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Aeschynē in Aristotle's Conception of Human Nature

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Aeschynē in Aristotle's Conception of Human Nature

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my husband Bill Murray and to my parents: Joan and Richard Coakley. Thank you for your endless support, encouragement, and friendship.

To Dr. John P. Anton, I have learned from you the importance of having a “ton of virtue and a shield of nine layers for protection from the abysmal depths of vice.” Thank you for believing in me, my dear friend.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides a thorough examination of the role of *aeschynē* (as distinct from *aidōs*) in Aristotle's conception of human nature by illuminating the political and ethical implications of shame and shamelessness and the effect of these implications in his treatises. It is crucial, both to one's own personhood and *eudaimonia* as well as to the existence of a just and balanced state, that *aeschynē* be understood and respected because of the self-evaluating ability that it maintains.

The aim of this work is to show that a recognition and appreciation of *aeschynē* as understood in Aristotle's conception of human nature simultaneously leads to *eudaimonia* and away from the dangerous state of *anaeschyntia* (shamelessness). *Aeschynē* is required in order to create a better existence both on the personal level and on the larger level of social community. The function and responsibility of *aeschynē* in Aristotle's work is recognized in its full potential as a civic virtue: specifically, *metriopatheia*.

Metriopatheia, which is *aeschynē* properly energized through *phronesis*, acts as a tool allowing one to moderate her passions. It is essential to recognize Aristotle's use of *aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* because it sheds new light on Aristotle's conception of human nature. The rational human soul, according to Aristotle, is always striving for full actuality. The goal of human life, like all life for Aristotle, is proper function with excellence. *Aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* is responsible for the moderation of one's

passions thus promoting *aretē*. *Aeschynē* offers insight into the opinions of those who are ethical and thus produces right reason in actions. One who is *anaeschyntia* cannot reach her full potentiality nor can she be a contributing member of the political community, the *koinōnia*.

PREFACE

This dissertation *Aeschynē in Aristotle's Conception of Human Nature* grew out of an intense curiosity about *ta pathē* (the passions) and an admiration for the way that Aristotle presents them. The passions are well represented in Aristotle's work and understanding them is indispensable to understanding his conception of human nature.

Although I am captivated by Aristotle's discussion of the social and political aspects of the passions I realized that I needed to focus on one specific passion. Shame immediately stood out as both fascinating and in need of further attention. An urgent problem occurred to me as I noticed that some English translations of 'shame' referred to *aeschynē* and some to *aidōs*. In almost every instance these terms are translated in Aristotle's work without distinction as 'shame'. I argue that the Greek 'shame'-terms – at least in Aristotle's work – are unique.¹ *Aidōs* is best translated as awe or modesty. *Aeschynē*, on the other hand, should be translated as shame or a sense of shame.

Further research produced several arguments in favor of the conflation between the terms. But, in the midst of these arguments I noticed a few small mentions that support viewing *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as unique. I did not see anything overwhelming to

¹ I rely solely on the translations that appear in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The revised Oxford translation*, edited by Jonathan Barnes (Volume 1 and 2), 1984 Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. The major works I consult in these volumes are the *Nicomachean Ethics* translated by W.D. Ross and revised by J.O. Urmson, the *Rhetoric* translated by W. Rhys Roberts, the *Politics* translated by B. Jowett, and the *De Anima* translated by J.A. Smith.

this effect as most discussions regarding the difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* were reduced to footnotes.

With this project I endeavor to show that in Aristotle's conception of human nature *aeschynē* contributes to social and political cohesion as well as to personal excellence. *Aeschynē* is a principal ingredient in Aristotle's philosophy that deserves recognition in its own right as distinct from the passion *aidōs*. I argue that without *aeschynē* it is not possible for one to reach *eudaimonia* (happiness, thriving and flourishing, living well). Thus, *aeschynē* boldly and brashly, perhaps even *shamelessly*, beckons attention and interpretation.

This dissertation, then, answers two questions that are of great consequence to finding meaning in Aristotle's conception of human nature. First, what evidence is there to legitimately claim that Aristotle differentiates between the Greek terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs*? Once this question is satisfactorily addressed, the second question emerges and demands an answer. This question focuses on and undertakes the following issue: how does an appreciation of the difference in meaning between Aristotle's usage of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* affect the overall understanding of his conception of human nature? The first question is fully addressed in chapters one through three. The answer to the second question, which belongs to the final chapter, involves the recognition and acceptance that in Aristotle's corpus *aeschynē* exists as both a passion and, more important, as a civic virtue.

Aristotle makes it clear that *aidōs* is a passion. So, my first concern was to determine whether he considers *aeschynē* to be a passion as well. *Aeschynē* is not

mentioned in many of the treatises that deal with the passions. Nevertheless, I argue that *aeschynē* starts out as a passion. The second chapter details Aristotle's theory of passions and explains the reasons why *aeschynē* should be considered a passion. Once choice and practical wisdom are employed, however, *aeschynē* becomes an important civic virtue.

In order to prove that Aristotle considers *aeschynē* a civic virtue I provide evidence for the view that he considers the shame terms to be unique; for as Aristotle holds in the *Nicomachean Ethics* *aidōs* should be considered a passion - not a virtue.² I focused on each occurrence of the terms in Aristotle's corpus and soon found that there are a variety of reasons for differentiating between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. In my third chapter I present eight reasons why the terms should be thought of as having separate meanings in Aristotle's work.

The first difference between the terms concerns Aristotle's focus on *lexis*, his care in choosing words. This shows that he employs *aeschynē* and *aidōs* with deliberate choice and purpose. I reveal many of Aristotle's points on *lexis* to show how seriously he takes word choice.

Second, Aristotle says that bodily changes are indicative of passions. *Aeschynē* is mentioned only once in a retrospective sense in terms of a physiological affection whereas nearly every reference Aristotle makes to *aidōs* is in terms of the bodily conditions that arise as a result of the passion. For example, in the *Problems* and in the *Categories* Aristotle says that *aidōs* causes specific bodily changes. This distinction is

² *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b10-20.

significant because it shows that Aristotle has different uses in mind for *aeschynē* from what he has for *aidōs*.

Third, *aeschynē* is felt in terms of past, present, and future action whereas *aidōs* is future directed only. This is significant in respect to my claim that *aeschynē* is a virtue. It is the retrospective nature that leads to contemplation and reflection. One's contemplation and reflection influences one's future choice.

Fourth, *aeschynē* is chosen and is felt for both voluntary and involuntary actions whereas *aidōs* is felt only for voluntary actions committed by the agent. Virtues must be chosen. Aristotle says people are not praised or blamed for feeling passions because they are felt without choice.

Fifth, Aristotle's claim in the *Topics* that *aeschynē* is found in the reasoning faculty must be recognized since there is no parallel claim that *aidōs* is found in the reasoning faculty of the soul. As a passion Aristotle believes that *aidōs* exists in the spirited faculty.

Sixth, *aeschynē* is felt only in front of those whom the agent respects and deems to be ethical. Aristotle does not mention this occurrence in terms of *aidōs*. *Aidōs* – since it is felt without choice – can be experienced in front of small children, for example. In answering a child's question that may be of an intimate nature *aidōs* can arise but *aeschynē* cannot. Aristotle specifically says that one does not feel *aeschynē* in front of small children (because small children are not deemed ethical).

Seventh, though many modern scholars claim that the two 'shame'-terms are indistinguishable various commentators through antiquity present opposing evidence. It

is important to consult those who wrote closer to Aristotle's time. I present the views of E.E.G, Edward Meredith Cope, and Richard Chenevix Trench – who all (in one way or another) provide evidence against the conflation of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*.

These seven distinctions combine to show the eighth and final difference: in Aristotle's corpus *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are always used with individual and unique *telos* (purpose). I argue that the recognition that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* have different *telos* is the most important distinction between the Greek 'shame'-terms. Once difference in purpose is accepted it is impossible to conflate the terms in Aristotle's work.

My argument, then, is that there is reason to read *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as unique in Aristotle's corpus, and, that this interpretation matters. Once *aeschynē* is accepted as unique from *aidōs* I focus on the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē*.

I present the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē* in chapter four to provide evidence in favor of the virtuous characteristics of shame. Once the virtuous features are accepted the task turns to showing the ways that *aeschynē* as a civic virtue leads to *eudaimonia*.

At this point the term *metriopatheia* is introduced to describe the virtue of *aeschynē*. *Metriopatheia* is best translated as 'moderating one's passions'. For Aristotle, *aretē* and thus the ability to experience *eudaimonia*, involves feeling the passions in the right way. This requires *phronesis* or practical wisdom.

In Aristotle's words *phronesis* is "that part which forms opinions; for opinion is about what can be otherwise, and so is practical wisdom."³ *Phronesis* enables the passion *aeschynē* to be transformed into the civic virtue *metriopatheia*. *Phronesis* allows human beings to choose the correct action. The emphasis on opinion or *endoxa* in regard to practical wisdom is important. As Aristotle holds in the *Eudemian Ethics* the shameless person is one who is unconcerned with the opinions of others.⁴

Aeschynē as a civic virtue allows one to moderate her passions. *Aeschynē* arises when one stands poorly in regard to the passions, whether in excess or in deficiency. *Aeschynē* enables one - through *phronesis* - to choose the correct action given the ways the results will affect one's *eudaimonia* and, consequently, the political community as a whole.

Aeschynē acts as an ethical guide to one's actions and helps one find the intermediate state. *Aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* is a state of soul – a settled disposition which makes *aeschynē*, in Aristotle's eyes, a civic virtue.

Possession of the civic virtue *aeschynē* is the only way that one can come to find the intermediate. *Aeschynē* functions in regard to the *relative* intermediate because *aeschynē* is experienced socially, politically, and internally. Virtue requires choice and it is *aeschynē* that allows one to make the correct choice. Aristotle believes that one may do things by chance – speak grammatically, for instance - but the grammarian is the person who chooses to speak grammatically.⁵ *Aeschynē* is the virtue that provides one

³ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 5, 1140b27-28.

⁴ *Eudemian Ethics* III, 7, 1233b27.

⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics*. II, 4, 1105a24-25.

with the ability to actively choose the right course of action to lead to the relative intermediate state.

The occurrence of *aeschynē* is a special case and deserves attention in the work of Aristotle because it is a unique and useful disposition. *Aeschynē*, as a civic virtue, is important because it is self-centered, self-reproaching and concerns both political and ethical responsibility. It is what tells human beings that it is wrong to do certain things, and thus one avoids those things.

The study of *aeschynē* in Aristotle's corpus is attractive for several striking reasons. The significance of *aeschynē* to political and ethical life must be thoroughly examined and comprehended so that human beings may benefit socially and individually from this curious passion. A solid grasp of the features of the passion *aeschynē* is critical to understanding many of the ethical motivations behind human action. It is said that shame is the "most human of our attributes, and one of the most important"⁶. Indeed, shameful thoughts and feelings have the distinct power to produce ethical change for the better. To see that this is the case, simply imagine a society wholly without shame. The shameless society lacks law and order and any semblance of justice. In addition, friendship would not exist in a world without shame.

With this project I endeavor to show that in Aristotle's conception of human nature *aeschynē* contributes to social and political cohesion as well as to personal excellence. *Aeschynē* is a principal ingredient in Aristotle's philosophy that deserves recognition in its own right as distinct from *aidōs*.

⁶ Cavanaugh and Espeland (1989), 7.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Throughout his corpus Aristotle regularly discusses various passions, many of which have garnered a high level of attention from industrious academics. One passion that has been delved into much less is shame. In Aristotle's work there are two terms, *aeschynē* and *aidōs*, that are commonly translated as shame. When Aristotle's use of the two ancient Greek 'shame'-terms has been studied their unique individual meanings have, in most cases, been ignored, lost, or mistakenly conflated. Nevertheless, shame occupies a prominent role in ancient Greek society and deserves attention in and of itself.⁷

It is impossible to conceive of the social roles so important in ancient Greek culture without considering shame-feelings, the actions that produce them, and the collective reactions to them. This is crucial to note because Aristotle's conception of shame cannot be understood without a frame of reference in regard to the conventional ancient Greek views of shame.

The significance of shame in early Greek society is so prevalent that E.R. Dodds, in his book *Greeks and the Irrational*, refers to Greek culture, at least during the time of Homer, as a shame-culture.⁸ The importance of referring to a society as a 'shame-

⁷ Shame held such a place of distinction in the Athenian political arena that, "The traditional Athenian trial was meant to be a competition between two adversaries, one of whom would leave the courtroom shamed" Tarnopolsky (2010), 128.

⁸ Dodds (1951), see page 17.

culture' lies in the fact that Dodd's use of shame figures in direct opposition to what he calls a 'guilt-culture'. A shame-culture is one in which, when it comes to viewing oneself, the opinions of others matter. A guilt-culture, on the other hand, exists as a product of a society that feels that human beings ultimately embody a sense of personhood in which they are responsible solely to themselves. Guilt, in this respect, turns out to be an individual and personal phenomenon whereas shame is unequivocally social and communal. The societal characteristics of shame are, I argue, the attributes that make *aeschynē* so central to Aristotle's theory of human nature. *Anaeschyntia* (shamelessness), on the other hand, is dangerous precisely because it is manifest in a lack of regard for the opinions of others.

In further considering the place of shame in classical Greek culture it is fitting to note Robert Solomon's contention that, "To be shameless is to have no honor at all."⁹ Shame, for the ancient Greeks, involves a loss of one's reputation and is, to an extent, a forfeiture of one's honor. In a 'shame-culture' or a society in which the opinions of others are taken seriously and considered relevant to one's honor and character, shame exists as a constant source of contemplation and reflection. To members of the ancient Greek community shame-feelings are to be avoided at all costs because the sensation of shame has with it the distinguishing characteristic of providing an embarrassing and unfortunate social stigma.¹⁰

⁹ Solomon (2007), 96.

¹⁰ David Konstan maintains that "Shame was a vigorous emotional category for the ancient Greeks. Although it has tended to be suppressed in contemporary American society, or else treated as a morally deficient emotions (we are ashamed of shame), writers in classical Greece saw it as fundamental to ethical behavior" (2006, 110).

The question that requires attention at this point is the following: just how ingrained are the ancient Greek thinkers in their so-called Doddesian shame-culture? The best way to answer this question is to consider the regular appearance of shame in the various Greek arts that have been persevered and passed down through the millennia. Douglas Cairns, in his compelling survey of *aidōs*, one of the terms often translated as 'shame', points out that "Not all the archaic poets are moralists or social commentators, but the majority of the relevant instances of *aidōs*, etc. come from those who are, and all too often these tell us merely that *aidōs* is considered a good thing, or sketch a situation in which it is appropriate."¹¹ Shame, then, must have some virtuous characteristics, and can therefore be said to be important for ancient Greek citizens.

In searching for the earliest appearances of shame in Greek literature one naturally turns to the epic poetry of Homer. Frequent reference is made to shame (using the term *aidōs* only) in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In Homer's writing *aidōs* exists as a distinctly human ethical concept, "neglect of which often brings fear or anger."¹² Elizabeth Belfiore, in discussing the work of the German writer Carl von Erffa, says that *aidōs* is the most ethical notion in Homer's writing and is responsible for preventing social wrongs from developing.¹³ Clearly, shame in this respect held a principal place of distinction for Homer and the Greeks.

The use of *aidōs* in Greek literature continues to appear in the work of subsequent authors, though to a lesser degree than it is found in the Homeric epics.

¹¹ Cairns, (1993) 147.

¹² Belfiore (1992), 191 [quoting Carl von Erffa].

¹³ Belfiore (1992), 191.

Aidōs occurs in the writings of Hesiod all the way through Aristotle's corpus.¹⁴ Though the earliest appearances of 'shame'-terms in ancient Greek literature refer exclusively to *aidōs* it must be recognized that *aidōs* is not the only 'shame'-term employed in extant Greek writing.

There is a second shame term that comes to the fore around the mid-sixth century BCE. This other term, *aeschynē*, makes its first appearance in the collected poems of Theognis. It is here that *aeschynē* is used to describe a gluttonous young boy who has become a shame to his friends.¹⁵ Between the nearly two centuries that separate Theognis' initial mention of *aeschynē* (at times transliterated as *aischines* or *aeschines*) and Aristotle's extensive use of the word one finds a great library of work utilizing the term.

Since the literature and philosophy of a culture can be said to reflect the values and concerns of its citizens it should be clear, based on the quantity of extant work dealing with *aidōs* and *aeschynē*, that shame holds a prominent and marked position in ancient Greek society. The problem, then, is not showing that shame is a significant aspect of Greek political, social, and ethical life. Rather, the problem of shame begins to be appreciated upon the realization, introduced above, that in the ancient Greek language two separate 'shame'-terms exist and that they are often translated without recognition of their unique nature into the English equivalent of shame.

¹⁴ Douglas Cairns points out what he believes to be the most significant use of *aidōs* in Hesiod's work which is the claim that *aidōs* "greatly harms as well as helps mankind" (1993, 149). I make note of this because it highlights an aspect of the double duty that I believe later falls to *aeschynē*.

¹⁵ *Elegy and lambus*. With an English Translation by. J. M. Edmonds. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1931. 1, Perseus Digital Library.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0479%3Avolume%3D1%3Atext%3D11%3Asection%3D2#note-link312> (accessed March 28, 2013).

The dilemma, in respect to the two ‘shame’-terms, is that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* should not be conflated. Each word has its own specific meaning. These two unique terms are, in translation and in commentary, often merged and consolidated in ways that disregard the individual nature, and thus the importance, of each term. Recognition and acceptance of the distinguishing attributes of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* is necessary for one to truly understand the social domain that Aristotle was part of, as well as how this influenced his conception of human nature.

I address the issue of the conflated ‘shame’-terms in the work of Aristotle by considering each appearance of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in his treatises. In this dissertation I show that Aristotle uses both terms with fixed purpose and distinction. My claim that the two terms are distinct, at least in the work of Aristotle, is supported by the fact that in Aristotle’s corpus both words are utilized and each term is always expressed in an entirely different context.

Aristotle’s decision to use two distinct terms can be taken as a *prima facie* reason for believing that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* have separate meanings, at least, in his writing. Further support for this position is presented below as I address how an appreciation of the difference in meaning between Aristotle’s use of the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* affects the overall interpretation and understanding of his work as a whole. The task of providing evidence for this claim begins with a detailed examination of the ways Aristotle uses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* and where in the corpus these terms appear.

Shame in general and *aeschynē* in particular play a central role in Aristotle’s conception of human nature. *Aeschynē* is described by Aristotle as a “pain or disturbance in regard to bad things, whether present, past, or future, which seem likely

to involve us in discredit.”¹⁶ Keeping Aristotle’s description of *aeschynē* in mind note also that *aeschynē* can produce reflective activity and can prevent people from acting in ways that are not conducive to a good character. The real usefulness of *aeschynē* in Aristotle’s description is that it acts as an indicator of the values one holds; *aeschynē* is, by proxy, valuable as a way to gauge one’s character. *Aeschynē* is felt in response to a violation of an individual or – more important - social code of virtue.

Some extensive background must be provided initially; for in claiming that Aristotle acknowledges *aeschynē* to be both a passion and a civic virtue it is necessary to step back and look at these two Aristotelian categories – *pathos* and *aretē* - individually. Virtue, or *aretē*, is given due consideration later as *ta pathē* demands attention first. It is useful for one to initially have a secure grasp on the role the passions play in Aristotle’s philosophy before considering the prominent and significant responsibility of *aretē*. This is because excellence, in part, requires correctly habituated passions.

In order to establish solid working knowledge of Aristotle’s view of the passions it is necessary to consider the appearance of *ta pathē* as they occur in his relevant treatises. Understanding Aristotle’s use of *ta pathē* is very important to the contention that he views *aeschynē* as a passion. For Aristotle, *aeschynē* is an essential political and ethical passion that becomes a civic virtue once it is properly habituated through *phronesis* (practical wisdom).

¹⁶ *Rhetoric* Book II, 6, 15-16.

Although it seems straightforward and generally accepted *prima facie* to acknowledge that Aristotle considers *aeschynē* a passion, an answer must be provided about why, if *aeschynē* is a passion, it does not appear exhaustively on each of Aristotle's lists of the passions. For example, *aeschynē* is not included among Aristotle's passions in his ethical treatises. The rationale behind the fact that *aeschynē* is not discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics* is simply that Aristotle focuses, in these treatises, on passions that are felt without choice. This is the reason Aristotle says, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that people are neither praised nor blamed for feeling passions because they are felt without choice.¹⁷ *Aeschynē*, as I argue below, is felt with choice.¹⁸ It is vitally important to recognize this point in conjunction with the fact that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle is concerned with character. His aim, in the ethical treatises, is to discuss the best life for human beings. Character involves choice and human actions that are freely chosen are the only ones that can partake of virtue.

The significance of choice for Aristotle can be recognized in the fact that it is the sole aspect that distinguishes between a passion and a virtue.¹⁹ The passions are not virtues for Aristotle because they are not actively chosen. One cannot be called virtuous because of actions that occur as the result of an accident. In other words, an agent does not deserve credit for any act in which the originating principle is outside of

¹⁷*Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1105b19-1106a13.

¹⁸ This does not mean that *aeschynē* is felt only with choice. It is possible to feel *aeschynē* in the absence of choice. *Aeschynē* can be felt for actions that are chosen, voluntary, and involuntary.

¹⁹ It is crucial to note that there is a difference between what is chosen and what is voluntary. Aristotle says, "Choice, then, seems to be voluntary, but not the same thing as the voluntary; the latter extends more widely. For both children and the other animals share in voluntary action, but not in choice, and acts done on the spur of the moment we describe as voluntary, but not as chosen" *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1111b7-10.

herself. Choice requires deliberate reasoning and is an essential feature of Aristotle's conception of human nature.

Aristotle elaborates on choice throughout the corpus. It is often discussed in conjunction with *aeschynē*. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle points out that *aeschynē* is felt as a result of actions that are both voluntary and involuntary. In addition, the fact that *aeschynē* is felt in front of those whose opinion matters implies that *aeschynē* is bound up in choice.²⁰ One can choose to reflect on an action or inaction and thus feel shame with choice. Still, the possibility of feeling *aeschynē* without choice remains. As long as one is not *anaeschyntia*, or shameless, and is open to feelings of *aeschynē*, one can be made to experience feelings of shame. The act of catching a person in a shameful situation may be sufficient to produce in that agent feelings of *aeschynē* that are not brought on by choice. One can feel 'shame' just as one can be made to feel 'ashamed'. As Aristotle maintains in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the excellences and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way."²¹ The full impact of this quotation in terms of the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē* is made clear below.

I argue that for Aristotle *aeschynē* should be taken to be more than a mere passion because it is felt both with and without choice unlike the passions that occur primarily without choice²². For instance, I may feel shame arise instantly and without

²⁰ *Rhetoric* II, 6 1384a22-35.

²¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* 11064-6.

²² The list of the passions offered in the *Nicomachean Ethics* features "anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain" (II, 5, 1105b21-24).

cognitive thought upon witnessing what I deem to be some type of unethical misdeed of another human being. At the same time, my own misdeed may require some cognitive reflection and deep thought before I decide that I should or do feel ashamed. In this respect shame is the product of choice and is open to deliberation. One has the ability, or the choice, to reason oneself *out* of feeling shame (i.e. by telling oneself that the misdeed was due to someone else's behavior or that anyone else would have done the same thing in the given situation).

For Aristotle *aeschynē* is unique because it can be felt both with and without choice. The other passions, as maintained by Aristotle, always seem to arise without choice (though this is not to say that they are not open to persuasion and/or cognition). For example, Aristotle holds that one is not to blame for feelings of anger that arise as the result of a slight. Rather, he says, it would be worrisome if one did not automatically, and without choice, feel anger at a perceived slight. The belief that *aeschynē* is felt both with and without choice lends credibility to the contention that *aeschynē* exists as both a passion and a civic virtue; for according to Aristotle, "We feel anger and fear without choice but the virtues are modes of choice or involve choice. Further, in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the virtues and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way."²³ I argue that *phronesis* enables human beings to be "disposed in a particular way" to *aeschynē* via deliberation. *Aeschynē*, therefore, is not found on Aristotle's list of

²³ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1106a2-7.

passions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* because the passions listed in that treatise are not discussed as involving choice in the way that *aeschynē* involves choice.

The discussion of choice is further expanded below. For now, suffice it to say that *aeschynē* requires awareness, along with the faculty of *phronesis*, and produces a habit or disposition, thus creating a state of excellence. The state created by the properly educated *aeschynē* is due to one's *choice* to avoid the pain that accompanies feelings of *aeschynē*. It must be noted that the painful feelings themselves are not the only reason *aeschynē* is avoided. As Aristotle states in the *Rhetoric* when it comes to *aeschynē*, "we shrink from the disgrace itself and not from its consequences."²⁴ In addition to the "disgrace itself" the social stigma and dishonor that surrounds shameful behavior, actions, and inactions is in itself an enticing reason for one to shun doing something that would cause *aeschynē*.

Given the above analysis the importance of reading and discussing each of Aristotle's treatises in context should already be clear. As I argue below, the focus of the entire treatise must always be taken into consideration only for what it is and not for anything beyond what is provided by Aristotle. This is true in terms of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as for the *De Anima*. The passions considered in the *De Anima* are presented as affections of soul, which are listed as "Anger, courage, appetite, and sensation generally."²⁵ This list is followed, a few lines later, by a more extensive account that includes, "Gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating."²⁶

²⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 23-24.

²⁵ *De Anima* I, 1, 403a6.

²⁶ *De Anima* I, 1, 403a17.

Aeschynē is not on this list of passions and is not mentioned at all in the *De Anima*.

The reason *aeschynē* does not occur on the list of passions in the *De Anima* is that, as Aristotle holds in the *Topics*, “*Aeschynē* is found in the reasoning faculty, whereas fear is in the spirited faculty; and pain is found in the faculty of desire (for in this pleasure also is found), whereas anger is found in the spirited faculty.”²⁷ The crux of the matter is that the *De Anima* is not concerned with passions found in the reasoning faculty (i.e. *aeschynē*); for this treatise focuses on passions found in the appetitive faculty of the soul. The proof for this claim may be derived from Aristotle’s words in the *De Anima*, “If any order of living things has the sensory, it must also have the appetitive; *for appetite is the genus of which desire, passion, and wish are the species*” (italics mine).²⁸

Passions, in the *De Anima*, belong to the appetitive faculty of the soul. *Aeschynē*, therefore, is not considered in the *De Anima* since Aristotle believes it is found in the rational faculty of the soul and not in the appetitive, which is the focus of the treatise. Since each of the treatises must be reviewed based on individual subject matter it would be an error to determine that *aeschynē* is not a passion simply because Aristotle neglects to add it to the list of *ta pathē* he provides in the *De Anima*.

To digress for a moment and expand on the discussion of choice offered above, that *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul is noteworthy in that choice as well is found only in rational creatures.²⁹ Aristotle’s placement of *aeschynē* in the reasoning faculty should be taken as clear and vital evidence that he finds the role of *aeschynē* to extend beyond that of a mere passion. Assigning *aeschynē* to the

²⁷ *Topics* IV, 5, 125a9-12.

²⁸ *De Anima* II, 3, 414b1-3.

²⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1111b12.

reasoning faculty of the soul is critical to the claim, explored in the final chapter, that in Aristotle's eyes, *aeschynē* is a civic virtue.

At the same time, however, the absence of *aeschynē* from both the *De Anima* and the appetitive faculty of the soul should not be taken to mean that Aristotle never regards *aeschynē* as a passion. Once again, the overall aim of the treatise in question must be considered when one attempts to determine why *aeschynē* is not mentioned in the *De Anima*. The same rule applies in regard to consideration of *aeschynē* in all of Aristotle's treatises in which the term appears. What this means for Aristotle's devoted readers is that the discussion of *aeschynē* – or any other factor of importance to Aristotle – must never be taken piecemeal. The theme of each individual treatise must be recognized in order to correctly understand Aristotle's discussion or lack of discussion in regard to *aeschynē*. Failure to consider the aim of the individual treatise in question will always result in misconstruing Aristotle's intention.

After contemplating the place of *aeschynē* as it appears in relation to the passions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *De Anima* it is natural to turn to the discussion presented in the *Rhetoric*. This treatise offers Aristotle's most in-depth view of the passions and is fundamentally essential because it includes an extensive analysis of the ways in which *ta pathē* can be affected or changed by outside forces. *Aeschynē* is far from being neglected in the *Rhetoric* as the wide-ranging list of passions offered in Book II of this treatise includes an entire chapter focused solely on *aeschynē* and *anaeschyntia*.³⁰ Aristotle defines the passions in the *Rhetoric* as "feelings that so

³⁰ The comprehensive list advanced in the *Rhetoric* includes anger/gentleness (*orge/praos*), love/hate (*philia/misos*), fear/confidence (*phobos/tharsos*), shame/shamelessness (*aeschynē/anaeschyntia*), and

change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain and pleasure.”³¹

Aristotle’s inclusion of *aeschynē* in the *Rhetoric* is especially striking because he is focused, in this treatise, on the political and social aspects of the passions.

Aeschynē, as it appears in the *Rhetoric*, deserves attention given the actions which produce and affect this shame feeling. Aristotle believes that *aeschynē* is caused by, among other things, cowardice, injustice, licentiousness, greed, meanness, and overall is a result of badness and ethical corruption.³² In short, *aeschynē* is a product of all things regarded by Aristotle to be dishonorable, disgraceful, and vicious. As a result, one has good reason to take the discussion of *aeschynē* in the *Rhetoric* as Aristotle’s own persuasive argument about the virtuous aspects of shame.

In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle also provides a short discussion of shamelessness, or *anaeschyntia*, by which the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē* can be further recognized. The shameless person has no regard for, or fear of, dishonor or disgrace. *Anaeschyntia*, then, is of great consequence to any discussion about virtue and vice. For example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says, “Let us now make a fresh beginning and point out that of moral states to be avoided there are three kinds – vice, incontinence, brutishness.”³³ The significance of this quotation is highlighted by the fact that all three of these moral states, which directly oppose excellence, are caused by shamelessness. One maintains a disposition of shamelessness in *choosing* to be

benevolence/ungraciousness (*kharis/akharistia*) along with pity (*eleos*), indignation (*nemesis*), envy (*phthonos*) and emulation (*zēlos*).

³¹ *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1378a21-22.

³² *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b20-1384a6.

³³ *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, 1, 1145a15-16.

vicious, incontinent, and brutish whereas *aeschynē* acts as insurance against these three malicious states. One who experiences feelings of *aeschynē* avoids vice, incontinence, and brutishness due to the painful feelings of disgrace and dishonor associated with these states.

Aristotle defines *anaeschyntia* as a feeling of contempt or indifference to the bad things that cause *aeschynē*.³⁴ One who is *anaeschyntia* has no concern for her reputation or for the opinions of others. In Aristotle's words, *anaeschyntia* exists as the opposite of *aeschynē*.³⁵ In viewing *anaeschyntia* as a vice it is reasonable to likewise view *aeschynē* as a virtue.³⁶ This claim is enforced by Aristotle's remark in the *Categories* that "What is contrary to a good thing is necessarily bad; this is clear by induction from cases – health and sickness, justice and injustice, courage and cowardice, and so on with the rest."³⁷ Notice that there are no intermediate positions in the examples just presented. Health, justice, and courage are all virtues and their opposites – sickness, injustice, and cowardice respectively – are all vices. *Aeschynē* also lacks an intermediate. It should be unmistakable, then, that since Aristotle considers *anaeschyntia* to be a bad quality *aeschynē*, in his view, must be a positive and useful counterpart.

Aristotle holds in *On Virtues and Vices* that virtue makes "the condition of the soul good... the marks of vice are the opposites... and belong to the class of the blamable."³⁸ In the same work Aristotle describes folly as a vice of the rational faculty of

³⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 6 1383b16.

³⁵ See *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1385a14-15.

³⁶ Aristotle points to the vice of shamelessness in the *Rhetoric* 1383b14-15, *Eudemian Ethics* 1221a1; 1233b23-28, and *Magna Moralia* 1193a3.

³⁷ *Categories* 11, 13b37.

³⁸ *On Virtues and Vices* 1250a16.

the soul.³⁹ Since *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul, as maintained in the *Topics*, it is pertinent to assume that folly is a vice of *anaeschyntia*. Furthermore, Aristotle later points out, in *On Virtues and Vices* that folly is accompanied by intemperance which in turn is accompanied by *anaeschyntia*. Shamelessness, then, seems to be a vice caused by poor judgment and deliberation along with choosing “hurtful and base pleasures.”⁴⁰ The fact that *anaeschyntia* accompanies intemperance serves to collaborate my claim, fully advanced below, that the virtue of *aeschynē* is *metriopatheia* (moderating one’s passions).

Aristotle’s seemingly marginal discussion of *anaeschyntia*, then, provides an initial indication of his contention that *aeschynē* exists as a virtue. As already stated, surface evidence for this claim can be appreciated with the recognition that the opposite of *aeschynē*, the lack of openness to shame feelings or the lack of capacity to feel shame, is a vice. As Aristotle points out in the *Topics*, when attempting to define a term one should “see if from the expression used the account of the contrary is not clear; for definitions that have been correctly rendered also indicate their contraries as well.”⁴¹

The claim that *aeschynē* is a civic virtue, however, requires more than simply accepting Aristotle’s notion that *anaeschyntia* is a vice or that *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul and arises as a result of disgraceful behavior. As a perquisite for calling *aeschynē* a virtue full consideration of Aristotle’s use of *aretē*, virtue or excellence, in regard to character is required. According to Aristotle, ethical excellence

³⁹ This is interesting in light of Aristotle’s contention, mentioned above, that *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul.

⁴⁰ *On Virtues and Vices* 1251a18.

⁴¹ *Topics* VI, 3, 140a18-20f.

“is concerned with the pleasant and the painful.”⁴² As Aristotle says, “character must be bad or good by its pursuit or avoidance of certain pleasures and pains.”⁴³ *Aeschynē* unquestionably meets this condition as it teaches one to avoid the painful feelings of disgrace. It is clear that Aristotle associates *aeschynē* with a good character since he specifically defines *aeschynē* in Book II of the *Rhetoric* as “a pain or disturbance in regard to *bad things*” (italics mine).⁴⁴ The feelings of pain or disturbance brought on by *aeschynē* are sufficient for one with a good character to avoid the disgraceful actions or inactions that cause feelings of shame. Those who are *anaeschyntia* do not partake in virtue because they do not feel “pain or disturbance in regard to bad things.” Consequently, shameless people do not avoid those dishonorable things and can never be said to possess excellence of character.

Digging deeper into Aristotle’s discussion of virtue a second principle of *aretē* comes to light. This qualification is that *aretē* does not arise naturally; rather, it is the result of habit or settled disposition. *Aeschynē* also meets this requirement in that shame-feelings are not natural (for example, children must be taught to feel *aeschynē*; they are not born with an innate sense that it is wrong to steal or to hit another child or to otherwise behave ‘badly’) and vary personally, socially, and culturally. An action that causes extreme shame-feelings in one culture may go completely unnoticed in another culture. This second condition of virtue, that it is the result of habit and does not arise naturally, is further explored below in conjunction with *aeschynē*.

⁴² *Eudemian Ethics* II, 2, 1220a38; *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 3, 1104b4-16, 1105a10-12.

⁴³ *Eudemian Ethics* II, 4, 1221b32-34.

⁴⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b15.

It is easy for one to accept, at face value, that Aristotle views *aeschynē* as a passion. In addition, several rudimentary arguments have already been provided to show that Aristotle considers *aeschynē* a virtue. It must be noted, however, that even though *aeschynē* meets the conditions necessary for it to be both a passion and a civic virtue, it is not both at the same moment. As Aristotle says, “neither the excellences nor the vices are *passions*, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our excellences and our vices.”⁴⁵ In short, *aeschynē* initially exists as a passion. Once it is properly cultivated through *phronesis* it becomes an essential cultural asset that is indispensable to political and social living—and, thus, a civic virtue.

In the pages that follow a thorough examination of the role of *aeschynē* in Aristotle’s conception of human nature is presented by showing the political and ethical implications of *aeschynē* and *anaeschyntia* and the effect of these implications as manifest in his treatises. *Aeschynē* deserves attention from anyone interested in Aristotle’s thoughts on human nature because of the unique self-evaluating ability that shame and shame feelings help create and maintain. A deep recognition and appreciation of Aristotle’s interpretation of *aeschynē* is crucial to understanding his conception of personhood as well as his view on the existence of a just and balanced state. My goal is to show that an awareness of Aristotle’s view of *aeschynē* – as both a passion and a civic virtue – will simultaneously lead one to *eudaimonia* and away from *anaeschyntia*.

⁴⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 4, 1105b29-32.

Aeschynē is required in order to create a better existence both on the personal level and, more important, on the larger communal level. One example in respect to the social status of *aeschynē* is seen in Antiphon's contention that it "naturally follows breach of convention."⁴⁶ Social convention generally does not have the support of written laws to help influence adherence. *Aeschynē* acts as a type of enforcement because it is responsible for creating painful feelings, which include the loss of honor or social status, that arise when one breaches convention. It is precisely this social nature of *aeschynē* that makes it so deserving of Aristotle's attention. As Robert Solomon holds, one "can say, 'you should be ashamed of yourself' even when a person doesn't feel anything at all. But just saying this may be sufficient to convince the person to see what he or she has done as shameful."⁴⁷ Unless one is *anaeschyntia* one will always be open to shame-feelings for disgraceful deeds committed in front of those deemed ethical. In this sense there is a built in social standard that *aeschynē* helps to maintain.

Aeschynē* and *Aidōs

In order to supply evidence that the Greek shame terms are distinct in Aristotle's work it is necessary to immediately provide an outline of what I take to be the separate meanings of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. In Book I of the *Topics* Aristotle points out that when one is arguing about whether two things are the same simply showing that they do not have the same definition "is enough of itself to overthrow" the argument.⁴⁸ This is no

⁴⁶ Cairns (1993), 362.

⁴⁷ Solomon (2007), 93.

⁴⁸ *Topics* I, 5 102a15.

small task, however, in the case of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. As Douglas Cairns points out, *aidōs* is “notoriously one of the most difficult Greek words to translate.”⁴⁹

Perhaps the complexity of the terms is in part responsible for the fact that in Aristotle’s treatises his use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are often translated, without differentiation, into the English word ‘shame’. Some of the emphasis originally placed on conflating the two ‘shame’-terms may have created a bias for one to automatically accept the two terms as identical to one another. This blind acceptance may occur much in the same way that people often accept, at face value, a translation they are given for a term from one language to another. Consider, for example, the common translation of *eudaimonia* as ‘happiness’. Certainly happiness does not convey the full meaning Aristotle has in mind when he discusses the importance of *eudaimonia*. Many translations of *Nicomachean Ethics*, for instance, report that Aristotle’s goal is happiness without making note of the more complex meaning associated with *eudaimonia*. It is important that the full range of *eudaimonia* be offered which includes flourishing and well-being - not simply happiness.

Though I refer to the Greek ‘shame’-terms throughout, it must be noted that translating *aeschynē* and *aidōs*, without distinction, as ‘shame’ is erroneous- at least on the part of *aidōs* which is more aptly translated as ‘modesty’, ‘awe’, or ‘respect’.⁵⁰ In Lidell and Scott’s *Lexicon aidōs* has a rather extensive entry and includes the terms presented above as well as ‘shame’, ‘self-respect’, ‘sense of honor’, and ‘moral feeling’.

⁴⁹ Cairns (1993), 1.

⁵⁰ Cairns (1993) points out that “*aidōs* is not shame... *aidōs* words in Greek will bear a set of connotations different from those of shame in English” (14).

Lidell and Scott also note that *aidōs* should be defined as a term that reflects “reverence, awe” and “respect for the feeling or opinion of others or for one’s own conscience.”⁵¹ Aristotle’s discussion of *aidōs*, as I show below, is nearly always in conjunction with the physiological effects produced by the passion. That bodily conditions arise as the result of *aidōs* indicates that the term is more in line with modesty than any type of remorseful or *ethical* conception of shame.

It is not enough to merely consider the definition of *aidōs* provided by Lidell and Scott, for, the definition they present for *aidōs* is nowhere near universally accepted. For example, Cairns steadfastly maintains that *aidōs* should not be translated as ‘shame’. Rather, he says, *aidōs* is “an inhibitory emotion based on sensitivity to and protectiveness of one’s self image.”⁵² Cairns’ interpretation, though, may be anticipating aspects of the translation that, once cultivated through *phronesis*, belong solely to *aeschynē*. As David Konstan points out, *aidōs* “does not normally designate the feeling of shame *for acts committed*” (italics mine).⁵³ Cairns’ mention of the word “inhibitory” must not be confused with the idea of one’s correcting his or her behavior due to the views or opinions of others. This self-correcting aspect of the definition of shame fits with only *aeschynē*. Nor should *aidōs* be looked at as a feeling of regret for actions that have already occurred. The inhibitory nature of *aidōs* must be recognized only as a sense of modesty or as an aspect of the passion that hinders future bad behavior. As Cairns further holds, “*aidōs* is always prospective and inhibitory *in the earliest authors*”

⁵¹ *A Greek-English Lexicon* compiled by Henry George Lidell and Robert Scott, (1996), 36.

⁵² Cairns (1993), 2.

⁵³ Konstan (2006), 94.

(italics mine).⁵⁴ This reference to the “earliest authors” is important and needs to be stressed because, as is developed below, Aristotle’s use of *aidōs* does not necessarily reflect the inhibitory sense that is seen in the term when used, for example, by Homer (*aidōs* occurs as it does in Homer since *aeschynē* was not known to exist during the period of “the earliest authors”).

Of interest here is the fact that the posthumously published author of *The Makers of Hellas*, known only by the initials E.E.G, (writing in the late 19th century) maintains that *aidōs*, by the time of Euripides (in the fifth century), had evolved into a term with two distinct meanings. I argue that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* possess their own unique meaning while E.E.G argues that *aidōs* possesses two well-defined and noticeably different meanings in itself. E.E.G. states that the two senses of *aidōs* include both a noble honorable sense as well as a bad sense. According to E.E.G., “as *shame* the *aidōs* came to have (as Euripides himself tells us in the *Hippolytus*) a bad sense.⁵⁵ If people realized this they would not have given the same name to two different things. This bad *aidōs* is either (a) some confusion with *aeschynē* wherein *aidōs* equals disgrace, or it is (b)... too-much of modesty.”⁵⁶ E.E.G’s division of *aidōs* is important to my contention that the Greek shame terms are unique in Aristotle’s work. The quotation above also provides emphasis for the view that *aeschynē* is best defined as ‘shame’ or a ‘sense of shame’ resulting from disgrace. Since E.E.G believes the bad sense of *aidōs* may be a result of possible confusion with *aeschynē* he is providing support for

⁵⁴ Cairns (1993), 13.

⁵⁵ Euripides was born nearly a century before Aristotle. It is possible that the two meanings E.E.G attributes to *aidōs* were further separated over the hundred year span of time in question.

⁵⁶ E.E.G (1903), 482.

my thesis that there is an explicit difference between the terms. E.E.G's claim is not to be taken lightly or thought of as without merit; for there is a notion that the meaning of *aidōs* is considered to be both good and bad depending on the context as well as the person using the term. Carl von Erffa's seminal 1937 study on *aidōs* emphasizes the beneficial aspects of *aidōs* by showing the "positive, motivating power of *aidōs*" whereas, von Erffa holds, "others stress the negative, restraining power of *aidōs*"...the "inhibiting function."⁵⁷

Despite the obvious disagreement regarding the meaning of *aidōs*, I hold, again, that Aristotle's use of *aidōs* is best reflected by the definition 'modesty'. The split meanings of *aidōs*, however, documented in Carl von Erffa's work and E.E.G.'s searching comment above, may have carried over into Aristotle's writing in his employment of both *aidōs* and *aeschynē*. In the following sections I attempt to explain *aidōs* and *aeschynē* as they appear throughout Aristotle's work.

The first notable aspect of *aidōs* as it appears in Aristotle's treatises is that the term is virtually always discussed with an inclusion of the varied ways it produces bodily affections or conditions. Aristotle treats *aidōs* centrally as a passion that is responsible for producing physiological results. He believes that when one feels *aidōs* it is reflected in the eyes or seen in the redness of the ears or the blush that occurs on the cheeks.⁵⁸ Similar physiological claims are not made in respect to *aeschynē*, with one minor (and merely grammatical) exception that is presented below.⁵⁹ Aristotle's focus on the bodily

⁵⁷ Belfiore (1992), 191.

⁵⁸ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a36; *Problems* XXXI, 3, 957b11; *Rhetoric* I, 9, 1367a10; *Problems* Book XXXI, 3, 957b11 and XXXII, 8, 961a10; *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b13.

⁵⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b13.

affections of *aidōs* must be recognized as a chief and weighty distinction in regard to his view of the two 'shame'-terms. This is because in the *De Anima* Aristotle points out that passions always seem to "involve the body"; he says that when experiencing a passion there is always "a concurrent affection of the body."⁶⁰ Notice virtues are not once listed as including or creating bodily affections. Simply put: passions are defined as *passions* as a consequence of their capacity to produce physiological conditions.

Aidōs, as described above, is a passion. It never encapsulates the ethical significance that Aristotle reserves for *aeschynē* nor does it, in his work, ever mature beyond that of a simple passion. In contrast, *aeschynē*, by definition, is roughly translated as 'shame' or a 'sense of shame' and may be best captured by the English term 'disgrace' or 'dishonor'.⁶¹ Just as *aidōs* was said by E.E.G. to have two separate meanings so too does *aeschynē*. These two senses of *aeschynē* – as 'shame' and as a 'sense of shame'- provide the crux of my argument that *aeschynē* exists as both as a passion and as a virtue. As David Konstan aptly points out, "Indeed, the two concepts would seem to be psychologically discrete, 'shame' being an emotion while a 'sense of shame' is more like an ethical trait."⁶²

Aeschynē, in Aristotle's description, is said to be caused by feeling regard for the opinions of others one deems ethical. William Grimaldi, in his incisive commentary on Book II of the *Rhetoric* says that the things which cause *aeschynē* "are either a violation of a virtue or the exercise of a vice."⁶³ Along similar lines Paul Nieuwenburg maintains

⁶⁰ *De Anima* I, 1, 403a19.

⁶¹ Liddell and Scott (1996), 43.

⁶² Konstan (2006), 95.

⁶³ Grimaldi (1988), 108.

that *aeschynē* is a feeling of deep concern for one's social status or reputation.⁶⁴ These aspects of the definition are essential to note, because they demonstrate the fact that regard for the opinions of others is central when it comes to *aeschynē*. Collectively there are not many aspects that seem to be agreed upon concerning *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. One attribute of *aeschynē* that appears to be universally accepted, however, is that it arises as the result of a violation of some accepted social norm. *Aidōs*, on the other hand, is never said by Aristotle to occur as a result of social breach.

Further unique characteristics of *aeschynē* involve the varied ways in which the feeling differs from the other passions. For example, *aeschynē* is felt as a result of one's own actions and thus differs from anger, for instance, which, according to Aristotle, is typically the response to a slight and is therefore caused by an action outside of one's self.⁶⁵ *Aeschynē* also differs from anger in that sometimes anger is a natural response to shame or an expression of shame. In addition, *aeschynē* can be said to be distinct from the feeling of fear because fear is always a future oriented passion and *aeschynē* is felt in regard to past, present, and future situations.⁶⁶ Fear also may be said to be felt in response to the consequences of an action and not felt in response, as with *aeschynē*, to the disgrace itself. *Aeschynē*, then, must be considered not only as distinct from *aidōs* but must be viewed as unique in its own right as 'shame' and as a 'sense of shame'. It is also important to note that *aeschynē* occurs when one fares poorly in regard to the other passions. Too much or too little of a specific passion

⁶⁴ Nieuwenburg (2004), 451.

⁶⁵ It is also possible for *aeschynē* to be felt upon witnessing the unethical or disgraceful deed of another. Consider, for example, Sophocles' *Ajax*. As Cairns (1993) points out, if Ajax feels *aeschynē* for his deeds his loved ones will also feel *aeschynē* for those same deeds (229).

⁶⁶ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b16.

may result in shame-feelings. One may experience *aeschynē* because she did not display courage in an appropriate manner, for example.

Additional proof for the claim that the proper definition of *aeschynē* is ‘shame’, ‘a sense of shame’, or ‘dishonor’ comes from Kurt Riezler’s contention that *aeschynē* is a personal response dealing with a violation of “man-made codes.”⁶⁷ The man-made codes in question are a product of convention. These codes can be self-imposed or socially imposed, but either way breaking them can and mostly likely will (provided the individual is not *anaeschyntia*) result in feelings of *aeschynē*. *Aidōs* lacks the ability to make one feel regret for breaking a social, political, or otherwise man-made code. For this reason Aristotle, as he explicitly states in his ethical treatises, considers *aidōs* solely as a passion.⁶⁸

Given the views highlighted above, in respect to the definitions of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*, the present study advances the theory that in the work of Aristotle these two Greek ‘shame’-terms hold different meanings and as such should be translated accordingly. This contention is fully examined below with a discussion of the history and background surrounding the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* along with an extensive catalogue of evidence supporting the ways these terms differ.⁶⁹

Distinguishing between the two ‘shame’-terms is valuable but providing solid evidence for the recognition that they are separate is difficult. This is because there are

⁶⁷ Konstan (2006), n.28, 298; Riezler (1943), 14.

⁶⁸ For example, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b10; *Eudemian Ethics* II, 3, 1220b37-21a12; see also Cairns (1993) who says “That *aidōs* is an emotion is, I take it, uncontroversial; Aristotle regards it as more like a *pathos*, an affect, than anything else” (5).

⁶⁹ Full explication of the pre-Aristotelian uses of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* is offered elsewhere – notably in the work of Cairns (1993), Williams (1993), Konstan (2006), and Tarnopolsky (2010).

various modern commentators who claim that by the time of Plato and Aristotle the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* were indistinguishable⁷⁰. The support offered for this view stems predominantly from the belief that the Greek ‘shame’-terms were slowly compressed as *aeschynē* took the place of *aidōs* between the sixth to fourth centuries BCE.⁷¹ I argue against the view that the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are indistinguishable, in Aristotle’s work, for several reasons. These reasons, much more significant than what has already been mentioned, are revealed below as the argument is fully fleshed out in chapter three.

History of *Aeschynē* and *Aidōs*

As indicated above, there is certainly an extent to which *aidōs* and *aeschynē* have been misunderstood as a result of the historical use of the two terms. The discussion highlighting the difference between the two ancient Greek ‘shame’-terms, therefore, must begin by briefly considering the history of both *aeschynē* and *aidōs*.

One example worth emphasizing occurs in book twenty-two of Homer’s *Iliad*. *Aidōs* is discussed in this book as “Hector recalls the shame he felt when he was

⁷⁰ See Grimaldi (1988), Cairns (1993), Williams (1993), Tarnopolsky (2010), Sigalet (2011). All authors claim that by the time of Plato and Aristotle the distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* had disappeared. Additionally, Anthony Cua’s work on “The Ethical Significance of Shame: Insights of Aristotle and Xunzi” makes no mention of *aeschynē* save for two footnotes. Paul Nieuwenburg in “Learning to Deliberate: Aristotle on Truthfulness and Public Deliberation.” *Political Theory* 32 (4): 449-67, discusses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as if the terms are defined equally. The same goes for Marlene K. Sokolon *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006 (109-125).

⁷¹ See Konstan (2006, 93-94) and William Grimaldi *Aristotle, Rhetoric II: A Commentary* New York: Fordham University Press, 1988. Grimaldi believes, “what we find reflected in A’s usages is very likely the historical development of *aidōs* toward a gradual fusion with *aeschynē*” (106). Cairns (1993), specifically points out that in Sophocles’ work *aeschynē* appears more often than *aidōs* (264).

reprimanded by a warrior of lesser status and fears this shame would reoccur if he hid within Troy's city gates...while in the first scenario he remembers a scene of shame to discourage him from retreating, in the second he vainly hopes for a reprieve through a scene of apparent longing and infatuation."⁷² The shame term that Homer uses in the above scene is *aidōs*. In fact, it is crucial to note that *aidōs* is the only shame term Homer ever employs. Homer's unwavering use of *aidōs* is significant because the other Greek shame term, *aeschynē*, was unlikely to have been in his vocabulary. The first known use of *aeschynē* did not appear until the work of Theognis more than one hundred and fifty years after Homer's death. As Richard Chenevix Trench appropriately points out, many instances of Homer's use of *aidōs* would have been better written as *aeschynē* had Homer been familiar with the term.⁷³ Trench believes that *aeschynē* would have more suitably captured the ethical dimensions of shame that Homer was concerned with. According to J.T. Hooker "*aidōs*, *aideomai*, and cognate words are very common in Homer, they embrace a much wider area of meaning than can be accommodated *within a single term in any language*. The original meaning of the *aidōs*-words is not 'shame' but 'awe' especially 'religious awe'. This sense, or a somewhat weakened meaning 'respect', is found in the majority of Homeric examples; only as the result of a later, specialized development do these words come to mean 'shame'" (italics mine).⁷⁴ This remark is reminiscent of E.E.G's stance, introduced above, that *aidōs* (prior to Aristotle) seems to have two unique meanings.

⁷² Koziak (2000) 51-52.

⁷³ Trench, Richard Chenevix, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pg 66. Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA. March 2006.

⁷⁴ Hooker (1987), 123

Homer's use of *aidōs*, considered in light of the fact that *aeschynē* was unavailable to him, is essential when it comes to understanding the history of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. Cairns, in the preface to his expansive work on *aidōs*, maintains that "our best information on *aidōs* as a social and psychological entity comes from... Homeric and tragic poems."⁷⁵ Cairns further asserts that by considering Homer's use of *aidōs* one realizes "its great value as a trait of character."⁷⁶ If the best information we have on *aidōs* is rooted in understanding the term as it was used more than one hundred and fifty years before *aeschynē* came into existence then the information we have must be re-examined in light of the specialized use of *aeschynē*. This is particularly important given Trench's comment above claiming that *aeschynē* is a better candidate for many of Homer's descriptions of shame feelings (most notably the ethical dimensions, or, in Cairns' words "its great value as a trait of character").

Although Cairns concludes that there is no difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* other views about this matter must be considered. Trench, for example, holds that, "in the Attic period of language they (*aeschynē* and *aidōs*) were not accounted synonymous."⁷⁷ I argue that by the time of Thucydides, who lived between 460 and 395 BCE, the two shame terms had distinguishable meanings all their own. As David Konstan so relevantly points out, in Thucydides *aidōs* is related to modesty and *aeschynē* is related to courage.⁷⁸ Plato, using the term *aeschynē* (*aischunen*) in his *Symposium*, says "there is something that should lead each man all his life long, if he is

⁷⁵ Cairns (1993) viii.

⁷⁶ Cairns (1993) viii.

⁷⁷ Trench, Richard Chenevix, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pg 66. Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA. March 2006.

⁷⁸ Konstan (2006), 95, see also Tarnopolsky (2010) 104, n60.

going to live well (this is) a sense of shame about shameful things and a striving towards fine things... (for without these) no city or private individual can do anything great and fine."⁷⁹

This brief discussion of the historical use of *aidōs* and *aeschynē*, as employed prior to Aristotle, sets the stage by supplying some evidence regarding the unique individual meanings of the terms. It is with this starting point in mind that I present the terms *aidōs* and *aeschynē* as they occur in the treatises of Aristotle. Since clarity in meaning is a strong point of pride for Aristotle it is necessary to consider each distinct mention of the terms as they appear in his corpus. In doing so, the full picture regarding Aristotle's view of the Greek 'shame'-terms emerges.

***Aeschynē* in the Corpus**

Now that a concise background regarding the earliest use of the two Greek 'shame'-terms has been supplied it is necessary to focus on Aristotle's employment of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. In order to provide support for the view that Aristotle uses these terms with a recognition of their distinct meanings it is important to determine where in the corpus *aeschynē* and *aidōs* appear and for what are they useful. This information will also provide evidence that Aristotle considers *aeschynē* to be both a passion and a virtue.

⁷⁹ Rorty, (1980), 395 (*aischrois, aischunen* 178cd).

Having a firm grasp on the individual functions of the Greek 'shame'-terms as they occur in the work of Aristotle is indispensable to the claim that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are unique expressions with distinct meanings in his treatises. For Aristotle *aidōs* can only be considered a passion, and never a virtue. Aristotle is quite clear about this as he explicitly states in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that *aidōs* is not a virtue.⁸⁰ Once the terms have been fully dissected it will be apparent that *aeschynē*, on the other hand is for Aristotle both a passion and a civic virtue.

Aeschynē is useful because it arises in a person when she contemplates doing, does, or witnesses some action that is socially unacceptable. This, of course, leads to the importance of identifying and understanding the shameless person. One who is *anaeschyntia* does not contribute to society in a positive manner. The final significance of *aeschynē* will be realized and explored once Aristotle's use of the term has been uncovered. Suffice it to say for now that the value of *aeschynē* lies in the fact that it lends itself to a close knit social community. The members of a community influenced by the value of *aeschynē* focus on avoiding vices that are characterized by doing things that reputable or ethical people believe will bring dishonor.

The word *aeschynē* appears in the *Rhetoric*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Topics*. The shortest, but perhaps the most telling, discussion of *aeschynē* appears in the *Topics*. In this treatise Aristotle maintains, "*Aeschynē* is found in the reasoning faculty, whereas fear is in the spirited faculty; and pain is found in the faculty of desire (for in this pleasure also is found), whereas anger is found in the spirited faculty."⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 10, 1128b10-11.

⁸¹ *Topics* IV, 5, 126a9-12.

Fear and anger are, in the *Topics*, said to be found in the spirited faculty. Aristotle holds that these two passions are felt without choice and that human beings are neither praised nor blamed for feeling fear or anger.⁸² The person who feels these passions in a certain way, however, is praised or blamed. This is because being able to feel passions in a certain way is an attribute of the rational part of the soul. As Aristotle says, “Choice is not common to irrational creatures as well, but appetite and anger are”; because the continent person acts through reason and with choice.⁸³

Aristotle’s contention that *aeschynē* is found in the reasoning faculty provides clear and straightforward evidence that he considers *aeschynē* to be more than a mere passion. This contention is unmistakable given that the reasoning faculty, and not the spirited faculty, contributes to human flourishing or *eudaimonia*. In the *De Anima* Aristotle says that it is the rational faculty of the soul that allows human beings to know and understand.⁸⁴ In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle makes the assertion that the reasoning part of the soul urges human beings “aright and towards the best objects.”⁸⁵ In the *Eudemian Ethics* virtues are divided into two categories: those of the rational part of the soul and those of the appetitive. Aristotle says, “The rational part being the intellectual, whose function is truth, whether about a thing’s nature or genesis.”⁸⁶

Aristotle’s placement of *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul provides an insight into the twofold view of his use of *aeschynē* as both a passion and a virtue. This

⁸² *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1106a1-6.

⁸³ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1111b12.

⁸⁴ *De Anima* III, 4, 429a9-10.

⁸⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 13, 1102b16.

⁸⁶ *Eudemian Ethics* II, 4, 1221b29-32.

positioning ought to be taken as evidence that *aeschynē* is distinct from *aidōs*, according to Aristotle, and also that Aristotle recognizes that the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē* are necessary for the life of excellence.⁸⁷ Certainly Aristotle, who is usually clear in his meanings, would not have placed *aeschynē* in the rational part of the soul without true intent.⁸⁸ The above description and placement of *aeschynē* must not be ignored if one endeavors to understand and correctly interpret Aristotle's conception of human nature.

Further insight into Aristotle's use of the term *aeschynē* is provided in the second book of the *Rhetoric*. In discussing *aeschynē* Aristotle holds that, "Aeschynē may be defined as pain or disturbance in regard to bad things, whether present, past, or future, which seem likely to involve us in discredit; and shamelessness as contempt or indifference in regard to these same bad things", and again "Now since *aeschynē* is the imagination of disgrace, in which we shrink from the disgrace itself and not from its consequences, and we only care what opinion is held of us because of the people who form that opinion, it follows that the people before whom we feel *aeschynē* are those whose opinion of us matters to us."⁸⁹ These remarks highlight the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē* in that ethical human beings, who feel pain and pleasure at the right things, the right times, and to the right degree, avoid actions that cause feelings of *aeschynē*. The painful feeling produced as a result of *aeschynē* are secondary to the loss of honor

⁸⁷ Note also Aristotle's contention that *aidōs* is a passion not a virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b10-20). Passions are not part of the rational faculty because the rational faculty of the soul is responsible for moderating the passions.

⁸⁸ Aristotle places *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul. By proxy he places *aidōs* in the appetitive faculty; for, he claims that *aidōs* is a passion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and he places passions in the appetitive faculty (in *De Anima*).

⁸⁹ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b15-17, II, 6, 1384a23-27.

or reputation one suffers from involvement in disgraceful actions. The loss of reputation, it is important to note, is felt only in relation to those one finds worthy, ethical, and honorable.

The first quotation mentioned above, at 1383b15-17 emphasizes the role of *aeschynē* in avoiding painful (in terms of the resulting discredit to one's character) activities. It is an integral aspect of Aristotle's ethics that abstaining from painful behavior produces the habits required for a virtuous character. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says, "It is by reason of pleasures and pains that men become bad, by pursuing and avoiding these."⁹⁰ Aristotle further maintains that "*aretē* is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of pain that we abstain from noble ones."⁹¹ One may infer, then, the first grains of Aristotle's notion of *aeschynē* as an ethical guidepost or a civic virtue: *aeschynē* teaches avoidance of bad things (*kakon*) – whether past, present, or future - that cause pain (specifically the pain of having dishonor attached to one's character). This quotation is central to the claim that *aeschynē* exists as a civic virtue because Aristotle notes that *aeschynē* results from the activities that are considered harmful and disgraceful to one's character. In Aristotle's work virtue is, at all times, unequivocally and irrevocably tied to character. As David Konstan points out, "Envisioning an anticipated ill evokes the emotion of shame just as much as recollecting a past one does, and the very same sentiment that galls us in the case of things that have been done moves us also to avert them, if we can, in the future."⁹² This may be why Aristotle

⁹⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 3, 1104b21-22.

⁹¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 3, 1104b9-11.

⁹² Konstan (2006), 99.

holds that virtuous character exists as a result of actions spread over a lifetime. One reflects, anticipates, and also learns (socially) which actions must be avoided and which ones must be embraced. *Aidōs* is felt only in contemplation of future behavior and thus cannot be said to include the virtuous reflective traits of *aeschynē*.

The second quotation presented above that focuses on *aeschynē* is significant, perhaps even more than the previous reference. Here Aristotle declares that *aeschynē* causes people to “shrink from the disgrace itself and not from the consequences.”⁹³ This phrase ought to be interpreted as providing clear evidence that Aristotle regards *aeschynē* as a form of *aretē*. Since *aeschynē* causes people to abstain from actions for the *right reasons* it requires use of deliberate choice and as such is distinct from a passion such as fear (which Aristotle says in the *Topics* is always felt without choice). If one refrains from committing an act simply because of the consequences of that act virtue or *aretē* will be lacking entirely. Aristotle implies, in this passage, that the person acting through *aeschynē* - by “shrinking from the disgrace itself” - acts through *prohairesis* (choice) which “involves reason and thought.”⁹⁴ Once again, Aristotle’s assignment of *aeschynē* to the rational part of the soul arises. In order to flesh out the full use of *aeschynē* in the *Rhetoric* two additional important quotations from this treatise are examined in detail below.

It is essential, in order to provide a complete substantiation of the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē*, to observe and discuss the claim made in the *Rhetoric* that

⁹³ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a24-25.

⁹⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1112a15-16.

aeschynē is only felt in front of those one regards as ethical.⁹⁵ There is, in this assertion, an additional underlying feature of *aretē*. Aristotle defines *aretē* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as “a state concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it.”⁹⁶ One who regards only the opinions of those who are deemed to be ethical can be said to endeavor to be like ethical people. Feeling *aeschynē* in front of those whom one considers to be ethical is akin to saying ‘I am ashamed because I am not like you’. Also note that in defining *aretē* Aristotle expressly mentions the role of the rational faculty, which is where *aeschynē* dwells, in determining one’s relative mean.

In his discussion of character in Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says,

Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.⁹⁷

This quotation emphasizes Aristotle’s contention that *aeschynē* causes one to shrink from, and therefore focus on, the disgrace itself instead of the painful feelings that accompany shame. By avoiding the “disgrace itself”, and thus acting like a just or temperate person for example, one creates habits that will produce a just and temperate

⁹⁵ See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on this point.

⁹⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 7, 1106b36-1107a2.

⁹⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 4, 5-11.

character. *Aeschynē* acts as right reason by teaching human beings how to reach the relative and socially acceptable intermediate.

Aeschynē must be viewed as being, for Aristotle, essential when it comes to character development. Future behavior may be modeled and chosen based on avoiding *aeschynē* simply because of the painful feelings felt in front of those whom one deems to be ethical. This type of behavior is necessary for a functioning political community. *Aeschynē* is the model by which a good citizen learns to be ethical. That *aeschynē* is never felt in front of people who appear to have vicious characters or in front of small children and animals (who lack the ability to be ethical – and who lack rationality, according to Aristotle) speaks volumes about the role of the properly energized civic virtue *aeschynē*. Notice too that no similar claim in regard to basing one's behavior around a person deemed to be ethical is ever made by Aristotle about the passion *aidōs*.

In leaving the *Rhetoric* momentarily and instead focusing on the *Nicomachean Ethics* one finds a more complicated presentation of *aeschynē*. In the passage listed below Aristotle also includes the term *aidōs*. Drawing attention to this particular passage is essential because it is the only instance in which Aristotle chooses to use both *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in one section. Aristotle's decision to use both terms in this passage must not be ignored as it signifies that he reserves separate meanings for *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. Here Aristotle at length points out:

The passion (*aidōs*) is not becoming to every age, but only to youth. For we think young people should be prone to *aidōs* because they live by passion and therefore commit many errors, but are restrained by *aidōs*; and we praise young people who are prone to this passion, but an older

person no one would praise for being prone to *aeschynē*, since we think he should not do anything that need cause this sense. For the sense of *aeschynē* is not even characteristic of a good man, since it is consequent on bad actions (for such actions should not be done; and if some actions are *aeschra* [shameful] in very truth and others only according to common opinion, this makes no difference; for neither class of actions should be done; so that no *aeschynē* should be felt); and it is a mark of a bad man even to be such as to do any *aeschrōn* [causing shame] action. To be so constituted as to feel *aeschuno* [disgraced] if one does such an action, and for this reason to think oneself good, is absurd; for it is for voluntary actions that *aidōs* is felt, and the good man will never voluntarily do bad actions. But *aidōs* may be said to be conditionally a good thing; *if* a good man did such actions, he would feel *aeschuno* [disgraced]; but the excellences are not subject to such a qualification. And if *anaeschyntia* [shamelessness] – not to be *aideisthai* [ashamed] of doing base actions – is bad, that does not make it good to be *aeschuno* [ashamed] of doing such actions.⁹⁸

Although this passage offers a strong insight into the difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in Aristotle's work, the full reach of the diversity between these two terms is discussed in depth in chapter three. For present purposes suffice it to say that the above illustration offers further support for the claim that *aeschynē*, properly cultivated, is for Aristotle a civic virtue. *Aeschynē* is always felt because of some disgraceful action (an action which should not be performed) thus, one is never praised for feeling *aeschynē*.

An acknowledgement of Aristotle's claim that *aeschynē* is felt with regard to past, present, and future action is essential to understanding the above passage.⁹⁹ Aristotle does not reserve praise for anyone who simply feels *aeschynē* since it means that a

⁹⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b16-35.

⁹⁹ "*Aeschynē* may be defined as pain or disturbance in regard to bad things, whether *present, past, or future*, which seem likely to involve us in discredit" (italics mine) *Rhetoric*, II, 6, 1383b15.

disgrace or bad action was committed or considered. Instead, praise is reserved for one who uses *phronesis* in regard to the disgrace produced by *aeschynē*. The *phronimos*, one who uses practical wisdom, considers which actions or inactions may cause the painful and civically dishonorable feeling of *aeschynē* in the future. It is through *prohairesis* (choice) that one decides to avoid those painful *aeschynē* causing actions. The use of *aeschynē* in this passage, it is necessary to point out, does not imply that *aeschynē* lacks purpose; for it is still essential that one understands which actions cause *aeschynē* so that those actions or inactions may be avoided.

One specific line from the quotation above deserves special attention. The line, at 1128b27-28, is about the voluntary nature of *aidōs* and says, “it is for voluntary actions that *aidōs* is felt, and the good man will never voluntarily do bad actions.” This quotation is best understood in reference to what Aristotle believes about the voluntary characteristics of the passions. Aristotle writes, “What is the difference in respect of involuntariness between errors committed upon calculation and those committed in anger? Both are to be avoided, but the irrational passions are thought not less human than reason is, and therefore also the actions which proceed from anger or appetite are the man’s actions. It would be odd, then, to treat them as involuntary.”¹⁰⁰ When acting on behalf of the passions one is acting voluntarily because the moving principle is in the agent – by virtue of the passion felt. In a sense, then, in holding that *aidōs* is felt as a result of voluntary actions, Aristotle is at once claiming that *aidōs* is an irrational

¹⁰⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 1, 1111a33-1111b3.

passion. Surely this assertion is directly opposed to Aristotle's claim that *aeschynē* resides in the rational faculty of the soul.

At this point it is necessary to explain the distinction Aristotle makes between what is chosen and what is voluntary. In Book III of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle discusses choice and says that choice is not the same thing as the voluntary. Aristotle states that choice is most closely related to *aretē*. Choice requires reason and thought and does not rest on appetite in the way that voluntary things do. Recall that *aeschynē*, since it belongs to the rational faculty, occurs and is felt with choice. *Aidōs*, however, is not chosen with deliberation for "acts done on the spur of the moment we describe as voluntary, but not as chosen."¹⁰¹ Once again, the excerpt from the *Nicomachean Ethics* above refers to *aidōs* specifically as a voluntary passion.

In the lengthy passage above Aristotle also mentions shamelessness. He says it is base for one to be *anaeschyntia*. In other words, it is dishonorable for one not to feel *aidōs* at the prospect of doing what is shameful. But, it is not decent for an agent to feel *aeschynē* when she does something shameful – because as a civic virtue *aeschynē* should teach one to avoid vicious actions. The use of *aidōs* in this quotation exemplifies the prospective and inhibitory nature that, according to Douglas Cairns, belongs to *aidōs*.¹⁰² In other words, *aidōs*, in this case, is more like a feeling or a sense of embarrassment at the thought of doing something that would cause *aeschynē*. It

¹⁰¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1111b9-10.

¹⁰² Cairns (1993), 13.

should be clear, then, that Aristotle employs both terms at 1128b16-35 because the use of *aeschynē* in place of *aidōs* would not make sense.

***Aidōs* in the Corpus**

Aidōs was present in the passage at 1128b16-35, however, there are several additional inclusions of this term in Aristotle's corpus and it is necessary to consider each individual occurrence. *Aidōs* is a very beneficial passion that is best described as modesty. *Aidōs* may be helpful in guarding against a display of the passions – vices – listed as excessive by Aristotle. For example, one who feels modest is unlikely to act in ways that are overly vain, rash, or boastful. Modesty can be said to be akin to a feeling of shyness. In a sense it is displayed as a consciousness of the self, but not on the social level that exists when one experiences feelings of *aeschynē*.

In Aristotle's work *aidōs* as modesty always arises in conjunction with his use of the term's physiological or bodily conditions. For instance, Aristotle points out, on more than one occasion, that *aidōs* dwells in the eyes and that it is manifest in the blushing of one's cheeks. Traditionally, these physiological conditions are considered to be marks of modesty or shyness. In the *Categories* Aristotle remarks that the "many changes of color do come about through an affection is clear; when ashamed one goes red, when frightened one turns pale, and so on."¹⁰³ Physiological conditions, therefore, arise in response to feelings, not states of character. It is for this reason that Aristotle makes no claim about *aeschynē* as being responsible for causing bodily conditions. *Aeschynē* is

¹⁰³ *Categories* 8, 13-15.

not only distinct from *aidōs*, it also has the potential to become a virtue – an ability that the passion *aidōs* entirely lacks.

A deeper probe into Aristotle’s use of *aidōs* is necessary. Whereas *aeschynē* appears only in three of Aristotle’s treatises *aidōs* is mentioned in several treatises that include *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, *On the Heavens*, *Rhetoric*, *Categories*, *Physiognomonics*, and *Problems*. The appearance of *aidōs* in each treatise is explored in depth below with the exception of *On the Heavens*.¹⁰⁴

Aidōs, in the *Rhetoric*, is presented in respect to the physiological conditions briefly discussed above. The only difference regarding Aristotle’s mention of *aidōs* in the *Rhetoric* appears in the form of a proverb “*aidōs* dwells in the eyes” (this proverb is mentioned in *Problems* as well) and in the quotation “only *aidōs* restraineth me.”¹⁰⁵ In the *Rhetoric* recognition that Aristotle employs *aidōs* as modesty or shyness is central to the claim that he considers *aeschynē* to be distinct from *aidōs*. It should be noted that in this treatise *aidōs* is presented as entirely different from *aeschynē*. For example, Aristotle references *aidōs* in the *Rhetoric* in a quotation from Sappho. Sappho’s quotation focuses on the restraining properties of *aidōs* and the idea that when one experiences *aidōs* it is seen in the agent’s eyes. *Aeschynē* in the *Rhetoric* occurs when “we shrink from the disgrace itself and not from its consequences” whereas *aidōs* appears to transpire as a direct result of the consequences.¹⁰⁶ I blush or am shamefaced in response to contemplating the consequences of a possible future action.

¹⁰⁴ The remark made about *aidōs* in *On the Heavens* is minimal; in this treatise only one instance of *aidōs* is present in discussion of modesty as opposed to overconfidence (*On the Heavens* II, 12, 291b27).

¹⁰⁵ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a36; *Problems* XXXI, 3, 957b11; *Rhetoric* I, 9, 1367a10.

¹⁰⁶ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 23-24.

Elizabeth Belfiore notices the discord between the two ‘shame’-terms in the *Rhetoric*. Belfiore states that the *Rhetoric* “expresses the traditional idea, shared by Aristotle’s ethical works, that *aidōs* prevents one from acting on a base desire, and thus involves conflicting impulses. This is not true of *aeschynē* in the *Rhetoric*, however, which can be felt for involuntary acts that are not objects of desire.”¹⁰⁷ Belfiore’s contention is that one can be made to feel *aeschynē* for disgraceful actions that breach convention. *Aidōs*, conversely, is felt only through voluntary actions. One cannot be compelled to experience *aidōs*. In both the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* *aidōs* is only experienced as a restraining passion.

The *Categories*, *Physiognomonics*, and the *Problems* include several additional declarations of the bodily effects of *aidōs*.¹⁰⁸ Especially notable is the appearance of *aidōs* in the *Categories*. In this treatise Aristotle says, “Thus a man who reddens through *aidōs* is not called ruddy, nor one who pales in fright pallid; rather he is said to have been affected somehow. Hence such things are called affections but not qualities.”¹⁰⁹ That Aristotle calls *aidōs* an affection is remarkable because he is, in essence, claiming once again that it is not a virtue. Earlier in the *Categories* Aristotle says a quality is a state and a virtue is a state. An affection, on the other hand, is a fleeting thing that lacks the permanence of a virtuous character.¹¹⁰ It should be clear that this statement from the *Categories* is not the only time Aristotle refers to *aidōs* as

¹⁰⁷ Belfiore (1993), 193.

¹⁰⁸ *Problems* Book XXXI, 3, 957b11 and XXXII, 8, 961a10.

¹⁰⁹ *Categories* 8, 9b30-32.

¹¹⁰ *Categories* 8, 8b25-9a9.

an affection or passion. This claim is famously made in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as well.

The bodily effects of *aidōs* appear to be in line with the claim that *aidōs* fits the definition of ‘modesty’ or ‘shyness’. The conceptual idea of inhibition and bashfulness fits in quite well as a substitute for the term *aidōs*. It is necessary to point out that there is no hint of concern in the above mentioned occurrences of *aidōs* about the opinions of ‘ethical’ others as there is at all times Aristotle discusses *aeschynē*. This conversation is picked up again and elaborated on further in chapter three while focusing on the specific differences between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*.

Aristotle’s ethical treatises offer additional evidence in favor of the view that *aidōs* exists solely as a passion. For example, one of the most striking passages containing the term *aidōs* appears in the *Eudemian Ethics*. This occurrence emphasizes Aristotle’s contention, introduced above, that *aidōs* always seems to arise voluntarily but without choice. This is unmistakably distinct from *aeschynē* which, according to Aristotle, is felt both voluntarily (and involuntarily) and with choice.¹¹¹ The resulting consequence in this case is that ‘modesty’ once again fits best as a translation of the term *aidōs*. One is not responsible, since choice or *prohairesis* is not employed, for feelings that arise as a consequence of modesty. One cannot choose to experience the bodily conditions that occur as a result of feeling modest, for example, but one can choose to feel shame.

In the ethical treatises *prohairesis* carries a great deal of weight for Aristotle. Take, once again, the *Eudemian Ethics*. In this treatise *aidōs* is a praiseworthy passion

¹¹¹ The possibility of choosing to feel *anaeschyntia* always exists.

but it is not an excellence because it doesn't involve choice. Aristotle says that virtue is found through *phronesis* – and *aidōs* is felt neither with choice nor through *phronesis*.¹¹² My thesis rests heavily on this distinction because *aeschynē*, unlike *aidōs*, both involves choice and is felt without choice. This may be taken as a notable major difference between the Greek 'shame'-terms, highlighted in full detail in chapter three.

Additional evidence for the claim that *aidōs* does not involve choice, and is therefore not an excellence, can be found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is impossible to misconstrue Aristotle's proclamation that *aidōs* is not a virtue because he straightforwardly declares, "*Aidōs* should not be described as an excellence; for it is more like a passion than a state."¹¹³ Aristotle continues by asserting that *aidōs* involves bodily conditions or affections which are characteristic of passions but not states. Along the same lines, the fact that *aidōs* causes a cooling of the eyes and a redness of the ears is stated elsewhere.¹¹⁴

The significance of the physiological conditions unique to *aidōs* provides further support for the thesis that the two terms in question, *aeschynē* and *aidōs*, are distinct. Only once in the entire corpus does Aristotle make any reference to the bodily conditions caused by *aeschynē*. In this case, he says that "people who feel *aeschunomenoi* (disgraced) blush."¹¹⁵ The use of *aeschunomenoi* in this sentence is retrospective. In other words, *aeschunomenoi* is used because *aidōs* or a word with an "aid" root would not fit in this passage since *aidōs* is never based on the past and never

¹¹² *Eudemian Ethics* III, 7, 24-30.

¹¹³ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b10.

¹¹⁴ *Problems* XXXI, 3, 957b11 and XXXII, 8, 961a10.

¹¹⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b13.

used retrospectively. Quoting Douglas Cairns, “*aidōs* is always prospective and inhibitory” and therefore does not carry the retrospective sense that is shared by *aeschynē*.¹¹⁶ Aristotle’s contention that *aeschynē* is felt in terms of past, present, and future, whereas *aidōs* is felt only in the future sense provides, then, additional evidence that the terms are separate and distinct in his work. Cairns further states that in the passage in question *aeschynē* is used “in an exclusively retrospective sense.”¹¹⁷

Intuitively all of the aforementioned appearances of *aidōs* still work well with the claim that in Aristotle’s treatises *aidōs* translates best as ‘modesty’ or ‘shyness’. Consider first the bodily conditions that arise in the case of *aidōs*. Aristotle does not highlight the physiological conditions of *aeschynē* though it is certainly possible for shame (as a passion), to result in bodily effects. It is far more likely that feelings of modesty will lead to blushing as it is a fully inner experience in which the agent is in the spotlight. Take into account also the prospective nature of *aidōs*. One does not feel a sense of modesty or humility for past actions. It is always only felt in expectation of what is coming. One is shy or modest in anticipation of future actions not upon reflection of past actions. *Aeschynē*, on the other hand, can be felt by reflecting or contemplating on past painful or disgraceful situations. It can also be felt in the present and in the future when one experiences something disgraceful or anticipates a potential action or inaction.

¹¹⁶ Cairns (1993) 13.

¹¹⁷ Cairns (1993) 415.

My Contribution to this Problem

Despite the voluminous research devoted to *aidōs*, most notably in the work of Carl von Erffa and Douglas Cairns, less attention has been focused on *aeschynē*. In fact, when *aeschynē* is mentioned in these various studies it is typically included as a footnote, afterthought, or simply as another word for *aidōs*. Since my goal is to provide evidence that *aeschynē* describes and designates a unique perspective, the question that begs to be addressed is how does an appreciation of the difference in meaning between Aristotle's employment of the terms *aidōs* and *aeschynē* affect the overall understanding of his conception of human nature?

I seek to provide a thorough examination of the role of *aeschynē* in Aristotle's conception of human nature by showing the political and ethical implications of *aeschynē* and *anaeschyntia* and the effect of these implications as manifest in his treatises. It is crucial, both to one's personhood and to the existence of a just and balanced state, that *aeschynē* is understood and respected because of the self-evaluating capacity that it maintains. For Aristotle the ideal political community cannot exist without a sense of *virtuous* shame. *Aeschynē*, then, is required in order to create a better existence both on the personal level and on the larger community level.

Aeschynē is indispensable to Aristotle's conception of human nature because of the unique role it plays in one's character development, and thus one's *eudaimonia*. This dissertation attempts to show that for Aristotle an understanding and appreciation of *aeschynē* – as both a passion and as a fully actualized virtue - simultaneously leads

one to *eudaimonia* and away from the harmful feelings of *anaeschyntia*. *Aeschynē* is beneficial both politically and ethically. As a civic virtue *aeschynē* is bound up in others, especially the reputable *endoxa* of others, and is thus required for successful living within a just political community.

There is an additional benefit to be realized by viewing *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as unique individual terms denoting different concepts in Aristotle's writings. The advantage is that a better understanding of *aeschynē* provides an enhanced reading and grasp of Aristotle's work. *Aeschynē* deserves attention because it is a socially relevant passion and a civic virtue. An understanding of the political and ethical characteristics of *aeschynē* allows for a fresh interpretation of Aristotle's conception of human nature.

Outline of Subsequent Chapters

This chapter has provided an introduction and overview of the historical use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as well as of their appearance in Aristotle's corpus. The stage has been set for further discussion and analysis on the impact made by these distinct terms in the work of Aristotle. In order to provide evidence in favor of the claim that *aeschynē* is a passion, the second chapter demonstrates the importance of the passions in Aristotle's conception of human nature. Problems with interpretation are identified and discussed as are the passionate aspects of *aeschynē*. Since this dissertation claims that *aeschynē* is both a passion and a civic virtue it is necessary to present, at this point, the reasons that *aeschynē* can and should be considered a passion.

Chapter three develops the thesis that *aeschynē* is distinct in meaning from *aidōs* by offering a myriad of solid reasons for holding this position. Once the differences between the two ancient Greek 'shame'-terms have been determined and settled, the fourth and final chapter exhibits the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē*. This is designed to provide evidence that *aeschynē*, in its fully actualized state, exists as a civic virtue and not merely as a passion. The full implication of *aeschynē* as virtue is also identified in chapter four. In this, the concluding chapter, the term *metriopatheia* is introduced as the virtue attained in the case of *aeschynē*. In that chapter it is shown that *aeschynē* influences and affects Aristotle's conception of human nature and one's ability to reach *eudaimonia*

CHAPTER II: THEORY OF PASSIONS

The Importance of *Ta Pathē* to Aristotle's Conception of Human Nature

The last chapter provided an insight into the essence of the term *aeschynē* as it occurs in Aristotle's corpus. *Aeschynē* was shown to involve choice and require personal insight and social awareness of one's environment. *Aeschynē*, for Aristotle, is not an irrational impulse. Unlike *aidōs*, *aeschynē* exists as more than a mere or simple passion. It is, however, necessary to show the ways in which *aeschynē* is considered to be a passion before providing additional evidence that it, properly energized through *phronesis*, exists as a civic virtue. It is now essential, then, to consider Aristotle's theory of passions and the passionate aspects of *aeschynē*.

Aristotle is interested in the passions and their "role in the nature of 'man' as a rational and social animal."¹¹⁸ The passions are indispensable to Aristotle's conception of human nature because of their thoroughly political qualities. When one asks 'who is passionate' the only Aristotelian answer that can be provided is that the citizen of the *polis* (city-state) is passionate. As Robert Solomon points out, passions are "political in nature. They have a great deal to do with relationships between people living together in society."¹¹⁹ It is because of this inherent political nature that the passions are the subject of prominent discussion in several of Aristotle's treatises.

¹¹⁸ Solomon (2003), 125.

¹¹⁹ Solomon (2003), 144.

According to Aristotle, the passions must all be understood as directed to some social purpose or end.¹²⁰ In fact, the passions that Aristotle is concerned with in the *Rhetoric*, such as anger, calmness, fear, envy, emulation, and indignation are all “desires for a certain state of social relations, a desire, for example, for social inclusion, for social belonging, for social recognition but not in the narrow sense of status.”¹²¹ This is why Aristotle gives the passions a seldom seen reprieve. He is concerned with the social and communal traits of human nature and the passions exemplify these qualities.

In order to show that *aeschynē* is a virtue it is necessary first to understand the passionate aspects that it exemplifies. In doing so it should become clear that the passions are socially important and linked to the community in much the same way as the excellences. It is critical for Aristotle to discuss the passions because as Marlene Sokolon so aptly points out they “are essential for the development of ethical dispositions, any analysis of ethics, justice and the good political regime similarly requires an understanding of the role of emotions in human social and political action. We cannot have political analysis, for Aristotle, without focusing on the passions. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of human emotions is, therefore, also an essential aspect of understanding human politics.”¹²² A full appreciation and awareness in regard to Aristotle’s approach to the passions is fundamental in understanding his views on political virtue, social cohesion, ethics, and justice. Sokolon further states that the passions are crucial “in the overthrow of tyranny and the fight against social and political

¹²⁰ “Emotions, especially ones of pleasure and pain, reinforce communal norms” Koziak, (2000), 57.

¹²¹ Koziak (2000), 96.

¹²² Sokolon (2006), 32. In addition, it is important for Aristotle to discuss the passions because of “the ancient idea that ethical theory is about how to lead a good life, and that such a life will express the emotions as well as reason.” Sherman (2006), vi.

injustice.”¹²³ If there is any reservation about the importance of the passions in human social life the case studies discussed in the work of neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio offers support to alleviate these doubts. According to Barbara Koziak, Damasio “finds that when patients lose the ability to feel emotions, they also lose the ability to reason and make decisions about practical, social, personal, and moral affairs.”¹²⁴ It seems clear, then, that the passions are necessary for any type of communal life.

Before delving into Aristotle’s theory of passions this chapter begins, necessarily, with consideration of yet another difference of opinion that also has age-old roots: the argument concerning whether reason or the passions influence one’s decisions. There has, in the history of philosophy, been a heavily discussed and often resolutely maintained disagreement between those who believe in the authority of reason and those who trust in the primacy of the passions. In many ways the dispute for dominance between reason and the passions carries over into Aristotle’s conception of human nature and his often mistakenly labeled “inconsistent” view of the passions. A great many Aristotelians find it difficult to come to a common understanding regarding Aristotle’s concern with the passions. The task of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive view of what I take to be Aristotle’s theory of passions. I confront this controversial subject by illuminating the various complexities concerning *ta pathē* in Aristotle’s work.

It is helpful at this stage to outline Aristotle’s attempt to reconcile reason and passion and to identify the extent of his belief in the cognitive nature of the passions.

¹²³ Sokolon (2006), 164.

¹²⁴ Koziak (2000), 17.

Aristotle's stance regarding the compromise between reason and the passions is made clear in the *Rhetoric*. In this treatise Aristotle maintains that one's belief, thought, or imagination acts as fuel for various passions. The favored example, at this point, is of the passion anger. Anger, Aristotle says, is a natural and healthy response to an undeserved slight and it includes the desire for revenge. When one learns that the slight was unintentional the anger, along with the expectation or the longing for revenge, subsides. Thus, the feeling of anger arises when one believes that some injustice has been committed. The feeling of anger is not, in these terms, a random instinctive force. There is thought behind the passion. Aristotle's discussion of anger highlights the important role of practical wisdom, which belongs to the rational faculty, in *choosing* to feel certain passions.¹²⁵

The question that now presents itself is whether it is possible to claim that Aristotle assembles a hierarchy of passions. In other words, does Aristotle believe that the more cognitive passions, being more open to the reasoning faculty, are of a higher order? I argue that he generally does not consider the passions in a hierarchical manner; however, passions that involve the reasoning faculty may be, for Aristotle, more significant. *Aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty and therefore should be supposed to hold more weight for Aristotle than passions belonging to the spirited or desiring faculties of the soul (such as fear and anger for example). Certainly part of this

¹²⁵ That anger is cognitive in the *Rhetoric* should be further understood given that the physiological effects of anger are not mentioned in this treatise. Elsewhere, anger is often discussed in terms of bodily conditions. Consider also the fact that *aeschynē* is never expressed in physiological terms. Thus, it should be noted that the *Rhetoric* views passions in a cognitive light.

assumption may be made on the grounds of Aristotle's assertion that human beings alone possess reasoning ability.

Now that an acknowledgement of the degree to which Aristotle's belief in the cognitive capacity of passions has been reached, it is essential to consider why Aristotle's various discussions of *ta pathē* are often thought to be contradictory. This can be understood without much effort by reflecting on two of Aristotle's remarks regarding *ta pathē*. First, in the *Politics* Aristotle writes that "the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful."¹²⁶ In this quotation Aristotle maintains that it is imprudent for one to be ruled by the passions. This is not the only stance Aristotle takes concerning *ta pathē*. A contrasting approach to the passions in Aristotle's work appears in the *Rhetoric* as he says "persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile."¹²⁷ Here Aristotle observes, once again, the cognitive capacity of passions as outlined above. Yet, he also appears to directly contradict his stance in the previous quotation from the *Politics*.

How should one understand the discrepancy between these two distinct Aristotelian approaches to the passions? On the one hand Aristotle says that the passionate element of the soul ought always to be ruled by the rational element. On the

¹²⁶ *Politics* I, 5, 1254b6-10; this quotation provides further evidence for the argument that *aeschynē* possesses some semblance of superiority over the other passions.

¹²⁷ *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1356a13-15.

other hand passions are said to affect judgments – which makes it appear that the passions have, in this case, primacy over reason. These quotations emphasize the undeserved though oft-considered discrepancy in terms of Aristotle’s work on the passions. The good news, however, is that this conflict can be settled quickly and easily. This is apparent when one takes into account the discussion of the passions in the context of the individual treatises. Examining the passions as they appear in separate treatises is a requirement for correctly understanding Aristotle’s theory of passions.

When attempting to comprehend Aristotle’s beliefs and ideas about the passions, it is vital to consider the goal of the treatise in question and then determine the meaning of the passions in terms of the overall aim of each specific treatise. When one views the passions in this manner a distinct pattern emerges – especially in regard to *aeschynē*. The present chapter focuses on just this matter by viewing the ways that Aristotle’s presentation of the passions differs from treatise to treatise based on the *telos* or purpose of the work in question. The overarching objective of this chapter, then, is to provide a reconciliation for Aristotle’s seemingly contradictory approaches to the passions by presenting individual consideration of the *telos* of each of the respective treatises. This reconciliation is accomplished by eventually specifying a full theory of passions in Aristotle’s conception of human nature.

Making sense of Aristotle’s approach to the passions is of great consequence to my thesis that *aeschynē* exists both as a passion and, when properly energized through

phronesis, a virtue.¹²⁸ *Aeschynē* as civic *aretē* is addressed in chapter four, in terms of its political and ethical attributes respectively. The present focus is solely on the passionate aspects of *aeschynē*. In order successfully to explain that *aeschynē* is a passion, however, Aristotle's use of the term *pathos* must be clear. Once the term is understood the pattern behind Aristotle's theory of passions emerges and is reconciled into one distinct uniform system. First, though, some possible challenges involving translation and cultural interpretations must be taken into account.

Problems with Translation and Cultural Interpretations

Certainly there is an abundance of problems that arise when considering a foundation for Aristotle's theory of passions. The passions specifically, and *aeschynē* in general, have a very social nature. This is a prominent feature in that the ancient Greek notion of passion is, in many respects, different from the contemporary Western perception familiar to modern thinkers. In order to consider Aristotle's theory of passions it is necessary to formulate a clear picture of the ancient Greek conception of passion.

First, it is important to note that just as with traditional translations of *aidōs* and *aeschynē*, there is typically a discrepancy regarding the English translation when one encounters the Greek term *pathos*. Quite often *pathos* is translated as emotion;

¹²⁸ On this note, David Konstan has written that *aeschynē* holds two meanings – one signifying 'shame' and one that signifies a 'sense of shame'. He says, "Indeed, the two concepts would seem to be psychologically discrete, 'shame' being an emotion while a 'sense of shame' is more like an ethical trait", (2006), 95.

however, there are many negative connotations associated with the term 'emotion'. The correct translation of *pathos* should be 'passion' as this term captures the essence of the word better than the term 'emotion'. In addition, the word 'passion' correctly encapsulates Aristotle's contention that *ta pathē* are open to judgment. This seems like a minor nuance though it is of great consequence since the goal of this dissertation is to understand all aspects of Aristotle's regard for *aeschynē*.

In addition to the translation of *pathos* it is prudent to consider the various ways in which culture may affect the way one intimately feels and understands the passions. I quote David Konstan at length as he has hit on an issue of some significance in respect to cultural differences:

Two studies on Dutch versus Spanish emotional responses indicate a 'greater Spanish focus on others' evaluative judgments', in contrast with the greater Dutch focus on autonomous judgments'; the investigators concluded that 'Spanish participants' thoughts during pride and shame experiences were more often other-centered, whereas Dutch participants' thoughts were more often self-centered'. There is at least *prima facie* reason to suppose that the emotional experience of the ancient Greeks and that of modern Anglo-Saxon cultures may diverge along similar lines.¹²⁹

The problem with cultural interpretation continues on another level. Konstan asks whether modern passions are regarded in the same way that the ancient Greeks viewed and experienced their passions. In exploring this topic he uses the different approach people may have to viewing colors. For example, Konstan wonders whether, when asked about the color blue, the Greeks would see "blue" or some specific shade of the color blue. Konstan says, "But do we all see blue? More precisely, does what is

¹²⁹ Konstan (2006), 23.

called blue in contemporary English correspond precisely to some color label in every other human language?”¹³⁰ He continues by asking, “How much more likely is it that such intangible items as emotions should vary from culture to culture? One might even argue that, unlike color, the ontological status of emotion itself is as hazy or ambiguous as that of the individual emotions”.¹³¹ It is clear, then, that the pervasive problem of interpretation extends far and wide. There are many cases in which passions occur, are named and understood in one culture, but are entirely absent from other customs and traditions. Kurt Riezler presents a succinct view of this issue as he says, “Different languages do not draw exactly the same distinctions. Where the human heart is concerned languages seem to be attempts to lay hands on an evasive subject matter... we admire the subtleness of one for the shades of emotion it can express and deplore the clumsiness of another.”¹³²

A close reading of Aristotle’s corpus with attention to the various nuances in his writing may help diminish the troubling problems of translation and cultural interpretation. Aristotle’s theory of passions is here offered as a starting point to determine his unique view on *ta pathē*, which will, of course, provide the ground work for his interpretation and subsequent use of *aeschynē* in his conception of human nature.

¹³⁰ Konstan (2006), 5.

¹³¹ Konstan (2006), 7.

¹³² Riezler (1943), 457.

Aristotle's Treatment of *Ta Pathē*

An overall and concrete understanding of *ta pathē* is important to Aristotle's conception of human nature. Evidence for this claim is found insofar as the passions, as a subject both of inquiry and discussion, arise often in the work of Aristotle. Though frequent reference and explanatory promises are made in this chapter regarding Aristotle's theory of passions, the question whether Aristotle formulated a clear and unified theory of passions remains. If there is, as I argue, a well-defined and concrete system regarding the passions in Aristotle's work what does it hold? This question can be adequately addressed only by considering the various treatments *ta pathē* receive in Aristotle's corpus.

Prominent discussion of the passions is found in several of Aristotle's treatises – most notably the *De Anima*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and the *Rhetoric*. These treatises, with the exception of the *De Anima*, also comprise Aristotle's most significant references to *aeschynē*. Each analysis of *ta pathē* provides additional insight into Aristotle's conception of human nature. This investigation is useful as it sets the foundation for *aeschynē* as passion making it possible to move forward and consider the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue. The end result is a complete and thorough comprehension of *aeschynē* in Aristotle's conception of human nature.

Aristotle believes that the passions are involved in and are relevant to many aspects of human nature. As is indicative of Aristotle's form of covering all elements of a subject, he discusses *ta pathē* and their functions physiologically, cognitively,

sociologically and politically, psychologically, ethically, poetically, and rhetorically. The majority of these aspects are closely related to *aeschynē*. Readers of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, for example, should notice that this particular treatise covers a variety of these attributes in the discussion of *aeschynē*.

Aristotle, in examining the numerous characteristics of the passions, endeavors to understand them in terms of their functions. A keen recognition of these functions allows for an intimate knowledge of the virtues of the individual passions. This is unmistakable, because, when Aristotle wants to find the function of something he looks to what that thing does well. There is no exception to be made in terms of the passions. This recognition regarding Aristotle's concern with the function of the passions offers some initial insight into what I take to be Aristotle's theory of passions.

The claim that Aristotle is concerned with the *ergon*, or the function, of the passions is substantiated in the *De Anima*. In this treatise Aristotle mentions the fact that the passions are defined differently depending on the experience and background of the speaker – whether physicist or dialectician, for example.¹³³ Indeed, this aspect is acknowledged more than once in Aristotle's conception of human nature; for he also holds that "A carpenter and a geometer look for right angles in different ways: the former does so in so far as the right angle is useful for his work, while the latter inquires what it is or what sort of thing it is."¹³⁴ Based on this quotation some of the force behind the undeserved claim of inconsistency in Aristotle's theory of passions should be diminished; for he is already providing evidence that human beings are psychologically

¹³³ *De Anima* I, 1, 403a26-403b19.

¹³⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 7, 1098a29-31.

influenced by their experiences and training and that the passions must be considered in the context of these experiences.

The passions for Aristotle are not one dimensional. They are useful in a variety of ways that depend on the specific purpose they are needed for. Viewing *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as two unique terms with distinct meanings may be easier in light of this initial revelation. Since Aristotle holds that the passions must be understood in terms of their *ergon* it makes sense to use two different terms to encompass the separate functions of shame.

From the recognition that Aristotle is concerned with the *ergon* of the passions it follows that the key to understanding his theory of passions lies in viewing the individual treatises *as he intends them to be viewed* and not in considering the passions as singular feelings existing without boundaries. The passions must be understood within the borders or the constraints of their respective subjects. Whether the subject is the best mode of persuasion, as in the *Rhetoric*, or about living well as in the ethical treatises, matters when one is trying to formulate Aristotle's theory of passions. It is a mistake to compile a list of the passions as they appear in Aristotle's corpus and attempt to derive his theory of passions without regard to the aim he has in mind for each treatise. The passions must be considered in relation to the context of the treatises they appear in if one wants to fully appreciate Aristotle's theory of passions and thus his conception of human nature.

Before turning to the passions as presented in the *Rhetoric* and the ethical treatises, the area of primary concern in this chapter, it is essential to note the function

of *ta pathē* as presented in the *De Anima*. The passions, or affections of the soul in *De Anima* are, “gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating” and all involve the body.¹³⁵ These passions, as they appear in *De Anima*, are products of the appetitive faculty of the soul. Aristotle is concerned, in the *De Anima* with the natural aspects of *ta pathē*. Recall that in this treatise there is some discussion of the physiological effects of *aidōs*. No reference, however, to *aeschynē* appears in the *De Anima*.

Although my thesis rests heavily on the notion that it is important to view the individual treatises when attempting to construct Aristotle’s theory of passions, this does not discount the fact that one can trace a connection in Aristotle’s thought across his treatises; for it is clear later on in Book I of the *De Anima* that it is not the soul that feels the passions, rather it is the “man who does this with his soul.”¹³⁶ Here one can begin to see the first grains of Aristotle’s cognitive explication of *ta pathē*.

Now that Aristotle’s concern with the passions in the *De Anima* has been briefly presented, it is necessary to consider and explore the diverse elements of *ta pathē* in the *Rhetoric* and the ethical treatises (with a strict emphasis on the discussion of the passions that occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics*). The passions in these works are examined in terms of their similarities as well as the numerous ways they differ. Once these aspects have been outlined and Aristotle’s theory of passions has been determined, the focus turns to the passionate aspects of *aeschynē*.

¹³⁵ *De Anima* I, 1 403a17.

¹³⁶ *De Anima* I, 7, 408b14.

Turning first to the passions as they appear in the *Rhetoric*, the definition found of *ta pathē* in Book II is as follows: “*Ta pathē* are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain (*lupē*) or pleasure (*hēdonē*); such are anger, pity, fear and the like, with their opposites.”¹³⁷ That Aristotle makes mention of the ability of *ta pathē* to affect judgment is critical in terms of understanding the role of the passions in the *Rhetoric*.

Continuing with the discussion of the passions in the *Rhetoric*, the comprehensive list, in addition to shame/shamelessness (*aeschynē/anaeschyntia*), includes anger/gentleness (*orge/praos*), love/hate (*philia/misos*), fear/confidence (*phobos/tharsos*), and benevolence/ungraciousness (*kharis/akharistia*) along with pity (*eleos*), indignation (*nemesis*), envy (*phthonos*) and emulation (*zēlos*). These passions, as discussed in the *Rhetoric*, are open to persuasion and judgment. It is for this reason that Aristotle chooses to discuss them in the *Rhetoric*, the treatise most concerned with outside influences on the passions. It is beneficial to keep the aim of the *Rhetoric* in mind regarding the recognition that it is *aeschynē* and not *aidōs* that is discussed in this treatise.

The definitions of *ta pathē* in *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* are related to one another in content. For the sake of simplicity and relevance I focus this section on the occurrence of the passions as they are presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says that by passions he means, “appetite (*epithymia*), anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling, hate, longing, emulation,

¹³⁷ *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1378a20-22.

pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain.”¹³⁸ Notice that though the emphasis on pleasure and pain remains, the definition given in the *Nicomachean Ethics* neglects to mention that the passions affect one’s judgments. Nor are they, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, open to persuasion as they are in the *Rhetoric*. That Aristotle disregards these aspects in his ethical treatises should not be ignored since it is a crucial piece of evidence that must be used to construct his theory of passions. Other than this, on the surface the definitions offered in the ethical treatises and the *Rhetoric* are similar in nature; however, and more important, dissecting the place of the passions in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* proves that each treatise has a very different approach to and purpose concerning *ta pathē*.

In order to fully comprehend Aristotle’s theory of passions his contention, found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that the virtuous person feels the right things, at the right times, and in the right ways must be understood. How does this claim fit into the discussion of the passions set forth in the *Rhetoric*? In order to appreciate the relationship between the two treatises, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* must be considered in their entirety. Upon doing so the differences regarding the passions in both treaties will be explicit. The first striking distinction between the two treatises in general is that the *Rhetoric* is written as an investigation into the best forms of persuasion whereas the *Nicomachean Ethics* presents an inquiry of the best human character. This is significant, because it offers recognition of Aristotle’s aim which, once again, must not be ignored. Reading the treatises without considering their individual

¹³⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1105b20.

aim is self-defeating. One must view the passions in the *Rhetoric* in light of Aristotle's focus on the art of persuasion. Likewise, the passions in the ethics must be considered in terms of how they affect one's character.

The opening lines of the *Nicomachean Ethics* hold that all inquiries aim at specific ends and that "as there are many actions, arts, and sciences, their ends are also many."¹³⁹ Aristotle has, to be sure, different ends in view for his ethical projects and his *Rhetoric* such that rhetoric is a *techné* (art) and ethics focuses on human conduct. That for each inquiry the *telos* must be considered is made clear upon consideration of Aristotle's claim that rhetoric must not be made to be more than it is. As Aristotle says, "the more we try to make either dialectic or rhetoric not what they really are, practical faculties, but sciences, the more we shall inadvertently be destroying their true nature; for we shall be re-fashioning them and shall be passing into the region of sciences dealing with definite subjects rather than simply with words and forms of reasoning."¹⁴⁰

Ethics, on the other hand, *is* a practical science. Art and science, for Aristotle, have entirely different ends. Taking what Aristotle says about a passion – be it anger or shame, for example – in the *Rhetoric* and applying it to what he says about the same passion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* often earns Aristotle's theory of passions the undeserved label of inconsistency.

¹³⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 1, 1094a6-7.

¹⁴⁰ *Rhetoric* I, 4, 1359b15-20.

It should be clear that Aristotle wants his treatises to be understood in terms of the subject matter they deal with. One should not, according to Aristotle, attempt to take his discussions of the passions out of context. Again, the passions, as they appear in the *Rhetoric*, must be viewed in light of the art or the *techné* they belong to. Likewise, the discussion of the passions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* ought to focus on how they affect one's state of character. Failure to consider the passions as an extension of the treatises they are found in will result in a confused or contradictory theory of passions. Aristotle's theory of passions is generally further convoluted in regard to the Greek 'shame'-terms because many critics often try to piece together what Aristotle says about shame without noting that Aristotle uses two distinct terms.

Returning to the differences between the ethical treatises and the *Rhetoric* it should be noted that the second related, and perhaps more important, discrepancy between the occurrence of the passions in the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* has been hinted at above and concerns *hexis* (disposition) and *dunamis* (capacity). Since Aristotle is not, in the *Rhetoric*, explicating a scientific theory, but rather an art, he does not assume disposition, (as he does in the *Nicomachean Ethics* with regard to states of character); rather, in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle focuses on capacity. The distinction between *dunamis* and *hexis* is noteworthy because Aristotle believes that human beings have the capacity to feel certain passions – as maintained in the *Rhetoric*. The *Nicomachean Ethics*, on the other hand, focuses on *hexis* such that the passions are felt in regard to the states of character the person possesses. The *Nicomachean Ethics* deals with states of character and *ethos*, or character, leads to virtue. *Aretē*, however, is not a part of rhetoric; nor does rhetoric ever lead to *aretē*.

The aim of the rhetorician, as stated in the *Rhetoric*, is to find the best modes of persuasion. In this sense Aristotle claims that, “When people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity.”¹⁴¹ In the *Rhetoric* there is no presupposed belief that the virtuous person must feel the passions in the right way at the right time and in the right situations – rather, passions are allowed to fluctuate and affect one’s judgment.¹⁴² Recall that the definition of passions offered by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* neglects to include anything about affecting one’s judgment.¹⁴³ Also, in the *Rhetoric* there is no emphasis on excess, defect, and the intermediate as there is in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

This can be developed further, for example in terms of rhetoric, as Aristotle maintains, “Clearly the orator will have to speak so as to bring his hearers into a frame of mind that will dispose them to anger, and to represent his adversaries as open to such charges and possessed of such qualities as do make people angry.”¹⁴⁴ It is for this reason that Aristotle takes the time to discuss the passions in regard to disposition and the ways the young, those in the prime of life, and the old respond to particular situations. Clearly, if Aristotle believes that passions are felt in the right way, at the right

¹⁴¹ *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1377b31-33.

¹⁴² An immediate problem here, pointed out by C.D.C. Reeve, may exist such that the less virtuous the rhetorician’s audience, “the further they are from having the right feelings and emotions ‘at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way’ – the more the orator or rhetorician will need to deal with their unruly emotions in order to gain conviction”, Reeve (1996), 202. Reeve’s problem can be overcome by noting that the rhetorician addresses an audience with the knowledge of “what seasons, times, conditions, and periods of life tend to stir men easily to anger” (*Rhetoric* II, 2, 1379a25-28). It is in this respect that the rhetorician must be aware of the extent to which the dispositions play a part – an important part to be sure, but nevertheless a part independent of ethical considerations.

¹⁴³ *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1378a20-22; *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1105b20.

¹⁴⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 2, 1380a1-4.

times, and in the right situations in the *Rhetoric* (as he does in the *Nicomachean Ethics*) he would not place such great emphasis on the various types of character in relation to *pathos* and ethical qualities.¹⁴⁵ At length Aristotle discusses youth, prime of life, and old age as well as good fortune and bad fortune and how each stage or position in life determines the actions and reactions one has in regard to the passions. Contrariwise, the *Nicomachean Ethics* sets forth the principle that regardless of age (or any other possible characteristics that open one to persuasion) in the face of the worst tragedies “nobility shines through, when a man bears with resignation many great misfortunes, not through insensibility to pain but through nobility and greatness of soul.”¹⁴⁶ In the *Nicomachean Ethics* passions are not open to persuasion because one’s character guards against rhetoric.

In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle does not assume that the virtuous audience must feel the right things in the right ways at the right time *qua* virtuous audience (and this, at least, because the *Rhetoric* is not concerned with virtue); however there *is* an extent to which it is presupposed in the *Rhetoric* that human beings do feel the right things at the right times and in the right way – otherwise rhetoric would not be possible. At the very least this presupposition exists in the form of predictability. In other words, rhetoric requires that one’s passions be aroused by such specific things and in such specific ways as can be anticipated by the orator; hence Aristotle discusses each passion in regard to three aspects one must discover. Using *aeschynē* as an example the three aspects are “the things that cause shame and shamelessness, and the persons before

¹⁴⁵ *Rhetoric* II, 12, 1388b32-35.

¹⁴⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 10, 1100b30-32.

whom, and the states of mind under which they are felt.”¹⁴⁷ There would not be reason to understand these three aspects of the individual passions if there were not a formula such that the audience must feel the right things at the right time and to the right extent (but again, and this is important, not *qua* virtuous audience).

The rhetorician must be able to “reason logically, to understand human character and goodness in their various forms, and to understand the passions, that is, to name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited.”¹⁴⁸ Once again, this is to the extent that there exists an element in the *Rhetoric* such that the passions must be felt at the right time and to the right degree. However, the emphasis on the character of the rhetorician which “may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses” must not be ignored.¹⁴⁹ If the audience is assumed to truly feel the right things in the right ways at the right times and situations the rhetorician’s character would not and could not be as persuasive as Aristotle deems. In other words, no matter how persuasive the rhetorician is if one has developed the right state of character – right reason - within herself the character of the rhetorician will be less effective.

Indeed, character has a dual role in the *Rhetoric*. The rhetorician must know the states of character both for herself and what she should project to the audience as well as how to arouse specific passions in different types of character. For, in order to be a successful rhetorician one must know the different states of character people are prone

¹⁴⁷ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b13-14.

¹⁴⁸ *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1356a23-28.

¹⁴⁹ *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1356a12-14.

to experience. The rhetorician must know, for example, that “With regard to pleasantness in the giving of amusement the intermediate person is ready-witted and the disposition ready wit, the excess is buffoonery and the person characterized by it a buffoon, while the man who falls short is a sort of boor and his state is boorishness.”¹⁵⁰

Emphasis must be placed on the fact that *aretē* is not part of the art of rhetoric. There is no virtue associated with the audience of a rhetorician. Rhetoric is not about virtue; it is about what can be produced within listeners (recall the earlier distinction between *hexis* versus *dunamis*). Rhetoric aims at persuasion and not at truth. There is no claim to ethical action nor does the *Rhetoric* assume truth. It is in this sense that *aeschynē* is intimately linked to the art of rhetoric since rhetoric involves judgment and *endoxa*. *Aeschynē* is concerned with opinion and convention and does not assume truth. *Aeschynē* occurs as a response to a violation of some standard social norm.

There are five states by which the soul possesses truth according to Aristotle: art, knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom, and comprehension. When presenting these categories Aristotle does not include “judgment and opinion because in these we may be mistaken” but what the rhetorician brings about in the audience is exactly this – judgment and opinion.¹⁵¹ This is precisely what *aeschynē* is concerned with; for without judgment and opinion feelings of *aeschynē* could not arise. Indeed, the feeling of *aeschynē* occurs when one is judged to stand badly in respect to any of the

¹⁵⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 7, 1108a23-25.

¹⁵¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 3, 1139b15-17.

other passions. For example, I may experience *aeschynē* if I am irascible or if I fail to display appropriate courage in a given situation.

In the *Rhetoric* the passions are directly linked to cognitive abilities, not to character. Aristotle clearly notes the relevance of *ta pathē* in terms of human reason and decision making ability when he writes that “When people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity: when they feel friendly to the man who comes before them for judgment, they regard him as having done little wrong, if any; when they feel hostile, they take the opposite view.”¹⁵² In the *Nicomachean Ethics* virtue is discussed in terms of character in regard to the passions and actions that make up one’s state of character. In these passions there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. A direct quotation from the *Nicomachean Ethics* emphasizes this claim. Aristotle says, “Both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue.”¹⁵³ The passions in the *Rhetoric* are not part of character; they merely affect judgments.

There is still, however, a problem with this interpretation. Even though I urge the importance of considering the individual treatises in their own right, the passions one feels as a virtuous person in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and as a member of an audience

¹⁵² *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1378a1-5.

¹⁵³ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 6, 1106b15-24.

in the *Rhetoric* are chiefly the same *feelings*. Why is it, then, that one can be called virtuous or vicious as a consequence of one's feelings in the *Nicomachean Ethics* but not in the *Rhetoric*? Aristotle has a perfectly reasonable answer as he explains that, "Neither the virtues nor the vices are *passions*, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our virtues and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (for the man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels it in a certain way), but for our virtues and our vices we *are* praised or blamed."¹⁵⁴ Thus, one is considered virtuous or vicious as a result of one's feelings in the *Nicomachean Ethics* because passions – as presented in that treatise – are habituated states of character. In the *Rhetoric* passions are simply feelings which are aroused by persuasion of an *outside force* – namely, a gifted orator.

Choice, for Aristotle, is always a prerequisite for virtue.¹⁵⁵ Recall, again, that choice is directly intertwined with *aeschynē* for it is choice that differentiates between *aeschynē* as a passion and *aeschynē* as a civic virtue (and this is why *aidōs* is never a virtue because it never occurs with choice). One is not praised or blamed for feeling *aeschynē* as a passion because the actions that lead to *aeschynē* should be avoided. Choice is not part of *aeschynē* qua passion. *Aeschynē* qua virtue, however, requires choice and the virtue is reflected in the choice to avoid the action that causes the painful and disgraceful feelings of *aeschynē*.

¹⁵⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 4, 1105b30-34.

¹⁵⁵ This should also explain why the passions are not considered in terms of virtue in the *De Anima*. Since the *De Anima* focuses only on the appetitive aspects of the passions, as they are felt without choice, it is not possible to consider them as habituated states of character.

Since the *Rhetoric* deals with persuasion the natural question whether persuaded agents are responsible for their passions as voluntary actions must be considered. Aristotle has another readily available answer to this question in that involuntary things, “which take place under compulsion”, deserve pardon because the moving principle is outside of the person.¹⁵⁶ Such are the passions incited by the rhetorician.¹⁵⁷ Virtues, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as states of character are voluntary.¹⁵⁸

Aeschynē as both a passion and a civic virtue can be felt voluntarily and involuntarily. The distinction between choice and voluntary and involuntary actions offers a further difference between the passions discussed by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Attention once again should be given to the distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. This point highlights the fact that *aeschynē* – given its position as both a passion and a virtue - is felt for choice as well as voluntary and involuntary actions whereas the passion *aidōs*, as described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is felt only for voluntary actions.¹⁵⁹

A question of significant consequence, however, must be addressed. How does the knowledge that passions are susceptible to persuasion fare for the overall human goal of *eudaimonia*? Is it possible that one can never be happy if one’s passions are determined by an orator? In the rhetorician’s audience *ta pathē* are not brought out in accordance with virtue as they would be for the ethically trained and properly habituated

¹⁵⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 1 1110a1.

¹⁵⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 1, 1110a.

¹⁵⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 5, 1115a.

¹⁵⁹ I cannot control when I blush (*aidōs*), for example. The physiological effects of *aidōs* are so often highlighted by Aristotle while *aeschynē* lacks this distinction.

person. This problem is not insurmountable because states of character are caused by habits such that if certain passions are felt in a particular way they will contribute to character if they are habitual. The persuasion of the rhetorician will not have a long-term negative effect on one who possesses the right habits and the correct state of character. Thus, the passions engendered by the rhetorician will not change one's state of character provided that one's state of character has been habituated in the right ways. It is appropriate to point out that for Aristotle ethics precedes rhetoric. This means that they are not mutually exclusive – if one has developed an ethical state of character she will not be open to the persuasion of the rhetorician. It is for this reason that Aristotle's belief in the cognitive nature of the passions was discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

In the *Rhetoric* passion and reason are compatible. Passions are open to reason and can inspire certain judgments just as judgment can lead to certain passions. Cognition plays a role in one's passions because passion occurs with thought. As such passions are instrumental to rationality. As Christina Tarnopolsky points out in her important work *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants*, "Emotions are the very psychic mechanisms by which we move into a world of rationality and thus acquire our ability to reflect and deliberate on ourselves in relation to a social and external world that is beyond our control and that constrains us in very specific ways."¹⁶⁰ As the only 'passion' Aristotle places in the rational faculty of the soul one may gather that he has an extraordinarily specific use reserved for *aeschynē*.

¹⁶⁰ Tarnopolsky (2010), 181.

In addition to the cognitive elements of passions it must be noted that passion can be tied to ethical virtue. Some passions traditionally thought to be ‘negative’ (i.e. anger and hatred, and certainly as this dissertation seeks to prove, *aeschynē*) have been shown to have positive effects on living correctly in a just political regime. Aristotle’s words are once again fitting: “He who lives as passion directs will not hear argument that dissuades him, nor understand it if he does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his ways? And in general passion seems to yield not to argument but to force. The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble and hating what is base.”¹⁶¹ To this end, Aristotle’s ethics serve not only to lead one to the life of contemplation and *eudaimonia* but to insure that nothing – least of all rhetoric and the clever rhetorician – will be able to interfere with one’s *eudaimonia*.

Thus, Aristotle’s theory of passions is understood such that the passions are so diverse that it is necessary to consider them as they occur across various disciplines and arts. In attempting to reconcile the passions without considering the categories they belong to, one misses the full effect of Aristotle’s theory of passions and attributes to him the undeserving label of inconsistency in reference to the place of the passions in his conception of human nature. As Aristotle maintains throughout the corpus, “things are defined by their function and power” - the passions are not an exception here.¹⁶² The passions have different functions depending on the end result at which one aims.

¹⁶¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1179b25-30.

¹⁶² *Politics* I, 2, 1253a23.

Understanding Aristotle's theory of passions and his treatment of *ta pathē* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* provides one with advantages both philosophically and socially. For Aristotle, the passions, and awareness about how they function, can be seen to benefit not only the leaders of the *polis* but also the citizens *qua* citizens as well as on a personal and individual level. It is important for Aristotle to discuss the passions in terms of their unique *telos*. Understanding all aspects of the passions leads to better decision making and thus a better political life.¹⁶³

The question posed at the beginning of this chapter as to whether Aristotle has a clear and defined theory of passions can now be affirmatively answered. Aristotle's theory of passions holds that *ta pathē* are an integral aspect of human nature. There is, of course, more to the story. The passions, for Aristotle, reflect the vast differences that can be experienced simply by virtue of being human. Aristotle furnishes this answer by saying, "a physicist would define an affection of soul differently from a dialectician; the latter would define e.g. anger as the appetite for returning pain for pain, or something like that, while the former would define it as a boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart. The one assigns the material conditions, the other the form or account; for what he states is the account of the fact, though for its actual existence there must be embodiment of it in a material such as is described by the other."¹⁶⁴

Aristotle shows remarkable perception in his recognition that passions are incredibly intricate – just as human nature itself is. The effects of individual passions differ based on the method and manner by which the passion is aroused. In the

¹⁶³ *Rhetoric* II, 1, 1377b24-25.

¹⁶⁴ *De Anima* I, 1, 403a29-403b4.

Rhetoric passions are aroused through persuasion. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* passions are habituated in order to develop character.

The remaining task of this chapter is to consider the passionate characteristics of *aeschynē*. It is first necessary to mention that the major differences, highlighted above, between *ta pathē* as discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *ta pathē* as discussed in the *Rhetoric* provide solid evidence for my assertion that *aeschynē*, properly energized through *phronesis*, is a civic virtue. This claim is explored fully in the final chapter, however, suffice it to say for now that *aeschynē* bridges the gap - between the *telos* of the passions as discussed in the *Rhetoric* and the *telos* of the passions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* - in that it teaches one *how* to habituate *ta pathē* in order to function best on a social and political level. *Aeschynē* is expressed in terms of the cognitive aspects it maintains. The rational features of *aeschynē* allow for the reconciliation of the social and contextual qualities required to be virtuous. This is precisely why *aeschynē* is not discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In its fully actualized form it is not a passion that affects one's character, rather, it is a civic virtue that helps regulate the passions. This is the reason that Aristotle, in the *Topics*, places *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul. This idea is fully realized in chapter four below with the introduction of *metriopatheia*.

The Passionate Aspects of *Aeschynē*

Now that Aristotle's theory of passions has been revealed it is necessary to turn to *aeschynē* in order to discover the passionate aspects of this oft-misunderstood term.

That *aeschynē* is a passion should not be disputed since Aristotle chooses to discuss *aeschynē* along with the other passions he focuses on in the *Rhetoric*. The importance of this distinction must not be dismissed since the *Rhetoric* is the treatise that offers Aristotle's most in-depth discussion of *ta pathē*. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle's requirements for passions are set out. He says that a passion is a thought or a belief that has with it a feeling of pain or pleasure and a desire for some action or occurrence. The ways *aeschynē* meets these conditions are outlined below.

Returning, first, to the discussion of the passions in the *De Anima*, Aristotle maintains that desire and passion are found in the irrational part of the soul.¹⁶⁵ This is striking because, once again, it is important to note that in the *Topics* Aristotle consigns *aeschynē* to the rational part of the soul. The fear that it is not possible to rightfully consider *aeschynē* as passion may be entertained in light of this categorization, but all is not lost, for turning to the *Nicomachean Ethics* it is clear that "both the reasoning must be true and the desire right if the choice is to be good."¹⁶⁶ This again leads one to consider Aristotle's contention that the passions possess a cognitive, or rational, nature. Aristotle, in this quotation, shows that reason and passion are required to work together in order to get the best results. So, though *aeschynē* exists in the rational part of the soul this does not offer strong enough evidence to believe that it never exists as a passion (as there is no reason to believe that in this case the two – reason and passion - are mutually exclusive).

¹⁶⁵ *De Anima* III, 9, 432b6.

¹⁶⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 2, 1139a24-25.

The idea that the rational faculty of the soul must work together with the passions is perfectly exemplified in terms of *aeschynē*. Aristotle, given his emphasis on the value of contemplation, believes that improvement can arise from reflection. *Aeschynē* is the passion most open to reflection. For instance, one reflects on the past, present, and future results of actions that cause feelings of *aeschynē*. If one is interested in attaining and maintaining a good reputation or a sense of honor in the community one must not do what is shameful. In this manner *aeschynē* is also reasonable. It is reasonable in yet another sense as well because *aeschynē* is not felt in instances when one acts rationally. Rationality serves to help one avoid actions that cause feelings of *aeschynē*.

Aeschynē involves choice and choice, of course, implies rationality. As stated in the first chapter *aeschynē* does not appear exhaustively on each of Aristotle's lists of the passions. The reason that *aeschynē* is not discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is that Aristotle focuses on passions felt without choice and *aeschynē* is a special case because it is felt both with and without choice.¹⁶⁷ According to Aristotle, "We feel anger and fear without choice but the virtues are modes of choice or involve choice. Further, in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the virtues and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way."¹⁶⁸ Thus, *aeschynē* is not found on Aristotle's list of passions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* because the passions listed in that treatise do not involve choice and *aeschynē* belongs to a different category because it both involves choice and is felt without choice. *Aeschynē*

¹⁶⁷ The list of the passions offered in the *Nicomachean Ethics* features "appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain" (II, 5, 1105b21-24).

¹⁶⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1106a2-7.

requires awareness and produces habit as a consequence of one's choice to avoid the painful feelings and the disgrace that accompanies *aeschynē*; however the fact that painful feelings are a part of *aeschynē* leads to the belief that *aeschynē* is a passion.

Since the passions, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, are felt without choice and are not discussed in terms of cognitive nature it is necessary to consider *aeschynē* in this light in order to determine the ways in which *aeschynē* exists *qua* passion. It is clear that one may do a shameful deed either voluntarily, involuntarily, or with or without choice as Aristotle says, "we yield to lust both voluntarily and involuntarily, to force involuntarily."¹⁶⁹ Likewise, the resulting feeling of *aeschynē* may be experienced either voluntarily, involuntarily or with or without choice. For example, Aristotle believes that *aeschynē* is felt most in front of others and in response to gossip such as when people tell others about the shameful things that have occurred.¹⁷⁰ These examples of *aeschynē* qua passion show that there is no cognition involved when the feeling of shame arises under circumstances beyond one's control (i.e. when something shameful occurs and others happen to notice or when others discuss the action in question). Of course, this is not the full story. It is worth mentioning that *aeschynē* has many cognitive qualities as Aristotle says, "we feel *aeschynē* at such bad things as we think are disgraceful to ourselves or those we care for."¹⁷¹ This further supports my contention, taken up extensively in the fourth chapter, that *aeschynē* is a civic virtue.

¹⁶⁹ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a20.

¹⁷⁰ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a35-1384b10.

¹⁷¹ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b18-19.

The above discussion regarding Aristotle's theory of passions leads one to think about how the difference between virtue and passion ought to be defined. This is also notable as a consequence of my claim that *aeschynē*, properly energized is, for Aristotle, a civic virtue. Before moving into the next chapter I offer a short note on the diversity concerning virtue and passion. For Aristotle virtue is understood and addressed in terms of human goodness. Goodness concerns choice and the passions, are not felt with choice (otherwise human beings would be called good or bad in as a result of the passions they experience). Also, generally speaking, passions do not focus on goodness. *Aeschynē*, as argued in this chapter, includes elements by which to consider it a passion; however chapter four provides insight into why, when properly educated through *phronesis*, it should also be considered an indispensable Aristotelian virtue.

Evidence for claiming that *aeschynē* is a civic virtue comes directly from consideration of Aristotle's definition of virtue in the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle says that virtue, or excellence, is "a faculty of providing and preserving good things; or a faculty of conferring many great benefits, and benefits of all kinds on all occasions."¹⁷² My aim is to show the ways in which *aeschynē* necessarily meets these conditions. For Aristotle virtue is a state, a habit that results in character. One becomes virtuous by acting as a virtuous agent acts.¹⁷³ According to Aristotle, it is not possible for one to become good through arguments. Rather, virtue must be learned through experience. As Aristotle says, "Those who have learned a subject for the first time connect together the

¹⁷² *Rhetoric* I, 9, 1366a36-1366b1.

¹⁷³ Therefore, the presence and *endoxa* of others is required for virtue on every level.

propositions in an orderly way, but do not yet know them; for the propositions need to become second nature to them, and that takes time.”¹⁷⁴ This is profoundly akin to *aeschynē* in that one can easily and often be told that a certain action or inaction is shameful – but it is only in self-recognition that *aeschynē* begins to be understood as a virtue. One is shameless, or *anaeschyntia*, until self-recognition produces and accepts feelings of *aeschynē*.

Chapter Summary

This chapter both affirms the existence of and offers an insight into Aristotle’s theory of passions. The explication of Aristotle’s theory of passions is important because it provides an understanding of and reason for the emphasis that Aristotle’s focus on the passions must be observed in terms of the larger issue at hand, and that is the aim of his individual treatises. Aristotle is right to recognize the many dimensions of the passions. He should not be labeled as having inconsistent views in respect to the passions.

Aristotle’s regard for *aeschynē* as a passion should now be settled. Likewise, his view that *aidōs* is a passion, though not controversial in the least, should be further solidified because *aidōs* meets the conditions for a passion as outlined above. The next task of this dissertation is to provide support for the claim that these ancient Greek ‘shame’-terms – even though they are both passions - are unique. Evidence is provided

¹⁷⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, 3, 1147a20-22.

below as to why Aristotle's remarks on *aidōs* should not be confused with his observations pertaining to *aeschynē*.

CHAPTER III: *AESCHYNĒ* AS DISTINCT FROM *AIDŌS*

History of the Issue

The first chapter of this dissertation provided an introduction to the meaning and use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. It was determined that the best translation for *aeschynē* is 'shame' or 'sense of shame' while 'awe', 'shyness', or 'modesty' serve as the most accurate translations of the term *aidōs*. The second chapter focused on creating a blueprint for Aristotle's theory of passions. The purpose of the second chapter was to highlight the passionate aspects of *aeschynē* while supplying evidence as to the difference between a passion and a virtue according to Aristotle.

The fundamental goal of the present chapter is to advance the perspective that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* should be taken as distinct terms, at least in the work of Aristotle, with clear and unique definitions. Providing an organized and thorough discussion of the difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* is essential but difficult because there are many writers who believe the distinction between the terms is fabricated and unreal. This chapter highlights several reasons why *aeschynē* and *aidōs* must be thought of as terms with individual meanings and why this is essential to interpreting and understanding the focus of Aristotle's treatises and, more important, his conception of human nature. First, it is necessary to explain why *aeschynē* and *aidōs* have earned the reputation of being identically defined and why it is valuable to consider their unique attributes.

Just as Aristotle believes there are many separate dimensions to the passions, so too does he believe that marked dimensions exist in language. Of course it is not a stretch of the imagination to hold that much can be lost in translation from one language or culture to another.¹⁷⁵ Certainly when it comes to ‘shame’ classical Greek is not the only language that differentiates between types. As Robert Solomon astutely points out, the French language “distinguishes between two very different (though occasionally overlapping) types of shame, *pudeur* for the sort of shame that Adam and Eve experienced when they found themselves naked in Eden, *honte* for the shame that accompanies the disgrace of being caught in a scandal. Conflating these two is all-too-easy in English, especially in a society that feels generally conflicted and uncomfortable with sexual and more generally bodily issues.”¹⁷⁶ The contemporary American society that I am part of is so culturally and temporally removed from the ancient Greek social order that one would not be mistaken in applying Solomon’s logic to explain the current view that the Greek ‘shame’-terms are understood as if they speak with one voice. Solomon’s comment is also valuable in that his description of *pudeur* fits with my contention that *aidōs* is best defined as ‘modesty’, ‘shyness’ or ‘awe’. The description Solomon provides of *honte* is in line with the definition of ‘shame’ and ‘sense of shame’ that belongs to *aeschynē*.

The view that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* possess identical meanings, however, is not a purely modern convention. A thorough review of the work of some of Aristotle’s ancient commentators shows that historically there were a few strong arguments for viewing the

¹⁷⁵ Additional aspects of this discussion can be found in chapter one.

¹⁷⁶ Solomon (2007), 91. David Konstan (2006) makes a similar point regarding the French, German, and Spanish ‘shame’-terms (99).

two 'shame'-terms as identical in meaning. Yet, this interpretation was far from unanimous as many ancient commentators write in favor of explicating the noticeable difference between *aidōs* and *aeschynē*. I address ancient views on *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in depth below in terms of my contention that the ancient interpretations generally lend more credibility than their modern counterparts when it comes to the determination of whether *aeschynē* and *aidōs* have distinct meanings.

First, in terms of modern commentators there are many who claim that by the time of Plato and Aristotle the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* were indistinguishable. For example, see Grimaldi (1988), Cairns (1993), Williams (1993), and Tarnopolsky (2010). All four of these authors, writing extensively on Greek shame, claim that by the time Plato and Aristotle used the terms the distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* had completely disappeared. Cairns' contribution to the issue is particularly noteworthy because much of the present work is concerned with refuting his notion that Aristotle treats *aidōs* and *aeschynē* as synonymous. At length, Cairns, in discussing a passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, holds that:

Aristotle neither identifies *aidōs* and *aeschynē* nor treats them as two distinct concepts; rather he uses the two terms... to refer to distinguishable aspects of a single emotional concept. In ordinary Greek *aidōs* and *aeschynē* are synonyms, except when the latter refers to a disgraceful state of affairs rather than the individual's reaction to that state, but *aidōs* is the older and more poetic term, and it draws its claim to be considered as a virtue from its use in highly poetic contexts where something of the importance originally accorded the concept is preserved. *Aeschynē*, on the other hand, is the regular prosaic word of Aristotle's own day, the one which would generally be used to do the work of *aidōs* both as affect and as a trait of character, although as a trait of character *aeschynē* does not bear the exalted connotations of *aidōs*. Aristotle's moves from *aidōs* to *aeschynē*, then, are not in any way underhand –

ordinary language, in fact, goes further than he does in this passage, in so far as it treats the two as synonyms.¹⁷⁷

In opposition to Cairns' claim I argue that *aeschynē*, as described by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and elsewhere, is a cognitive state. This claim – of rationality and cognition – never carries over to Aristotle's discussions of *aidōs*.

An additional observation regarding the conflation of the 'shame'-terms by modern commentators can be found by consulting Bernard Williams' *Shame and Necessity*. As Konstan points out Williams, in his extensive and well developed discussion of the ethical sentiment of shame, does not differentiate between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*.¹⁷⁸ It is also important to note that Anthony Cua in his work on "The Ethical Significance of Shame: Insights of Aristotle and Xunzi" makes no mention of *aeschynē* in Aristotle's corpus save for two minor footnotes. A similar view is held by Paul Nieuwenburg in his "Learning to Deliberate: Aristotle on Truthfulness and Public Deliberation." Nieuwenburg discusses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as if the terms are defined the same. He does not include any possibility of a distinction between *aidōs* and *aeschynē*. The same goes for Marlene K. Sokolon's *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion* (2006).¹⁷⁹ Sokolon discusses both *aeschynē* and *aidōs* interchangeably without noting any important distinction between the terms. There are a host of other modern commentators who conflate the 'shame'-terms and refuse to entertain the idea that Aristotle does not consider *aeschynē* and *aidōs* to have identical meanings and use.

¹⁷⁷ Cairns (1993), 415.

¹⁷⁸ Konstan (2006) 93.

¹⁷⁹ See pages 109-125.

It is essential to note that not all modern commentators argue that the Greek 'shame'-terms are indistinguishable. David Konstan firmly believes that Plato's contemporaries would have effortlessly recognized the difference between *aidōs* and *aeschynē*.¹⁸⁰ An example of Konstan's point can be seen by looking at Plato's *Laws*. Jerome Walsh writes, in his book *Aristotle's Conception of Moral Weakness*, regarding the *Laws* that "the burden of Book I is that military courage is not needed so much as shame (*aeschynē*) and reverence (*aidōs*). These are not the defiance of fear, but are said at 647a to be the possession of fear – the fear of an evil reputation. At 671a they are called "divine fear" and at 699c they are associated with placing one's trust in the gods as the Athenians did when they defeated the Persians."¹⁸¹ This passage is significant for two reasons. First, it helps fuel the claim that Konstan makes above regarding the difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* being recognized during the time Plato wrote his dialogues. Second, it highlights the social importance of *aeschynē* as it is later seen in the work of Aristotle. Both reasons are discussed in depth below as they are major factors contributing to the belief that the ancient Greek 'shame'-terms are unique.

Key Differences between *Aeschynē* and *Aidōs*

Lexis

Having presented a brief outline of the two divergent views of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* it is now essential to consider what I hold to be the distinct qualities of the two

¹⁸⁰ Konstan (2006), 95, see also Tarnopolsky (2010) 129, n51.

¹⁸¹ Walsh (1960), 51.

terms. In the sections that follow I concentrate on eight separate explanations for claiming a unique meaning regarding the two Greek 'shame'-terms in Aristotle's corpus. The eight differences offered below are designed to provide enough evidence to show that Aristotle always uses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* with clear intention and distinction; however it must be noted that for Aristotle one example exposing a difference is sufficient. As he points out in the *Topics* in order to overthrow a definition "it is enough to show in a single case only that it fails to belong."¹⁸²

The simplest and perhaps most notable reason that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* must be thought of as distinct lies in the fact that Aristotle uses both *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in his treatises. The use of each term is purely intentional. This claim has for its evidence that *aidōs* appears in different treatises from those that *aeschynē* does. Chapter two focuses on the principle that Aristotle's treatises must be analyzed solely with a view to the intention with which they were produced. Failure to do this always results in a misinterpretation of Aristotle's aim. The same line of thought applies in this case since it is clear that there is purpose, on Aristotle's part, for specific 'shame'-terms to appear in the treatises they are part of.

This first difference in use places emphasis on a crucial characteristic of Aristotle's thought. Specifically, it highlights the fact that clarity is integral to Aristotle's philosophy.¹⁸³ As Aristotle points out in the first line of chapter 22 of the *Poetics*, "the

¹⁸² *Topics* VII, 5, 154b21-22.

¹⁸³ George Kennedy maintains of Aristotle that "His emphasis on clarity as the most important requirement of good oratorical style is consistent with his stress on logical proof in the earlier books and his dislike of the style of sophists" *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civil Discourse* (1981), 198. See also Sister Miriam Therese Larkin's claim in *Language in the Philosophy of Aristotle* (1971), that "It is obvious that the philosopher cannot phrase his opinions in a careless fashion. To be oblivious of the nuances of words is very often the reason why genuine reasoning is not effected."

excellence of diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean.”¹⁸⁴ How does one create clarity in speech or writing? The obvious answer is by choosing specific words. But, clarity is also accomplished by avoiding specific words. For example, consider Aristotle’s claim that, “we may conclude that clarity will be achieved in philosophy by avoiding equivocation, ambiguity, and metaphor.”¹⁸⁵ Not only is clarity in word choice or *lexis* important for Aristotle in order to “convey a clear meaning” but it is also absolutely necessary because of the “corruption of the hearer” who frequently misunderstands.¹⁸⁶ Accordingly, it is imperative that one always be as precise as possible when attempting communication.

Clarification is quite important for Aristotle overall, but, clear speech is also a prerequisite for philosophical language. As Therese Larkin points out, “Aristotle refused to admit the Sophists as philosophers because they purposely did not distinguish meanings of words but engaged in linguistic sleight. Not to have a specific meaning, for Aristotle, is to have no meaning; it is to refer to nothing.”¹⁸⁷

Aristotle spends a great deal of time discussing precision of language in terms of what ought to be avoided. He mentions equivocation and expressly focuses on words that have more than one meaning; yet The Philosopher never discusses the fact that two different words can have the same meaning. Since Aristotle is exceedingly thorough one may take this as evidence that he wasn’t aware of the phenomenon of words with indistinguishable definitions. As rigorously organized as Aristotle is it seems

¹⁸⁴ *Poetics* 22, 1458a17.

¹⁸⁵ Larkin (1971), 61.

¹⁸⁶ *Rhetoric* III, 1, 1404a3.

¹⁸⁷ Larkin (1971), 99-100.

straightforward to imagine that if Aristotle does indeed view *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as indistinguishable in definition that he would create a category to deal with this occurrence.

One could expend great effort detailing Aristotle's comments on *lexis*; however the strongest proof for the importance of choosing specific words is found in the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle says that one "shall say something which is significant both for himself and for another; for this is necessary, if he really is to say anything. For, if he means nothing, such a man will not be capable of reasoning, either with himself or with another."¹⁸⁸ The lesson to be learned from this passage is that before delving into the work of Aristotle one ought to recognize that he would not write without making every attempt to meet the condition of clarity. Communication and knowledge of concepts, which is of the utmost value to Aristotle, depend on clear and exact word choice. Clear and exact word choice used with intention and meaning, appears to be, for Aristotle, the hallmark of rationality since language use belongs to human beings alone.

In the *Topics* Aristotle warns against using words without having knowledge of the various meanings the words may have.¹⁸⁹ Consider also the *Rhetoric* and the aim of the rhetorician. In order for the rhetorician to effectively persuade she must choose her words carefully and pay close attention to the nuances that different word choices offer. As Aristotle maintains in *Sophistical Refutations* "It is impossible in a discussion to bring in the actual things discussed: we use their names as symbols instead of them;

¹⁸⁸ *Metaphysics* IV, 4, 1006a21-24.

¹⁸⁹ *Topics* I, 18, 108a18-36.

and we suppose that what follows in the names, follows in the things as well.”¹⁹⁰ This further shows that Aristotle was undoubtedly aware of the importance of speaking clearly. Exact communication is key for Aristotle, but useful communication requires unambiguous language. If the above explication is not sufficient one needs only to turn to Book III of the *Rhetoric* for evidence that Aristotle chooses his words carefully¹⁹¹. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle asserts:

We may, then, start from the observations there made, and the stipulation that language to be good must be clear, as is proved by the fact that speech which fails to convey a plain meaning will fail to do just what speech has to do. It must also be appropriate, avoiding both meanness and undue evaluation; poetical language is certainly free from meanness, but it is not appropriate to prose. Clearness is secured by using the words (nouns and verbs alike) that are current and ordinary.¹⁹²

Finally, note that in the *Topics* Aristotle discusses tips in regard to understanding the ways in which different terms are used. One piece of advice Aristotle offers in this treatise is to see “if some of them have more than one intermediate, while others have but one.”¹⁹³ This comment is of particular interest given that the intermediate Aristotle offers for *aidōs* in the ethical treatises is modesty. As for *aeschynē*, there is no intermediate, only the opposite: *anaeschyntia*. The careful student of Aristotle, then, observes that the terms *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are always chosen with purpose and intent on the part of Aristotle.

¹⁹⁰ *Sophistical Refutations* 165a6-8.

¹⁹¹ “For it is not enough to know *what* we ought to say; we must also say it *as we ought*” (*Rhetoric* III, 1, 1403b15-16).

¹⁹² *Rhetoric* III, 2, 1404b1-6.

¹⁹³ *Topics* I, 15, 106b9-10.

Bodily Conditions

Although the above explication is convincing, accepting that there is a difference in terms based on knowledge and recognition of Aristotle's careful wording alone is not sufficient. The second difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* has been hinted at above in the statement that *aidōs* alone involves bodily or somatic conditions. Nearly all of the passages in which a discussion of *aidōs* occurs contain reference to the physiological conditions that arise in response to feeling the passion *aidōs*.

The bodily conditions that arise in conjunction with feeling *aidōs* are elaborated on in *The Rhetoric*, *Categories*, *Problems*, and *Physiognomonics*.¹⁹⁴ Aristotle's discussion of *aidōs* in the *Rhetoric* appears in the form of the proverb "*aidōs* dwells in the eyes" (this proverb is mentioned in *Problems* as well) and in Aristotle's use of Alcaeus' quotation "only *aidōs* restraineth me."¹⁹⁵ This is quite distinct from Aristotle's discussion of *aeschynē*; for Aristotle makes only one reference to "blushing" as an effect of *aeschynē*. As previously discussed, the use of *aeschynē* in this passage is due solely to the retrospective nature of the term.

One may object to this point on the grounds that Aristotle's discussion of the passions in the *Rhetoric* does not include the material conditions of *ta pathē*.¹⁹⁶ That the *Rhetoric*, the treatise most concerned with *aeschynē*, does not focus on the material or bodily conditions of the passions should not discount the status of the discrepancy between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in regard to physiological conditions. Recall, once again,

¹⁹⁴ *Problems* XXXI, 3, 957b11 and XXXII, 8, 961a10.

¹⁹⁵ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a36; *Problems* XXXI, 3, 957b11; *Rhetoric* I, 9, 1367a10.

¹⁹⁶ Larry Arnhart makes this claim in *Aristotle on Political Reasoning* (1981), 129.

the aim of the *Rhetoric*. The second book, which contains the discussion of *aeschynē*, is intended to teach the rhetorician the various ways by which to incite the assorted passions. Since this is the case, it would make more sense for Aristotle to discuss the physiological conditions that arise as a consequence of shame feelings. The rhetorician certainly has a better chance of identifying the passions that occur simultaneously with bodily conditions. I can easily recognize that a person is feeling shy when I see that he is blushing. In addition, since nearly all of Aristotle's discussions involving *aidōs* include some mention of the physiological conditions it would be difficult to imagine a discussion of shame, as in the *Rhetoric*, without reference to these somatic qualities if *aidōs* and *aeschynē* are, in the eyes of Aristotle, identical in meaning. But, since *aeschynē* is distinct from *aidōs* no mention of the bodily conditions occurs when the term is discussed in the *Rhetoric* or in any other discussion of *aeschynē*.

Retrospective vs. Future Directed Nature

The third central difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* came to light during the above analysis of the bodily conditions created by feeling *aidōs*. The retrospective nature of *aeschynē* was revealed as distinct from *aidōs* which is only felt as a “prospective and inhibitory” passion.¹⁹⁷ The retrospective nature of *aeschynē* brings to mind Aristotle's contention that *aeschynē* is felt as a result of past, present, and future evils that bring disgrace whereas *aidōs* occurs and is felt only in terms of future directed actions.

¹⁹⁷ Cairns (1993), 13. See also Konstan (2006).

It is worth mentioning that this distinction has been met with challenge. Geoffrey Thomas Sigalet, in his work on Aristotle's politics of shame, argues that the retrospective and prospective distinction (which he attributes to Konstan) is simply "a general lexical trend in Aristotle."¹⁹⁸ Sigalet holds that *phantasia* (imagination) is experienced with both *aeschynē* and *aidōs* and, in effect, the connection between imagination and experience creates for Aristotle "a special kind of dispositional shame which he describes using both Greek words."¹⁹⁹ The result is that the retrospective and prospective distinction is, for Sigalet, purely temporal and does not contribute a reason for reading the terms as unique in Aristotle's work. Sigalet argues that Aristotle does distinguish between *types* of shame (i.e. "Learner shame" and "Mature shame") but he believes that the Greek 'shame'-terms themselves are not in any way determinant of the types.

In opposition to Sigalet's claims I argue that the retrospective and prospective division provides important evidence in favor of viewing the 'shame'-terms as unique. This distinction is made clear in Aristotle's discussion of *aidōs* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle says the young are "restrained by *aidōs*" therefore showing *aidōs* to be a future directed passion.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle defines *aeschynē* as "pain or disturbance in regard to bad things, whether present, past, or future, which seem likely to involve us in discredit."²⁰¹ Certainly the terms, in Aristotle's work at least, should be said to have distinct meanings as Aristotle never refers to *aidōs* in past or

¹⁹⁸ Sigalet (2011), 11.

¹⁹⁹ Sigalet (2011), 11.

²⁰⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b18.

²⁰¹ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b15-16.

present tense. Past and present tense are reserved solely for discussions involving *aeschynē*. That *aeschynē* can be felt in regard to past experiences provides additional evidence in favor of its capacity as a civic virtue; for one learns from past events – but, future experiences do not teach moderation or right reason.

It is important to note that since *aidōs* is felt only in regard to future directed ills there is no concept of educated reflection as there is when it comes to *aeschynē*. The absence of reflection when feeling *aidōs* is an absence of focus on what one knows to be socially or ethically permissible in the community. In experiencing the feelings of the future directed *aidōs* one feels what is actually better described as a sense of fear. Consider Aristotle's claim that the many "do not by nature obey the sense of *aidōs*, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue their own pleasures and the means to them, and avoid the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it."²⁰² This quotation which shows that arguments are not enough to make human beings good, appears to highlight the ways Aristotle sees *aidōs* as distinct from *aeschynē* in terms of retrospective versus future directed behavior. Bear in mind also Aristotle's contention that *aeschynē* causes one to shrink from the disgrace itself. In feeling *aeschynē* one is concerned with avoiding disgrace for the sake of right reason. *Aidōs*, on the other hand, is avoided due to fear of the resulting punishment.

²⁰² *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1179b11-15.

Since *aeschynē* is felt in regard to past, present, and future actions, one has the ability to reflect upon “what is noble and truly pleasant” in a way that is not possible with the future directed passion *aidōs*. Note again Aristotle’s remark that the many “do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment.” It is important to emphasize the fact that this future directed fear of punishment is in complete contrast to feelings of *aeschynē* that cause one to avoid disgraceful behavior simply due to the fact that it is disgraceful – without fear of punishment in mind. It is the retrospective nature of *aeschynē* that allows for actions to be contemplated in the all-important Aristotelian *right way*. Lacking reflective ability *aidōs* will never be felt for the *right reasons* and is thus never considered, by Aristotle, to be anything more than mere passion.

Voluntary, Involuntary, and Choice

The fourth critical difference is that in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle states that *aeschynē* is felt for both voluntary and involuntary acts.²⁰³ This is a remarkable distinction because in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle describes *aidōs* as being the result of voluntary actions only. He says, “For it is for voluntary actions that *aidōs* is felt, and the good man will never voluntarily do bad actions.”²⁰⁴

In addition, *aidōs* produces somatic effects such as blushing. These bodily conditions always arise without choice; for one does not choose for her cheeks to redden through physiological conditions. Highlighting this distinction is very important in

²⁰³ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a20-21.

²⁰⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b27-28.

respect to this dissertation because, as Aristotle states in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, virtue involves choice and we feel passions without choice.²⁰⁵ This may be taken as a principal determinant that *aeschynē* ought to be considered both a passion and a civic virtue, whereas *aidōs* meets the requirements for passion only.

Aeschynē is felt for actions that are both voluntarily and involuntarily. *Aeschynē* is also felt with choice. This distinction provides support for the argument that it is both a passion and a virtue. Aristotle holds that virtue or *aretē* “is a state concerned with choice.”²⁰⁶ Since *aeschynē* involves choice it must, to some degree, be a virtue. Aristotle never makes this claim about *aidōs*. On the contrary, he is explicit in his contention that *aidōs* is not a virtue. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle specifically declares that “*aidōs* is not an excellence.”²⁰⁷

Reasoning Faculty vs. Spirited Faculty

There is a fifth difference regarding Aristotle’s use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* such that *aeschynē* exists in the reasoning faculty and *aidōs*, as a passion, exists in the spirited faculty.²⁰⁸ This distinction between the terms is of particularly great consequence to my thesis given the claim made in the *Eudemian Ethics* that “reason governs not reason, but desire and the passions.”²⁰⁹ *Aeschynē*, since it resides in the rational faculty of the soul, according to Aristotle’s claim in the *Topics*, is responsible for

²⁰⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1106a3-4.

²⁰⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 6, 1106b36.

²⁰⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 7, 1108a32.

²⁰⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics*, V, 9, 1128b10-11.

²⁰⁹ *Eudemian Ethics* II, 1, 1220a1.

and useful to the moderation of one's passions. Given the significance Aristotle places on his division between the spirited faculty of the soul and the rational faculty it is absolutely imperative that his placement of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in separate faculties be noted.

There is a sense that *aidōs* is not only distinct from *aeschynē* but that it is inferior to *aeschynē* since it is the rational faculty of the soul that rules over one's desire and passions. It is additionally important to note Aristotle's belief, expressed in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that the proper function of a human being occurs when one acts in harmony with reason: acting through reason is the only way for a human being to reach *aretē*. Since *aeschynē* resides in the rational faculty of the soul and is manifest as painful feelings in regard to disgraceful actions it is fair to say that it possesses qualities reserved for an Aristotelian virtue. A similar claim cannot be made about *aidōs*. Since *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are found in different parts of the soul one should be assured that Aristotle considers the terms to be distinct from one another and unique in their own regard. As such, the Greek 'shame'-terms are not conflated in Aristotle's philosophy.

***Aeschynē* is Felt in Front of Those Believed to be Ethical**

In Aristotle's work a sixth important difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* is that, according to claims presented in the *Rhetoric*, *aeschynē* is felt in front of those one believes to be ethical. No similar mention of *aidōs* is ever made by Aristotle in this regard – indeed, *aidōs* seems to always be felt without choice and as such it may be felt

in front of anyone at any time. For example, one may feel *aidōs* in front of a small child who asks questions of a personal or intimate nature. This would never occur with *aeschynē*, on the other hand, since “no one feels *aeschynē* before small children or animals.”²¹⁰ Indeed, *aeschynē* is felt only in front of people one admires. According to Aristotle we admire those “who possess any good thing that is highly esteemed.”²¹¹ *Aeschynē* is felt as a response to acts that are the result of cowardice, injustice, licentiousness, and low greed.²¹² Aristotle maintains that *aeschynē* is never felt in front of children and animals because members of these two groups do not partake in virtue.

The claim that *aeschynē* is a civic virtue is further highlighted, in this respect, because one feels *aeschynē* in front of people “whose opinion of us matters to us.”²¹³ This must be taken as very strong support for the argument at hand since *aidōs* is never said to be felt with choice or ethical consideration. In other words, the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē* are made clear by Aristotle, whereas *aidōs* is never claimed to possess these virtuous traits.

The Opinions of Various Aristotelian Scholars

Many modern commentators believe that Aristotle’s use of the two ‘shame’-terms is interchangeable. Acknowledgement that this is predominantly a *modern* view leads to a seventh difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. It is undeniably essential that the

²¹⁰ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384b24-25.

²¹¹ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a30-31.

²¹² *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b21-26.

²¹³ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a27.

words of those who lived and wrote closer to Aristotle's own time be consulted in regard to a consideration of his employment of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*.

One clear example is presented by Alexander of Aphrodisias, who wrote commentary on Aristotle around the close of the second century. Alexander of Aphrodisias considers Aristotle's use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* to be distinct.²¹⁴ The problem is that the only readily available English translation, produced by R.W. Sharples, ignores any distinction between the terms and neglects even to mention the word *aeschynē*. Another significant example, though much later, is found in the work of Richard Chenevix Trench. In his *Synonyms of the New Testament* (1855) Trench says that the two Greek 'shame'-terms were not, in the Attic period, considered to be synonymous. In fact, Trench claims the opposite. According to Trench the words were not used with any distinction between them *until* the Attic period, at which point, Trench says, "almost every passage in which either occurs attests a real difference existing between them."²¹⁵

At length Trench says:

This distinction has not always been seized with a perfect success. Thus it has been sometimes said that *aidōs* is the *shame*, or sense of honour, which hinders one from doing an unworthy act; *aeschynē* is the *disgrace*, out-ward or inward, which follows on having done it (Luke xiv. 9). This distinction, while it has its truth, yet is not exhaustive; and, if we were thereupon to assume that *aeschynē* was thus only retrospective, the conscious result of things unworthily done, it would be an erroneous one: seeing that *aeschynē* continually expresses that feeling which leads to shun what is unworthy out of a prospective anticipation of dishonor.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ This information comes from a footnote in Konstan (2006) regarding the *Questiones naturales et morales* book 1, problem 21 (on 'Aidōs') in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, suppl. 2.2, ed. I. Bruns* (297).

²¹⁵ Richard Chenevix Trench D.D. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA March 2006 (66-67).

²¹⁶ Richard Chenevix Trench D.D. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA March 2006 (66-67).

Trench continues, mentioning Aristotle's use of *aeschynē* and saying specifically, "its seat, therefore, as Aristotle proceeds to show, is not properly in the moral sense of him that entertains it, in his consciousness of a right which has been, or would be, violated by his act, but only in his apprehension of other persons who are, or who might be, privy to its violation. Let this apprehension be removed, and the *aeschynē* ceases; while *aidōs* finds its motive in itself, implies reverence for the good as good and not merely as that to which honour and reputation are attached."²¹⁷

Trench's statements should be taken as support for the view that Aristotle uses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* with distinction, and further, that the distinction for Aristotle is thoroughly social. Trench, however, claims that *aidōs* is the more moral and noble of the two words since it "involves moral repugnance to the doing of the dishonorable act."²¹⁸ This is not the case for Aristotle; for his conception of human nature relies on, in Trench's words, "the apprehension of other persons who are, or who might be, privy to" anything considered a violation of a social norm.

As hinted at earlier, not all historical voices believe that there is a clear distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. Also writing in the 1800s, Edward Meredith Cope, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, holds that there is no distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in Aristotle's work. Nevertheless, Cope maintains that in general language there is a difference such that "*aidōs* precedes and prevents the shameful act,

²¹⁷ Richard Chenevix Trench D.D. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA March 2006 (68).

²¹⁸ Richard Chenevix Trench D.D. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, Digitized by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, Wenham, MA March 2006 (68).

aeschynē reflects upon its consequences in the *shame* it brings with it.”²¹⁹ It is essential to consider the views of writers like Alexander of Aphrodisias, Richard Chenevix Trench, and Edward Meredith Cope because they provide historical references many modern commentators tend to disregard.

It must be noted that there are also some contemporary views in favor of the distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. These views include those espoused by David Konstan and Kurt Riezler (1943).²²⁰ The claim that the origination of *aeschynē* is dishonor and that of *aidōs* is awe is advanced in the work of Riezler who maintains “dishonor puts the emphasis on man-made codes. If you are ashamed of violating or having violated such codes, the Greeks use the verb that corresponds to the noun *aeschynē*. *Aidōs* is not concerned merely with man-made codes. You feel *aidōs* when confronted with things nature tells you to revere and not violate.”²²¹ This quotation is meaningful because it emphasizes, once again, the unique social features of *aeschynē* that matter very much to Aristotle in his conception of human nature. In Aristotle’s corpus *aidōs* is never discussed in terms of usefulness for social regard or *endoxa* whereas *aeschynē* is always understood in respect to opinion and convention.

The use of *aeschynē* in Aristotle’s corpus has not been widely explored; nevertheless some concern must be given to the fact that those who wrote closer to Aristotle’s time tend to hold that *aeschynē* is distinct from *aidōs* in Aristotle’s corpus. The further removed one is from the time a particular term is considered conventional

²¹⁹ Cope (1877), 71-72.

²²⁰ Konstan (2006) in *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks* quotes from *Nicomachean Ethics* (IV, 8, 1128b32-3) saying “in this passage, *aidōs* is clearly understood to inhibit bad behavior, while *aeschynē* reflects back on it with regret” (95).

²²¹ Riezler (1943), 463.

the more difficult it may be to fully capture its meaning. That Alexander of Aphrodisias, Trench, and Cope all attribute some difference between the terms must be taken as evidence that there is, at the very least, some question regarding the nature, meaning, and use of the two Greek 'shame'-terms.

The *Telos* of *Aeschynē* and *Aidōs*

Riezler's quotation, introduced above, regarding man-made codes is significant because it drives home the final difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* in the work of Aristotle. Again, Riezler holds that "dishonor puts the emphasis on man-made codes. If you are ashamed of violating or having violated such codes, the Greeks use the verb that corresponds to the noun *aeschynē*. *Aidōs* is not concerned merely with man-made codes. You feel *aidōs* when confronted with things nature tells you to revere and not violate."²²² The division Riezler highlights shows that the distinction between the two terms is also present in regard to the *telos* of each term. At last, then, the final difference between *aeschynē* and *aidōs* is that each term has a unique *telos*. As Aristotle says of *aidōs*, the many do not "by nature obey the sense of *aidōs*, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue their own pleasures and the means to them."²²³ This quotation about *aidōs* should be taken in opposition to Aristotle's claim

²²² Riezler (1943), 463.

²²³ *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1179b11-14.

that *aeschynē* causes people to “shrink from the disgrace itself and not from the consequences.”²²⁴

The distinction concerning the *telos* of *aeschynē* and *aidōs* can be further explicated by considering a recapitulation of all the differences discussed above. Taken as a group, the various unique qualities belonging to *aeschynē* and *aidōs* meld together to demonstrate that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* differ in Aristotle’s work. Recognition regarding the separate *telos* of the ‘shame’-terms serves as the most powerful distinction between *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. Once difference in purpose is accepted it is impossible to claim that the terms are used without distinction in Aristotle’s conception of human nature.

The first difference between the terms concerns Aristotle’s focus on *lexis*, his care in choosing words. This shows that he very likely uses *aeschynē* and *aidōs* with deliberate choice and purpose. Many of Aristotle’s points on *lexis* have been revealed to show how seriously he takes word choice. Second, Aristotle says that bodily changes are indicative of passions. *Aeschynē* is mentioned only in a retrospective sense in terms of affections whereas *aidōs* is described in the *Problems* and in the *Categories* to be a cause of specific bodily changes. The *Physiognomonics*, though considered spurious, also mentions *aidōs* in terms of causing “a face that reddens.”²²⁵ This distinction is significant because it shows that Aristotle may have different uses in mind for *aeschynē* from what he has for *aidōs*. Third, *aeschynē* is felt in terms of past, present, and future action whereas *aidōs* is future directed only. Fourth, *aeschynē* is chosen and is felt for both voluntary and involuntary actions whereas *aidōs* is felt only

²²⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a23-27.

²²⁵ *Physiognomonics* 812a30.

for voluntary actions committed by the agent.²²⁶ Fifth, Aristotle's claim in the *Topics* that *aeschynē* is found in the reasoning faculty must be recognized since there is no parallel claim that *aidōs* is found in the reasoning faculty of the soul. Sixth, *aeschynē* is felt only in front of those whom the agent respects and deems to be ethical. Aristotle does not mention this occurrence in terms of *aidōs*. Seventh, though many modern scholars claim that the two Greek 'shame'-terms are synonymous various commentators through antiquity present opposing evidence.

These seven distinctions combine to show the eighth and final difference: in the work of Aristotle *aeschynē* and *aidōs* are always used with individual and unique purpose. Understanding the *telos* of something is, for Aristotle, indispensable to gaining knowledge of that thing. In the *Physics* Aristotle points out that "Men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the 'why' of it."²²⁷

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlights various crucial aspects that must be taken into consideration when one attempts to understand the meanings behind Aristotle's use of *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. The evidence presented here is designed to provide a collection of compelling reasons to view *aeschynē* and *aidōs* as distinct terms having unique meanings and uses in Aristotle's corpus. At the very least, if one determines that the

²²⁶ The claim that *aidōs* is felt only for voluntary actions should not be confused with the claim that it is felt involuntarily.

²²⁷ *Physics* II, 3, 194b19-20.

two ancient Greek 'shame'-terms should still not be viewed as distinct in their own right a sufficient case has been made to argue that they are distinct in the work of Aristotle.

Now that substantial evidence has been provided to show that *aeschynē* and *aidōs* have been erroneously conflated, the focus shifts in the concluding chapter to *aeschynē* as a civic virtue. The following chapter has the great burden of developing and presenting the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē*. This undertaking is essential as it is required to solidify an understanding of the claim that according to Aristotle, *aeschynē*, properly energized through *phronesis*, exists is a civic virtue indispensable to human political nature.

CHAPTER IV: AESCHYNĒ AS A CIVIC VIRTUE

Political Aspects of *Aeschynē*

Aristotle makes it clear that politics and ethics are tightly intertwined in his philosophy. As he says in the *Ethics*, both are necessary “in order to complete to the best of our ability the philosophy of human nature.”²²⁸ Recognition of Aristotle’s regard for the political nature of human beings is key in terms of providing evidence for his view concerning the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē*. Awareness of Aristotle’s emphasis on the prominence of ethics and ethical behavior is likewise critical in this respect: ethics and politics work together and are indispensable to the best life. As Bernard Yack points out, “Although the *polis* may come into being ‘by nature’, it needs habit to function as an organized whole.”²²⁹

The present chapter focuses on the political and ethical aspects of *aeschynē* and *anaeschyntia*. Aristotle describes *anaeschyntia* as the opposite of *aeschynē* and says it is contempt or indifference to bad or disgraceful things that are “likely to involve us in discredit.”²³⁰ The goal of this chapter is to prove that in Aristotle’s conception of human nature *aeschynē*, as a civic virtue, is required for proper political and ethical conduct. This chapter provides a deeper look into Aristotle’s concern with both politics and ethics. The essential ethical facets of *aeschynē* are covered below, but first, a reflection of the

²²⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1181b14.

²²⁹ Yack (1993) 94.

²³⁰ *Rhetoric*, II, 6, 1383b12-17.

political nature of *aeschynē* is presented. This is of extreme consequence because, as Aristotle famously holds, “a social instinct is implanted in all men by nature.”²³¹ Indeed it is the political community that allows human beings not only to live, but to live well. Without the political community *aretē* cannot exist.

Political science, according to Aristotle, is the most authoritative and highest practical science because it has as its end the common interest of justice.²³² Politics, as any student of Aristotle knows, is one of two things – the other being friendship – that human beings cannot live without. Even those who have never studied Aristotle’s work are familiar with the oft-quoted phrase “Man is by nature a *politikon zōion* (political animal).”²³³ This phrase, made famous in the *Politics*, should be interpreted to mean that it is natural for human beings to be political and to live in the *polis*. In other words, Aristotle believes that human beings will never be able to fully escape their innate political nature. The political aspects of human nature, for Aristotle, are not only inherent – they are indispensable to proper human conduct. This is supported by Aristotle’s contention that “politics is more prized and better than medicine.”²³⁴

Ancient Greek society is known for its remarkable political nature and for placing an emphasis on the *koinōnia* (social or communal groups). Athenian citizens often assumed an involved and personal stake in the *polis*. Aristotle, though not born an Athenian citizen, is no exception; for with even a cursory glance at his treatises one

²³¹ *Politics* I, 2, 1353a30.

²³² *Politics* III, 12, 1282b15-16.

²³³ *Politics* I, 2, 1253a3.

²³⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 13, 1102a20.

should have no doubt that Aristotle is highly focused on the social and communal aspects of the *polis* and the ways in which these aspects relate to justice.

Given the importance of political nature in Aristotle's corpus it is necessary to consider the political implications of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue. Aristotle maintains that politics "legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from" much like, as I argue, *aeschynē* in its properly energized form legislates what one is to do and what one ought to abstain from.²³⁵ Aristotle holds that "the state exists for the sake of a good life" and that "political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not of living together."²³⁶ *Aeschynē*, I argue, is important for Aristotle because it is an essential aspect of political or communal society that is instinctive to all human beings. *Aeschynē* helps generate human noble action. As Robert Solomon points out, "Shame is a straightforwardly social emotion. Shame involves the sense of seriously failing those around you, violating their norms, falling short of their expectations, letting them down."²³⁷ It is my contention that the civic virtue of *aeschynē*, as a sense of shame, is precisely as Solomon describes it.

In his work *Aristotle on Political Reasoning* Larry Arnhart discusses the reason *aeschynē* holds a central place of importance in the *Rhetoric*. The answer offered by Arnhart is that, "Shame might be of central importance because it is the prime example of how passion can support moral restraint. Moreover, since shame presupposes a prior moral education, the centrality of shame may confirm the earlier conclusion that in

²³⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 2, 1094b5.

²³⁶ *Politics* III, 9, 1280a32; 1281a3-4.

²³⁷ Solomon (2007), 95.

the *Rhetoric* Aristotle depicts the passions not as they are in their raw, unrefined state, but as they are once they have been shaped by the civic training of the laws.²³⁸

Aeschynē as shaped by the civic training of the laws is a virtue that benefits the *polis* in that it teaches one to avoid the painful feelings of disgrace and dishonor.

The prevalence of the political nature of shame is unquestionable in ancient Greek society. Elizabeth Belfiore points out, in her extensive work on tragic pleasures, that “it is commonplace in Greek thought that a certain kind of fear is essential to a well-ordered society.”²³⁹ As it turns out the fear Belfiore addresses is not a pure fear, or *phóbos*, but rather a fear of shame and shameful things; a fear of disgrace and dishonor. Belfiore continues, stating that, “This beneficial fear, which preserves law and custom, prevents civil strife, and averts shameless crimes against kin, is the fear of wrongdoing and the respect for parents, gods, and custom that the Greeks called *aeschynē* and *aidōs*. Aristotle follows Greek tradition in characterizing *aidōs* in negative terms as an emotion that restrains people from wrongdoing (*EN* 1128b18), or as ‘avoidance of blame’ (*EN* 1116a29). Because this beneficial fear averts evil, it has a function that can be called apotropaic.”²⁴⁰ Of course, I argue that Aristotle’s focus is entirely on the restraining features of *aeschynē*, as a civic virtue, rather than *aidōs* as passion; however, the notion that shame is an important aspect of the political order of Greek society is key and must be understood as a foundation for Aristotle’s view regarding the political status of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue.

²³⁸ Arnhart (1981), 130.

²³⁹ Belfiore (1992), 9.

²⁴⁰ Belfiore (1992), 9.

In the *Politics* Aristotle presents a discussion highlighting the ways in which human beings are most suited for political life (as opposed to other animals). *Logos*, or reasoned speech, Aristotle believes, allows human beings to “set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.”²⁴¹ This passage from the *Politics* emphasizes what I take to be the most poignant aspect of the political nature of *aeschynē*. Human *logos* provides the capacity to communicate the behavior that is *anagkaion* (necessary) along with the behavior that is destructive, to a good political society. Without *aeschynē* the political community, which exists for the sake of the best life – and which requires *logos* - would not be able to function at its highest level. This too is why Aristotle holds that *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul: without reasoned speech human beings would not be able to create political justice. Aristotle believes “human beings are by nature political animals, because nature, which does nothing in vain, has equipped them with speech, which enables them to communicate moral concepts such as justice which are formative of the household and city-state.”²⁴²

The rational element of the soul, Aristotle says, rules the inferior passionate element. This is significant upon consideration of Aristotle’s use of the word *aeschynē* since Aristotle says *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul.²⁴³ Aristotle is quick to mention that “the intellect rules the appetites with a constitutional and royal

²⁴¹ *Politics* I, 2, 1253a7-18.

²⁴² *Politics* I, 2, 1253a1-18.

²⁴³ *Topics* IV, 5, 126a9-12.

rule.”²⁴⁴ The intellect, or the rational faculty of the soul, in accordance with *logos*, is what makes human beings political animals. *Aeschynē*, which resides in the rational faculty, must rule over the passions that lack rationality – for example, *aidōs*.²⁴⁵

It is reasonable to conclude that the rational faculty of the soul is more important than the other faculties of the soul. This is because the human function in life is to realize one’s full rationality, or full potential as a rational being. The purpose of ethics is to teach human beings how to become rational, how to become immune to the temptations of the lower animalistic faculties. *Aeschynē* is not a naturally occurring feeling; it must be taught. The painful feelings of *aeschynē* provide incentive to avoid the disgrace and the dishonor that usually accompany fulfillment of one’s base desires.

That Aristotle places *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul is noteworthy in yet another regard. This is because *phronesis* – the excellence of the rational faculty – allows one to deliberate about what is capable of being otherwise. In other words, practical wisdom is the excellence of the part of the soul “which forms opinions; for opinion is about what can be otherwise, and so is practical wisdom.”²⁴⁶ *Aeschynē* is tightly interwoven with opinion and convention. Consider, for instance, Antiphon’s contention that *aeschynē* “naturally follows breach of convention.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ *Politics* I, 5, 1254b6-9.

²⁴⁵ Interestingly, there is evidence that Aristotle may not have been alone in his belief that *aeschynē* belongs to the rational faculty of the soul. Plato may have also placed *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul. According to William Fortenbaugh, when it comes to Plato’s dialogues, “There are, of course, difficulties in locating shame within any one particular psychic part. The connection of shamelessness with courage (561a1) and of feeling ashamed with being frightened (5628-9) may suggest locating shame as well as fear within the spirited part. The *Phaedrus* connects shame with the so-called good horse (253d6, 254a2, e4, 256a6) and therefore seems to refer this emotion to the spirited part. Nevertheless, these passages should not be used to reject or doubt the connection of shame with the reasoning part at *Rep.* 571c9, 606c3-6 [Fortenbaugh (1975) 32, n1].

²⁴⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 5, 1140b28-29.

²⁴⁷ Cairns (1993), 362.

In the *Politics* Aristotle says that “convention is a sort of justice.”²⁴⁸ Since *aeschynē* acts in a manner that enforces convention it undoubtedly works in the service of justice. Aristotle also believes that citizens share “in the administration of justice” in a community.²⁴⁹ The administration of justice on the part of citizens is due to the fact that the good citizen shares in ruling and in being ruled. The citizen shares in political ruling by enforcing social norms. These social aspects are carried out by means of *aeschynē*. As Aristotle says, “law is only a convention... and has no real power to make the citizens good and just.”²⁵⁰ But, I argue, *aeschynē* does have that power.

If the role of *aeschynē* is to make citizens just by ruling over the passions that lack rationality an important question now presents itself: what does feeling passions have to do with being a citizen and taking part in citizenship? Silvia Gastaldi points out in “*Pathos and Polis: Aristotle’s Theory of Passions in the Rhetoric and Ethics*” that “Aristotle admits in effect that feeling passions belongs to men by nature and even suggests that it is in a certain sense the mark of a citizen.”²⁵¹ For Aristotle the citizen must deal with passions in everyday life. It is in having correctly trained passions that humans become good educated citizens. Consider, for example, that in Plato’s *Laws* drinking wine during symposia is encouraged “in order to strengthen, temporarily, the desires and emotions opposed to reason... wine is a medicine to produce *aidōs* in the soul.”²⁵² There is a need for human beings to experience passion.

²⁴⁸ *Politics* I, 6, 1255a23.

²⁴⁹ *Politics* III, 1, 1275a21.

²⁵⁰ *Politics* III, 9, 1280b10-12.

²⁵¹ Gastaldi (1987), 107-108.

²⁵² Belfiore (1992), 31.

Passions are necessary aspects of citizenship because the ancient Greek political arena, as thoroughly explicated in Aristotle's political analysis, is largely communitarian. This is notable because Aristotle places what is best for the *polis* above what is best for the individuals who make up the *polis*. As he mentions early in Book I of the *Politics*: "The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual."²⁵³ It is in this respect that Aristotle believes the citizen works for the common good of the *polis*. *Aeschynē* is, likewise, communitarian and also works for the common good of the *polis*. The individual realizing and experiencing the painful shame feelings does so for the greater advantage of the *polis* as a whole. *Aeschynē* is felt as a consequence of one's violation of social norms. The importance of observing the social norms takes precedence over the painful experiences had by the person who abuses or breaks those norms.

One's sense of *aeschynē* is very social and can be deeply rooted in the familial sphere. As an example of this one need only consider the various ways shame provides an avenue for contemplation in regard to one's actions. One often avoids acting in ways that cause painful shame feelings, but not only on account of feelings themselves but because of the disgrace involved in the act that causes the feelings.²⁵⁴ An individual who is open to feeling or experiencing *aeschynē* will likely be accustomed with and show appreciation and respect for the standards and norms of her family and her community. This belief is effectively demonstrated in Stephen Salkever's *Finding the Mean*:

²⁵³ *Politics* I, 2, 1253a19.

²⁵⁴ *Rhetoric* Book II, 6 1383b15-17.

My conjecture that the development of shame is a good candidate for the *telos* of the family is based on the Aristotelian view that people who are not capable of being ashamed are not open to persuasion and deliberation- the only motive such people have for not living childishly or according to momentary or episodic passionate attraction is the fear of punishment. The sense of shame, the habitual disposition to worry that one's initial response to a situation might be wrong, or the fear of disgrace (NE 4, 1128b10-13), is a necessary prelude to mature deliberation and *paideia*. The sense of carefulness or hesitancy that belongs to the modest person is nicely expressed in the definition of shame in the *Magna Moralia*: a person capable of shame "will not, like the shameless person, say and do anything in any way; nor, like the shy person, hold back in everything in every way; but will do and say what is appropriate" (*Magna Moralia* 1193a7-10). A related definition is given in Book 2 of the *Rhetoric*, where shame (here *aeschynē*) is described as "a certain pain or uneasiness about past, present, and future bad things that bring disgrace (*adoxia*)" (*Rhetoric* 2, 1383b12-14). Such pain or fear, as long as it is not hopeless dread, has the effect of making us think about what we are doing, and thus of humanizing us, for Aristotle as for Hobbes: "fear makes people deliberate."²⁵⁵

In asserting that the ability to develop shame may be the purpose of the family Salkever anticipates my contention that *aeschynē* is necessary for proper political functioning. Proper political functioning, in other words communal living, being the end of the family, "comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life" as Aristotle maintains in the *Politics*.²⁵⁶ It is clear, then, that *aeschynē* is crucial to fulfilling human purpose. Salkever's claim that *aeschynē* has the unique ability to humanize us must not be downplayed. It is imperative that the political and social power of *aeschynē*, as a civic virtue, be recognized.

²⁵⁵ Salkever (1990), 192-193.

²⁵⁶ *Politics* I, 2, 1253b29-30.

Political communities and human beings become the best and possess excellence through *aeschynē*. But, the opposite happens in the face of *anaeschyntia*. One who is truly shameless is *anaeschyntia* and does not regret or have remorse for his terrible actions and thus has no catalyst for change. *Anaeschyntia* benefits only the tyrants, the wealthy leaders of the oligarchy, and the democratic rulers. *Aeschynē*, on the other hand, benefits every member of the state.

There is, however, some disagreement as to whether the truly shameless person exists. Christina Tarnopolsky holds that, “There are no *completely* shameless people in this world. Rather the tyrant is the person who *desires* to be shameless, renames his shame simplicity, and tries to banish it from his soul, just as he tries to banish, stigmatize, or (in extreme cases) exterminate any person or other who threatens to make him feel shame.”²⁵⁷ Tarnopolsky also maintains that in the work of Plato “the tyrant gradually does away with any friend or enemy who speaks frankly (*parrhesia*) to him and rebukes him for his actions” and she argues that the tyrannical person “dares to do everything as though it were released from, and rid of, all shame and prudence.”²⁵⁸ In any case, *anaeschyntia* tends to have dangerous consequences and not merely for the agent who feels *anaeschyntia* but also for the political community as a whole.

Exploring the political aspects of *aeschynē* provides a new dimension by which to view Aristotle’s understanding of shame. Consider again Aristotle’s contention that human beings are naturally political animals. Given the political nature of human beings it is clear that for Aristotle human beings can only achieve *eudaimonia* by living as

²⁵⁷ Tarnopolsky (2010), 25.

²⁵⁸ Tarnopolsky (2010), 25, n. 78.

citizens in the *polis*. Human beings cannot achieve the political state Aristotle has in mind without the personal and social benefit received from *aeschynē*. The full picture of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue is revealed below as the ethical features of *aeschynē* are presented.

Ethical Aspects of *Aeschynē*

Having completed the discussion of the political aspects of *aeschynē* as well as the effects and consequences of *anaeschyntia*, it is now necessary to consider the ethical implications of *aeschynē*. Much of what was covered above in examining the political nature of *aeschynē* applies also in a discussion of the ethical implications. I argue further, however, that *aeschynē* is important to Aristotle's conception of human nature because it is self-centered, self-reproaching and is thus concerned with ethical responsibility. Indeed, when reflecting on the ethical characteristics of *aeschynē* one would do well to consider the astute words of Robert Solomon who said that, "Shame, accordingly, is or can be a most effective tool for moral cultivation."²⁵⁹ With this thought in mind I advance the argument that *aeschynē*, as a properly energized virtue, promotes ethical conduct by allowing one to find the "intermediate between excess and defect" thus avoiding the vicious extreme of *anaeschyntia*.²⁶⁰

Aeschynē is both a personal and a social passion and as such, *aeschynē* can ruin one's trust and security – "two phenomenological events which play a significant

²⁵⁹ Solomon (2007), 96.

²⁶⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 6, 1106a29.

role in forming and maintaining relationships.”²⁶¹ *Aeschynē* is felt strongly in primary or significant relationships. As Aristotle says, the level of *aeschynē* deepens in direct proportion to the level of closeness. Consider the fact that the loved ones of Sophocles’ Ajax experience feelings of *aeschynē* at Ajax’s disgrace. It is also in this respect that Crito’s behavior comes to mind. During his attempt to save Socrates, Crito fears feeling undeserved shame. Crito’s fear of shame may be the result of the fact that his close relationship with Socrates is so well-known among Athenians. As Crito says, “many people who do not know you or me very well will think that I could have saved you if I were willing to spend money, but that I did not care to do so. Surely there can be no worse reputation than to be thought to value money more highly than one’s friends.”²⁶² Crito shows that worry about a shameful reputation may exist as a catalyst to more ethical action.

Crito’s worry not only emphasizes that *aeschynē* is felt in front of those one is close to. His fear of a shameful reputation also shows that *aeschynē* can be experienced for past, present, and future action.²⁶³ Most important though, *aeschynē* is reflective or backward looking in the sense that one may feel *aeschynē* upon reflection of certain past actions or inactions. In this retrospective regard there is an ethical significance to *aeschynē*. The reflection and concurrent feelings of *aeschynē* offer a motive to abstain from and to avoid unethical behavior. *Aeschynē* is an essential aspect of Aristotle’s conception of human nature in terms of ethical conduct because it involves pain and is, in Aristotle’s words, “a pain or disturbance in regard to bad

²⁶¹ Kaufman (1989), 17.

²⁶² Plato, *Crito* 44b.

²⁶³ *Rhetoric*, II, 6, 1383b16.

things.”²⁶⁴ Aristotle says it is through pain that punishment is inflicted. He points out, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that pain is a kind of cure.²⁶⁵ When one feels *aeschynē* as a consequence of ‘bad things’ the painful feelings act as a kind of cure – a prevention against choosing future ‘bad things’. I do not want to experience the painful feelings of *aeschynē* so I avoid the actions that cause those feelings.

In addition to the fact that *aeschynē* involves pain and can arise as a consequence of past, present, or future action there are four ethical dimensions of *aeschynē* presented in the *Rhetoric*. These four aspects are discussed in depth here. A solid understanding of these ethical dimensions is integral to the claim that *aeschynē* is a civic virtue. First, Aristotle mentions the crucial fact that when it comes to an act or situation that causes feelings of *aeschynē* the emphasis is on the disgrace itself and not the punishment for the action or inaction.

This statement should be viewed as clear evidence for the ethical sensibility of *aeschynē*; for, Aristotle highlights the corrective abilities of the virtue instead of consideration of punishment or reward for one’s actions. With regard for *aeschynē*, then, according to Aristotle, one chooses to avoid an action based on the simple fact that it is disgraceful. *Aeschynē*, therefore, involves right reason. Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, says, “If it is in our power to do noble or base acts, and likewise in our power not to do them, and this was what being good or bad means, then it is in our power to be virtuous or vicious.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b15.

²⁶⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 3, 1104b15-17.

²⁶⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 5, 1113b11-13.

Second, in addition to the realization that *aeschynē* causes one to “shrink from the disgrace itself” there is a plethora of specific disgraces that lead to *aeschynē* that are all “due to badness.”²⁶⁷ These things, Aristotle says, are caused by behavior involving cowardice, injustice, licentiousness, low greed and meanness, boastfulness, and “the actions due to any of the other forms of badness of character.”²⁶⁸ The significance of the last word should not be ignored since “character” is essential when discussing virtue for Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* it is clear that actions determine one’s character.²⁶⁹ The emphasis Aristotle places on vicious actions must be considered in this context. Vice, for Aristotle, is a deliberate choice – an ethical failing that must be avoided. Vicious behavior exists in direct opposition to virtue. That Aristotle considers *aeschynē* to occur as a consequence of vicious action speaks volumes regarding his view of the ethical aspects of *aeschynē*.

Aeschynē is also felt as the result of a lack of good social ties. This is the third ethical dimension of *aeschynē* discussed in the *Rhetoric*. As Aristotle says, “Another sort of bad thing at which we feel *aeschynē* is, lacking a share in the honorable things shared by everyone else.”²⁷⁰ In other words, *aeschynē* is felt when one is deficient in a share of the good or beneficial social aspects of life. This is certainly ethical for Aristotle in that it emphasizes the idea that *aeschynē* is valuable to both the possessor and, more important, to the larger social community. The shame felt for lacking in honorable

²⁶⁷ *Rhetoric*, II, 6, 1383b20.

²⁶⁸ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b20-1384a8.

²⁶⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 10, 1100b32.

²⁷⁰ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a910.

things shared by one's peers intensifies if it is a consequence of one's own badness of character.

Finally, the fourth important ethical aspect of *aeschynē* is that it is only felt in front of those whose opinion one considers valuable. For example, when discussing feeling *aeschynē* in front of others Alcibiades says that Socrates was the only person who ever made him feel shame.²⁷¹ This is noteworthy when understood in conjunction with the commendable qualities Alcibiades sees – and venerates - in Socrates. Clearly Alcibiades finds Socrates' character to be admirable. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle mentions that *aeschynē* is felt in front of “those whose opinion matters to us. Such persons are: those who admire us, those whom we admire, those by whom we wish to be admired, those with whom we are competing, and those whose opinion of us we respect.”²⁷² In other words, one only experiences *aeschynē* in front of those one considers ethical. Aristotle says, people are not ashamed in front of those who are considered unworthy or unethical (i.e. small children and animals).²⁷³

In Aristotle's ethics the importance of the opinion of others must not go unnoticed. For, “What fuels philosophers' suspicions about the value of feeling ashamed is the way shame seems to shift attention away from what *morality* requires to what *other people* require us to be like.”²⁷⁴ This quotation emphasizes a crucial aspect of Aristotle's thought in that he does not subscribe to what morality requires – rather, he focuses on people. This is why *endoxa*, or what is known to us, plays such a key role

²⁷¹ Plato *Symposium* 216b.

²⁷² *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a27-29.

²⁷³ *Rhetoric*, II, 6, 1384b24.

²⁷⁴ Calhoun (2004), 128.

when it comes to issues of ethics and ethical conduct. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle holds, that “the highest kinds of excellence must be those which are most useful to others.”²⁷⁵ This means he believes that there is no need for ethics without community. *Aeschynē* as a thoroughly social virtue is ranked high on Aristotle’s list of excellences.

Many modern writers have made note of the ability of shame to provide and support moral education and restraint.²⁷⁶ The ethical boundaries of *aeschynē*, however, extend far beyond what is typically considered in discussion of the term ‘shame’. For instance, *aeschynē* is interlocked with the other passions in a unique and significant consequential manner. *Aeschynē* seems to arise on each occasion that one acts badly in regard to the passions. One may feel *aeschynē* for being unkind, for being too angry, for feeling hatred, for lack of courage, or for being fearful. *Aeschynē* may also be felt as a result of lack of appropriate pity-feelings since pity “is associated with good character.”²⁷⁷ This is noteworthy given Aristotle’s position that states are “the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g. with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately; and similarly with reference to the other passions.”²⁷⁸ *Aeschynē* is the only passion that one experiences as a result of standing badly in regard to the passions.

²⁷⁵ *Rhetoric* I, 9, 1366b3-4.

²⁷⁶ Larry Arnhart (1981) discussion the *Rhetoric* claims that “shame might be of central importance because it is the prime example of how passion can support moral strength (130). Stephen G. Salkever (1990) writes that “a strong Aristotelian case can be made for saying that the special work of the family is neither procreation nor security but the development in children of the sense of shame that is an indispensable precondition for deliberative or thoughtful living” (191).

²⁷⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 9, 1136b12.

²⁷⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 5, 1105b24-28.

If Aristotle's use of *aeschynē* does not provide sufficient evidence for the claim that he believes it is a civic virtue one should consider shamelessness or *anaeschyntia* and the various reasons it is a vice. It is quite evident to anyone reasonably familiar with the classical period that "the bulk of Greek literature, which ascribes great importance to the sense of shame, attacks the vice of shamelessness, and connects the avoidance of shame with excellence of character and action in accordance with shared norms."²⁷⁹

Further evidence regarding the ethical nature of *aeschynē* is provided by Aristotle's student Theophrastus in his work *The Characters*. The notion of *ethos* or character is one that is important in Aristotle's conception of human nature – especially in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Theophrastus' focus on character in his discussion of undesirable attributes shows that the traits in question are vicious. According to Theophrastus *anaeschyntia*, or the absence of *aeschynē*, is a state of character. Aristotle contrasts character with passions when he says that, "*aidōs* should not be described as a virtue; for it is more like a feeling than a state of character."²⁸⁰ Thus, since Theophrastus, Aristotle's chosen heir to the Lyceum, considers *anaeschyntia* a state of character it may be taken as evidence in favor of Aristotle's similar perception regarding *aeschynē* and *anaeschyntia*. If *anaeschyntia* is a state of character, so too must its opposite – *aeschynē* – be a state of character.

That *anaeschyntia* is a vice should be accepted, without issue; however, in regard to the above discussion it makes sense to ask what the criteria are for defining

²⁷⁹ Rorty (1980), n. 10, 429.

²⁸⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 9, 1128b10-11.

‘shamelessness’. In *Magna Moralia* Aristotle describes the shameless man as one “who says and does anything on any occasion or before any people.”²⁸¹ Similarly in the *Eudemian Ethics* the shameless one is said to be unconcerned with the opinions of others.²⁸² In the *Rhetoric* the shameless person is one who feels contempt or indifference “in regard to bad things... which seem likely to involve us in discredit.”²⁸³ Clearly, then, one cannot be said to possess ethical attributes in the face of *anaeschyntia*.

Overview and Conclusions

The two sections just concluded draw from Aristotle’s political and ethical treatises in order to provide evidence that *aeschynē*, as understood by Aristotle, exists as a civic virtue. Having delivered proof for this position, along with corroborating material from Aristotle’s corpus, it is now essential to tie everything together and to identify the virtue attained by the properly energized *aeschynē*. In the *Politics* Aristotle maintains that “the final cause and end of a thing is the best.”²⁸⁴ This section acts as a bind or ‘final cause’ joining together the information from all the material outlined above. The purpose of this section is to state the full and essential role of *aeschynē* in Aristotle’s conception of human nature and to describe the effects of *anaeschyntia* on *eudaimonia*.

²⁸¹ *Magna Moralia* I, 29, 1193a4.

²⁸² *Eudemian Ethics* III, 7, 1233b27.

²⁸³ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1383b15-18.

²⁸⁴ *Politics* I, 1253a1.

For Aristotle *eudaimonia* is the highest human good. It is the rational human soul that makes *eudaimonia* possible, according to Aristotle. *Eudaimonia* is a rational activity “in conformity with excellence” which means that Aristotle considers it practical knowledge.²⁸⁵ The importance of *eudaimonia* is not found in theory or discussion; rather, it is in practical application. The position and recognition of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue is also in its practical application.

Aristotle presents two accounts of *eudaimonia* that are often held to be separate from one other. It is my contention, however, that the accounts of *eudaimonia* provided by Aristotle are closely connected through the virtue *aeschynē*. In Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* *eudaimonia* is presented as an activity that occurs when one exercises the virtues through moderation. This is, according to Thomas Nagel, the comprehensive view. The second account of *eudaimonia* occurs at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and focuses on contemplation and reflection.

Aeschynē is in line with the comprehensive view of *eudaimonia* because Aristotle insists that virtuous actions exist for the sake of living well. *Eudaimonia* can only be reached by exercising the virtues of the rational faculty of the soul. *Aeschynē* helps one live well by choosing the right course of action (through reason) thus allowing one to act moderately in regard to the passions. The comprehensive view of *eudaimonia* is significant because it encourages the contemplative activity of *theoria*, or in Nagel’s terms the intellectualist account. Rational contemplation is, for Aristotle, essential for the best life. *Aeschynē*, because it is open to reflection, produces rational

²⁸⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 7,1098a16.

contemplation about the most important things for Aristotle: political and ethical communal existence.

Eudaimonia requires one to have and use both the ethical and the intellectual virtues. The ethical virtues are attained only by finding the relative mean. *Aeschynē* in conjunction with the intellectual virtue practical wisdom functions in a manner that allows one to attain the relative mean between extremes. As Nagel points out, “*eudaimonia* essentially involves not just the activity of the theoretical intellect but the full range of human life and action, in accordance with the broader excellences of moral virtue and practical wisdom. This view connects *eudaimonia* with the conception of human nature as composite, that is, as involving the interaction of reason, emotion, perception, and action in an ensouled body.”²⁸⁶ The attributes highlighted by Nagel – reason, passion, perception, and action in context of ethical virtue and practical wisdom – must be viewed as collective aspects of *aeschynē*.

The passionate characteristics of *aeschynē* were revealed above with the discussion of Aristotle’s theory of passions. Aristotle’s regard for the rational aspects of *aeschynē* were considered in respect to his placement of *aeschynē* in the rational faculty of the soul. The importance of perception and action in *aeschynē* exists in the recognition that *aeschynē* is felt in terms of past, present, and future actions that can be chosen. The explication of *aeschynē* as ethical virtue is complete. What remains is a discussion regarding the relation of *aeschynē* and practical wisdom.

²⁸⁶ Rorty (1980), 7.

For Aristotle, *aretē* and thus the ability to experience *eudaimonia*, involves feeling the passions in the right way. Character is tightly entwined with *ta pathē* in that the habits one has in relation to the passions can affect one's reasoning ability. It is for this reason that *aeschynē* properly educated through *phronesis* is a civic virtue. As Aristotle holds, "The activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference."²⁸⁷

Practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, is an excellence of one part of the rational faculty of the soul.²⁸⁸ In Aristotle's words it is "that part which forms opinions; for opinion is about what can be otherwise, and so is practical wisdom."²⁸⁹ Since *aeschynē* requires deliberation and choice *phronesis* is involved. Aristotle defines *phronesis* as "a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods."²⁹⁰ *Phronesis* is the faculty that enables the passion *aeschynē* to transform itself into the civic virtue *metriopatheia*. *Phronesis* allows human beings to choose the correct action, keeping in mind how the results will affect one's *eudaimonia*. The emphasis on opinion or *endoxa* in regard to practical wisdom is important. Recall Aristotle's contention in the *Eudemian Ethics* that the shameless person is one who is unconcerned with the opinions of others.

The discussion of practical wisdom, then, allows for identification of *metriopatheia*: the civic virtue attained in the case of *aeschynē*. The virtue of *aeschynē*

²⁸⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 1, 1103b23-26.

²⁸⁸ *On Virtues and Vices* 2, 1250a4.

²⁸⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 5, 1140b27-28.

²⁹⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 5, 1140b20-21.

is most fittingly named *metriopatheia* which is best translated as ‘moderating one’s passions’. This is an appropriate term for the *aretē* of *aeschynē* since, as I argue, *aeschynē* as a civic virtue exists as a means of teaching one to find the relative intermediate state. In other words, *aeschynē* as virtue is a moderator of *ta pathē*. *Aeschynē* arises when one stands poorly in regard to the passions, whether it is in excess or in deficiency. *Aeschynē* enables one - through *phronesis* - to choose the correct action given the ways the results will affect one’s *eudaimonia* and, consequently, the political community as a whole.

Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* has suffered undue criticism for providing only guidelines and not exact rules for ethical conduct – critics maintain that Aristotle’s *Ethics* does not give sufficient advice; however proper advice is not necessary nor is it feasible given that the intermediate is *relative*. Still, if one feels she must find ‘rules of ethical conduct’ in Aristotle’s conception of human nature she must look to *aeschynē*. *Aeschynē*, as understood from the preceding chapters, teaches one to find the relative intermediate state.²⁹¹ This is because *aeschynē* functions as a guidepost - *metriopatheia* - offering ethical advice and allowing one to attain the relative intermediate state. As Aristotle says, “We must drag ourselves away to the contrary extreme; for we shall get into the intermediate state by drawing well away from error, as people do in straightening sticks that are bent.”²⁹² *Aeschynē*, as a properly educated civic virtue draws us “well away from error.” *Aeschynē* acts as an ethical guide to one’s actions and helps one find the intermediate state. *Aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* is a state

²⁹¹ *Nicomachean Ethics*. II, 6, 1106b1-5.

²⁹² *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 9, 1109b5-7.

of soul – a settled disposition, much like friendship, which makes *aeschynē*, in Aristotle's eyes a civic virtue.

Possession of the virtue *aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* is the only way that one can come to recognize the intermediate. *Aeschynē* functions in regard to the *relative* intermediate because *aeschynē* is felt not only socially and politically, but, internally as well. Virtue requires choice and it is *aeschynē* that allows one to make the correct choice. Aristotle believes that one may do things by chance – speak grammatically, for instance - but the grammarian is the person who chooses to speak grammatically who.²⁹³ *Aeschynē* is the virtue that provides one with the ability to actively choose the right course of action to lead to the relative intermediate state. It is my assertion that, like *dikaiosunē* (justice), which has only the deficiency of injustice to contend with, *aeschynē* as a civic virtue has but one single extreme: *anaeschyntia*.

The occurrence of *aeschynē* is a special case and deserves attention in the work of Aristotle because it is a unique and useful disposition. In fact, there is some semblance of justice tied up in the nature of *aeschynē*. As Bernard Yack says, “The only natural disposition that Aristotle associates with justice is a disposition to demand that others conform to what we believe are appropriate standards of behavior.”²⁹⁴ *Aeschynē* certainly does this and can essentially reinforce communal ties and communal life. *Aeschynē* is a feeling of an acceptance of responsibility. It makes one unhappy; it is painful and sometimes results in the agent's feeling physically ill. *Aeschynē* is important because it is self-centered, self-reproaching and concerns both

²⁹³ *Nicomachean Ethics*. II, 4, 1105a24-25.

²⁹⁴ Yack (1993), 42.

political and ethical responsibility. *Aeschynē* teaches one to be able to discriminate. It is what tells human beings that it is wrong to do certain things, and thus one avoids those things. *Aeschynē* does not provide an insight into why those things are wrong; it simply shows that they are indeed wrong.

It is certainly possible that one might feel *aeschynē* without choice; however that *aeschynē* is felt with choice is one of the aspects that separates it from *aidōs* and allows it to be properly energized through *phronesis*. Still, one can always choose whether her shame feelings will affect her choices and decisions. One can choose whether to let *aeschynē* guide her to action or inaction. This, once again, explains why the bodily functions in Aristotle's corpus are always discussed in terms of *aidōs* and not in regard to *aeschynē*. Physiological conditions, such as blushing or going pale, occur without choice.

It is understood, in Aristotle's conception of human nature, that choice is required for ethical behavior; however choice is also integral to human political existence because, as Aristotle says, "slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life based on choice."²⁹⁵ Since the rational faculty of the human soul involves choice, human beings are able to experience happiness. But, because human beings are political animals happiness can only be experienced in a political community. Without the *polis* it is not possible for human beings to flourish.

²⁹⁵ *Politics* III, 9, 1280a33-34.

In placing a solid emphasis on community, or *koinōnia*, Aristotle simultaneously underscores the priority of sharing. The *polis* brings individual human beings together to share and collectively experience the variety of activities that make up citizenship; it is *ta politika* (a community that shares political things). Social goods, such as civic friendship and justice, depend on community, according to Aristotle. Friendship and justice, Aristotle says, “Are concerned with the same objects and exhibited between the same persons. For in every community there is thought to be some form of justice and friendship too; at least men address as friends their fellow-voyagers and fellow-soldiers, and so too those associated with them in any other kind of community. And the extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them.”²⁹⁶ The importance of *aeschynē* ought to be marked in the many ways that it makes the community and thus sharing, friendship, and justice possible by working in the service of social convention. Without *aeschynē*, which is always felt in front of “those whose opinion of us matters to us” in its fully actualized state as a virtue, the harmony of the *polis* would be lost.²⁹⁷

Bernard Yack sums this up by presenting his claim that,

Because the practice of justice grows out of our efforts to hold others accountable to standards of mutual obligation that they are not naturally disposed to follow, it is bound to involve the compulsion of some individuals by others. Unlike friendship, which involves other-regarding actions we are ourselves disposed to perform, justice primarily concerns other-regarding actions that we are disposed to demand from others. As a result, standards of justice, as Aristotle conceives of them, inevitably reflect a choice that some individuals make and impose on others.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 9, 1159b25-32.

²⁹⁷ *Rhetoric* II, 6, 1384a27.

²⁹⁸ Yack (1993), 41.

Yack's comment seems unknowingly to address the attributes of *aeschynē* as a civic virtue; for shame is other-regarding both in that it invokes actions "we are ourselves disposed to perform" as well as actions "we are disposed to demand from others." It is *aeschynē* that ultimately holds human beings accountable for these actions and to each other. Thus, *aeschynē* is indispensable to friendship, justice, and the community in general. Aristotle's claim that the political community exists for the sake of the good life is reminiscent of the virtuous aspects of *aeschynē*.

Only *aeschynē* entices human beings to abstain from actions at the right time, in the right way, and for the right reasons. As Aristotle holds in the *Nicomachean Ethics* "it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, any one can get angry – that is easy – or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way, *that* is not for every one, nor is it easy; that is why goodness is both rare and laudable and noble."²⁹⁹

Aeschynē, then, as *metriopatheia*, is an excellence that helps regulate and habituate the passions. Aristotle believes that human excellence occurs when one experiences passions with right reason. In so doing, the best and most excellent character is cultivated. *Aeschynē* is useful in that it completes one's character and leads the way to *eudaimonia* by helping citizens experience the passions with right reason. As Aristotle says, "just as man is the best of animals when completed, so he is

²⁹⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 9, 1109a25-29.

the worst of all when separated from law and justice.”³⁰⁰ One who is *anaeschyntia* is always separated from law and justice.

Implications for Understanding Aristotle’s Conception of Human Nature

Aristotle’s conception of human nature has retained its significance throughout the millennia. Recognition of the importance of the role of *aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* in Aristotle’s conception of human nature helps one become “self-regulating, self-nurturing, and self-directing [because] shame enables us to know ourselves better and reach our full potential.”³⁰¹ One does not improve ethically without reflection and *aeschynē* is the passion most open to reflection.

A concrete awareness of *aeschynē* is important to Aristotle and to our understanding of Aristotle’s work. That this is the case may be seen in the recognition that *aeschynē* is, for the most part, directly linked to justice and injustice.³⁰² The presence or absence of justice serves to arouse certain passions. *Aeschynē* is no exception here; indeed, it is of the utmost interest because it is a thoroughly social – and at the same time, deeply personal – passion, which when properly cultivated exists as a civic virtue essential to *eudaimonia*.

Aeschynē occurs when one acts badly in regard to the passions. Practical wisdom in conjunction with a fear of dishonor produces *metriopatheia* and leads to the

³⁰⁰ *Politics* I, 2, 1253a30.

³⁰¹ Cavanaugh (1989), 7.

³⁰² Fear may be an exception.

best life both as individual and as contributing member to the *koinon sumpheron* (common advantage). In the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Politics* Aristotle argues that justice is met when one showcases virtue to the benefit or advantage of all.³⁰³ The happiness of the community is advanced only in respect to this common advantage.

The very nature of *aeschynē* keeps it bound up with others and otherness; for it is when one thinks of oneself badly in relation to others that one feels a sense of shame or disgrace. *Aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* has a positive relation to others in terms of convention and *endoxa* concerning what is good and bad for the *polis*. Without a doubt respect for opinion and standards of custom help to increase actions that are conducive to friendship and justice – two important attributes required for a good political existence.

Consider the lack of friends of the tyrant, or any other totally shameless person. One who is *anaeschyntia* will never truly experience friendship. According to Aristotle, friendship provides members of the community with responsibility and ties to one another in a way that law and justice cannot. Aristotle's remark at the beginning of Book VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics* must here be noted. He says, "Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers care more for it than for justice... when men are friends they have no need for justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality."³⁰⁴ The authentic and valuable role held by *aeschynē* as *metriopatheia* is that it works to

³⁰³ See *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 9 1160a13-14 and *Politics* III, 6, 1279a17-18.

³⁰⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 1, 1155a21-27.

encourage the advancement of the ethical aspects that enhance political community.

Aeschynē as *metriopatheia*, then, exists for the sake of the good life.

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