimensions involved in the comparison. Feelings of guilt, which involve a focus on a behavior somewhat apart from the global self, are likely to involve the mildest threat to the core self.

Third, shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy are each fundamentally interpersonal emotions. For example, Tangney et al. (1994) and Tangney, Miller, et al. (1996) observed that the vast majority of shame and guilt experiences reported by both children and adults occurred in social contexts. By their very nature, experiences of jealousy and envy arise in relation to others. Moreover, shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy each have significant implications for subsequent interpersonal behavior.

Although a considerable number of researchers have examined interpersonal aspects of these four emotions, the emphasis of studies on jealousy and envy differs considerably from the emphasis of studies on shame and guilt. In the case of jealousy and envy, much of the theory and research focuses on interpersonal factors contributing to the experience of these emotions. To what degree does the likelihood and intensity of jealous and envious feelings hinge on the nature of the interpersonal situation and the types of comparisons made? In the case of shame and guilt, considerable theory and research instead focus on the interpersonal outcomes or sequelae of these emotions. What kinds of interpersonal behaviors are motivated by these two moral emotions? How do individual differences in
proneness to shame versus proneness to guilt relate to various aspects of social adjustment? We next summarize work conducted in these two important areas.

The Interpersonal Context of Jealousy and Envy: A Self-Evaluation Maintenance Perspective

In planning empirical work on jealousy and envy (e.g., DeSteno & Salovey, 1994, 1996; Salovey & Rodin, 1984, 1988, 1991), we generally find self-evaluation maintenance (SEM) theory (Tesser, 1986, 1988) a useful conceptual framework. The major premise of SEM theory is that individuals are motivated to maintain positive self-evaluation. Given a situation in which another has possessions that one desires or performs well on some task, two opposing processes are possible. In the first, called reflection, the good performance or possessions of another raise one's self-evaluation. That is, one basks in reflected glory (cf. Cialdini et al., 1976). In the second process, comparison, the superior performance or possessions of another lowers one's self-evaluation.

According to the theory of SEM, the relevance of the other's performance to self-definition determines whether comparison or reflection results. If the domain of the other person's performance is self-definitionally relevant, a comparison is likely. Reflection follows when the domain is irrelevant. Because, according to SEM theory, one is motivated to maintain (or raise) one's self-evaluation, one basks in reflected glory at one's friends' self-definitionally nonthreatening successes. When relevance is high, however, one maintains self-esteem by engaging in any of a number of coping strategies, such as changing one's self-definition to reduce the relevance of another's performance, reducing the closeness of the relationship with the comparison other, re-evaluating the quality of the other's performance, or actually maliciously preventing the other's good performance (e.g., Tesser, Millar, & Moore, 1988; Tesser, Pilkington, & McIntosh, 1989).

Supporting data on a SEM view of jealousy and envy has been generated in both survey and experimental research. For example, in a magazine survey some years ago, Salovey and Rodin (1991) asked respondents questions concerning what attributes were particularly important to them, how they would ideally like to be on these attributes, and how they actually perceived themselves. They measured self-esteem using a standard instrument and then obtained respondents' reports of their likelihood of engaging in a variety of jealous and envious behaviors as well as indications of the situations in which they would experience the most jealousy or envy. Feelings and behaviors associated with jealousy and envy were predicted by the importance of a domain to self-definition and by large discrepancies between actual self-descriptions and ideal self-descriptions on the relevant attributes, namely, wealth, fame, being well liked, or physical attractive-
ness. Domain importance and real–ideal discrepancies in each domain predicted jealousy and envy in that domain, even accounting for global self-esteem. Ideal–real self-discrepancies were most closely associated with experienced envy and jealousy in those domains rated as most important. A person with a large real–ideal discrepancy about personal wealth, for example, tended to report great jealousy if his or her spouse showed an interest in someone very wealthy, especially if the domain was rated as important. This pattern was particularly robust when the self-definitional area was physical attractiveness.

In another testing of the SEM model of jealousy, DeSteno and Salovey (1996) conducted two experiments to explore how the characteristics of the rival in a jealousy situation determine the amount of jealousy experienced. To the extent that a rival for a romantic relationship excels on some dimensions identified as especially self-relevant to an individual, that individual should experience greater jealousy as this represents an especially great threat to self-evaluation. They presented participants with hypothetical rivals excelling in various domains, such as athleticism, intelligence, and popularity. Participants were asked to imagine a situation in which they and their boyfriends or girlfriends were at a party and the rival and beloved flirted with each other. Which rivals elicited the most jealousy? According to the SEM model of jealousy, a match between the participant's self-relevant domain and the domain of achievement of the rival would maximize jealousy.

In a first study (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996, Experiment 1), participants were given a test that measured the importance of intelligence, athleticism, and popularity to them. Three groups were formed on the basis of their scores on this test. Participants were assigned to a group if they scored high on the importance of one domain but not the other two. They then imagined three different scenarios in which a rival flirted with their boyfriend or girlfriend at a party. Depending on the scenario, the rival was described as very popular, intelligent, or athletic. They completed a multi-item measure of jealousy to describe their feelings in these situations. Participants were most jealous when the rival was successful in their self-definitional domain for athleticism and popularity. When the experimenters created interaction scores and controlled for participant and rival domain main effects, the domain-matching hypothesis was confirmed in all three domains. This is not merely a social comparison effect—it is not simply that being compared with a relevant rival makes people feel bad. In fact, when they asked participants how much they liked the rivals in the absence of the flirtation incident, they actually liked the matching rivals the most.

A limitation of this experiment, however, is that DeSteno and Salovey (1996, Experiment 1) provided participants with descriptions of individuals that they felt were excellent in the specified domains. However,
there was no way of knowing whether the participants conceived of them in the same way. So a second experiment was conducted in which a new set of scenarios was developed, and participants indicated who they believed to be most intelligent, athletic, and popular. In the second study, not enough of the participants indicated that popularity was the most important domain to them, so the experimenters only included participants for whom either intelligence or athleticism was their self-defining domain, and then participants were asked the following question: Would romantic rivals who excelled on a matching dimension elicit more jealousy? Once again, they did. Athletic students were jealous when an athlete honed in on their date. The ones who valued intelligence were threatened by smart rivals. The matching relationship seems to be dose dependent—the more important a domain, the greater the jealousy in the presence of a matching rival. However, in the absence of a threat to the relationship, these matching rivals were actually liked more than those who were dissimilar.

Taken together, results from each of these studies are consistent with a SEM perspective for understanding envy and jealousy. People appear especially vulnerable to experiences of envy and jealousy when the domain of comparison is self-translationally relevant and when there are substantial real-ideal discrepancies in that domain. In other words, one's worst rival excels in highly valued areas, particularly those in which one feels inadequate.

The Interpersonal Context of Shame and Guilt: Contrasting Concerns, Motivations, and Behaviors

As we discussed earlier, the distinction between shame and guilt lies not so much with the nature of the eliciting event but more with a person's interpretation of that event. The situations that give rise to shame and guilt are objectively similar in terms of the types of failures and transgressions involved and of the degree to which others are aware of the event. Nonetheless, it appears that people's interpersonal concerns differ, depending on whether they are experiencing shame (about the self) or guilt (about a specific behavior).

In Tangney et al.'s (1994) qualitative analysis of children's and adults' autobiographical accounts of personal shame and guilt experiences, systematic differences were found in people's interpersonal focus as they described their personal failures, misdeeds, and transgressions. Among adults, especially, shame experiences were more likely to involve a concern with others' evaluations of the self, whereas guilt experiences were more likely to involve a concern with one's effect on others. This difference in egocentric versus other-oriented concerns is not that surprising in light of Lewis's (1971) observation that shame involves a focus on the self whereas guilt involves a focus on a specific behavior. A shamed person who focuses on negative
self-evaluations would naturally be drawn to a concern over others’ evaluations of the self as well. In contrast, a person experiencing guilt is already less self-absorbed (focusing on a negative behavior somewhat apart from the self) and, thus, is more likely to recognize (and become concerned with) the effects of that behavior on others.

Not surprisingly, when people describe guilt-inducing events, they convey more other-oriented empathy than when describing shame-inducing events (Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney et al., 1994). In contrast, people induced to feel shame exhibit less empathy (Marschall, 1996). The acute self-focus of shame seems to interfere with an other-oriented empathic connection; in contrast, the processes involved in guilt appear congruent with perspective taking and sympathetic concern. This differential relationship of shame and guilt to empathy is evident not only when considering situation-specific episodes of shame and guilt but also when considering more general affective traits or dispositions. Across numerous studies of adults, a dispositional capacity for empathy was positively associated with proneness to guilt (Tangney, 1991, 1995a). That is, guilt-prone individuals are generally empathic individuals. In contrast, shame proneness has been repeatedly associated with an impaired capacity for other-oriented empathy and a propensity for self-oriented personal distress responses.

Not only do shame and guilt differ in the type of interpersonal concerns aroused and in the degree to which other-oriented empathy is facilitated, but also there is a good deal of evidence that shame and guilt give rise to very different motivations for subsequent behavior in interpersonal contexts (Ferguson et al., 1991; Lewis, 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Lindsay-Hartz et al., 1995; Tangney, 1989, 1995a; Wicker et al., 1983). A consistent finding is that shame often motivates avoidance. Perhaps because shame is generally a more painful experience than guilt and because shame involves a sense of exposure before a real or imagined audience, people feeling shame often report a desire to flee from shame-inducing situations, to “sink into the floor and disappear.” Thus, shame motivates behaviors that are likely to sever interpersonal contact. In contrast, guilt is more likely to keep people constructively engaged in the interpersonal situation at hand. Both qualitative and quantitative studies indicate that rather than motivating avoidance, guilt motivates corrective action. People feeling guilt often report a desire to confess or apologize for the offending behavior and to repair the damage that was done. This motivation for reparation may stem from the fact that guilt involves a focus on the offending behavior and, therefore, presumably on its harmful consequences to others. In addition, in guilt the self remains relatively intact, unimpacted as it is in the shame experience. Thus, the self remains mobile and ready to take reparative action.

These motivational differences between shame and guilt were high-
lighted in Tangney and colleagues’ studies of people’s narrative accounts of their personal shame and guilt experiences (Tangney, 1989, 1994; Tangney, Miller, et al., 1996). For example, an 18-year-old college student shared this shame experience: “I’m not allowed to date. One day my mom found me kissing this guy. I felt ashamed of myself. I couldn’t face my mom for months” (emphasis added). This young woman, feeling shame, also felt moved to avoid subsequent interpersonal contact, namely, with her mother, someone with whom she was presumably close. Contrast this with the guilt experience related by another college student: “Well, there’s this girl I really like. The other day at the hotel, I kind of messed around with another girl. . . . Now I feel sort of guilty and maybe I should tell her” (emphasis added). Rather than searching for a means of escape, this young man was actively debating whether to confess his misdeeds to his girlfriend.

In summary, across a range of studies, analyses of narrative accounts of shame and guilt and participant ratings of these experiences indicate that shame and guilt lead to contrasting motives relevant to interpersonal relationships. Whereas guilt tends to motivate reparative action, shame tends to motivate escapist responses. In fact, Barrett and colleagues (Barrett, 1995; Barrett, Zahn-Waxler, & Cole, 1993) used avoidant versus reparative patterns of behavior as early markers of shame-prone versus guilt-prone styles among toddlers—behavior patterns which were significantly related to independent parental reports of children’s displays of shame and guilt in the home. In addition, as we discuss in a subsequent section, there is also considerable theoretical and empirical evidence that shame can motivate defensive, retaliative anger as well.

ADAPTIVE FUNCTIONS OF SHAME, GUILT, JEALOUSY, AND ENVY

How Are Shame and Guilt Useful?

The adaptive functions of guilt are perhaps most obvious. Humans are social beings. They spend much of their life involved in relationships of significance, interacting with people who matter to them. With all this social interaction, it is inevitable that they will make mistakes and transgress with some regularity. Tactless comments, unintended slights, flashes of irritation and anger, and betrayals large and small are part of the fabric of living relationships. In the wake of these inevitable rifts and transgressions, guilt appears to orient people in a constructive, proactive, future-oriented direction. A broad range of studies indicates that guilt typically motivates reparative action—confessing, apologizing, in some way undoing the harm that was done (Ferguson et al., 1991; Lewis, 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, et al., 1996; Wallbott & Scherer,

In a recent review of the theoretical and empirical literature on guilt, Baumeister, Stillwell and Heatherton (1994) identified several other “relationship-enhancing” functions of guilt, beyond these explicitly corrective, reparative functions (see also Sommer & Baumeister, 1997). First, Baumeister et al. (1994) observed that in feeling guilty, people affirm their social bonds, signaling to one another that the relationship and each other’s welfare are important. One feels guilty because one cares. Second, the authors pointed out that feelings of guilt can restore equity in a relationship. For example, usually it is the less powerful person in a relationship or situation who induces guilt; concessions or reallocations often follow. Third, there is the intriguing notion that guilt may serve to “redistribute” emotional distress. In instances of interpersonal harm, the victim is initially the distressed party. (In many instances, the perpetrator may experience significant benefits from the transgression.) Guilt can level the emotional playing field. Feeling guilty, perpetrators take on more negative affect, and there are some indications that victims, in response, feel better when their partners express guilt. So the upshot is that following an episode of guilt, the affective experiences of victim and perpetrator are closer in valence. Similarity breeds empathy and attraction. The relationship in the moment strengthens.

The adaptive functions of shame are less readily apparent. Much recent theory and research emphasizes the dark side of shame (e.g., Harder, 1995; Harder & Lewis, 1987; Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1995a; Tangney, Burggraf, & Wagner, 1995; Tangney, Wagner, Barlow, Marschall, & Gramzow, 1996), underscoring negative consequences of this emotion for both psychological adjustment and interpersonal behavior. Two obvious questions then are Why do people have the capacity to experience this emotion? and What adaptive purpose might it serve?

Tompkins (1963) suggested that shame may play an important role in regulating experiences of excessive interest and excitement (see also Nathanson, 1987, and Schore, 1991). The notion is that especially at very early stages of development, a mechanism is needed to “put the brakes on” interest and excitement in social interactions (especially vis-à-vis one’s mother). Feelings of shame ensue when a child’s bid for attention is rebuffed or when a significant social exchange is interrupted (e.g., when a mother is distracted from focusing on her infant). According to this view, feelings of shame then help the child disengage when it is appropriate to do so.

Taking a sociobiological approach, Gilbert (1997) discussed the ap-
peasement functions of shame and humiliation displays, noting continuities across human and nonhuman primates. Gilbert's approach in many ways echoes Leary's (1989; Leary, Britt, Cutlip, & Templeton, 1992; Leary, Landel, & Patton, 1996) analysis of the appeasement functions of blushing and embarrassment (see also Keltner, 1995). Both perspectives emphasize the communicative aspects of shame—embarrassment displays and their role in diffusing expressions of anger and aggression among conspecifics. In a related fashion, the motivation to withdraw—so often a component of the shame experience—may be a useful response, interrupting potentially threatening social interactions until the shamed individual has a chance to regroup.

Finally, there is the widely held assumption that because shame is such a painful emotion, feelings of shame help people avoid "doing wrong" (Barrett, 1995; Ferguson & Stegge, 1995; Zahn-Waxler & Robinson, 1995), decreasing the likelihood of transgression and impropriety. As it turns out, there is surprisingly little direct evidence of this inhibitory function of shame. But indirect evidence suggests that shame is not as effective as guilt in serving a moral, self-regulatory function. In one study, Tangney (1994) examined the relationship of shame proneness and guilt proneness to self-reported moral behavior (assessed by the Conventional Morality Scale; Tooke & Ickes, 1988). She found that self-reported moral behaviors were substantially positively correlated with proneness to guilt but unrelated to proneness to shame. Together with other results showing that guilt but not shame is associated with enhanced empathy (Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney, 1991, 1994, 1995a; Tangney et al., 1994), a tendency to take responsibility (Tangney, 1990, 1994), and constructive responses to anger (Tangney, Wagner, et al., 1996), these findings really raise questions about the moral, self-regulatory functions of shame.

Although shame may not be as effective as guilt in motivating constructive change across most situations, there are possibly some circumstances in which this more global, self-focused emotion is especially useful. No doubt, there are instances when individuals are faced with fundamental shortcomings of the self (moral or otherwise) that would best be corrected. But as any clinician knows, changes to the core self do not come easily. The acute pain of shame and the corresponding directed self-focus can, in some cases, motivate productive soul searching and revisions to one's priorities and values. The challenge is to engage in such introspection and self-repair without becoming sidetracked by the defensive reactions so often engendered by shame. It seems likely that this positive function of shame would most likely ensue from private, self-generated experiences of shame as opposed to public, other-generated shame episodes. In particular, high "ego-strength" individuals with a solid sense of self may be especially able to circumvent "knee-jerk" defensive responses to make constructive use of shame in the privacy of their own thoughts. 
How Are Jealousy and Envy Useful?

Regarding envy and jealousy, several intriguing adaptive functions have been suggested. A sociological perspective views envy as having adaptive significance in promoting economic development in (usually Western) societies (Schoeck, 1969). Envy is thought to motivate individuals to better their lot, improve their talents and abilities, and be more productive (Rorty, 1971). Although envy is an acknowledged motivator, admitting to it is still highly stigmatized, so most societies conceive of envy as a necessary evil. This conception of envy emphasizes what Foster (1972) termed the competitive axis of envy. The competitive axis of envy underscores wants and desires for the self rather than those things one wants to take from others. Envy expressed in this manner is expected to motivate self-improvement. The denigration of others and their possessions that embodies the dark side of envy is not featured in this formulation. Schoeck argued that Western nations promote envy specifically to motivate their citizens to improve themselves and advertising is an excellent window in which to view how societies attempt to motivate individuals to differentiate themselves from those around them.

We can consider this argument at the level of the individual as well. When of moderate intensity and limited duration, envy can be a motivator. One way individuals can become motivated to accomplish new goals is to harness their envy to energize goal-directed behavior. The social comparisons involved in envy can highlight areas in need of development. Perhaps at first, Salieri’s envy of Mozart’s obvious talents and productivity motivated his attempts to compose (Shaffer, 1981).

A second adaptive function of envy is its potential role in the formation and clarification of one’s identity. Most individuals recognize that some situations are more likely to induce envy than others. This emotional feedback informs one about those dimensions of self that are especially crucial to one’s unique identity. What does one learn when one’s envy of a Nobel Prize-winning colleague involves rumination about how one would spend the prize money but little attention to his or her new-found fame? It would seem that a core part of one’s identity includes a desire for material wealth but not necessarily for the admiration of others.

Jealousy too can have adaptive significance; perhaps that is why Freud (1922/1955) noted that it is “one of those affective states, like grief, that may be described as normal” (p. 232). For one, it is an early warning sign in relationships, signaling that attention needs to be paid to threats to the stability of that relationship, to the self-esteem of a relationship partner, or both. Only in the fantasy world of a Harlequin Romance is jealousy actually a sign of love itself. Nonetheless, jealousy is a signal that someone whom one cares very much about is in danger of being lost. If one never experiences jealousy, one must either be very sure that losing a loved one
Although shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy are normal emotions that can serve as an adaptive function for both individuals and groups, there are obvious darker sides to these emotions. When do these emotions become problematic? Intensity of affective reaction may seem the most obvious dimension of importance here. However, although brief flare-ups of intense jealousy, envy, shame, or guilt may represent unpleasantness for one's self and significant others, these experiences may be short-lived and of relatively little consequence to on-going relationships and to the mental stability of the individual. Duration and pervasiveness, however, strike us as more significant warning signs of these emotions gone awry. It is not the intensity of one's guilt that drives one to seek therapy but rather the persistence with which these guilt experiences eat away at one's peace of mind. By the same token, a brief, albeit intense, flash of jealousy may simply reveal the depth of one's passion, but chronic, obsessive, jealousy can become all-consuming psychologically and can even land one in jail.

A closely related issue here concerns the appropriateness of the context eliciting these feelings. A person who is prone to pervasive feelings of shame across a multitude of situations is no doubt experiencing shame in situations that do not warrant such reactions—situations to which the typical individual would not respond with ugly feelings of shame. Thus, in assessing clinically relevant problems with these four emotions, one must attend more to their appropriateness, pervasiveness, and duration than the short-term intensity of these experiences per se.

A second set of issues concern people's ability to cope constructively with these feelings and resolve them satisfactorily. A person may experience guilt in an appropriate context, and the intensity of these feelings might be commensurate with the transgression. But that same person may lack the coping skills to express these feelings adaptively, to resolve these feelings, or both. For example, Tangney (1996) found that college students' reports of "useful" short-lived experiences of guilt were much more likely to involve active repair of the harm done or a heartfelt resolution to change one's behavior for the better in the future. In contrast, nagging, chronic experiences of guilt were not typically accompanied by constructive changes in one's behavior. It seems that some people are more adept at identifying avenues of repair or change whereas others obsess unproductively ad infinitum. This may be a useful point of intervention with...
clients troubled by chronic unresolved feelings of guilt. Therapy may include helping distressed clients develop problem-solving skills aimed specifically at identifying proactive solutions or other constructive means of atoning for their transgressions.

Similarly, an effective method of coping with envy is to reframe the domain in which envy is elicited as not as important to one’s sense of self. All life domains of the individual chronically smitten with envy are defined as equally significant in determining his or her self-worth. Perhaps it is for these reasons that therapists dealing with envious clients may ask them to fantasize about trading their life for that of the envied other. Salieri may have envied Mozart’s profound musical talents, but would he really have wanted to be Mozart, including his psychological immaturity, physical infirmities, and abject poverty, along with his obvious musical gifts? Salieri might have benefited from this reframe (Shaffer, 1981). One can envy the specific attributes of another, but this envy may resolve when one must entertain the possibility of being that other person, part and parcel.

Links to Psychopathology

What kinds of psychological symptoms and disorders are likely to arise when tendencies to experience shame, guilt, envy, or jealousy take a turn for the worse? In her landmark book, Shame and Guilt in Neurosis, Lewis (1971) suggested that individual differences in cognitive style (i.e., field dependence vs. field independence) lead to contrasting modes of superego functioning (i.e., shame proneness and guilt proneness) and together these cognitive and affective styles set the stage for differential symptom formation. According to Lewis, the global, less differentiated self of the field-dependent individual should be particularly vulnerable to the global, less differentiated experience of shame—and ultimately then to affective disorders, including the global experience of depression. In contrast, the more clearly differentiated self of the field-independent individual should be particularly vulnerable to the experience of guilt (which requires a differentiation between self and behavior)—and to obsessive and paranoid symptoms involving a vigilance of the “field,” separate from the self. As it turns out, there is very little support for this intriguing set of hypotheses.

Research consistently demonstrates a relationship between proneness to shame and a whole host of psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, obsessive patterns of thought, paranoid ideation, symptoms of eating disorders, subclinical sociopathy, and low self-esteem (Allan, Gilbert, & Goss, 1994; Brodie, 1995; Cook, 1988, 1991; Gramzow & Tangney, 1992; Harder, 1995; Harder, Cutler, & Rockart, 1992; Harder & Lewis, 1987; Hoblitzelle, 1987; Sanftner, Barlow, Marshall, & Tangney, 1995; Tangney, 1993; Tangney et al., 1995; Tangney, Wagner, Burggraf, Gramzow, & Fletcher, 1991; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). These relation-
ships appear robust across a range of measurement methods and across diverse age groups and populations. Moreover, the link between shame proneness and depression is robust, even after controlling for attributional style (Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). People who experience feelings of shame about the entire self frequently seem vulnerable to a range of psychological symptoms.

The research is more mixed regarding the relationship of guilt to psychopathology. In fact, two very different views of guilt are represented in the current literature. The traditional view, rooted in a long clinical tradition (e.g., Freud, 1909/1955, 1917/1957, 1924/1961), is that guilt contributes significantly to psychological distress and symptoms of psychopathology (Blatt, D'Afflitti, & Quinlin, 1976; Harder, 1995; Harder & Lewis, 1987; Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1985; Weiss, 1993; Zahn-Waxler, Kochanska, Krupnick, & McKnew, 1990). However, recent theory and research emphasize the adaptive functions of guilt, particularly for interpersonal behavior (Baumeister et al., 1994; Hoffman, 1982; Tangney, 1991, 1994, 1995a). Tangney and colleagues (Tangney et al., 1995; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992) have argued that once one makes the critical distinction between shame and guilt, there is no compelling theoretical reason to expect tendencies to experience guilt over specific behaviors to be associated with poor psychological adjustment.

Researchers using adjective checklist-type (and other globally worded) measures of shame and guilt have found that both shame-prone and guilt-prone styles are associated with psychological symptoms (Harder, 1995; Harder et al., 1992; Harder & Lewis, 1987; Kugler & Jones, 1992; Meehan et al., 1996). But a very different pattern of results emerges when measures are used that are sensitive to Lewis's (1971) self versus behavior distinction (e.g., scenario-based methods assessing shame proneness and guilt proneness with respect to specific situations). Across studies of both children and adults, the tendency to experience "shame-free" guilt is essentially unrelated to psychological symptoms, whereas people prone to experience shame appear vulnerable to a range of psychological problems (Burggraf & Tangney, 1990; Gramzow & Tangney, 1992; Tangney, 1994; Tangney et al., 1991, 1995; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992).

Jealousy and envy have also been linked to various psychological symptoms. Currently, the only disorder listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed. [DSM-IV]; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) in which jealousy or envy is the primary symptom is delusional disorder, jealous type. In this disorder, the individual is convinced, even in the absence of supporting data, that his or her spouse is unfaithful or likely to be unfaithful. Often trivial incidents—a partner's slip of the tongue, a slip of paper with a name written on it—are exaggerated and presented as evidence for the supposed infidelity. The delusionally jealous individual often confronts the partner with such evidence and may, in fact,
take dramatic actions, such as to telephone presumed rivals, attempt to injure the partner, throw the partner out of the home, or even file for divorce. Such individuals may resort to stalking the partner or a presumed rival and attempt to curtail the freedom of the partner to associate with others or even leave the house.

Although delusional jealousy is the only mental disorder in which jealousy or envy are the primary symptoms, these emotions may feature in other psychological difficulties. For example, in paranoid personality disorder, the individual may ceaselessly question without justification the fidelity of a spouse or other sexual partner or may be focused excessively and resentfully on the attainments of others. Alternatively, the hypersensitivity to the evaluation of others that characterizes individuals with narcissistic personality disorder can sometimes involve extremes of envy. Such individuals generally feel that successful others do not deserve their success, despite chronically envying these successes, and may fantasize about injuring their rivals or in other ways interfering with their rivals’ accomplishments. Because such people rarely experience the pleasurable accomplishment of their ambitions, envy of others is often chronic and unremitting. The DSM-IV, in fact, lists explicitly preoccupation with feelings of envy as one of the possible diagnostic symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder.

Links to Aggression

Research shows that three of these emotions—shame, jealousy, and envy—each can motivate aggressive behavior. (If anything, guilt appears to be inversely associated with overt acts of aggression.) In fact, the situations in which these emotions are most likely to come to the attention of clinicians are precisely those that involve aggression or threats of aggression.

Many legal scholars have argued that unbridled envy and jealousy are at the root of much criminal activity. Unfortunately, this issue has received little systematic attention by social scientists. Consideration of crimes of passion is fraught with political overtones. Many commentators (e.g., Jordan, 1985) have noted that the classic crime of passion, the murder of a lover and rival on discovering them in the midst of a sexual indiscretion, is a myth. Rather, such so-called crimes of passion are preceded by years of psychological abuse and physical battering and, in fact, very little passion at all.

Nonetheless, homicide committed in the alleged heat of passion is considered manslaughter rather than murder in many states (Dressler, 1982). The American Law Institute’s Model Penal Code still lists manslaughter as any intentional killing committed under the influence of extreme mental or emotional disturbance for which there is a reasonable
explanation or excuse. Yet confusion reigns in the courts' interpretation of the law in what are called "sight of adultery" cases. For example, a married person who kills on sight of adultery can be convicted of manslaughter, but an unmarried person who kills under similar circumstances has committed murder (Dressler, 1982). There is no real evidence that sight of adultery by a married person arouses any more intense and putatively cognitively disrupting "passion" than that in the unmarried person. As Dressler (1982) noted, "this rule is really a judgment by the courts that adultery is a form of injustice perpetrated upon the killer which merits a violent response, whereas 'mere' sexual unfaithfulness out of wedlock does not" (p. 438).

The psychiatric literature is the source of many case studies of jealous murderers, despite the legal confusion over the proper use and disposition of a heat of passion defense. Typically, many murderers experience intense jealousy immediately preceding the killing (Cuthbert, 1970; Lehrman, 1939). Psarska (1970) analyzed a string of homicide cases and found that in nearly one fourth, nondelusional jealousy was a causal factor. Among these 38 cases, 16 involved actual unfaithfulness and the remaining 22 cases comprised situations where long-standing marital conflicts developed into jealousy. Moreover, delusional jealousy has been reported as one of the leading motives of murderers judged insane (Mowat, 1966). Only a few social scientists have addressed these disturbing trends. Most have placed the blame on several interrelated factors: (a) societal sanctioning of aggression and battering (mostly by men) in the context of marital relationships, (b) an emphasis on exclusivity rather than permanence in what couples value in their marital relationships, (c) a lack of resolution of how couples should deal rationally with the availability of extramarital sexuality, and (d) unrealistic visions of what can be expected in a normal marital relationship (Whitehurst, 1971).

There is virtually no social scientific literature on envy as the motive for aggression against people or property, but one imagines such possibilities. Indeed, some have argued that hate crimes against ethnic or other minority group members are, at times, motivated by (often false) perceptions of the growing power of such individuals vis-à-vis the majority group and an envy of this power (or, perhaps, a jealous guarding of one's own power).

There also appears to be a special link between shame and anger. Lewis (1971) first noted the link between shame and anger (or humiliated fury) in her clinical case studies. Consistent with this notion, numerous empirical studies of both children and adults repeatedly find that individuals prone to the ugly feeling of shame are also prone to feelings of outwardly directed anger and hostility (Tangney, 1995a; Tangney, Wagner, et al., 1996; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). For example, in a study of young adults, the tendency to experience shame was significantly
positively correlated with measures of trait anger and indexes of indirect hostility, irritability, resentment, and suspicion. In contrast, proneness to shame-free guilt (i.e., independent of the variance shared with shame) was negatively or negligibly correlated with indexes of anger and hostility (Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Similarly, in a study of 363 fifth-grade children (Tangney et al., 1991), shame proneness was positively correlated both with boys’ self-reports of anger and teacher reports of aggression, whereas guilt was negatively correlated with boys’ and girls’ self-reports of anger. Among girls, proneness to shame was also positively correlated with self-reports of anger.

Not only are shame-prone individuals more prone to anger, in general, than their non-shame-prone peers, but once angered, they are also more likely to manage their anger in an unconstructive fashion. In a recent cross-sectional developmental study of 302 children (Grades 4–6), 427 adolescents (Grades 7–11), 176 college students, and 194 adult travelers passing through a large urban airport (Tangney, Wagner, et al., 1996), shame was clearly related to maladaptive and nonconstructive responses to anger, across individuals of all ages. Consistent with Scheff’s (1987, 1995) and Retzinger’s (1987) descriptions of the “shame–rage spiral,” shame proneness was related to malevolent intentions; direct, indirect, and displaced aggression; self-directed hostility; and projected negative long-term consequences of everyday episodes of anger. In contrast, guilt was generally associated with constructive means of handling anger, including constructive intentions, attempts to take direct corrective action and to discuss the matter with the target of the anger in a nonhostile fashion, cognitive reappraisals of the target’s role in the anger situation, and positive long-term consequences.

Similar findings have been observed at the situational level too. For example, Wicker et al. (1983) found that college students reported a greater desire to punish others involved in personal shame versus guilt experiences. In addition, in a study of specific real-life episodes of anger among romantically involved couples, shamed partners were significantly more angry, more likely to engage in aggressive behavior, and less likely to elicit conciliatory behavior from their significant other (Tangney, 1995b).

What accounts for this rather counterintuitive link between shame and anger? Shame is a painful, ugly feeling that involves a global negative evaluation of the entire self. When people feel shame, they feel devalued. Their sense of self—and self-efficacy—is impaired. Their awareness of others’ negative evaluations (real or imagined) is highlighted. This is an extremely distressing experience that presses people to suppress or eliminate the pain associated with shame. At least two routes are open for shamed individuals to manage their feelings of shame. The more passive route involves interpersonal withdrawal—shrinking, withdrawing, hiding from the shame-eliciting situation. The more active route involves other-
directed anger. When feeling shame, people initially direct hostility inward ("I’m such a bad person"). But this hostility can easily be redirected outward in a defensive attempt to protect the self, "turn the tables," and shift the blame elsewhere, for example, "oh what a horrible person I am, and damn it, how could you make me feel that way!" (Tangney, 1995a; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992).

In contrast, feelings of guilt are not as likely to invoke a defensive, retaliative sort of anger. Because guilt involves a negative evaluation of a specific behavior, somewhat apart from the global self, guilt experiences are less distressing and less likely to involve severe threats to the self. People experiencing guilt are not typically pressed toward anger in a desperate attempt to rescue a devalued self mired in shame. Because the experience of guilt is less likely to interfere with feelings of empathy for others, guilty individuals are more able to take the other person’s perspective, even when angered, further contributing to their ability to find constructive solutions to events involving interpersonal conflict.

LINKS AMONG THESE PROBLEMATIC EMOTIONS

Surprisingly few empirical researchers have examined the links among shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy. But there is good reason to expect that these emotions frequently go hand in hand in human experience. Studies of people’s real-life episodes of shame and guilt indicate that these two emotions often co-occur (Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, et al., 1996). Correspondingly, there is a positive correlation between dispositional indexes of proneness to shame and proneness to guilt (Tangney, 1990, 1991). Most likely, people at times experience a cognitive-affective sequence running from guilt to shame. When faced with a failure or transgression, a person may initially experience feelings of guilt over a specific behavior but then generalize the implications of that behavior to a shameful evaluation of the self: "look what a horrible thing I did and aren’t I a horrible person!" Nonetheless, this link between shame and guilt is by no means inevitable. People can experience a sense of guilt but still stop short of a full-blown shame reaction. Similarly, people can experience the shrinking sense of shame unaccompanied by the more articulated tension and remorse of guilt over a particular behavior.

To our knowledge, no one has examined the relationship of shame (or guilt) to feelings of jealousy and envy explicitly. But one can imagine a number of plausible scenarios. First, the experience of shame may render one vulnerable to subsequent experiences of envy or jealousy. Imagine a person who, having failed or transgressed, is faced with a shameful sense of shrinking, of being small, of being worthless and powerless. The self, in that moment, is diminished. That same person is still part of a social world
that invites social comparisons. Feeling diminished, falling prey to global negative evaluations, that person seems particularly vulnerable to feelings of envy over others' positive attributes, self-relevant accomplishments, and superior abilities. To the extent that valued relationships may be seen as threatened, jealousy toward potential rivals is likely as well.

Not only may feelings of shame set the stage for subsequent experiences of envy and jealousy, but also people may feel shame or guilt over experiences of jealousy and envy themselves. Some theorists have gone so far as to characterize envy as a transgression of a moral order, in other words, a sin (Aquinas, 1270/1964; Sabini & Silver, 1982). LaRoche-Soucail (circa 1665/1995) noted that envy is so shameful a passion that one can never dare to acknowledge it. Perhaps this connotation between envy and shame is why some societies often go to great lengths to organize social life, so as not to risk arousing the envy of others (Schoeck, 1969). In these cultures, envy is likely when a person deviates from highly valued social norms, such as the possession of food, the size of one's family, or the state of one's health. Because there is a fear of arousing envy in others, people try hard not to deviate from social norms. Women hide their pregnancies, farmers down play their bumper crops, and extremely successful people may even move out of their villages to avoid arousing envy. The fear of arousing envy in others is so great in these societies that people believe it will result in personal misfortune. This fear of misfortune is central to the notion of the "evil eye." The evil eye is an active expression of envy that can be found across a wide range of cultures (Foster, 1972; Schoeck, 1969). Individuals in many cultures hold that if one is looked on by the evil eye, one is cursed. Consequently, children, livestock, and other possessions of great value are shielded from the evil eye. Correspondingly, compliments related to these valued personal possessions as well as to personal successes are discouraged or rejected. As Friday (1985) has remarked, "envy is all about spoiling things. At the bottom it's a desire to destroy" (p. 159).

At present, we must rely on anecdotal reports of the interplay of shame, guilt, jealousy, and envy. But an exciting direction for future research would be to examine the dynamics of these social emotions in the relationships of daily life.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we described some of the antecedents and consequences involved in feelings of jealousy, envy, shame, and guilt. However, a theme that hovers over this chapter is the manner in which these four emotions can result from similar stimuli and can produce intertwined affective reactions. Investigators and clinicians who specialize in these emo-
tions typically do not consider all four emotions in the same package. Shame and guilt experts do not typically collaborate with jealousy and envy experts along theoretical, empirical, or clinical lines. As our chapter emphasized, however, a richer understanding of the functions and adaptive significance of human emotions more generally may emerge from investigations of affective phenomena unconstrained by these traditional boundaries. Similarly, clinical interventions that attempt to draw on an integrated consideration of these maladaptive emotional patterns may be especially effective.

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*PROBLEMATIC SOCIAL EMOTIONS* 193
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