Politics of Shame in Turkey: Public Shaming and Mourning

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Abstract

The politics of shame makes part of the politics of affects. It is becoming a prominent form of politics in the age of social media. Social media, insofar as it presents a plurality of perspectives, can be a milieu for public deliberation. Acknowledging that politics of shame can be of different types, this essay considers two different experiences of politics of shame in social media. It compares public shaming as an activist strategy of moral reform in contemporary feminist politics with politics of shame under authoritarianism by concentrating on two cases from Turkey. At first the structure of shame will be articulated by recourse to the phenomenological and psychological theories of shame. In public shaming for feminist moral reform, the publically shamed agent, who is a feminist, is accused by a group for performing an injurious speech act or a deed with mediate pernicious, harmful consequences. It is my contention that a theory of gender or sexual difference can be false, but is not morally equivalent to an attack on somebody's existence, racism, and acts of genocide denial. Practices of public shaming in feminism are not self-defense; they are repressive and unfair attacks that destroy public deliberation. It is also problematic to attack feminists, on the grounds of arguments that are based on analogies, which do not apply to non-Western geo-political contexts. All politics of shame is not wrong. For example, the practices of politics of shame that concern non-elaborate mourning have moral and political value insofar as they can play a role in challenging an authoritarian political rule. In this case, the public shame results from attesting to injustice done to the other(s) in the public sphere, a public sphere, which is already closed, and highly manipulated by the authoritarian state.

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In the feeling of shame there is predominantly at issue the agency of a morally wrong action, direct or indirect responsibility for an unjust state of affairs. One may feel guilty and be ashamed of oneself as the subject of a shameful act because one has done the morally wrong thing or omitted to do the morally right thing. Hanna Ballin Lewis argues that both shame and guilt are superego functions; whereas shame is linked with a negative assessment of the self, guilt implies a negative assessment of an action (Lewis 1971). According to this view, guilt is associated with the deed and shame with the character of the agent. One feels guilty if one acts in the morally wrong way, but the object of shame is the *self*. Cast in the language of virtue ethics, one is ashamed of one's self for being such a person, either for having vicious character traits or for lacking virtues. Virtues and vices are acquired in relations with others. And one can be ashamed of one's self as a relational being for not taking sufficient care of the people for whom one is responsible, and if one harms other people by injurious words and deeds.

Durkheim regarded shame and guilt as emotions that lead to moral life, instruments of social control, which socially constrain agents for the maintenance of social order (Scheff 1999). Public shaming was a legal practice in the past but civilization moved away from public shaming that was formally inscribed in law because, as Russell Blackford argues, we have accepted that 'it is not our job to punish individuals and make examples of them' (Blackford 2016). Martha Nussbaum, too, in *Hiding From Humanity* (Nussbaum 2004) opposes to the practices of shaming in US penal law because she thinks shame is a normatively unreliable feeling in public life and public shaming is an insult to human dignity and freedom.

Although the politics of shame is enrooted in the tradition, it calls for a new elaboration in the technological age. Indeed, public shaming has come back in the technological age of social media. The contemporary social media activism practices public shaming not for maintaining an existing status quo; it aims at morally reforming the society. To this end, it also employs non-philosophical strategies that amount to the dismissal of the opponent's speech acts that are prone to *reasonable rejection*, as evidence of the speaker's morally worthless self. False analogies and slippery slope arguments are used to establish that the words used in public debate are injurious or morally wrong. People should be publically criticized if they acted wrongly in public but the criticism should be fair and proportional to the act. Moral reform must be based on fair symbolic exchange. Moral reformers who struggle for good, emancipatory ends should not employ violent means such as silencing the interlocutors who attempt to express their legitimate concerns. Public shaming makes examples of the publically shamed individuals for scaring and silencing the spectators. The third party fears harm to its social being if it disagrees. Public shaming is different than fair criticism for it terrorizes: It aims at the civil death of the individual it targets, by cancelling the person, destroying her reputation, boycotting her works, and getting her to lose her job. This is the new strategy to reform the general public. Of course this style of social media activism that spreads fear sharply contrasts with the previous generations of activists who solved disputes through peaceful dialogue and discourse. Public shaming in this form is an instrument of politics of war; it a cruel, mean, and brutal way of social punishment of publically reputed individuals by groups. To prey upon a reputable victim by creating a scene of public shaming serves some activists better in attracting the public attention to instruct the general public the new terms and arguments of their theory and politics.

This essay acknowledges that there can be good and bad employments of politics of shame. Firstly, it disagrees with the use of public shaming by feminist activists that targets other feminists for theoretical disagreements over the nature of sex and gender. Public shaming in this case is not an instrument of moral progress to overcome oppression; it is an oppressive strategy that prevents intellectual progress by democratic participation to the public debate. Moreover, it can be more harmful when it is adopted as a global, universal activists' strategy without taking into consideration what happens to feminist movement in different geo-political contexts. Turkey, where feminist organizations are crushed by the authoritarian state and feminism is still very weak and fragile in the academia, is a good example for the great need of feminist coalition and solidarity against the state assaults.

Under authoritarianism that violently suppresses political subjectivity, shame can be a revolutionary feeling and politics of shame a part of resistance. One can be ashamed for the unjust treatment of the others by the state. This experience of shame will be addressed by looking at two cases of non-elaborate public mourning from Turkey. In these cases, one, as the third party, feels shame at the face of the suffering others, for the system of oppression, in which one is also implicated because of living there. This kind of public shame may destabilize an authoritarian regime, if it leads the third party to political action rather than to self-devaluing apathy.

To evaluate these examples of public shame, the phenomenological and psychological theories of shame will be relied upon. From a Sartrean analysis of shame, we derive the importance of the role of the third party and suggest that the convertibility of shame to guilt has to do with the heterogeneity of the Other in Lacan's sense. Convertibility of shame to guilt presupposes that the agent accepts that she has acted in the morally wrong way. In the second section the reasons for disagreeing with public shaming within feminism will be laid out. Lastly, in the third section, public shame that ensues from political injustice and impunity will be at issue. Although the public shaming of the individuals who participate in public debate by groups that operate with too broad definitions of injurious speech is morally and politically problematic, in the cases of public shame for unjust state acts, politics of shame can be emancipatory.

Phenomenology of Shame

Jean-Paul Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, highlights the corporeal dimension of shame and stipulates that shame is about the relational self. Shame is a non-positional mode of self-consciousness lived (*Erlebnis*) as an intimacy of myself to me and is not originally a phenomenon given in reflection. 'It is in its primary structure shame before *somebody*' (Sartre 2003, p. 221). In Sartre's account shame does not merely concern the moral character independently of the body as a corporeal being. His phenomenology of shame plays a pivotal role in explicating the being of the subject, of the I, as a corporeal being in the modality of being for others. More specifically, the feeling of shame has the ontological effect of inserting the subject as consciousness (being-for-itself) in the world, exposes that the subject is a being for others. In the shameful experience the subject takes cognizance of itself as embodied.

Shame is often presented as a clash between individual narcissism and society. In Sartre, it is also alienation, because it is an objectification, a freezing of the subject in

the object—that is seen by the other. Seeing something is to grasp it in an image. And being caught up in an image seen and not being able to get out, is lived by the relational subject as not being free. Thus in shame the subject passes from invulnerability to vulnerability.

In Freud's early work (1900, p. 246) too, shame is presented as a social feeling that includes predominantly the eyes of the other. Lacan follows Freud and Sartre in the argument that shame has to do with the others' gaze. He writes: 'A gaze is this object lost and which is unexpectedly recovered in the explosion of shame, through the appearance of the other' (Lacan 1998, p. 182 translation modified). Not only my shame becomes visible to the other in the blushing of my face, in shame I discover the other's gaze, which I can at other times ignore or escape from. Even though the privileges that accrue to me in social and symbolic positions may facilitate my evasion from the Other's gaze, in shame how I am situated becomes visible, creating a paralysis that may lead to a resolution in an apology. Both Sartre and Lacan see shame as interrupting the pre-reflective automatic engagement in the practice or action that is considered as shameful.

In Lacan's framework shame as a social feeling is transfigured as a relation to the Other. The Other, as part of the linguistically structured unconscious, is as internal as external, as language is. In this framework shame becomes a symbolic question. It presupposes the internalization of a norm or moral principle, which makes an action unacceptable or morally wrong, at least under normal non-conflicting conditions in which something else morally significant is not at risk. A child who stole something would be ashamed if he believes that stealing is wrong. She would not be ashamed only because she is caught in stealing. To be ashamed one should know that a given behavior is morally wrong and that one willingly or unwillingly behaved in that way. This means, insofar as the Other is internalized, one can be ashamed of oneself even though there are no real witnesses to morally wrong action. The Other is the lost gaze we encounter in shame; it looks at us from the inside as much as outside.

Let us now turn to the experience of public shaming in social media in which the worth of a person as a self is made an object of the gaze of the others (third parties), often by the interpretation of her words and deeds in the accusative mode. The scene of public shaming is often structured as the asymmetrical relation of many against one. The struggle is about the Other in the Lacanian sense, a fight over normativity, ethics. Shamers assume the position of moral reformers, and preach ethics by exhibiting what is wrong in others' comments and posts, which are often removed from their original contexts, reframed, distorted, and serviced to other pages. Such screen images are supposed to exhibit somebody in who they are; assuming that the real self can be manifested in repeated and displaced words and deeds. The person is now exposed to the public gaze and becomes an object of the indefinite number of interpretations, which are beyond her control. She is an object brought under the intersubjective gaze to which an indefinite number of unknown gazes are invited to join, a gaze that becomes psycho-political subject of cruel pleasure.

This is a hopeless situation because the individual is showered by a multiplicity of the voices that make derogatory comments, which she cannot answer one by one. The participant voices may have very different reasons to fuse with the group. They may genuinely be moral reformers or just use the opportunity to socially appear under a certain moral light. Some might resent the publically shamed character, others might

envy the privileges they could have attribute to her. Public shaming can be an outlet for a safe release of 'right' anger in the historical and social sense and may provide the participant with the opportunity to assume a group identity. The initiators of the public shaming intend to give a warning or lesson to the general public about what it is not acceptable to say. Not only the person who is publically shamed but also those who are silently watching the dehumanization scene, the third party, receive a political message.

The third party, the witness who is the subject of the gaze, is structurally a key element in situations in which shame and humiliation are experienced. Indeed, the third party is expected to make an evaluative judgment on the situation by testifying to it. Her judgment can be independent of the specific political framing of the problem imposed by the shaming group's political discourse. Indeed, the third party plays a decisive role in the final organization of the dramatic plot of the event. It is due to the third party that the event gains a spatio-temporal fixity and form in the narrative sequence.

Public shaming is a traumatic, depersonalizing event for the individual who is undergoing it; the person may isolate herself, hide from humanity, experience depression that may lead to suicide, lose her will to relate to others and become a suspicious, reserved person. In public shaming one is gazed at by the others; the enjoined gazes express themselves in derogatory and judgmental language of absolutely and indubitably superior ethical standards. Ethical arguments are instrumentalized to crush a person and their application to her might involve questionable projections, false analogies, and other fallacies. During the attack all the significant achievements in a person's life would be degraded. Her past 'mistakes' and accusations directed at her would be excavated from the electronic traces. The information recuperated from the cyber space, would be bent to serve the present purposes. The person under attack is made a spectator of the totalization of her life in hostility and hate, as if the final judgment is actually given on her already completed life, as if she is deceased. The analogy with the deceased is fair because public shaming is an attempt to kill a person as a self, an agent, depriving her of the possibility of any future action and production.

Whether shaming is a good strategy for motivating moral/political behavior is a relevant question. According to Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 2007 study, guilt can lead to correcting the behavior but shame, because it concerns in a holistic manner the self as a whole, impedes the pro-active attitude to focus on the behavior to understand why it is bad and to change it in the future. 'Rather than needing to defend the exposed core of one's identity, people in the throes of guilt are drawn to consider their behavior and its consequences' (Tangney et al. 2007, p. 395). In shame I am revealed to myself as a horrible person, in the essentialist and a-temporal sense, which precludes any possibility of change. This experience of the self may give to self-defense by attacking others destructively, or to regain control by disowning and laying responsibility on a scapegoat. James Gilligan (1996, p. 110) who conducted a research in prisons, on the origins of crime holds that the feeling of shame is 'the primary or ultimate cause of all violence.' He writes: 'I have yet to see a serious act of violence that was not provoked by the experience of feeling shamed and humiliated, disrespected and ridiculed.'

Unresolved shame amounts to protection of the self through consolidation of identity, anger and hostility towards others whereas resolved shame can involve the acknowledgment of the wrongdoing and empathy for the hurt. According to Sluzki, shame leads to an ego-syntonic experience if the plot of the event is organized in a

demeaning way and the subject assumes and internalizes it (Sluzki 2013, p. 48). However, if the shamed subject reclaims subjectivity in public, perceives humiliation as external and is eventually joined by the witnesses (third parties), the experience of shame becomes 'an ego-dystonic experience.' Although in the ego-dystonic experience of shame the subject maintains self-respect and moral dignity, in the ego-syntonic experience of shame the person's self-respect and moral dignity is destroyed in his or her own eyes. In the ego-syntonic experience the person wishes to escape and hide, whereas in the ego-dystonic experience they build caring social and political bonds with the public.

It can be argued that an ego-syntonic experience can become an ego-dystonic experience if shame is convertible to guilt. Nonetheless, when public shaming involves unfairness and cruelty, it is unclear if the subject can recover by converting shame to guilt. Public shaming stipulates shame as a consequence of guilt, and attempts to make a moral trial of a person. The culprit is called to accept her moral fault for which she is 'guilty' and this makes in principle possible the recovery of the worthless self, which is now exposed as the object of shame. It is unclear what moral wrongs justify the subjection of an individual to public shame in the first place. There may be no good reasons for the morally blamed person to be convinced that she has said or done anything wrong. If she is not given the platform to explain how she relates to what is designated as her 'moral fault,' the right thing to do for her is to reject the strategy to convert shame to guilt and refuse to make an apology. In public shaming the individual is deprived of the platform to discuss her own views and accused of denying responsibility for the alleged injury.

Levinas sees shame as a feeling of ethical significance. In *Totality and Infinity* he argues that ethical relation is a relation in which the subject realizes its imperfection measuring itself against the perfection of the Other. This does not happen by theoretical judgment but is accomplished in the consciousness of shame (Levinas 1979, p. 84). In shame freedom discovers its arbitrariness and its murderous nature. Here, shame concerns the attitude to theorize independently of the relation to the Other, without taking into account the Other's experiences. Feminists believe that the self is existentially situated in intersecting kinds of oppression and that justice and equality requires taking into account various kinds of historical hierarchies. To multiply the speakers from different standpoints and to let the oppressed speak for themselves is of paramount importance. Privilege is a relative term and may change from context to context. One can be privileged because of being middle class woman who has an academic job, in a country in which there is 25 percent unemployment. One should perhaps remain silent just because of that inequality. And be ashamed for not being expelled by the government for political reasons as many fellow academics were. Who is white and who is black if one applies intersectionalist feminism to this context? You do not have to act or say anything for being morally ashamed; it suffices to have the 'privileges' others do not have. If it is shameful to theorize about gender oppression without considering the experiences of the oppressed, which are intersectionally structured, is not it worth considering the experience of those who are analogously attributed white privilege?

It is highly problematic to justify public shaming of an individual by a group by invoking Levinas' ethical relation. First of all, according to Levinas the relation with the Other in the face-to-face relation cannot be decided from the outside; even if the

third is inscribed in the face-to-face relation, it is not even up to the third party to judge whether or not a public speech derives from a face-to-face relation. Should an intellectual be held guilty of, and therefore subject to public shame for theorizing without taking into account the experiences of the more oppressed, instead of recognizing her privileges and keeping silent? This argument from epistemic violence is problematic if it cuts off all critical discussion about how experiences are construed by activists as group leaders. Experiences can be formulated in advance for groups thereby closing the space for free dissent. In other words, fused groups tend to repress individual experiences: If a certain telos politically structures the experience; people are not allowed to disagree with it by giving expression to different narratives.

According to Levinas being in an ethical relation is not to offer excuses or pretexts to escape responsibility. Invoking the ethical relation to fix the perspective from which an ethical situation is perceived and understood, and to reduce politics to ethics, produces an anti-levinasian outcome because the third party and its legitimate concerns are dismissed. The descriptions of public shaming as possible relations to the Levinasian Other should be disagreed with for a Levinasian reason: No group can set the terms of the encounter between me and the Other. Rather than the Levinasian ethical relation, public shaming can be a relation to the Lacanian Other, in which ethics is cruelly appropriated for the narcissistic enjoyment of the superego. The main concern of the superego is how one is seen, and the anxiety about visibility can become a source from which power is derived. In the Levinasian ethical relation, how I relate to the Other cannot be subject to public shaming, because a group is not entitled to set the terms for the encounter of the Other by me. This goes against the relation Levinas describes 'as ethical relation.' First of all the ethical relation is not between an individual and a group, and it is not about the non-critical acceptance of what I am told by the Other. The third party and the Other may have different concerns and I have to hear their conflicting interests.

We should ask if this instrumentalization of ethics and political correctness is anything ethical and if it can indeed contribute to the creation of a better world. The prevalence of the politics of shame indicates the prominent role ethics has started to play in politics. It is worrisome that politics of shame has come to be the main instrument in changing the world to overcome oppression. There is a problem in making it the fundamental political strategy in the struggle for equal rights. Can we achieve equality if the professional dissenting voices are charged with epistemic privilege and silenced? These dissenting voices might express the concerns and interests of other disadvantageous groups. Ethics is a domain of conflicting interests, using universal principles and neglecting to take different contexts into account turns ethics into a means of terror rather than a discourse that peacefully mediates and transforms the public.

The Public Shaming in Feminism

In this section I focus particularly on the international—the new trans rights activisms' group shaming of feminist academics in social media labeling them as transphobic or as TERF (trans exclusionary radical feminist); asking them to apologize for what they have said about gender issues, in the comments they have made to Facebook posts or in

their own twitter pages. The public shaming of feminists has rapidly spread to other geopolitical contexts in the world. For example, we have seen similar social media attacks on feminists in the summer of 2019 in Turkey, a country in which democracy is lost to authoritarianism in the political Islamist spirit. None of the feminists attacked were trans exclusionary and all defended trans people's human rights. None knew the meaning of the term 'TERF' until they were attacked. They had to read articles written in UK and US contexts to make sense of what is happening to them. They were chosen and invented as public enemies by activists who wanted to carry out a revolutionary international politics.

There are two arguments to explain why this is problematic from a feminist point of view. The first draws from feminist analyses of shame. Shame and guilt as means of social control can be instrumental in the social production of various sorts of inequalities. Arguably, women have stronger reaction to shame and greater shame aversion than men and experience self-conscious emotions such as shame, embarrassment, and guilt more intensely than men (Else-Quest et al. 2012). This has very much to do with gender. Benetti-McQuoid and Bursik have argued that 'Heightened levels of guilt-and-shame proneness were observed among both men and women with traditionally feminine gender roles, whereas a more traditionally masculine self-concept was associated with decreased shame-proneness for women' (Benetti-McQuoid and Bursik 2005, p. 133). Feminist reflection on gender norms takes the feelings of shame and guilt belong to a culturally produced 'self.' Women as subjects of shame and guilt may not necessarily self-conscious, highly individuated, autonomous, and reflexive human beings, they may be ashamed or feel guilty when they should not be at all. Gender norms make women feel shame or guilt in certain situations as a result of the historical gender inequality, because the norms that account for the experience of shame have been internalized. Even if one takes a critical attitude in relation to them, they may not be very easy to overcome.

Public shaming in social media is a performative, an injurious exercise of power on the shamed, that produces a gendered being by de-subjectivating it. As a performative act, it has perlocutionary effects on the third parties. Public shaming is an effective strategy to silence women who speak up alone, for themselves, without being supported by a group. Why is public shaming an effective way of silencing women? Women are already gendered such that they know that when one woman is shamed and silenced, others will shut their mouths up as well. In the case of the public shaming in the feminist camp of the closest allies, the third party is thorn between the recognition that trans people are a more severely oppressed group in the society and that we are all responsible for fighting against discrimination, and the lack of understanding why what an intellectual said is considered shameful. It is not easy to understand why some familiar sounding piece of feminist theory should now be considered as equivalent to racism and genocide denial. In fact, the third party is called, on fallacious grounds, to feel shame for what a feminist scientist or philosopher says. Even though the third party is not clear about the truths of such allegations, given the number of people who shout what is said is inappropriate, and the clear facts about differences in privilege and oppression, she is perplexed and unsure of what to think. In situations of aggressive conflict people tend to stick with the majority to be on the safe side.

The publically shamed person who observes that the onlookers keep silent or tend to be on the side of the aggressors might believe that she is personally responsible for the

social catastrophe that she has brought upon herself. She might feel that she is the cause of her own trauma and the harm that ensues from the public shaming. However, feminism offers the intellectual and emotional resources to fight guilt and shame. In situations of oppression, there is always room for women to take a feminist perspective that transforms one's relation to the situation in which shame or guilt is experienced. As feelings are interwoven with concepts that structure the experience, changing the conceptual framework can help to dispel shame and replace the feeling with a different one. For example this one: Shame is about social power; it aims at preventing us from doing or saying what we will under normal circumstances say and do.

The second argument appeals to the geopolitical context. According to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) annual Democracy Index report published on the 22 January 2019, Turkey was ranked 110th among 165 nations; it had the same rank in EIU's 2018 report. Turkey was characterized as the only 'hybrid regime' in Western Europe—which is worst than the 'authoritarian regime.' Feminism is very weak in the male dominant Turkish academia and there are only a few academics that openly define themselves as 'feminist.' The programs of gender equality in education and other institutions, that were reinforced during Turkey's negotiations with EU are now withdrawn, women centers at universities are precarious. Men kill every year 400 women; women are forced by the political power to go back to their traditional gender roles and the only support they get from the state institutions is religious counseling to create an everlasting happy marriage by obeying their husband. Both women's movement and LBGTI movement are under political attack. Since two years women's marches are stopped by the police force.

Given the geopolitical context, whether it is a good strategy to publicly shame and attack feminist academics as 'white feminists' with arguments borrowed from the Western contexts, and what positive results, if any, this can bring about for the liberation of trans people are questions that are worthwhile to ask. Should the same arguments that are used in the English speaking world, in the USA and UK contexts, be brought to Turkey? Is there an analogy between black feminism in the USA and transfeminism or Kurdish feminism in Turkey? Should a politics based on universal ethical arguments replace feminist ethics of solidarity and care that takes into account the specific contexts and relations? Here are some more questions that activists seem never to worry about.

Clearly, UK and US politics being taken as examples, feminist academics are attacked elsewhere and forced to apologize for making injurious speech. The notion of injurious speech is used rather widely here; making theoretical comments without consulting the experiences of the oppressed subjects is held to be an exercise of epistemic violence from a privileged academic position. To recognize a privilege one must consider the intersecting oppressive structures, and not just import arguments from elsewhere. Cancelling few feminists in the academia in Turkey where universities are not autonomous and feminism has little or no institutional support has no utility and is self-undermining as a feminist cause.

The power hierarchies that activists project are problematic in so many ways. For example, the power dynamics in the social media can be very different than the real life power dynamics. A graduate student may have more power than a feminist professor, if she is leading a group in the social media and provoke people to silence and de-platform academics. Activists may also be supported by international funds and

companies, which would like to change the relevant laws to open markets for their medical products. In Turkey women's organizations are crushed by the government, they no longer receive international funds or supports. In the present, under the political pressure of the government, feminist movement in Turkey has become a mass movement, which lacks political organization.

The question whether or not it is correct to appropriate the intersectionalist black feminist arguments in defense of transfeminist issues in Turkey requires that we answer the following questions as well. Is gender and race analogous? If gender is self-identification, can race, too, be changed by declaration? Although people can identify as woman or man if they desire, to belong to a racial or ethnic category requires that one shares a history. Although race might fairly be understood as a product of racism and sexism, is the analogical claim that biological sex is a product of gender true? Is sex merely a product of sexism? Is the view that sex is real and natural amounts to biological essentialism, if gender, which is about what we make of these differences in culture, is still determining? For me, the natural reality of the biological sex does not limit genders by two or render self-identification impossible.

Trans activism deems acceptable to use derogatory language in relation to feminist scholars, if their views on gender opposes the fundamental theses that this movement defends. The attack on Holly Smith Lawford, an Australian feminist scholar who makes a distinction between sex and gender and defends women's reproductive rights is a case in point. She was subjected to public shaming and banned from twitter. A feminist moral philosopher, Kate Manne, who supports trans activist strategy of public shaming, argued on Twitter that TERF is not a slur but a derogation that is an earned designation as it applies to gender critical philosophers, whom we should understand as anti-trans activists.[1] Manne argues on the grounds of her commitment to the validity of the analogy between racism and sexism and the applicability of the arguments of intersectionalist black feminists to trans politics. If this analogy is correct, making a distinction between biological sex and gender is an act equivalent to bigotry, racism, defense of slavery, and holocaust denialism etc. Holly Lawford Smith is not the first feminist who defends the sex based rights and it is not clear how much of feminist history should become garbage if trans activism is to be believed.

Anyway, there are different ontologies of sex and gender and this is a philosophical field where there is on-going debate. Shaming and aggression are violent political strategies. Even when they do not involve physical violence, they are symbolic violence targeting not arguments, but persons. This is not the same as political antagonism, which depends on critical thinking that belongs to the argumentative symbolic struggle in which personal attacks are disallowed; it is a war against scientists and philosophers who are attributed epistemic privilege and who dare not to agree hundred percent agree with the theoretical limits activists impose on them.

It is also possible to characterize the violence involved in public shaming against women as misogynistic male violence. It is appalling that even though injurious speech, threats of rape and physical violence are made in the social media, the perpetrators of this violence take themselves to be right and just. To create an atmosphere in which everyone is terrified to speak out is to endorse that power makes the law in history. How can we, as feminists, support politics of power now, if power has been the

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[1] https://twitter.com/kate_manne/status/1167904263286059010

problem all along? What if the political oppositions turn out to be as authoritarian as the political power fought? It makes good sense to criticize science and philosophy formed by power, but should we feel entitled to use power to change the classifications and categorizations in natural scientific research and impose new regulations on social sciences?

Public shaming within feminism that targets feminists is a politics of war for the sake of domination. We have here a universalistic politics that is paradoxically very narrow and sectarian. Does that kind of politics of shame, which is a politics of violence, help to effectively struggle against racism, different forms of sexism including transphobia, classicism, and ableism? To attack women is so much safer than to call-out men or to criticize the system in a context where women are already under attack. Have the call-outs for displaying the white privilege of a white woman helped the black feminisms case? Is the silencing of radical feminism by the accusations of transphobia for saying that there might be other groups harmed by the new legislations about gender as self-identification helping the cause of transpeople's rights? Why the biological experiences that cis women undergo and trans women do not so much matter? Differences between women can be respected by disallowing hierarchies. Cis women issues such as pregnancy, abortion, menstruation etc., are still causes for suffering for women in male dominant, poor, patriarchal societies. The uniqueness of the experiences in each group should not be pitted against one another in the name of abstract equality and the differences in respect of biological sex should not justify the moral and political inequality as humans. That there is no difference among people in the moral and political sense—does not mean that all groups have the same needs.

Being Ashamed of What the State Does to Others

In an authoritarian political atmosphere, voices that express experiences of injustice are prevented from reaching a public audience, because that would present the government and the system it empowers under a bad light in the moral and political sense. Hence cases of injustice do not get sufficient media coverage, given the absence of free media and rigid political censure. The protagonists of these cases are the mothers, fathers, and other family members who publicly mourn their losses and continue to demand justice. Their insistent appearance in the social media provoke political shame, which we, the citizens of the unjust state collectively feel in attesting to their suffering.

This shame is grounded in the belief that we are responsible for justice in where we live, even though the context makes it hard for us to take the position of political subjectivity. There is a political pressure created by arbitrary arrests and releases without intelligible reasons. Given that people can get arrested because of what they tweeted seven years ago, individuals are intimidated to speak up about the injustice others suffer. They are both individually vulnerable and vulnerable as relational beings, who have families and significant others to care for, thus people are caught up in conflicting responsibilities.

The citizens of the authoritarian regimes who are forced to adopt an apathic attitude, in relation to their state's unjust practices have two options: Either they have to become selfish and stop responding to others' suffering because of injustice or continue to feel

shame, which is an emotion that is conducive to depression if the situation is beyond our power to change.

(a) The obstruction of justice and the absence of free media to address injustice, lead the family members of the victims seek justice in social media. One such example is Mısra Öz, the mother of Oğuz Arda who was killed in a train accident because of neglect in the construction and maintenance of train tracks. The accident took place in July 8, 2018, when a train derailed in the district of Çorlu in Tekirdağ, bringing about the death of 25 and injury of 338 people. Families who have lost loved ones reunited in justice watch in order to inform the public of the unlawfulness with which the case is handled. The train tracks were not well maintained, the tickets were oversold, some of the passengers were not even sat. As Bianet, an internet journal puts it, in the trial 'the Prosecutor's Office filed a lawsuit against only four people who had the least responsibility and gave a verdict of non-prosecution for all other responsible persons' (Istanbul, Bianet Desk 2019). On the 3rd of July 2019, in the Tekirdağ courthouse, the relatives of the 25 crash victims, politicians and lawyers were unable to enter the courtroom because of the police assault. The lawyers demanded a criminal complaint against the court and the police. In the time of writing this essay, Mısra Öz tweeted: 'I look for justice in this country but I cannot find it. Instead of finding the cause [of the accident], there is a system that safeguards and protects [the persons who should be held accountable]. [I am looking for] the prosecutor, and the judge that will make the system of law function…I am looking for the professional people with integrity, who have the virtue to accept their faults and resign.'[2]

(b) My second example is a death by accident that is covered up as suicide. The media coverage of the event is found in Middle East Eye, in an article written by Alex MacDonald published on 9 May 2019. The article begins with the apparition of the colorized photograph of the eleven-year-old girl holding a book in the front cover of Turkish satirical magazine LeMan, which usually appears with the caricatures of the politicians and celebrities on its cover page. A question accompanied her photograph 'Who killed Rabia Naz!' LeMan was publicizing the outcry of her father Şaban Vatan who had gone on twitter not only to publically mourn the loss of her daughter but also to denounce the scandal that the real causes of her death are covered up by authorities. According to MacDonald's description, 'Rabia Naz Vatan was found dying outside her family home in the northeastern province of Giresun on 12 April 2018, her left leg hanging by a thread from her body, an artery severed' (MacDonald 2019). The police rapidly closed the case as suicide: the child had jumped from the roof of her house because she was upset for something her mother told her. Her father was not convinced by that story and demanded a new investigation of the case. Forensic investigation, testimony of people in the hospital, and autopsy reports were leading him to the conclusion that the injuries that lead to her death could have been caused by a car accident. Vatan told Middle East Eye of his suspicions that his daughter had in fact been killed in a car accident by a nephew of Coskun Somuncuoğlu—a political figure who, until 31 March municipal elections, has

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[2] https://twitter.com/misra_oz/status/1154045694841245698?s=21

served as major in Vatan's hometown Eynesil. Somuncuoğlu was linked to Justice
and Development Party bureaucrats, who were very close to Erdoğan, and without
the permission of whom would not be put on trial.

Şaban Vatan made his case in the social media and became publically well known. On the
occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, thousands of women carried photos of
Rabia Naz alongside other victims of violence against women. In social media, people have
repeatedly called for a new investigation, Women's Council and the We Will Stop Femicide
platform gave support with the protesters' banners on the 13th of April.

Bureaucrats tried shame reversal strategy by making public the information that
Saban Vatan has visited psychiatry service twice in the past. They attempted to create a
public image of him as a mentally ill person. In the literature on shame this is known as
reversing the shame by discrediting the source and eliminating the authenticity of the
claimed episode.[3] However, the case was hard to reverse because his townsmen and
social media followers related to his sincere pain and rebellion. He played a decisive
role during the elections on the 31th of May 2019 because Somuncuoğlu and his party
lost the elections in the town. Even though the electoral failure was upsetting for
Erdoğan, the judicial system was still reluctant to function properly, and we still do not
know what political stakes are involved in letting the truth reveal itself publicly.

In both cases, injustice results from the annulation of the separation between the
judicial power and the executive power. There are two consequences of the dependence
of the judiciary power on the executive power. In a system in which the presidential
power controls the judicial system with his orders, judges cannot give independent
verdict. It is highly likely that laws would be bent to protect and reward the political
allies and collaborators and punish the opponents. Second, the authorities in the
institutions that the executive power administers become unaccountable and able to
act with impunity. Indeed, laws still exist but have lost their prevalence and supremacy.
As a consequence, one can buy one's case even if one has committed a crime,
prosecutors and judges will proceed as they are told. In a state of law in which the
law has primacy/supremacy, a death by accident would be subject to legal action.
However, when the law becomes the instrument of the political power and serves to
protect friends and punish enemies, equal accountability does not exist. Agents who are
considered to be indispensable for the perpetuation of the regime acquire impunity even
if they fail in professional responsibility.

One may ask why does the president protect the failure of bureaucratic liability? In
the first case, the accountability rapidly reaches the president himself as the adminis-
trations who have accountability in the railroads may defer accountability to a presi-
dential order or decree, given that in one-man regimes all important decisions are made
by the President. In the second case narrated, the political power protects the driver who
happens to be the nephew of a local political authority, whose family has the unspoken
privilege of impunity. In this case, the problem is not only the lack of legal prosecution
that prosecutes those who are accountable and fair trial that convicts those who have

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[3] As Corbu and Moshe explain, 'The key steps or sequence of the process that led to reversing the direction of
the shame included the following: denying the accusations, discrediting the source, claiming lack of authentic
verification, alleging victimization, accomplishing a boomerang effect, reversing shame.' Corbu, N., &
Moshe, M. (2013). *The Walk of Shame*. Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

authority and responsibility, the case is covered over with the co-operation of the security forces. Politically powerful people are implicated in the event, and we do not know what role they play in the party. The message that unconditional allegiance to the party is rewarded with legal impunity is clearly given to all political supporters. The president Erdoğan might also be unwilling to allow a fair trial because that may be interpreted as a weakness on his part; it may mean that his power can be bent by the public power.

In the second case, the strategy of shame reversal is adopted. First, the father is undermined economically and stigmatized as a subject with poor mental condition, and the person who propagated the case in social media Metin Cihan had to leave the country because he had become subject to arbitrary arrest. In fact anybody who politically antagonizes the new political order can be confronted with violence of the judicial system, which is a mere instrument of political revenge against those who pursue change by way of political election. The strategy to imprison the political opponent by slanders and made up crimes is also shame reversal. Corbu and Moshe who write on the politics of shame in political campaigns, discuss shame as 'a double-edged weapon.' 'The rhetorical use of shame' is an extremely powerful means 'to elevate or lay low one or other political opponent' (Corbu and Moshe 2013). But the 'shame card' can turn against the person who possesses it, if it is not used in the appropriate time and in the correct manner. 'If a politician attempts to embarrass his opponent and humiliate him, he might find his opponent walking the walk of shame on his way to victory' (Corbu and Moshe 2013).

In both cases the public feels shame because it assumes responsibility for the dysfunctional system in which it is entrapped. The lack of justice here indicates the presence of institutionalized violence. All mourning is public because death is also a social event; people reassemble to mourn together for the loss to the community. But in my examples of public mourning, the society has extended beyond a particular community, and people who did not know the deceased persons when they were alive shared the mourning. Here mourning acquires the function of making manifest shameful omissions or unpunished crimes that are revelatory of political facts about the nature of the system.

According to Abraham and Torok non-elaborated mourning (in the Freudian sense) and shameful situations have something in common. They can be transmitted to the others (Abraham and Torok 1978). Shame is being buried alive in one's ego, being encrypted without proper burial; and because of that it approximates non-elaborate, non-accomplishable mourning. Both shame and unfinished, impossible mourning are transmitted to others. Both our shame and our mourning for lost objects have this in common: they are transmitted to others because it is impossible for us to hold them inside; contain, retain, control, and remember them at will. In the absence of the proper burial that re-instates the meaning, non-elaborate mourning is transmitted to others and becomes public shame.

In the two cases considered, although the mourning is expressed it could not be elaborated, properly incorporated through introjections (internalization by way of play, fantasy, projection, and a variety of unconscious mechanisms). In both cases the authoritarian political system's obstruction of justice culminates in the non-elaborated mourning, which in turn leads to psychic suffering and trauma in the victims who cannot move on with their lives.

Conclusion

Sartre in *The Family Idiot* talks about the freedom of conceiving reality –of intellection. This is what the totalitarian state targets to destroy in its functionaries and subjects. Sartre comments on Gustav Flauberth's father Achille Cleophas, the paterfamilias of the patriarchal family as a force that imposes heteronomous moral life on his children. 'Viewed from the outside, the master, impatient and nervous could yell, give capricious orders; a legislator by impulse, he could certainly decree laws so strict that they could never be obeyed. That is nothing—they could be circumvented through excuses, promises, tears; everything happens externally, the chief thing is not to be commanded internally by another' (Sartre 1981, p. 106) Decrees and laws that such a father figure makes for his children can only be observed heteronomously. The father desires to make the Other in his children homogeneous such that no difference and alterity could penetrate. An autonomous decision can be made if there is room for alterity in the same to begin with. The father figure aims at cutting his children's relation to other voices to strictly determine their future. This strategy is similar to that of the authoritarian male president in the public sphere. People who are insecure about their future because of global ecological and economical crises tend to elect an authoritarian father figure that they often think as a savior. Henceforth, for Sartre, they evade their freedom.

The destruction of free press and the control of all media channels by the political power break the communication that enables a society to reflect on itself; people have less access to critical thinking in public and are more exposed to conspiracy theories that weaken their connection with reality. Authoritarian states force their citizens to indulge in apathy, which implies being disinterested in matters of truth and reality in the public sphere. Citizens are, thus, psychologically prepared to be heteronomous, to identify with oppressors, and to agree that the suppression of dissent is necessary for the production of the political unity that is necessary for the nation's survival. Without a communicative social bond people cannot hear different voices, think about the important problems from different perspectives in making sense of the social and political phenomena.

The will to destroy pluralism is not unique to the authoritarian regimes; it is also found in political oppositions and social movements that impose their symbolic supremacy on others, and shut public debate by slogans, bullying, and public shaming. Caught in between the two pressures to accept without questioning and public discussion, the public undergoes a double persecution.

In the first part of this essay, the structure of politics of shame and the major questions that are related to it have been reflected upon. In the second section, public shaming in feminism targeting feminists is taken as an example of the politics of shame as practiced by the 'progressivist' camp. Indeed, there is a global trend to use public shaming to stigmatize and attack feminist public figures that have been the closest allies in queer politics. The public debate is made univocal by these progressive authoritarianism that claims to know what is right, who is allowed to speak and who should apologize for making a different point. Public shaming as a means of a politics of war targets a reputed public persona, explains and justifies its own claims by creating a scene of persecution, and promotes silence or insincerity in the third parties (spectators) who are intimidated that the same thing can happen to them. Public shaming, in this use, 'forecloses any kind of real deliberation' (Tarnopolsky 2004, p. 33). The politics of

war that threatens and excludes professionals from public debate risks authoritarianism because people need a plurality of the intellectual voices to make sense of their social and political experiences. Public shaming as the activists practice it, cancelling somebody for saying something that they consider harm or injury, should not be framed as self-defense. On the contrary, it involves a strategy of unfair symbolic domination over the apperception of the third party. Moreover, because it rests on the universal strategy that imports arguments from Western contexts to the rest of the world, in which there are different structures of oppression, it can be designated as 'epistemic colonialism.' My contention is that this use of public shaming within feminist politics is morally problematic for it is sectarian, authoritarian, and colonial. Neoliberal, imperialist and colonial forms of exploitation can appropriate even the most subversive and progressive looking moral ideas. Politics that disregard the context weakens feminism in places where it is already under the attack of authoritarian patriarchal restitution.

There are other practices of politics of shame that are respectable; they arise from the lived experiences of people. In the second type of public shame, we concentrated on parents that experience non-elaborate mourning for political reasons. These are people who are sad, rightly angry, and seem fearless. Unlike the third parties, which are the onlookers who might have significant losses but fear losing, these mourners do not give in to the political pressure that inhibits all political reaction. Although they suffer political harassment, they seem not to be intimidated as much as others. As non-negotiable and impossible to silence, they are already beyond the line that ordinary people are scared to cross. The social visibility of the pain of the mourning family member, even though this spectacle of pain involves contestation and resistance, makes the persona untouchable for the political power. They are fascinating figures because they overcome the wall of public fear and political control. These grievers do not structure their aggressiveness in the expression of pain, and the third party evaluates their feelings as justified anger.

Mourners are the most difficult subjects for authoritarian regimes to shut up. Ordinary speakers who object to state violence are often accused of 'terrorism.' Charges of terrorism by the state are analogous to excommunication by the religious institutions for heterodoxy; they bring about social exclusion upon the accused. Social and political excommunication implies civil death. A person subjected to civil death, by the sovereign decree, can be dispossessed of his and her economic and social rights, left to stroll within the community as a subject of solidarity, if not an object of pity. A legal trial may not be opened against him or her; and the person's legal appeals are obstructed. Is there any possibility of recovery from this situation? The third party's, the public's intellection of reality is the only possibility of salvation. Only the conjoined gaze of numerous witnesses has the power to undermine the official representation of the persecuted as a terrorist. The positive public opinion about a person who is arbitrarily detained by the state may often lead to the release of a person while other persons who are detained for the same charges and for whom nobody campaigns continue to stay in prison.

In contrast to political dissidents, mourners cannot be persuasively identified by the political power as terrorists. Gaining the support of the third party, these people become a venue for protesting against injustice as a phenomenon of a corrupt or dysfunctional political system. At least, the political power cannot touch such a persona without risking the loss of political support. It is hard to reverse shame when at issue is the loss

of children, because people identify with the mourning persona and find her pain intolerable. People identify with this position because having children implies the risk of losing them. Traffic accidents can happen to anyone. Even people who do not have children can understand that fear, by projecting it to their parents. This identification is so human that it might seem that there is nothing inherently political in it, even though, it can present the outmost political threat to an authoritarian government. In sharing the mourning, the public starts to feel shame for the government's effort to close the ways for reparatory and penal justice. These mourners who hold the state responsible for the injustice they face, directly address their questions and criticisms to politicians in social media channels, and ordinary people from all sorts of political convictions supportively follow them. They are not limited to an epistemic bubble or an echo chamber, their voices have the greatest potential to reach the other camp, catch the eye or ear of a supporter of the existing political rule and convert her to the opposition. This is the reason why public mourning and the politics of shame that attach to it harms and destabilizes the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

The politics of shame, in its use against authoritarianism, implies that a new, collective, and resilient intellection of reality by the third parties can be the primary way for the individuals and groups to resist state persecution. Political government needs legitimation, justification, and requires that the third party accept it. Justifications and legitimations that do not pass the endorsement of the third party fail as political performances. When the citizens feel responsible for the actions and omissions of the security forces and the judiciary, and experience the lack of justice as their own debasement and see it as a threat to their own existence; it is likely that they overcome their inertia and apathy or, at least, stop supporting the existing political order.

To conclude, the first kind of politics of shame reclaims vulnerability and makes accusations of harm to close off free speech and the possibility of public discussion. It provokes mobilizations that have no patience for public deliberation. The second kind of politics of shame encourages people to raise their voice and speak against political pressure and injustice. In witnessing, a moral standpoint opens in which collective reflection on the event is carried out by way of discursive negotiation. In politics of shame, the third party, the witness of shame, is called to detach herself from the status quo in the name of justice. If public shaming is utilized to destroy plurality of intellections in a field, it amounts to authoritarianism. However, it can also be a very effective way of resisting the arbitrariness and injustice of an authoritarian political rule.

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