

A Time for Shame: Levinas, Diachrony and the Hope of Shame

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Shame plays a fascinating role in both the self and the composure of society. Severson's explores the dynamics of shame as they relate to time. Drawing from a wide range of examples, this essay will first explore the double-edged sword that is "shame," then will utilize the unique philosophy of time offered by Emmanuel Levinas to explore the psychological and ethical dynamics of shame. Though shame takes many forms, I will isolate two manifestations in this chapter, calling them synchronic shame and diachronic shame. To unlock the difference between these two types of shame, which is crucial for thinking about shame psychologically and philosophically, Severson explores the relationship between time and shame. A better understanding of time, particularly the intersubjectivity of time, will improve our psychological understanding and treatment of shame. Ultimately Severson argues that shame points to the unsettling of time, an unsettling of the synchronization of my time with the time of the other.