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## Self-Conscious Emotions: Where Self and Emotion Meet

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In so far as a man amounts to anything, stands for anything, is truly an individual, he has an ego about which his passions cluster . . . (Charles Cooley, 1902, p. 216)

We are virtually always in a state of pride or shame. (Thomas Scheff, 1988, p. 399)

The centrality of emotion and self to social life is almost axiomatic in the psychological literature. What is less accepted, or at least less frequently discussed, is the essential interconnection between these two domains. Yet, as the quotations above suggest, self and emotion are inextricably linked. The experience of self is shaped by a constant and ever-changing flurry of emotions (i.e., “passions”), and feelings of pride, shame, and other emotions could not exist without perceptions and evaluations of the self (Brown & Marshall, 2001).

The traditional disconnect between the self and emotion literatures stems, in part, from their divergent theoretical roots. Emotion researchers have, to a large extent, embraced a biological model of affect. This approach has led to major advances in our understanding of the neural underpinnings and adaptive functions of emotions, their interactions with basic cognitive processes, and their automatically recognized and expressed nonverbal signals (Davidson, 2001; Ekman, 2003; LeDoux, 1996; Panksepp, 1998; Phelps, 2005). However, this approach has also led researchers to neglect psychologically complex emotions, such as pride and shame, which are more closely linked to self-evaluative processes.

The disconnect also results from the traditional emphasis in the self literature on cognitive rather than affective processes. When research on self-processes began to flourish in the late 1970s and 1980s, the cognitive perspective was emerging as the dominant paradigm, displacing the previously dominant paradigm of behaviorism (Robins, Gosling, & Craik, 1999; Tracy, Robins, & Gosling, 2003). The cognitive approach to studying the self has led to major developments in our understanding of how the self “works” from an information-processing perspective

(Greenwald, 1980; Markus, 1977; Sedikides & Green, 2000), but the role of emotion, at least as it is studied in the emotion literature, has been largely neglected. Self-researchers who include emotion in their models tend to view it in terms of broad dimensions (e.g., positive versus negative affect), whereas many emotion researchers focus on specific emotions such as anger, fear, and happiness (Ekman, 2003). For example, self researchers have argued that self-enhancement biases serve to increase “positive affect,” but they do not specify the precise emotions (e.g., joy, pride, relief) experienced by self-enhancers (Robins & Beer, 2001; Taylor & Brown, 1988).

As a whole, this disconnect has hurt research on the self, research on emotions, and, most notably, research on topics that exist at the interface between the two areas, such as self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame, pride, guilt, and embarrassment). We believe that self researchers would benefit from incorporating distinct emotions into their models, and particularly from examining the self-conscious emotions. Specifically, if researchers begin to identify and assess specific emotions (e.g., shame) rather than rely on global dimensions (e.g., negative affect), the precision and predictive power of their models may be increased.<sup>1</sup>

Consider, for example, the heightened aggression shown in response to ego threat (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). If anger is the specific emotion that accounts for this effect, then anger feelings may be a significant mediator between threat and aggression, whereas negative affect averaged across a set of emotions may not be. In contrast, if shame is the specific emotion at play, then it is important to assess shame, and test whether it mediates the effect. It is also possible that a defensive process occurs, whereby shame is converted into anger as a way of protecting self-esteem (Tracy & Robins, 2003). In this case, it would be important to examine both shame and anger and perhaps attempt to assess implicit, suppressed shame, through cognitive or physiological measures (Dickerson, Gruenewald, & Kemeny, 2004). Similarly, if a study finds that self-enhancement increases positive affect, it is important to ask whether this is because it causes people to feel joy, pride, relief, or some other positive emotion. Identifying the specific emotion involved is important, because different emotions are associated with different behavioral outcomes and unique dispositions. For example, overt shame should promote withdrawal, whereas anger should promote aggression; and although individuals with low self-esteem may openly experience shame, those high in narcissism are more likely to suppress shame and experience anger (Robins, Tracy, & Shaver, 2001).

Conversely, emotion researchers would benefit from incorporating self-processes into their models. Most current models of the emotion process, including those that delineate the elaborate cognitive appraisals that elicit each distinct emotion, tend to omit almost any discussion of the complex self-processes that are important for many emotions and are required for at least one particular class of emotions: the self-conscious emotions (Lewis, 2000; Tracy & Robins, 2004a). Instead, these models typically focus on crude dimensions, such as “self-relevance” or “self-compatibility”—appraisals that are somewhat vague and sometimes conflated with appraisals of general goal-relevance (Frijda, 1987). Furthermore, these appraisals seem to imply a very rudimentary notion of

self—the ability to distinguish between self and other—which is very different from the elaborate self-awareness and self-representations that are essential to self-conscious emotions. Other theories include appraisals about causal locus (appraisals of “agency,” “accountability,” and “responsibility”; Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Gehm & Scherer, 1988; Roseman, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Smith & Lazarus, 1993; Weiner, 1985), which distinguish between self-conscious and non-self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame versus anger), but not among different self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame versus guilt; Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Gehm & Scherer, 1988; Russell & McAuley, 1986; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

In this chapter, we first describe several insights from the self literature that may elucidate current understandings of emotion and emotion elicitation processes. We then reverse our analysis, and describe how we might achieve a richer understanding of several notable self phenomena (self-regulation, self-esteem, narcissism, and the cross-cultural self) by incorporating major findings and ideas from the emotion literature.

## PUTTING THE SELF INTO EMOTION

### *The Essential Role of the Self in Self-Conscious Emotions*

One of the major ways in which humans differ from nonhuman animals is that they have a complex sense of self. As conceived by theorists since William James (1890), this includes both an ongoing sense of self-awareness (the “I” self) and the capacity for complex self-representations (the “me” self, or the mental representations that constitute one’s identity). Together, these self contents and processes make self-evaluations possible; the “I” is needed to evaluate the “me.” The evolution of a complex self likely provided humans with remarkable advantages over their evolutionary ancestors (Leary, in press), but also set in motion a phenomenon that typically cannot be turned off when it is not needed. As several researchers have noted (Leary, in press; Miller, in press), animals with a sense of self have a hard time keeping it out of their lives; thus, in humans, emotional events typically involve the complex self.

There are, of course, emotions that can occur in absence of any complex self-evaluative process; for example, fear at the sight of a bear, or the feeling of joy that comes from winning a lottery. However, given the ubiquitous nature of the self, a lottery winner will often reappraise her win as caused by something she did (“that number was the date of my dog’s birthday”), make a corresponding self-evaluation (“I really know how to pick those numbers!”), and end up feeling the self-conscious emotion of pride in addition to pure joy. A man running from a bear will certainly feel fear, but, if he is camping with his girlfriend and her presence activates his self-representations regarding gender-stereotypical camping behavior, he may make self-evaluations that lead to other emotions as well. He may valiantly attempt to fight the bear, which could generate pride if he scares the bear away. Alternatively, if he flees from the bear in terror, he may feel shame or guilt because he has failed to live up to his “boyfriend as protector” identity, particularly if he

leaves his girlfriend behind to become bear food. In both examples, the self fundamentally changes the emotions experienced in response to events that seem, on the surface, not to involve complex self processes. Supporting this view, recent research suggests that self-relevant appraisals (i.e., “how does this event relate to me?”) influence individuals’ responses to the successes and failures of others (Smith, Eyre, & Powell, 2006).

Indeed, from a discrete emotion perspective, every emotion experienced will be uniquely influenced, and in some cases dramatically shifted, by the involvement of self-processes. Fear can become guilt when we think about what our fear means for our identity; this may be why Franklyn Delano Roosevelt’s famous statement, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” had a major impact on a generation of individuals who were at an age when identity concerns are highly prominent. Anger becomes hostility or aggression when it is directed toward someone who has threatened an individual’s identity and made him or her feel insecure (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). (Another presidential quote, “You won’t have Nixon to kick around anymore,” reflects this sentiment.) Happiness becomes pride when individuals credit themselves for a positive event (Tracy & Robins, 2004a; Tracy & Robins, in press). Disgust, which likely evolved as a mechanism of repelling noxious food (Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 1999) acquires a different, contemptuous tone when it is experienced by an individual making a favorable comparison between her own identity and someone else’s (Haidt & Keltner, 1999; Russell, 1991).

Importantly, the strong influence that the self has on most emotions does not mean that all emotional experiences always require these self-evaluative processes. The fear response to a car accident, the anger felt when one is physically threatened, and the happiness experienced at a baby’s smile, are a few examples of affective experiences that may be entirely unmediated by complex self-evaluations. However, as social and personality psychologists interested in complex psychological processes, many of us are more interested in the after-effects of these incidents: the guilt that results from knowing one was a careless driver, the shame experienced by an adolescent who chooses not to engage in a fight, and the pride felt in one’s newborn infant.

As these examples imply, there is a special class of emotions—the self-conscious emotions—that *critically* involve the self. Self-conscious emotions (e.g., embarrassment, guilt, pride, and shame) play a central role in motivating and regulating people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Campos, 1995; Fischer & Tangney, 1995).<sup>2</sup> These emotions drive people to work hard in achievement and task domains (Stipek, 1995; Weiner, 1985), and to behave in moral, socially appropriate ways in their social interactions and intimate relationships (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Retzinger, 1987). As a result, self-conscious emotions are vitally important to a range of social outcomes. Guilt is centrally involved in reparative and prosocial behaviors such as empathy, altruism, and care-giving (Batson, 1987; Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Shame mediates the negative emotional and physical health consequences of social stigma (Feiring, Taska, & Lewis, 2002; Gruenwald, Dickerson, & Kemeny, in press), and is associated with depression, chronic anger, and the

narcissistic, antisocial, and borderline personality disorders (Harder, Cutler, & Rockart, 1992; Lewis, 1971; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). Pride motivates moral and prosocial behaviors (Hart & Matsuba, *in press*; Tracy & Robins, *in press*), and is the emotion (along with shame) that gives self-esteem its affective kick (Brown & Marshall, 2001).

The primary distinctive characteristic of self-conscious emotions is that their elicitation requires the ability to form stable self-representations ("me"), to focus attention on those representations (i.e., to self-reflect; "I"), and to put it all together to generate a self-evaluation (Tracy & Robins, 2004a). In contrast, non-self-conscious emotions sometimes involve these kinds of self processes, but they need not. Complex self-evaluative processes are both an important part of the direct causal processes that elicit self-conscious emotions (i.e., a proximal cause), and of the evolutionary processes through which these emotions became part of the human repertoire (i.e., a distal cause). These self-processes may mediate the relation between an emotion-eliciting event, or environmental stimulus, and its emotional output (the self-conscious emotion). These ideas are discussed further in the next section.

### *The Self as a Proximal Cause of Self-Conscious Emotions*

Many theories of emotion assume that cognitive appraisals constitute the proximal cause of an emotional response (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1991; Scherer, 2001; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). From this perspective, each self-conscious emotion is elicited by a distinct set of appraisals, including particular kinds of self-evaluations and self-attributions. We recently developed a process model that specifies the appraisals that seem to be involved in the generation of self-conscious emotions in particular (Tracy & Robins, 2004a); this model builds on the ideas of Tangney (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) and Lewis (2000), as well as theorists advocating appraisal-based models of emotion (see Scherer & Schorr, 2001). According to this model (shown in Figure 9.1), in order to experience embarrassment, guilt, pride, or shame, an individual must focus attention on his or her public and/or private self-representations; appraise the eliciting event (i.e., stimulus) as relevant to and congruent (for pride) or incongruent (for embarrassment, shame, and guilt) with identity goals; and attribute the cause of the event to some internal factor, blaming (or crediting) the self for the situation. In addition to these identity and internality appraisals, attributions about the stability, globality, and controllability of the cause of the event determine which particular self-conscious emotion is experienced.

As is shown in Figure 9.1, shame occurs in response to internal, stable, uncontrollable, and global attributions for a negative event ("It happened because I'm a bad person"), whereas guilt occurs in response to internal, unstable, controllable, and specific attributions for the same kind of event ("It happened because I did a bad thing"; Covington & Omelich, 1981; Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994; Tracy & Robins, 2006; Weiner, 1985). Thus, shame involves negative feelings about the stable, global self, whereas guilt involves negative feelings about a specific behavior or action taken by the self (Lewis, 1971; Lewis, 2000; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Like shame and guilt, embarrassment requires appraisals of

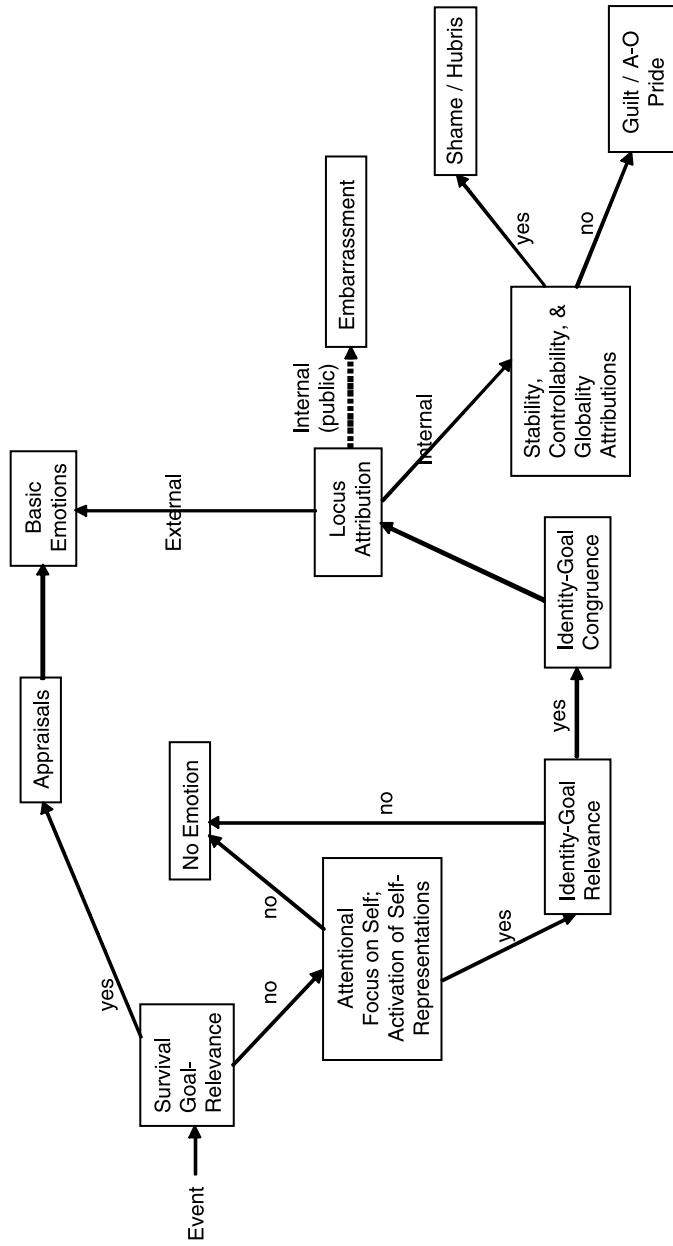


FIGURE 9.1 Process model of self-conscious emotions. The dotted arrow connecting “Locus Attribution” and “Embarrassment” indicates that a public self-representation must be activated in order for embarrassment to occur.

identity-goal relevance, identity-goal incongruence, and internal attributions. However, embarrassment does not seem to require any further attributions (i.e., it can occur in response to a stable or unstable cause), but does require that attentional focus be directed towards the *public* self, activating corresponding public self-representations. (From our perspective, embarrassment can occur in a private context, but only if public self-representations have been activated.)

Following Tangney et al. (1992) and Lewis (2000), we have argued that two facets of pride—“hubristic” and “achievement-oriented”—mirror shame and guilt, and result from complementary attributions for a positive event. Specifically, hubristic pride, like shame, results from internal, stable, uncontrollable, global attributions; whereas achievement-oriented pride, like guilt, results from internal, unstable, controllable, specific attributions. In a recent series of studies, we found that these two facets are reliably distinguished in prototypical conceptions of pride, the feelings that occur during an actual pride experience, and the chronic affective dispositions that are part of the pride-prone personality. We also found preliminary evidence for distinct causal antecedents of the two facets; each was more likely than the other to be associated with the specific causal attributions described in Figure 9.1 (Tracy & Robins, *in press*).

Thus, the proximal elicitation of each self-conscious emotion requires the activation of complex self processes: attentional focus on self-representations, comparisons among identity goals, and several distinct causal attributions.

### *The Adaptive Function of Self and Self-Conscious Emotions*

Thus far we have discussed the proximal causes of self-conscious emotions. These processes can be distinguished from the more distal evolutionary functions of self-conscious emotions—which also critically involve the self. Specifically, self-conscious emotions exist because they motivate individuals to protect, defend, and enhance their self-representations, which in turn allows them to maintain their place in the social group and avoid social rejection (Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000; Tracy & Robins, 2004a). Humans evolved to navigate within a social structure that has complex layers of multiple, overlapping, and sometimes nontransitive social hierarchies (e.g., the highest status hunters were not always the highest status warriors); as a result, they must be capable of quickly adapting to different social situations and responding to complex social cues about their status relative to others (Robins, Norem, & Cheek, 1999; Sedikides & Skowronski, 1997).

Self-conscious emotions may have evolved to coordinate and motivate behaviors essential to these social dynamics, and thus they collectively serve to increase the stability of social hierarchies and affirm status roles. For example, researchers have argued that embarrassment and shame evolved for purposes of appeasement and avoidance of social approbation, guilt for encouraging communal relationships, and pride for establishing dominance (Baumeister et al., 1994; Gilbert, 1998; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Miller, *in press*; Tracy & Robins, 2004b). More specifically, the nonverbal expression of embarrassment and possibly shame may draw forgiveness and increase sympathy and liking from onlookers after a social

transgression (Keltner & Harker, 1998; Miller, in press; Semin & Manstead, 1982). The nonverbal expression of pride may promote social status by increasing an individual's visibility to others following a socially valued achievement, while simultaneously informing them that the individual merits higher status (Tracy & Robins, 2004b).

In addition to these communicative, interpersonal functions, self-conscious emotions may provide more intrapsychic adaptive benefits. Self-conscious emotions guide individual behavior by compelling us to do things that are socially valued and to avoid doing things that lead to social approbation (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). We strive to achieve, to be a "good person," or to treat others well because doing so makes us proud of *ourselves*, and failing to do so makes us feel guilty or ashamed of *ourselves*. Society tells us what kind of person we should be; we internalize these beliefs in the form of actual and ideal self-representations; and self-conscious emotions motivate behavioral action toward the goals embodied in these self-representations. Thus, although we might understand cognitively that working hard is a good thing to do, it sometimes takes the psychological force of emotions like guilt and pride to make us do so. For example, a person might study late into the night to avoid feeling guilty for failure on an exam, and to feel pride for achieving a good grade. By reinforcing adaptive social behaviors—encouraging us to act in ways that promote social status (getting ahead) and acceptance (getting along)—self-conscious emotions facilitate interpersonal reciprocity, a social arrangement that is highly beneficial in the long term (Trivers, 1971). In summary, self-conscious emotions help us thrive in a social world where attaining status and acceptance is essential to our ability to survive and reproduce. As Kemeny, Gruenwald, and Dickerson (2004) stated, emotions like shame and pride "may be one way that individuals feel their place in the social hierarchy" (p. 154).

## PUTTING EMOTION INTO THE SELF

In this section, we apply our knowledge of self-conscious emotions to several topics that are central to the study of the self: self-regulation, self-esteem, narcissism, and the cross-cultural self.

### *Self-Regulation (Controlling Your Emotions to Control Yourself)*

From an emotion perspective, self-regulation likely works, at least in part, through the regulation of self-conscious emotions. If this is the case, we can shed new light on self-regulatory processes by re-examining them through the lens of self-conscious emotions. In this section, we utilize our process model of self-conscious emotions (see Figure 9.1) to make predictions about the cognitive processes entailed in the regulation of these emotions, which may be the primary affective mechanisms behind self-regulation.

Self-conscious emotions may be particularly amenable to emotion regulation because they often involve intense negative feelings (shame is the least desirable emotional experience; Izard, 1971), and they are generated by complex

cognitions—making them vulnerable to cognitive reappraisals (a primary method of emotion regulation; Gross, 1999). This regulation can take a number of paths, as is depicted in Figure 9.1. First, individuals may regulate their attentional focus, directing attention toward the external environment and avoiding attentional focus on the self. Such regulation would prevent the occurrence of any self-conscious emotions, given that they all require attentional focus on one's self-representations (i.e., self-consciousness). The state of awareness that results from a focus on the external world, which has been labeled “subjective self-awareness,” can be induced through distraction (Duval & Wicklund, 1972)—such as when students go out with friends to avoid thinking about failure on an exam.

A second means of regulation would be to reappraise emotion-eliciting events as irrelevant to the individual's goals for his or her identity. This may be a frequently used regulatory strategy; numerous studies suggest that negative feedback about the self causes individuals to downplay the importance, validity, and diagnostic value of the feedback (Brown, 1998; Sedikides, 1993; Shrauger, 1975). Other research suggests that individuals hold self-serving definitions of various ability domains, such that students who are skilled in math consider math to be central to being a good student, whereas students who are skilled in the humanities view the humanities as central (Dunning & Cohen, 1992).

Third, individuals can reappraise whether the event is congruent with their identity goals. For example, a failing student could shift her hierarchy of self-representations, reconceptualizing her ideal self so that failing an exam becomes congruent with goals for a different identity—that of being a fun-loving Bohemian who is not overly focused on studying and achievement.

Fourth, if an individual is highly committed to a long-term, stable identity goal, it may be easier to regulate emotions by reappraising causal attributions than by changing his or her ideal self. Thus, individuals can reappraise the causes of events; changing their locus, stability, controllability, and globality attributions. The first of these reappraisals, which may prevent the experience of any self-conscious emotion, is the reattribution of causal locus to an external, rather than an internal, source. This reappraisal is related to the widely documented “self-serving attributional bias”: people typically take credit for success and deny blame for failure (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004). The mechanism frequently hypothesized to cause self-serving attributions is the desire to feel positively and avoid feeling negatively (but see Miller & Ross, 1975). Although we agree that self-serving attributions are mediated by affective experiences, we argue that the motivating process involves specific self-conscious emotions, rather than generalized positive and negative affect. In other words, people make self-serving attributions to avoid feelings of shame and guilt and to promote feelings of pride. Furthermore, such reattributions are likely to be effective in converting self-damaging emotions such as shame into potentially less self-damaging ones like anger. Numerous studies suggest that making external attributions for negative events, instead of internalizing and blaming the self, promotes an anger response (Hudley, 1992; Kuppens, van Mechelen, Smits, & de Boeck, 2003; Roseman, 1991; Russell & McAuley, 1986; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982).

Although externalizations may be the most typical reappraisal used to regulate

shame, there is another option. Even after an internal attribution has been made, individuals can still avoid feelings of shame by reappraising the stability, controllability, or globality of the cause. If an event is reattributed to an internal but unstable, controllable, or specific cause (e.g., a lack of effort), the outcome emotion will be guilt instead of shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2006). This is a critical distinction, because shame is considerably more painful and self-esteem-damaging than guilt (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Furthermore, feelings of guilt seem to have positive consequences, such as promoting increased effort in achievement and other contexts, making it an adaptive and beneficial emotional experience following a failure (Barrett, 1995; Covington & Omelich, 1985; Leith & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney et al., 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Supporting this account, other research has found that teaching clinically depressed patients to make more adaptive reappraisals of their problems can improve their mental and physical health (Beck, 1976). From the perspective of the present model, some of these reappraisals are likely to include the reattribution of negative events to external causes, or to internal but unstable and specific causes ("I did a bad thing, but I'm not a bad person."). In this light, the success of cognitive therapy for treating depression may be linked to the positive effects of regulating self-damaging shame and transforming it into more adaptive emotions such as guilt (or, where appropriate, anger).

In summary, researchers interested in self-regulation and the strategies individuals use to protect or enhance the self may benefit from examining the specific emotions that are regulated in these processes.

### *Self-Esteem*

Self researchers have long viewed self-esteem as, at least in part, an individual's affective orientation toward the self (Brown, 1998; Rosenberg, 1965; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Thus, we may enhance our understanding of self-esteem by identifying the particular emotions most centrally involved in self-evaluative processes. Based on the few studies that have directly examined the question (Brown & Marshall, 2001; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), shame and pride are the two most likely candidates. In fact, one definition of self-esteem is "the balance between pride and shame states in a person's life, taking into account both duration and intensity" (Scheff, 1988, p. 399).

If high self-esteem is associated with a tendency to experience pride but not shame, and low self-esteem reflects the opposite pattern (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), then, using the emotion literature's functionalist perspective as a guide, we can make predictions about the function of high versus low self-esteem. Pride has been found to motivate prosocial behaviors (Hart & Matsuba, in press; Herrald & Tomaka, 2002) and, as was mentioned above, its expression may communicate high status and success to others (Tracy & Robins, 2004b). Thus, pride may be the affective mechanism that links high self-esteem and high status; pleasurable pride feelings may reinforce the socially valued behaviors that generated the emotion and that are typically awarded high status (e.g., achievement). These feelings may simultaneously inform the proud individual that he or she merits high status and

group inclusion. This account fits with Leary, Tambor, Terdal, and Downs's (1995) argument that self-esteem evolved as a social barometer, informing individuals of the extent to which they are accepted; the emotion-oriented perspective allows us to pinpoint the affective mechanism that may underlie this process. Conversely, the shame and embarrassment that accompany low self-esteem may inform individuals that they are in danger of group rejection; these emotions are associated with hiding or escape behaviors, and a desire to appease others (Gilbert, in press; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Lewis, 1971; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Miller, in press; Tangney et al., 1996). Thus, the negative self-conscious emotions at the root of low self-esteem may promote behaviors that allow those facing possible rejection to protect their self-images and prevent further damage to their social status.

### *Narcissism*

Narcissism represents another major topic of self research that would benefit from greater attention to self-conscious emotions. Within the self literature, prominent theories of narcissism emphasize the importance of affect, labeling it an "alarm system" that sets narcissistic processes in motion (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Yet, clinical psychologists have long noted the central role of one particular affect—shame (Wright, O'Leary, & Balkin, 1989). From a clinical perspective, narcissism is a defense against excessive shame. To avoid the conscious experience of this painful emotion, narcissistic individuals chronically regulate it through suppression, externalization, and explicit self-aggrandizement (Broucek, 1991; Morrison, 1989; Watson, Hickman, & Morris, 1996). Supporting this view is the notion that if narcissists simply felt bad, rather than bad about themselves (i.e., shame), we presumably would not see many of the interpersonal and intrapsychic consequences that mark the narcissistic self-regulatory system. For example, the narcissistic hostility and rage that has been observed in response to failure (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993) might not be so common or virulent if the underlying pain were due to generalized anxiety or anger, rather than shame following threats to self-worth.

However, empirical evidence of the link between narcissism and shame is somewhat inconsistent. Measures of clinical or pathological narcissism are positively related to self-reported shame (Bosson & Prewitt-Freilino, in press; Gramzow & Tangney, 1992), but measures of "healthy" narcissism, such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, are not (Gramzow & Tangney, 1992). Yet, even measures of healthy narcissism are positively related to measures of low implicit self-esteem (Bosson, Brown, Ziegler-Hill, & Swann, 2003; Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003), suggesting that individuals high on narcissism may be burdened by doubts about their self-worth and experience shame at an unconscious level. Thus, there is reason to view shame as a key component of the narcissistic process. In addition, research suggests that narcissists frequently report experiencing pride, and hubristic pride in particular (Bosson & Prewitt-Freilino, in press; Tracy & Robins, in press).

These links, between narcissism and shame and pride, suggest that it might be fruitful to examine narcissistic processes within the context of our model of

self-conscious emotions. As was explained above and is conveyed in Figure 9.1, in order to regulate shame, individuals must reappraise negative events as either congruent with their goals for their identity (e.g., “I failed the MCAT, but I didn’t want to go to med school anyway!”), externally caused (e.g., “It was my teacher’s fault”), or internally caused but due to an unstable, controllable, specific aspect of the self (e.g., “I didn’t study hard enough”). Conversely, to increase pride individuals must reappraise positive events as identity-goal relevant and internally caused; and to increase hubristic pride, in particular, individuals must appraise positive events as due to something stable, global, and uncontrollable about the self (e.g., “I’m brilliant!”). For narcissistic individuals, these regulatory processes may function in an extreme, even pathological, manner. Regardless of the actual eliciting event and circumstances, a narcissist may rigidly follow the regulatory pathways that lead to hubristic pride and away from shame.

For example, instead of consciously blaming themselves for failure and consciously experiencing shame, narcissists may blame others and feel the anger, hostility, and aggression that follow from an external attribution (Tracy & Robins, 2003). This may be one reason why narcissists show heightened aggression in the context of what Baumeister, Smart, and Boden (1986) referred to as “threatened egotism.” The resultant “shame–rage spiral”, previously observed in clinical research, is particularly characteristic of narcissists (Lewis, 1971; Scheff, 1998). At an implicit level, narcissists may be much like other individuals with low self-esteem, who tend to globalize failure (Brown & Dutton, 1995), so internalization of failure would mean internalization of global failure, leading to shame without any possibility of guilt. The only regulatory solution is to externalize blame, and experience anger and rage instead.

Conversely, narcissists may be vigilant of opportunities to internalize positive events, taking credit for successes whenever possible. Their globalizing tendencies may encourage not only internal attributions, but stable and global ones as well. For example, after receiving a high score on her math exam, the narcissist may think, “I’m smart and talented at everything I do,” whereas a less narcissistic person may also make an internal attribution but think, “I’m pretty good at math,” or even “I’m learning the material in this math class very well.” Interestingly, narcissists may make self-serving attributions even when positive events are not actually internally caused—they tend to take credit for events caused by others (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998).

In summary, narcissists may regulate self-esteem by regulating the cognitive processes that underlie the experience of shame and pride, as a way of externalizing shame and intensifying pride. Incorporating an emotion (and specifically, a self-conscious emotion) perspective into narcissism theory may thus be one of the most promising means of illuminating the specific mechanisms and dynamics that underlie narcissistic self-evaluative processes.

### *The Cross-Cultural Self*

One of the landmark findings in the emotion literature is that a small set of “basic” emotions—anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise—have distinct,

universally recognized, facial expressions. In a seminal series of studies, Ekman, Sorenson, and Friesen (1969; Ekman & Friesen, 1971) found that members of two preliterate tribal cultures in New Guinea agreed with individuals from the US, Brazil, Japan, and Borneo about the emotions conveyed by each basic emotion facial expression. This research countered the prevailing view that emotions are entirely culture specific, and supported Darwin's (1872) claim that emotion expressions are universal aspects of human nature which evolved to serve particular adaptive functions.

Recent research suggests that three self-conscious emotions—embarrassment, pride, and shame—also have nonverbal expressions that are recognized across cultures (Haidt & Keltner, 1999; Izard, 1971; Tracy & Robins, under review). In a study conducted in Toussiana—a small, remote village in the Western part of Burkina Faso, Africa—we found that individuals living in preliterate tribal cultures, highly isolated from the Western world, could reliably recognize expressions of pride and shame that have been previously documented in Western cultures (Izard, 1971; Keltner, 1995; Tracy & Robins, 2004b). Burkina Faso is the third least-developed country in the world (*United Nations Human Development Report*, 2005), so we were able to find research participants who were almost entirely isolated from Western culture. These individuals had little or no access to media such as film, television, magazines, or newspapers, and were unable to recognize any major figure from current Western culture about whom they were asked (e.g., George W. Bush). Given that participants were unlikely to have learned the pride or shame expressions through cross-cultural transmission, their accurate recognition suggests that these two self-conscious emotion expressions, like the basic emotion expressions, may be universal. In addition, Haidt and Keltner (1999) found that individuals from Orissa, India, who had limited access to Western culture and Western media, reliably identified the embarrassment expression previously found in Western cultures (Keltner, 1995).

What are the implications of these findings for self researchers? If individuals all over the world can recognize self-conscious emotions, then the experience of these emotions is likely to be universal as well. Otherwise, how could we explain cross-cultural agreement about their nonverbal expressions? Given that embarrassment, shame, and pride are elicited by complex self-evaluative processes (i.e., those displayed in Figure 9.1), the universality of self-conscious emotions implies that these complex self processes are also universal. The finding that the basic emotions were universally recognized led to widespread acceptance of Darwin's (1872) claim that emotions are an adaptive part of human nature. Evidence for the universality of self-conscious emotions may promote a similar acceptance of what we have referred to, following James (1890), as the "naturalized self" (Robins, Norem, & Cheek, 1999). James was committed to a *naturalistic* explanation of the origin and present function of self, assuming that conscious mental life "emerged by way of natural selection because it gave our species certain survival, and therefore reproductive, advantages" (p. 52).

Indeed, several researchers have analyzed the potential adaptive benefits of complex self processes, as discussed above (Leary, in press; Robins, Norem, & Cheek, 1999; Sedikides, Skowronski, & Gaertner, 2004; Sedikides & Skowronksi,

1997). Yet, without connecting these processes to a universally observable behavior (i.e., recognition of shared nonverbal expressions), it is difficult to empirically support the Darwinian claim (but, see Neiss et al., 2005, for evidence that several self-processes are heritable, hinting at their genetic basis).

In the same way that evidence for the universality of basic emotion expressions led to research on the neurobiology of these emotions and encouraged a “naturalist” approach to the study of affect, acceptance of universal self-evaluative processes may promote a new wave of self research. A complete naturalist perspective on the self would entail not only an understanding of its evolutionary roots but also its neurobiological underpinnings. Indeed, researchers are increasingly recognizing that self processes, like other affective and cognitive processes, derive from the interplay between biological and social forces—the self is constructed out of the raw materials endowed by nature and shaped by nurture. A handful of researchers are already tackling the neurobiology of several self processes essential to self-conscious emotion elicitation (see Beer, *in press*).

However, in contrast to the suggestion that self-conscious emotions are universal, a growing body of research suggests that culture has a profound influence on the way individuals construe the self. Specifically, individuals from collectivistic cultures tend to hold interdependent self-construals, viewing the self as embedded within and dependent upon a larger social context; whereas those from individualistic cultures tend to hold more independent self-construals, viewing the self as primarily separate from the social context (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). According to this perspective, these cultural differences in self-construals lead to cultural differences in emotion. Specifically, “other-focused” emotions such as shame may be more commonly experienced and lead to greater positive outcomes in individuals with interdependent views of self, whereas “ego-focused” emotions such as pride may be more commonly experienced and self-enhancing for those with independent views of self (see also, Eid & Diener, 2001; Menon & Shweder, 1994; Scherer & Walbott, 1994). How can we reconcile these findings and theory with the idea that the self-evaluations which elicit self-conscious emotions must be universal?

Emotion researchers have tackled this question for several decades (Ekman, 2003; Scherer & Walbott, 1994), and have reached some consensus that most emotions are likely to have both universal and culture-specific components (Edelstein & Shaver, *in press*; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Goetz & Keltner, *in press*; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). For example, although most researchers agree that emotion expressions generalize across cultures, most researchers also agree that there are considerable cultural differences in the ways in which individuals regulate these expressions, through display rules (Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, & Petrova, 2005). This suggests that the association between emotions and their automatic nonverbal expressions is at least partly rooted in human nature, but that the way individuals regulate (e.g., suppress or exaggerate) these expressions is, perhaps, mostly culturally determined.

Similarly, other studies suggest that the frequency of occurrence, and even the valence (i.e., whether a particular emotion is considered positive or negative) of specific emotions vary somewhat across cultures (Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990;

Menon & Schweder, 1994; Wong & Tsai, *in press*). For example, shame is considered to be a less negative emotion in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures, because it reaffirms the individual's place and sense of belonging within his or her social group (Menon & Shweder, 1994; Wong & Tsai, *in press*). At the same time, however, the basic antecedent appraisals that elicit these emotions seem to generalize across cultures. Scherer and Walbott (1994) studied 37 cultures and found considerable cross-cultural similarities in the appraisal processes that generated and distinguished among emotions (see also Fontaine, Luyten, & de Boeck, 2006). So, if the appraisals that elicit particular emotions generalize across cultures, yet the frequency with which particular emotions are experienced and their associated valence differs across cultures, then the differences are likely due to the ways in which *events* are appraised and emotions are valued. In other words, a person from a collectivistic culture may report feeling shame more frequently than a person from an individualistic culture even though the same set of appraisals and attributions elicits shame in both people, because (a) individuals in collectivistic cultures are more likely to make the kinds of appraisals that universally elicit shame, and (b) shame is a more socially accepted emotion in collectivistic cultures, and therefore less likely to be regulated and more likely to be self-reported.

In fact, there is evidence that culture exerts a strong influence on the way that individuals appraise emotion-eliciting events (Mesquita, 2001). For example, a person from a collectivistic culture who presumably holds an interdependent self-construal may not appraise an individual achievement as identity-goal congruent unless this achievement reflects well on his family, too. As a result, the same event—making an intelligent comment in class that draws attention from others—may lead to divergent emotions depending on culture. For a person from an individualistic culture, who presumably has an independent self-construal, this event will likely be appraised as congruent with the culturally determined identity goal of appearing smart to those around her. If she also appraises the event as internally caused, she will experience pride. In contrast, an individual with a more interdependent self-construal may feel shame instead of pride, because he might appraise this event as relevant to the culturally determined identity goal of fitting in with those around him, and as incongruent with this goal. Other cultural differences in appraisal processes—such as the tendency for people from individualistic cultures to make more self-serving attributions for success and failure than people from collectivistic cultures (Heine et al., 1999; Kitayama, Takagi, & Matsumoto, 1995)—will produce similar differences in the frequency of particular emotional occurrences. Thus, culture may affect how often particular emotions are experienced by influencing individuals' propensity to make certain appraisals (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992), but not the specific links between appraisals and emotions.

By viewing self and emotion as interconnected, we may reach a new understanding of cultural differences in self and emotion. Given that the self lies at the cornerstone of most emotional experiences, cultural differences in self-representations and other self-evaluative processes may account, at least in part, for cultural differences in the frequency and valuation of emotions. Yet, cross-cultural similarities in basic human capacities, such as the capacity to self-reflect

on one's stable self-representations, to evaluate and compare various identity goals, and to make attributions for the causes of one's behavior, likely promote a universal capacity to experience a range of self-conscious emotions. In general, self researchers interested in cultural differences may benefit from examining the cognitive processes that underlie differences in the frequency of emotional occurrences. This process-oriented approach, which examines the distinct appraisal pattern associated with each self-conscious emotion, may contribute to an understanding of cultural differences that takes into account underlying cross-cultural similarities.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have identified a number of ways in which the study of the self connects with the study of emotion. We have argued that each area has much to offer the other; specifically, how theoretical and empirical insights emerging from the self literature can help elucidate emotion processes and, conversely, how insights emerging from the emotion literature can elucidate self processes. In doing so, we hope that we have conveyed an appreciation of the fundamental importance of the unique class of emotions that exist at the intersection between the two fields, namely, the self-conscious emotions.

## NOTES

1. Although one reason for the historical neglect of self-conscious emotions is the lack of psychometrically sound measures, there are now reliable and valid self-report scales and nonverbal coding schemes for most of the self-conscious emotions (see Robins, Noftle, & Tracy, *in press*). Moreover, self-conscious emotions can be experimentally manipulated through a variety of procedures, such as the TRIER Social Stress test (Kirschbaum, Pirke, & Hellhammer, 1993) and the Relived Emotion Task (Ekman, Levenson, & Friesen, 1983).
2. There is little consensus regarding which feeling states constitute distinct "emotions," and even less regarding which of these constitute "self-conscious emotions." In this chapter, we focus on the small set of emotions that are generally agreed to be self-conscious; however, emotion theorists have proposed that other feeling states should also be considered part of this class. For example, Sedikides and colleagues (Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Routledge, 2006) have recently argued that nostalgia is self-conscious emotion because it involves identity processes, and Harter and Elison (*in press*) have argued that humiliation is a self-conscious emotion that is distinct from shame and embarrassment.

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