Phenomenology of Veiling

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Research Article

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Abstract: Covering appears to be a socio-cultural necessity for human beings. Covering styles are revealed in different forms in men and women. Covering the body in human history manifests itself as a result of necessity in social relations. The first human in the sources is the veiling problem of Prophet Adam and his wife Eve begins with their realization of their own lack of veiling. In this sense, veiling, apart from an innate necessity, is a need that arises with awareness and is related to being human. Max Scheler explains the feeling of shame as a feeling that arises as a result of the person who is between the lowest of creation and the highest of all first realizing it when the veil falls. From this point of view, veiling or veiling is a phenomenon needed as a requirement of Scheler's sense of shame, with the meanings of "to put a curtain between oneself and the other/somebody else, to hide inside or behind something", on the other hand, David Le Breton's of individuals revealing their own skin to society. It gains meaning as a message that is wanted to be given by the individual in social relations, seeing it as a limit.

Keywords: Hijab, phenomenology, Max Scheler, David le Breton, veiling, shame, skin, body.

Introduction

Max Scheler presents a phenomenological approach to veiling while examining the feelings of shame and humility. It examines the subject of veiling as the position of the feeling of shame and the way of human existence. First of all, the feeling of shame itself is an emotion that manifests itself from the contradictions inherent in human nature. Because man is somewhere between God and animals. He resembles God because he has deep feelings and supernatural experiences that contain the essence of His sublime. On the other hand, it resembles an animal because, like it, it has some instinctive behaviors and some essential needs for survival. Scheler explains this as the state between the emotional life and the impulse life.¹

The animal has some common feelings with humans. Feeling emotions such as fear, anxiety, disgust, and jealousy, the animal experiences these emotions away from the feeling of shame. It is necessary to keep the feeling of shame in animals and their characteristics such as staying in the background, courting, and avoiding behaviors, which are a requirement of some of their creational characteristics, separate from the feeling of shame. However, God, by his nature, should not have a sense of shame. God is not ashamed. The basic condition of what we call shame requires a higher form of judgment. There is no higher judgment authority than God.

The Concept of Shame

Shame is not a virtue in Aristotle.² Because it is not a preferred behavior,³ it is natural. However, knowing shame, developing the feeling of shame in one's other virtues and multiplying the results

Max Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, çev. Ebru Arun (İstanbul: Pinhan Yayıncılık, 2021), 7.

It is debated whether the feeling of shame is a virtue. E.g. Ryan Nichols, "A Sense of Shame among the Virtues," *Journal of Moral Education* 45, no. 2 (2016), 166-178.

³ Aristoteles, Nikomakhos'a Etik, çev. Saffet Babür (Ankara: BilgeSu Yayıncılık, 2011), 1099b.

is a virtue. The feeling of shame can be handled from a cultural perspective, but the subject of this article is the existence and source of the feeling of shame. I will try to explain the subject of having a sense of shame.

When examining the feeling of shame, consider all other situations caused by embarrassment, e.g. We deal with the point Max Scheler makes when we suspend embarrassment in the face of an event or embarrassment from a respectable elder (epokhe) and only look at the embarrassment itself. To be fully involved in the feeling of shame and try to understand why it occurs, it is necessary to examine the feeling of shame by separating it from the act of embarrassment caused by it. From this point of view, the feeling of shame includes bewilderment and confusion.4 It is a feeling of not understanding what should be and what is. This feeling is explained by the idea of "fall" in the religious literature of man. Man wants to forget his own limits and reach out to the divine. He wants to reach the divine pulpit. Because he realized the spiritual power within. Being able to feel sublime emotions distinguishes it from the animal one. Thus, he dares to think that he resembles the divine.

In religious literature, eating that forbidden fruit, reaching out to it, daring to possess eternity and the divine actually reveals the basis of the feeling of decline and shame. Max Scheler explains this literary explanation with the verses of the Bible. A similar explanation is also found in the Qur'an. In Surah Araf 20-22: "Then Satan tempted them to expose what was hidden of their nakedness. He said, "Your Lord has forbidden this tree to you only to prevent you from becoming angels or immortals." And he swore to them, "I am truly your sincere advisor." So he brought about their fall through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness was exposed to them, prompting them to cover

While thinking about the existence of man, Max Scheler says that what distinguishes man from his counterparts in nature is the degree of complexity in his mix of energies and faculties. Max Scheler, İnsanın Kosmostaki Yeri, çev. Harun Tepe (Ankara: BilgeSu Yayıncılık, 2020), 5.

themselves with leaves from Paradise. Then their Lord called out to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and did I not tell you that Satan is your sworn enemy?"5 Here we see the origin of the fall, which will cause the feeling of shame along with eating the forbidden fruit. There is a basis for the feeling of shame that occurs when a person who is aware of the divine features in himself forgets that he also has animal needs, overcoming his audacity and reaching out to the eternal, divine. At the heart of the feeling of shame is the awareness of the needs of the body and its needs of this world versus the needs of the soul and spirit that are not of this world. This realization causes embarrassment. When the veil is removed, people who face reality feel ashamed. A person who thinks himself godlike and divine suddenly remembers his weakness. For this reason, shame and decency, are considered as a matter of faith in Islam. In the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); It is written that the feeling of shame is a part of faith.⁶

The sense of decency and shame is a feeling found in all of the Prophets. Every religious person has a high level of shame. For man is ashamed and bows down before God when his daring of divinity strikes at the helplessness of his animal needs; remembers her faith. Allah, the Settar, covers and conceals the shame of man. As the human being is like a transitional being between God and animal, he is ashamed when he remembers his helplessness and confronts the reality of what he dares. Allah, al-Sattār, covers and conceals the shame of man. As the human being is like a transitional being between God and animal, he is ashamed when he remembers his helplessness and confronts the reality of what he dares. Man is ashamed of himself, of himself before God. Then he is ashamed of God. Here shame comes face to face with soul and skin. Shame is, in a way, a feeling of being in between. Between the soul and the skin, the person is squeezed. Because in those moments when a person cannot express himself clearly or does not want to express himself, he is buried in the feeling of shame.

⁵ Surah A'raf, 20-22.

⁶ Bukhari, "Iman," 3; Muslim, "Iman," 57-58.

Shame is related to our own emotional state. In all shame, there is a direction of our own, a state of turning to ourselves.⁷

David Le Breton, in his book "The Skin and The Traces", says the following about his deliberate injury to the human body and the resulting suffering: this situation, that is, people who harm their own body, actually risked pain or death to the living. The situation of contradiction here is not the desire to end life or the body in connection with it, but rather a desire to live, to get rid of the death that clings to the soul to save one's own life. 8 However, painful practices such as piercing and tattooing on the body/skin are a way of acquiring symbolic traces in society, first against oneself and then against the other. Preferences on the body are a form of self-control. This form of control is a form of self-healing. Just as between the animal and God, it is a reflex of healing the spiritual suffering of shame and the behavior of covering the body of the ashamed human when he realizes his sublime and inferiority. Man hopes to redefine himself in a more permanent way with the message he gives to social through his body. With the awareness of the feeling of shame, he redefines his existence through his body. Covering is a way of being. The body is the first place of the bewilderment of being himself for man.¹⁰

In this mode of existence, the relationship between the body, skin, or derm and veiling appears as a living-inanimate relationship, but the relationship between the body and the covering has a bilateral interaction. This interaction is existential and seems interactive. The existential message is hidden under the cover of the body, as a mortal cover. The veil is a sacred message that calms and protects the soul from the pain of shame. Here, the purpose of the veiling on the body is not to be erased from social relations,

⁷ Scheler, Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları, 19.

Bavid Le Breton, Ten ve İz, çev. İsmail Yerguz (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2020), 10-11.

⁹ Le Breton, *Ten ve İz*, 13.

¹⁰ Le Breton, *Ten ve İz*, 17.

Serkan Akyol, Malzemenin Bedeni Sarması Bedenin Malzemeye Uyum Sağlaması, Yüksek Lisans Tezi (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, 2012), 4.

but to be purified to regain these relations.

Our identity is always lacking in life and is in a constant process of formation. Life exists through meanings through which we constantly reflect our own existence. 12 Thus, human birth never ends. It is in a place where it starts over and continues with every event and every emotion it encounters in life. Actions that give life to the sense of self are in a constant and close relationship with the actions they reflect on society. 13 The body is inevitable in the identity formed by the feelings of self, which is necessary. Responsibility toward others in society against the self-scares people. It is perceived as a threat to "I". However, the body establishes the individual's relationship with the world. It is the only objective dimension of human existence in this world. The body is a form of deep meaning and expression that is both loved and hated here. The impact of deep emotions that threaten this form of expression takes place in different ways. Covering the body is one of these expressions. There are deep meanings behind the appearance of the body. In a way, this is evidence of the need for a symbolic detour to reach the sense of being oneself.14

The feeling of shame is a feeling that arises when the danger of diminishing the value of the personality of the person whose psychic field is interfered with. This situation again can be understood by reference to the situation of Adam and Eve in the verse. It is the situation in which the individual is faced with the loss of self-esteem due to inappropriate behavior. It also includes feelings of shame, honor, dignity, self-esteem and fearIn the relationship between self-awareness and veiling, veiling is not only a body cover but also a state of consciousness that shows the awareness of one's personality and a lifestyle in social terms.¹⁵

The skin forms a boundary between the inner and outer

¹² Le Breton, Ten ve İz, 21.

¹³ Le Breton, Ten ve İz, 22.

¹⁴ Le Breton, Ten ve İz, 24.

Fatih Tok & Merve Müftüoğlu, "Nur Suresi 31. Ayetin Tesettür Bağlamında İncelenmesi," Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 9 (2018), 105.

world, as the boundary of the body and therefore of a part of the self. The body here is the opening to the world, the living memory. The body, and in particular the skin, is also a barrier. It is a narcissistic fence that protects from the possible chaos and confusion of the world. 16 We focus on the feeling of shame, which is the deep pain that affects people; veiling is a structure that protects people on the body. It is the screen on which an imagined identity is projected. The cover is the scene of the turmoil in the background, in the showcase of the store with deep presentations inside or in backstage behind the visible. It is a spiritual armor and boundary. It is the expression of a spiritual feeling. The body is the transition place of meaning in relation to the world. In this sense, the skin appears only as a surface, but it is the depth of the self in a figurative sense. Its representation is interiority. In short, the skin, the derm, or the body is where meaning is recorded. 17 "I" is diffused throughout the body.18

The Relationship between Shame and Veiling

What we mean by the act of veiling is the urge to cover up. Why do people want to be covered? Is the explanation that the covering of the body is not limited to the skin only socio-cultural?

Veiling means to cover, to put a curtain between the other, to hide in or behind something, to prevent. The veiling, which comes from the Arabic root str, comes from the word تَسَتَّ "to cover". Covering and concealment are metaphorical; It means shyness, fear, and shame. In addition, the word siyab (clothing) is used as an allusion to virtue and chastity. Throughout human history, veiling has always existed in different forms in different societies and cultures. In Assyria, the goddess Ishtar was depicted as wearing a headscarf, and those who served in the temple covered their heads. In Christianity, the veil of the Mary was associated with

¹⁶ Le Breton, *Ten ve İz*, 25.

¹⁷ Le Breton, *Ten ve İz*, 26-27.

¹⁸ Le Breton, *Ten ve İz*, 50.

H. Yunus Apaydın, "Tesettür," Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2011), 40, 538.

modesty and interpreted as a practice that glorified women in society.²⁰

We tried to explain the nature of the shame-veiling relationship based on the feeling of shame. In times of danger, it is the behavior of a person to take the fetal position autonomously, to cover himself, to close and hide. Shame is a dangerous one feels in one's soul. In the case of shyness, the mind of a person is as if under a dense fog, his soul feels in danger.²¹ It is considered more in the spiritual dimension. It is a state of alarm of the soul. The feeling of shame also brings the soul and the skin together and puts them in touch. The embarrassed person blushes with the pain he feels in his soul, and there is also a physical change. It is a duel of essence and existence. A reaction, so to speak, is an allergy. The soul and body immediately want to get rid of this situation and relax. As a result of this encounter, people need to be covered spiritually and physically in order to be protected and to escape from danger. Max Scheler explains that veiling stems from shame as follows: When a human being, who is between God and an animal, sees the divinity in himself and wants to reach it, he sees his animal needs and feels shame the moment he realizes what he is daring. People dress because they are ashamed. That is, people are not ashamed of nudity, in other words, their skin covering themselves, they cover themselves because they are ashamed.²² When the source of embarrassment is examined, veiling is not a dress to protect from heat or cold but is actually a need required by the feeling of embarrassment.23

Humility and shame are ways of relating to our own well-being and to our limitations. It involves placing ourselves among others and the world in general. In a sense, this tends towards the

²⁰ Salime Leyla Gürkan, "Tesettür," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2011), 40, 543.

²¹ Abdurrahman Kasapoğlu, "Kur'an'da "Hayâ/Utanma Olgusu," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2, no. 2 (2011), 9.

²² Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, 15.

²³ Veyis Değirmençay, "Nizâmî-i Gencevî'nin Şerefnâme'sinde Tesettür," Atatürk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 63 (2019), 425.

mundane. People who lack humility have an exaggerated sense of themselves, their accomplishments, and their place in the world, among other things. In addition, the feelings of shame and humility are the knowledge that emerges from the person's state and behavior, not from theoretical knowledge. Probably the man himself does not know his own sense of shame. Accordingly, the virtue of humility seems to have some epistemic flaws because, as Sorensen (1988) points out, it is like a kind of ethical blind spot. If you have humility, you won't know it, on the other hand, if you seem to know that you have humility, you probably do not really have humility.²⁴ This state is reflected in some views of the outside. The most visible of these is veiling.

Bernard Williams expresses the experience of the emergence of shame as being seen inappropriately by the wrong person in the wrong situation, and this is directly related to uncovering.²⁵ The inference here is important in that shame is related to the veil and is an experience that occurs in front of a person who is ashamed of himself. There is a proverb in the ancient Greeks explaining this issue: 'aidôs is in the eyes' (shame is with the appearance). Unlike the modern understanding of shame, shame was a strong emotional category for the ancient Greeks. Although it tends to be suppressed or treated as a morally inadequate feeling in modern society, classical Greek thinkers saw it as the basis of ethical behavior.²⁶

The subject of dressing to display one's body by denying the sense of embarrassment in modern perception without covering one's body based on a sense of shame is another discussion topic.²⁷

Nicolas Bommarito, "Modesty and Humility," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/modesty-humility.

The most primitive experiences of shame are related to seeing and being seen, but interestingly, it has been suggested that the guilt originates from hearing. David Konstan, "Shame in Ancient Greece," Social Research 70, no. 4 (2003), 1034

²⁶ Konstan, "Shame in Ancient Greece," 1034-1035.

Nesibe Demirbağ, Kur'ân Perspektifinde Fıtrî, Dînî ve Ahlâkî Bir Olgu Olarak Örtünme, Yüksek Lisans Tezi (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 2006), 23.

According to Max Scheler, the basis of shame is to cover up the sexual drive.²⁸ He takes the phenomenon of coquetry²⁹ as a prerequisite for body shame and says that clothes are the crystallization of shame.³⁰

Max Scheler, with ethnographic evidence, emphasizes that a lack of cover that emphasizes sexuality in shame is less in men than in women. Ethnographers say that men were the first to cover their private parts.³¹ This shows us that men, unlike women, experience the feeling of embarrassment in a different or higher pitch. Accordingly, a woman by nature has less modesty than a man.³² What Max Scheler is saying here is that men are more shy than women about uncovering any part of their body, recognizing that there is a sexual influence. More veiling for women in human history may be due to this difference in the behavior of men and women.

Covering, which is explained on the basis of the feeling of shame, is an act that reveals the soul and skin, on the other hand, covering the feeling of shame about the opposite sex does not only include the covering of the skin. The verse about veiling in the Qur'an says that covering is the subject of looking first.³³ The veiling in this look is related to the veiling in thought. Not looking at what is haram and not approaching what is haram intellectually is a part of veiling. In this sense, veiling is first about the feeling of shame in the mind. Veiling is a blessing for people because it is a medicine that helps to alleviate the feeling of embarrassment spiritually and sensually. Veiling, taqwa is so protection and purification.³⁴

²⁸ Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, 10.

²⁹ Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, 11.

³⁰ Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, 28.

³¹ Scheler, *Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları*, 16.

³² Scheler, Utanç ve Tevazu Duyguları, 16.

³³ Surah Nur, 30.

Mehmet Görmez, "İslâm'da Örtünmenin Felsefesi ve Yeniden Temellendirmesi," 10 Eylül 2022, https://www.ide.org.tr/Common/DownloadFile.aspx?f=OrtunmeninFelsefesi 20220914093912941.pdf.

A look at the veiling with a sense of shame may have a higher purpose than hiding the body. This is the part of the veil that goes beyond the body dimension, the metaphysical side of the veiling. Because veiling is the submission of a person who sees his place in the face of the claim of divinity. On the other hand, veiling expresses a discourse that opens to the social through the body. While one side points to the philosophical dimension, the other is the sociological view. Explanations expressing that the veil exceeds the body are also available in the religious literature. The following is stated in verse 26 of Surah Al-Araf: "O children of Adam! We have provided for you clothing to cover your nakedness and as an adornment. However, the best clothing is righteousness. This is one of Allah's bounties, so perhaps you will be mindful." Wearing a spiritual dress contains deep surrender, shame, and submission at its source.

Conclusion

The feeling of shame emerges in "man" as an entity between the animal and God. Man thinks that he is a sublime being who is aware of the sublime in his soul, feels his being beyond matter to his bones, and can even see other dimensions with the different spiritual experiences he has lived. However, on the other hand, he is a needy creature who has primitive needs, is the subject of obligatory actions, and has animal instincts in himself. This is where the feeling of shame arises. According to Max Scheheler, man is somewhere between God and animal for these reasons. When the first man dared to become divinity, he bit the forbidden fruit, and then suddenly remembered what he had tried, his helplessness, his animal needs, he was "ashamed" at that moment. Because he was a helpless being who dared to be divinity. As soon as he was ashamed, his veil was opened and he began to be veiled. The one who was ashamed was covered, the one who was covered was ashamed. Thus, Max Scheler presents a phenomenological approach to veiling while examining the feelings of shame and humility.

Another point of view on the subject of covering can be shown through the body and skin. David Le Breton, in his book Skin and Traces, examines why he deliberately injured the human body and suffered as a result. He says human, he gives a message to the other one through his body. Preferences on the body are a form of self-control. This form of checking is a form of self-healing. Just as between the animal and God, it is a reflex of healing the spiritual suffering of shame and the behavior of covering the body of the ashamed human when he realizes his sublime and inferiority. Man hopes to redefine himself in a more permanent way with the message he gives to the social through his body. With the awareness of the feeling of shame, he redefines his existence through his body. Thus, veiling is a way of being. The body is the first place of the bewilderment of being himself for man. Covering the body is a way of self-expression. There are deep meanings behind the appearance of the body. In a way, this is evidence of the need for a symbolic detour to reach the sense of being oneself.

Hijab, a look with a sense of shame, contains a higher purpose than hiding the body. This is the part of the veil that goes beyond the body dimension, the metaphysical side of the veiling. Because veiling is the submission, surrender, awareness and repentance of a person who sees his place in the face of the claim of divinity.

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