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Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies
29.1 (2023): 207-224
doi: 10.30608/HJEAS/2023/29/1/11

"Nobody Can Be Vulgar All Alone": The Power of Shame in *Broadchurch*

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ABSTRACT
Through positing shame as inherent in women's sexual development, this article explores the screen representations of sexually abused female survivors/victims by focusing especially on the articulation of their selfhood. It interrogates the representation of rape narratives in the television series *Broadchurch* (Amazon 2017) by focusing primarily on the visual culture and visual texts as social texts. Using an intersectional perspective informed by such disciplines as feminism, film and television studies, body politics, trauma studies, and psychology, it also intends to prepare women to be media critical and question the effects of the heavy penetration of popular culture into their lives. The notion of selfhood developed in this article emphasizes embodiment, agency, conscience, and the inextricable relationship between self and other. (AF)

KEYWORDS: Shame, rape, TV series, the Other, guilt, the female body, being-looked-at

Introduction

Broadchurch (2017) is a British crime-drama series produced and directed by Chris Chibnall and James Strong. The third season of the series centers on the sexual abuse investigation of Trish Winterman, a 49-year-old woman who was raped while being intoxicated. After publicly releasing details of Tish's case, DI Alec Hardy and DS Ellie Miller discover that two other women in the small town of Broadchurch have also been assaulted by the same man over the last few years. One woman is eager to help and make a formal statement, whereas the other refuses to do so. Eight episodes follow step by step the work of the detectives and disclose the difficulties of being in an environment where everyone is a suspect, and shame and humiliation alternate interchangeably. This article grapples with the filmic investigation of female shame, and explores how it is manifested, performed, and experienced across different bodies, contexts, and images. It suggests a re-articulation of feminist theories of shame and regards the series as an attempt to restore female dignity through image making by offering a loving and accepting view of the self for the female subjects. I focus my analysis on the social complexities of honor culture, the dichotomous relationship between

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shame and the Other,[1] and the differences between shame (as an intense sensation related to one's morals) and other social emotions, including embarrassment, humiliation, guilt, and so forth, as well as their role in preserving the social order.

Although other TV series such as *Orange is the New Black* or *Sex Education* focus on body positivity by bringing to the forefront stories that women's bodies carry, few producers identify shame, self-blame, and the recurring experience of social isolation that follow sexual abuse as predominant themes in visual culture. On the verge of activism promoted by #metoo, which re-visions women's perception of themselves and encourages them to "scream" for social justice instead of adopting the victim mentality. Strong and Chibnall render the abuse on screen in such a way that viewers are spared the traumatic images. The camera serves as an instrument which explores sexual violence in its full complexity, thus framing women's subjectivities instead of their naked bodies and the abuse they undergo. In the series, our understanding of the survivors' suffering is based solely on bits and pieces of personal memories by traveling back and forth with characters. Strong and Chibnall address female survivors as dominant narrative makers instead of ameliorating rape as a mere cinematic plot device. They intently portray female characters as three-dimensional humans by focusing on their faces at a close range and bringing their despair intimately close to viewers, rather than rendering them as villainous sexual manipulators.

Both filmmakers depend on the characters' faces for the alteration of the meaning of shame, "because the face is the seat of one's identity, and one wishes to conceal oneself during shame," writes Michael Lewis (37). This reliance on facial blushing as a symbolic manifestation and metaphor for shame comes from the message shame entails. As Sara Ahmed notes, the word *shame* signifies covering, which is why it is associated with words such as *hide*, *hut*, or *house* (104). The impulse to cover oneself is intrinsically connected with the failure of the subject to provide concealment for oneself. Initially, Trish shames herself for being the "imperfect victim" and for failing to fulfill her "moral" obligations as a survivor. During her medical examination, she hides from the Other's gaze by turning her whole body away from the camera. She endeavors in some manner to hide by averting her gaze and dropping her head in a sensation more acute and intense than embarrassment. The very physicality of shame forces Trish to reform her body and the social space taken by it, as her body refuses to confront the gaze of the Other witnessing her pain.

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Although shame is a personal and isolated emotion, it evokes a lot of relationality. In *Broadchurch* it is recognized as a channeled experience which determines and controls simultaneously the lives of the abused women and everyone else around them. In the series, it is discerned as the "dirt" which contaminates the entire English town: "[a]n act like this, it sullies everything. It sullies us all," as Arthur Tamworth, the owner of the house Trish got raped in, remarks. The dichotomous relationship between shame and the Other gives meaning and significance to shame. The Other symbolizes a powerful and idealized subject because it is admired by the self. In *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre, the acclaimed philosopher of emotions, reveals the limitations of shame-before-the-other through the example of the voyeur. He argues that shame makes one realize an intimate relationship to oneself, "discover an aspect of [one's] being" (221).

> When the Other describes my character, I do not "recognize" myself and yet I know that "it is me." . . . This Me, which is not to be compared to the Me which I have to be, is still Me but metamorphosed by a new setting and adapted to that setting; it is a being, my being but with entirely new dimensions of being and new modalities. (274)

The Other conditions the feeling of self-negation, of the subject "being against itself," which simultaneously communicates its own failure experienced before another. When an individual feels shame, one confers on the Other an indubitable, immense presence that supports and embraces shame on every side (Sartre 269). This hypothetical presence of the Other's existence becomes probable because we believe that we are constantly looked at without this actually being the case.

After the assault, Trish locks herself in the house, hoping to avoid the burning presence of the outside world's look. Since the rapist remains unidentified by the police, every man around her is viewed as a potential intruder, who could have caused the unspeakable shame. Dealing with an anonymous crime offender means that the dense presence of shame incited by the Other's look cannot be reciprocal. Consequently, Trish chooses solitude and seclusion as the best way of trying to cope with the burden of shame.

The social complexities of shame

In his *Essays on Sexuality* (1896), Sigmund Freud observes the connection between erotogenic zones in one's body and repressive forces

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such as disgust, shame, and morality (xi). He refers to these forces as mental dams which try to determine the development of individuals' sexual instincts (28). Since shame is inherent in humans' sexual journeys (Jacoby 47), each individual has a unique developmental history of shame. In particular, mapping it in women's lives is challenging because violence and pleasure have proved interchangeable when accompanying their sexual journeys. Shame has been continuously used to justify violence, approach discomfort with less talk, and keep women's sexuality at bay.

Women's attachment to others' opinions intensifies their vulnerabilities toward shame. The only way for the shamed subject to liberate herself from the Other's critical look and from seeking constant validation is by recreating the self and reconstructing the inward gaze. As Aristotle points out in his *Rhetoric*:

> We feel no shame before those upon whose opinions we quite look down as untrustworthy (no one feels shame before small children or animals); nor are we ashamed of the same things before intimates as before strangers, but before the former of what seem genuine faults, before the latter of what seem conventional ones. (Barnes 4728)

Since the Other represents the spectatorship, it is the Other who assesses and evaluates the shamed individual (Zahavi 216). People care what opinion is held of them because the people before whom they feel ashamed are those whose opinions matter to them.[2] Additionally, Sara Ahmed explains the ambivalence of shame as a response elicited by a scene that engages our interest, a particular interest in the one witnessing our shame as "someone who has already elicited desire or even love" (105). Thus, despite being a self-reflective emotion, shame emerges from internalizing peripheral social standards and rules.

Sartre affirms that nobody can be vulgar all alone (222). When conjugating shame with vulgarity, he describes non-verbal vulgarity as a shared experience because, as he says, "my vulgarity and my awkwardness surpass the body and refer to a witness capable of understanding them and the totality of my human reality" (222). Sartre's encircling use of gestural vulgarity as an all-encompassing experience is in fact a benevolent representation of this morally crude, lewdly, and "unregenerate" state of being.[3] He reformulates vulgarism as an occurring incident, stimulated by systems of domination, which instantaneously associates vulgarity with immorality. Instead of confining one particular individual as socially degraded

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and coarse, Sartre calls attention to the "banality of power" and communal decadence of the masses who "join in madness and clothe themselves in the flashy rags of power" (Mbembe 29). Through his critique, the existentialist philosopher exposes the constraints and limitations of systems of oppression which, by adopting a position of moral superiority, shame "one of their own."

Some researchers focus on projecting shame as an important motivation in living a moral life, "a bonding mechanism that enables groups to withstand social difficulties" (Billig 23), rather than an obstacle. Additionally, Dolezal equates shame with belonging since it helps humans maintain the social connections necessary for their survival (422), and constitute "a shared understanding of circumstances similarly felt" (Fischer 838). Furthermore, Billig explains that the anticipation of "milder" emotions such as embarrassment ensures that one's self-presentation recovers because it provides a means of repair when social interaction is threatened (25–28).

Due to the conflicting duality attached to the concept of shame, feminist writers have tried consistently to investigate and foster an understanding between the emotion itself and the way it culturally constructs and deconstructs the female body. Dianne Taylor differentiates gendered relations of power in two mutually exclusive modes of recognition, those of inferior women and dominant men. The role of shame is therefore to secure heteronormativity (Healicon 30). In *Sexual Violence and Humiliation*, Taylor explores women's sexual humiliation as an indicator of women's sub-humanity. By situating rape within the context of gendered power, she reflects on "the internalization of a broader view of oneself as subhuman" (48).

In her essay that appeared in *Talking Visions*, bell hooks construes the life journey of women based on a history of shame "written on the body we cannot erase" (65). Although she acknowledges the importance of the naked body as a powerful weapon of resistance against repression, hooks warns that the shameful and contrasting meanings attributed to nakedness are marked by gender and systems of social inequality, which force women to hide the femininity of their bodies, deny their existence, invent gestures of disregard, and live in a state of lonely abandonment (66). Likewise, Jessica Valenti affirms that starting from primitive culture, people believed that women's bodies were in need of restrictions (97), and concludes that "shame inhibits identification" (84). By refusing to see themselves as people who are socially, morally, and legally stigmatized by the presence of others, other characters in *Broadchurch* easily disconnect and detach from Trish's shame, and instead

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"purify" their personal identities. Their fear of identification further isolates and restrains them by deepening feelings of alienation.

Although systems of social inequality provoke the invisibility of women's bodies, some researchers argue that shame can be mediated because certain power-dressing manuals can command the social meanings attributed to their looks. From this privileged, "control room" position, women can garner more authority, sovereignty, and dominance on matters that concern their bodies. These manuals attempt to guide women on how to avoid potentially career-damaging wardrobe errors that construct their appearances as either too feminine and unprofessional, or too masculine and threatening in the eyes of their male colleagues (Edwards 573). This ongoing dichotomy between invisibility and shameful visibility drives women to mimic reductive masculine dress codes (the pantsuit),[4] and encourages them to judge other women on account of what they wear. Admitting the necessity for power-dressing manuals remains problematic and precarious, because it constitutes women's powerlessness and exposes their bodies to the risk of being a potential source of shame, as it is the Other who has most control over its meanings.

Contagious shame

Considering the everyday reality of neoliberal and conservative societies, it is not by coincidence that the female characters of *Broadchurch* are depicted as the shame-bearers, stuck in dysfunctional marriages with men who openly disrespect them and other systems of oppression that sustain their power imbalances. This part of the study focuses on the "contagious" effect of shame that bystanders (female and male) feel when witnessing the shameful behavior of those closest to them. *Broadchurch* foreshadows not only the emotional cost shame brings to all those involved, but also its irreparable damage to friendships and relationships.

The boundaries of shame and the definition of what is dignified vary widely from one individual to the other. So is the case with one of the most intriguing female characters of the third season, Lindsay Lucas, the downtrodden wife of the taxi driver Clive. Seemingly timid, Lindsay confesses to detectives Hardy and Miller that she married Clive sixteen years ago, when she was only nineteen, and that for the last ten years he has been unfaithful to her. Hanging in a loveless marriage for the sake of her son, Lindsay epitomizes the reality of many perplexed women in abusive relationships who abandon their identity and voice for the sake of a conventional family life. The internalized power imbalance between her and Clive, along with her

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being excluded from any sexual fulfillment, alienates her from exercising her own sexuality and femininity, and instead leads her to no longer viewing herself as desiring and desirable. Leaving Lindsay's house, Hardy says: "You know what is bothering me about this case? It makes me ashamed to be a man" (Episode 3, 39:14–39:19).

Cath Atwood, Trish's best friend, has a bold personality and is much more forthcoming than Lindsay, yet she is also stuck in an unhappy, emotionally barren marriage with Jim, her cheating husband. She is ashamed of her husband's "weakness," as she refers to his disloyalty in Episode 5, yet is unable to abandon him. Cath was shattered when she found out about Jim having sex with Trish, her best friend, on the morning of her birthday. Her disappointment with Trish's deceitfulness and betrayal leads her to shame her friend. When referring to the sexual encounter between Trish and her husband, Cath says: "Christ, his standards have slipped. . . . Jesus, I never knew the smell of mildew turned him on" (Episode 5, 17:32–17:47). Cath and Trish, both in their fifties, belong to the generation of women who have gone through the process of degrading "one of their own," since this kind of rejection of other women would often grant an "entry ticket" for women aspiring to be male's favorites. Cath's anger and disturbance derive their intensity not only from Trish's hypocrisy and Jim choosing Trish over her, but from being deceived by them both.

Vengeance to Cath meant dishonoring Trish's aging body relentlessly by giving Trish looks of disgust and saying: "Here is what I do not understand. Of all the women at that party . . . why would somebody rape you? Does not make sense" (Episode 5, 19:32–19:46). She casts out her friend as unsuitable to be desired/raped and brings to light the complex issue of equating sexual abuse with sex and desire. Cath further justifies her reaction as morally appropriate and motivated by a demand for purity and freedom from the contamination shame brings. Thus, part of Cath's "healing journey" is projecting her own shame onto Trish, and the adoption of punishing practices of insult and scorn. This way, she imposes meanings on the desired body which fit into popular patriarchal discourses of aging, and filters out women like Trish who are just a "spur-of-the-moment," "a stupid mistake," and with whom men sleep out of pity. The controversy arises from the fact that Trish's aging body threatens Cath's self-confidence because it embodies the fear of how she might be perceived by the male audience. Cath's insecurities come to light when she converses with Ed Burnett after learning that Jim had sex with Trish. In this scene, a very vulnerable Cath asks for external validation:

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> Cath: Am I attractive, Ed?
> Ed: What?
> Cath: Come on. It is a simple enough question.
> Ed: Right, well, erm. . . I have to be careful, because as your boss, you know, sexual harassment laws. . .
> Cath: All right, look. If you did not know me, would you want to. . . to have sex with me?
> Ed: Well, yeah, probably,
> Cath: God, probably? Well, thanks for the ringing endorsement.
> Ed: All right, definitely! What sort of question is that, anyway?
> Cath: I do not know. I just. . . want to know if I am past it." (Episode 5, 35:20–36:00)

Cath's reliance on shame as a public motive encourages gendered social hierarchies. Based on narrowly defined and unattainable beauty standards, she marginalizes Trish's body since she fails to be a prevalent representation of femininity. In their work about gender and aging, Deborah Jermyn and Su Holmes state that "in a youth-obsessed culture, the everyday lives and appearances of older people remain 'Other'" (2). Thus, Cath masquerades and distances herself from her own shame by making Trish feel of a lesser worth, unfit of attention, and not "shame proper."

Broadchurch has been praised for defying traditional representations of rape, though it does not resist dominant images of masculine norms. At first, Trish seems in control of her life. She is more determined regarding her marriage; once things stop working between her and her husband, she is brave enough to separate from him. Yet, the abuse disrupts that control and instead questions the moral life of the men living in the community surrounding Trish, since after the attack the police have to interrogate at least fifty men who attended the party. One of the characters who falls prey to the culture of shame is her husband, Ian. When the detectives ask him about his relationship with Trish, Ian states that

> It is not very nice seeing the woman you used to be married to drunk and cavorting with a lot of strange men. I mean, by all accounts, she has slept with half a dozen blokes in the last few months. God knows how many of them were at the party. It is embarrassing. Technically, we are still married. (Episode 2, 23:23–23:50)

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Through his monologue, Ian expresses his discontent regarding Trish's lifestyle. He admits to feeling humiliated and tries to encourage "age-appropriate" behavior for women. His conservative views on aging and Trish's life choices translate into sex being considered as a "need" primarily for men. By acting carelessly, Trish denigrates being his wife, whichs incites further anger and shame in Ian. Further in the series, Ian confesses installing a spyware on Trish's computer, claiming that through the camera he wanted to check on her because since their separation he has missed her. As an active participant of honor culture, he establishes important expectations of behavior toward Trish, and unconsciously confirms that it is her behavior which governs and "threatens" his masculine honor.

General discussions of sexual desire, according to the editors of *Gender and Aging*, marginalize men and women as "opposites," and reinforce conversations which regard male sexuality as active, whereas female sexuality is labeled as passive (Arber 69). In other words, the male sexual "urge" is seen as a natural force over which men could exert little control. Trish confounds the stereotype of the passive middle-aged woman by actively exercising and asserting her sexual desires. She reiterates misogynistic discourses which try to reshape and reform her sexuality based on the accepted social norms. By celebrating her life and sexuality, she defies her aging body.

The rhetoric of honor culture operates at such an abstract level that it manages to masterfully hide ambiguities, states Gilbert (258). In a study related to masculine honor, the author analyzes manhood as dependent on the perception of others, which needs to be continuously proven through public behaviors, otherwise it risks being lost (Chalman 2). Being a fundamentally social status, masculine honor cannot occur in a vacuum; it is "a man's claim on the world, the ultimate explanation for a man's choice" (Gilbert 277). The notion of honor is celebrated in Ian's behavior through it being intrinsically connected with his public reputation and public esteem: "if a man has lost his reputation, then he has lost his value in the eyes of all the members of the group, and this includes himself" (Gabriele Taylor 55).

Ian is not the only man in *Broadchurch* who jeopardizes Trish's privacy. Ed Burnett, the owner of the local farm shop where Trish worked, was stalking Trish for almost a decade. Detectives Hardy and Miller find on his phone 5,219 photos dating back ten years. When confronted about his unhealthy obsession, he professes his love for Trish and states that "I have told you how I feel about her. It is not against the law." Ed is clearly convinced that the pictures he possesses are romantic and that the detectives

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are trying to manipulate the truth, deceive him, and turn the situation into something it is not.

The stereotypical image of manhood that Ed and Ian represent constructs a damaged, hierarchical, and dominant masculinity, which subjugates women to certain codes of behavior, and simultaneously widens the gap of gendered power inequalities in the show. Their acts not only foreshadow their insecurities about themselves, but also resemble Michel Foucault's metaphor of the Panopticon. Using the camera as a tool of exercising their power, Ian and Ed appear as "inspectors" from a privileged central location; their main intention is to monitor and "discipline" Trish. In this system of control, Trish resembles a powerless "prisoner," who is being observed without her consent.

Detective Hardy, on the other hand, represents a different side of the spectrum. Several times in the show, when witnessing different men abusing their power over their wives, their children, and the surrounding community, he states: "I am ashamed of being a man." He introduces a compassionate version of masculinity in the show,[5] which tries to install healthier ideas about fatherhood and provide support for women. Yet, his generic statements about manhood can easily be misunderstood since, unconsciously, he glorifies and romanticizes himself by criticizing the behavior of other men. "The male ideal is so deeply seated within us that we buy it for our daughters," states Buchwald in her essay when referring to the ways adult culture is educating the young generation (198). We take the worst cultural stereotypes and replace them with role models for a more egalitarian world. Sympathizing with Hardy and what he represents does not justify shaming and demonizing Jim Atwood, Ian Winterman, Ed Burnett, and Clive Lucas, who do not conform to his standards of manhood. If we, as viewers, narrowly categorize men into two binary categories, then we are being too astigmatic. Thus, despite Hardy's persona as an avant-garde man with unquestionable respect for female characters in the show, it is not indicative of categorizing manhood in rhetorical and reductive classifications, such as "good versus bad" men. This would only provide myopic views of masculinity, but would also prevent everyone from analyzing the causes of shame these men from the community of Broadchurch mirror to these women. In turn, disregarding such binary categorizations would help us understand men's individualistic standpoints, and identify more broadly what incites women's shame while searching for solutions.

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Shame of the deviant

Throughout history, the boundaries of what constitutes shame in women's lives are built upon women's bodies as bearers of a nation's identity. In a text written more than a century ago, Sigmund Freud condemns individuals who disobey the power of the community (*Civilization* 49), because community power constitutes civilization, and the cultural development of the individual is always interlocked with the cultural development of the group (107). The essence of sexual abuse lies in the fact that the abused individuals "fail" to refrain themselves from outside "contamination," and, as a result, end up with corrupted ethical values and morals.

Public trials against sexually abused women not only threaten them with disintegration and lack of privileges, but also serve as an opportunity for the community to channel its control and prevent anyone in the future from escaping adopted social and moral restrictions. Unfortunately, in most cases it is women more than men who are cast out as the "moral breakers" and shamed in the major sites of social life (Bartky 93). Let us now explore the shame that Trish, Nira, and Laura as women with subordinate identities experience, with a focus on the gendered implications of placing shame on them since it is their bodies that carry the risk of corrupting standards of morality.

Fischer identifies women's sexual purity as the essential and differentiating feature in the formation of the national identity of old Ireland. Women's bodies were deemed problematic since their potential impurity threatened nationhood (823). The sexual immorality of women and girls was understood through the prism of contagion, therefore the politics of shame operated by controlling their "polluted" bodies directly through physical and psychosocial confinement (Fischer 830–35). The institutionalization of women who dared to risk the moral purity of the nation was the only way to discipline their bodies. Likewise, Judeo-Christian mythology depicted women's desires as out-of-control, as sites of danger and disgust, which had to be controlled, in opposition to the male body, which was routinely represented as contained, controlled, orderly, and with definite boundaries (Wilz 81).

After the forceful invasion of their bodies, an overpowering system of domination is created which causes Trish, Laura, and Nira to feel intense pain, moral inadequacy, and unworthiness. Being the objects and the subjects of their own shame, these women experience that the boundaries of shame are inevitably fused and blurred. In the case of sexual abuse, body, face, and mind create separate discourses, which at first appear confusing, but shortly

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intermingle and articulate one sole experience. The growing sense of inferiority discomforts the rape survivors of *Broadchurch* to the extent that it corrupts their views of themselves as individuals and leads to their submission. The physicality of shame gradually becomes apparent in the show through their bodily reactions. In most scenes, when communicating their abuse, all three of them limit visual contact by dropping their eyes, since, as Sedgwick argues, the self lives in the face and burns brightest in the eyes (136). Additionally, their heads, and sometimes the whole upper part of their bodies remain hunched to signal their longing for invisibility and desire to avoid the other person's face.

Within the large universe of patriarchal social relations, it is the harmonious relationship with the surrounding community which makes it difficult for rape survivors as "shame-existing subjects" (Zahavi 221) to separate "the inner from the outer shame" (Bartky 85). In the aftermath of her body's violation, Trish feels shame not only because of the importance of others in her life, but due to the judgment attached to the opinion about her prior to the assault. As she is a middle-aged woman, Trish's shame takes another form, especially upon learning that her rapist was an adolescent. The conflict she feels arises from the disruption of the "natural" order caused by someone her daughter's age, and her inability to defend herself from a teenage rapist.

Bringing the focus onto Trish in this way, through close-ups, the series invites viewers to consider her metamorphosis. At first, shame isolates her, but later on it is also shame that makes her socially astute by structuring and reshaping her relationships with those around her. Trish transforms herself from a passive, "imperfect" victim to an active survivor. This shift symbolizes her gratitude in seeking justice and saving other women in the community. Although guilt accompanies her in almost every episode at the beginning of the show, Trish's perception of herself gradually changes:

> Cath: Look, I know you are not the same person you were before you were raped, but
> Trish: I am more that person now than I have ever been. Now get out.
> Cath: Fine.
> Trish: No, no, no, no. Not that way. Not through my house. Back way. Slink out, like your husband did. (Episode 8, 36:13–36:32)

This conversation between the two childhood friends marks the end of their friendship. The viewers witness Trish's "destruction," her burst into the

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flames of her own shame, then her rebirth. She experiences a powerful renewal and is reborn from her ashes like the mythical Phoenix. A confident Trish breaks free from the shame and all the other social stigmas which accompanied her throughout her journey. At the end, she appears unapologetic, keeping her head high with a confident posture, leaving all the ghosts of the past behind, and ready to embark on the next stage of her life.

The character of Nira represents a girl who refuses to make a public statement or report the assault to the local authorities as it is difficult for her to deal with the fallout and the perceived stigma. She shares her story of abuse with sexual violence advisors only. It is impossible to make an assessment about the shame Nira experiences without recognizing the power dynamics involved. Her sense of self-worthlessness begins with her internal "deficiency" as a representative of a minority group deprived of racial privileges, and expands to the external shame she is expected to endure because of engaging in "morally inappropriate behaviour." Her words, "If I report it, I have to tell my family. And they will be upset. And they will tell others and . . . to all those people, I will forever be the girl that was raped" (Episode 6, 13:23–13:28) reveal that she is afraid of others jeopardizing her identity. Nira is aware that if people around her learn about the sexual abuse, her perception of herself would be transformed. In order to control the distribution of her power, she stays silent, resists public surveillance, and prevents others from viewing her exposed, vulnerable self.

While recalling the assault, Nira turns pale. Her eyes freeze, her face trembles, and she gets defensive because she believes that she is further shamed for choosing not to disclose the details of her attack to the authorities. In her conversation with the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor, Nira feels judged because others have tried to inhibit her opportunity for self-determination by not respecting her decision and boundaries. Her testimony would serve as a reciprocal transaction for opportunities for justice by the bureaucratic system, therefore, her abuse is not considered as a personal matter but rather as a public one, and as a result, her empowerment is not articulated. Nira embodies all those survivors whose refusal to disclose details of the assault reflects that they are not entitled to continuous support; consequently, very little attention is dedicated to them.

Edwards views women's proneness to shame as an important component of their continued oppression and argues that "one reason why women appear to be particularly shame-prone is because the feminine body "is always, potentially at least, a sexual body," which means that regardless of their intentions, women are liable to become visible as sexual beings (572).

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He further analyzes clothing as an important trigger of shame for women, as it fails them in ways it cannot fail men. Additionally, Sedgwick parallels clothing with veiling one's genitals. He refers to the biblical story of Adam and Eve and says that everything changed for humankind when in the Garden of Eden, Eve ate the forbidden fruit, representing the immoral. After Eve's indulgence, in Genesis 3:7, Adam and Eve had to sew fig leaves to cover their nakedness. Being naked made them both conscious of their bodies and also exposed them to feelings of guilt, shame, and unworthiness, hence the fig leaves to cover their nakedness. So is the case of Laura Benson, who in her interrogation by one of the detectives, says:

> Alec**:** Did you speak to anyone about the attack at the time?
> Laura**:** My GP. A week or two after. She told me I should report it. I told her I did not want to. I did not tell anyone. Till now.
> Alec**:** Why didn't you want to report this at the time?
> Laura**:** I know what happens. I read the papers. I had had a lot to drink. I mean, a lot. Plus, short skirt. Nice top. Make-up. You think I do not know what they would do to me? I know how women like me get treated.
> Alec**:** Not by us. (Episode 5, 03:36–04:13)

The short dialogue between distressed Laura and Detective Hardy confirms that clothing for women is bound up with protection. Laura thought that dressing more conservatively would effortlessly provide her with invisibility in the eyes of the rapist, hence more power and control over her body. She feels guilty because she accepts and favors the moral demands of the community around her, and limits her own. As Freud describes, this helplessness and desperation that comes with guilt is internalized by the shamed individual to the extent that a fear of loss of love is foreshadowed (85). At the same time, her shame-anxiety over clothing is connected with a fear of being shamed through one's own fault, "one's own carelessness, adverse circumstances" (Jacoby viii). In the aftermath of rape, Laura's intimacy with herself is interrupted as she feels polluted and believes that the chosen outfit was the catalyst that incited the abuse. Although the victim's clothing should be inadmissible if introduced to show that she welcomed or consented to the sexual abuse, courts have considered clothing to be probative, relevant evidence.

The silent protest of all women of the community of Broadchurch in Episode 8 embodies remarkably not only their resistance to shame but also their defiance: these women vociferously manifest each-others' vulnerabilities

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in a way which ensures they are all heard, believed, and their truths are ascertained. Such gestures of solidarity not only limit the manifestation of prevailing responses to sexual violence, but also function as commitments to "acknowledge, validate, and support the disclosure of other victims/survivors" (Taylor, *Sexual* 110). Such shared transformative disclosures give rise to joint sentiments which bind women together, and help them reclaim personal control over judgments that reverberate with shame. Their gathering represents a fascinating union of supportive agendas which, on one end of the spectrum, chart and mobilize their empowerment through authenticity and anti-oppressive protests. On the other end, this harmonic merging of their consolidation builds contemporary and safe spaces where the basis for a new sexual morality can be articulated and victimhood is not recognized as an influential marker of one's identity.

Conclusion

Shame's power to incite moral panic renders women helpless agents of social control. Many women in today's neoliberal or conservative societies undervalue themselves based on questionably objective systems of morality, and base their self-perception on outside systems of evaluation. Therefore, shame is exposed as a fall into disgrace resulting in a loss of honor marked by a stigma or a stain. The humiliation coming from sexual abuse disturbs one's self-esteem and widely encourages a whole new phase of self-depreciation, for the survivor/victim hears outside judgments and unconsciously adopts them as their own. Shame is closely tied to the Other's eye represented by the community, which reinforces the demeaning feelings of degradation.

After the assault, the subjectivity of Nira, Trish, and Laura is diminished. Their selfhood is discussed as frozen and closely tied to their "otherness" due to their sexually stimulating bodies. As the events unfold, they prove that the boundaries given to one's self-image after a physical and/or psychological abuse are blurred, and in that vulnerable position external judgments of the self are applied. In community-based cultures that so often and so early make girls and women feel powerless, everything that nourishes playfulness needs to be cherished and cultivated daily. Shame plays a structural role in the construction of female desire, especially mature women's desire. For this reason, the director and scriptwriter re-establish the figure of middle-aged women as desirable and alluring. Through their screening techniques, they also criticize and disapprove of the suppressing

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power of honor culture which numbs the boundaries of privacy and desensitizes violence toward women.

The cumulative effect of violent media is evident in the choices of many women's lives who, being afraid of what might happen to their bodies, lose the zest for living their lives, and are instead faced with a continuously lessening self-esteem instead of exploring who they really are. To counter shame, the mirror (camera) is a critical apparatus for the construction of female subjectivity and beauty. The scriptwriter and director prioritize techniques and dialogues which do not isolate the shamed individuals in their deadly thoughts, but support them instead, and introduce the viewer to their triumphant journeys of empowerment.

Sexual abuse is a universal predation and as such it cannot be fought solely by women. Instead of encouraging women to cultivate self-pity after being raped, and instructing men how to comfortably become perpetrators of violence, *Broadchurch* reconstructs women's visibility and uses the influence of the camera to provide a protected and comforting space where the stories of shamed female subjects can be heard without judgment. This TV show demolishes shaming images by assembling new, affirming images which seek to empower and privilege women. Once women accept shame, they also accept that there is something deeply wrong with them, something that is in some sense intrinsic and therefore cannot be fixed. That something, if exposed, would forever alter their relationships, not only with others but, most importantly, with themselves. Therefore, asserting and cultivating solidarity with the self and the world resonates with possibilities and works as a counter-humiliating strategy.

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Notes

1. It is the Other (imaginary or present) that gives meaning and significance to shame (Dolezal 422). Once the defaming social gaze is internalized, shame no longer requires a social audience to judge its subject.

2. Such persons are: those who admire us, those whom we admire, those by whom we wish to be admired, those with whom we are competing, and those whose opinion of us we respect (Barnes 4727).

3. "Vulgar" as defined by Merriam-Webster.

4. During the presidential election campaign of 2016, Hillary Clinton's infamous pantsuit turned into the media's main focus.

5. This is used as a descriptive, not a labeling term. I do not intend to reinforce gender stereotypes by creating big groups of "toxic" versus "non-toxic" masculinity because

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those binary oppositions are reductive traps that every researcher ought to be cautious of. In describing the behavioral characteristics of male characters, I refer to terms such as gentle, compassionate, tender, and empathetic as explanatory ones only.

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