

Shame: Its place in life and American drama

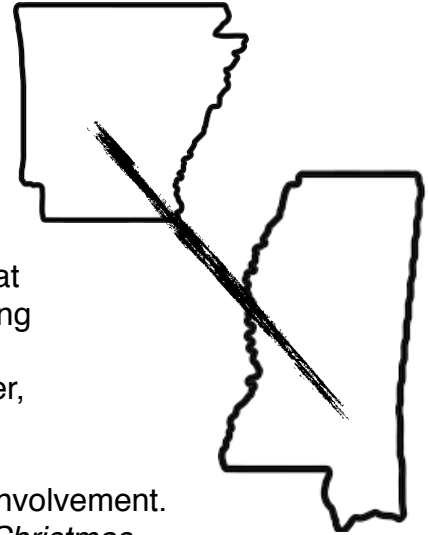
An exploration of the longevity and universality of shame

Introduction

How a TED Talk changed my life

I spent my twenty-second birthday driving six hours by myself through the back roads of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. I was traveling to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to interview at the University of Southern Mississippi for their MFA Theatre Directing program. As someone who loves birthdays, spending this time by myself with only my nerves to accompany me was difficult. However, it was during this trip that I stumbled across something that would change my life.

Leading up to that trip to Hattiesburg were years of theatre involvement. On a whim, in eighth grade, I auditioned for a production of *White Christmas* and was cast in my first show. This started a lifelong love for theatre, one that I have continued to pursue at the collegiate and professional level. During my senior year of undergrad, my university hired two new theatre professors, and I ended up working and learning a great deal from one of these professors in particular: Joe M. Hernandez. Through general conversations with him, classroom discussions, professional/work collaborations, and a handful of near-breakdowns in his office, the topic that he and I kept coming back to was connection and vulnerability with others. As someone who grew up always striving to be perfect and to present a very stable version of myself, I often struggled to let people in, see all of me, and use my voice as a human and artist. We had many difficult discussions about how this influenced my acting onstage and my relationships offstage.



As I drove down to Mississippi, I cycled through my normal mix of music and podcasts. Unable to find a TED Talk Radio Hour podcast topic I thought would be interesting, I pulled up the TED Talk website. (TED Talks focus on “ideas worth spreading.”) I clicked on the video [“The Power of Vulnerability”](#) by Brené Brown, a social worker and researcher. She discussed how shame and fear cause disconnection in our lives and that a sense of worthiness is vital for living a courageous, wholehearted life. Within minutes of listening to her talk, I felt my heart and mind opening. Everything she talked about - our desire/hardwiring for connection, the struggle we have with worthiness – it all resonated with me. It was exactly what I had been struggling with, what I had been discussing with Joe over the past year. As soon as I got to my room for the night, I sent the video to Joe and ordered Brown’s book *Daring Greatly*.

Thanks to the speedy service of ThriftBooks, I received the book within a few days and immediately started reading. The book caused great introspection, confronted me with my own struggles and walls, and equipped me with tools to *dare greatly* in my own life. Reading and seeing how deeply shame influences our lives, it was a quick connection for me to think of theatre. A main goal of theatre is telling stories – relating life and human experiences. It also has the ability to influence and touch.



So, I got to thinking: *if theatre is a reflection of life, and if shame is a fundamental human experience, how does theatre portray shame? What can we learn about the types of shame present in a society based on the theatre of that society? How can theatre be used to challenge and expose those shame ideas?*

I will begin with an exploration into theatre, how it has been used throughout history, how it can be used as a social tool, and how it is reflective of human life. Then, I will look into shame and its prevalence and impact. Through research and analysis of American play scripts, I will identify examples of shame in drama. From this, I hope to gain insight into the types of shame most present in our society and consider the impact of their inclusion in the world of theatre.

Theatre

Theatre throughout history

Theatre has existed in some form since the beginning of history as a type of storytelling. At its core, theatre is a way to communicate.

The origins of Western Drama go back to the ancient Greeks. Greek theatre focused on human beings and acted as a mirror to life. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, the first written account of theatrical structure and criticism, he dubbed theatre "an imitation of men in action."

Throughout its development, theatre was often used as a communicative effort to teach morals and lessons (through morality plays and other forms of sacred drama). Governments have long recognized the power of theatre to influence and throughout history have tried to regulate the types of theatre being produced.

In more modern times, theatre has often fluctuated between a more romantic and a more realistic point of frame. Romanticism (and at an extreme, [neo]classicism) looks for an ideal beauty. Romanticism treats the artist as a shaman, a being whom, through art, can uncover truth and beauty. Realism calls for careful representation of the world so that art can be used as a social tool. Symbolism looks to recognize truth through exploration of symbols and evocation of moods. Different movements and schools of thought have disagreed on the core goal of theatre, but all recognize the ability of theatre to reveal information and the influence it can have on the individual and society.

STORIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOLD BY LIVE HUMAN BEINGS TO OTHER LIVE HUMAN BEINGS, THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SUCH AN IMPORTANT AND ENDURING FORM OF ART IN MY VIEW... **HUMANITY IS AT THE ABSOLUTE CENTRE OF THEATRE.**

- SIR HOWARD PANTER, FOUNDER OF THE AMBASSADOR THEATRE GROUP LTD, CHAIRMAN OF RAMBERT DANCE COMPANY

THEATRE IS AN ART FORM THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE, CHALLENGE AND PROVOKE THROUGH THE TELLING OF STORIES. THE ROLE OF A THEATRE MAKER IS TO TELL THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES.

- JOANNA READ, PRINCIPAL OF THE LONDON ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMATIC ART

Theatre as a social tool

Research around theatre's ability to impact is often articulated in the sense of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."

In his book *Emotional Intelligence*, scientific reporter Daniel Goleman listed four main points of emotional intelligence:

Self-awareness
Self-management

Social awareness
Relationship management

These categories go hand in hand with theatre. In drama, we are presented where characters struggle with who they are, how they are, and how they relate within a society. Research has found that individuals who actively participate in theatre arts have a higher emotional intelligence than those who are not exposed to theatre arts. Results such as these can indicate the importance of theatre as a tool for society to use.

Theatre as a reflection of life

NOTHING, IN FACT, MORE TRULY PORTRAYS
US AS WE ARE AND AS WE COULD BE THAN
THE PLAY AND THE PLAYERS.
- MIGUEL DE CERVANTES, PLAYWRIGHT

This is the unique element of theatre. The California Educational Theatre Association notes that "of all the arts, theatre is the one that is most concerned with the study of humanity." This study of humanity gives theatre what I would consider a special insight. Though each work approaches the idea of humanity differently, all shed a light on that humanity.

In connection to the idea of shame, I love this quote from Vikas Shah:

"ART IS THE MEDIUM BY WHICH WE- AS HUMAN BEINGS- ARE ABLE TO RELATE TO EACH OTHER. ART ALLOWS US TO UNDERSTAND THINGS THAT ARE MORE THAN OURSELVES, AND IMAGINE LIFE THROUGH THE AGENCY OF OTHERS. THEATRE- AS PERHAPS THE MOST HUMAN OF ALL THE ARTS- HAS THE PROFOUND ABILITY TO ENGAGE US IMMEDIATELY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF SOMEONE ELSE'S AGENCY- AT ANY POINT IN TIME, AT ANY PLACE. IT BREAKS DOWN THE LONELINESS OF BEING A SELF, AND ALLOWS ONE TO REALISE THAT NOT ONLY ARE THERE OTHERS- BUT THAT THE SELF CAN BE THEM TOO."

Professor Anthony Rhine of Florida State University speaks of the correlation between the goal of engagement in art and its "corollary, connection." Shame research is full of the topic of connection, and how shame itself can corrode our ability to connect and be vulnerable with others. I do not take the shared semantics lightly. Connection is at the root of human experience. If a goal of theatre is to shed some sort of light on the human experience, it follows that it would be heavily steeped in the idea of connections, which can bring us full circle to a discussion of shame.

THEATRE ALLOWS FOR AND OFFERS VICARIOUS EXPERIENCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF SOMEONE ELSE EXPERIENCING SOMETHING... WE KNOW THAT WITNESSING ANOTHER'S ACTIONS AND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES CAN CREATE THE SAME NEUROLOGICAL IMPRINT AS DOING OR FEELING THEM ONESELF.

- ERIN HURLEY, PH.D., MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Shame

What is shame?

The etymology of the word shame is often tied back to the Old English *scamu*, meaning “feel shame.” Many people also relate it to the word *hama*, which means “covering.” This relates to a veil one might wear to signal penitence (McNamee). This idea of covering is often related to physical reactions to shame. (For example, in the Bible, when Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge, this is when they first realize they are naked and then clothe themselves due to shame. Even the physical gesture of covering one’s face is a standard shame response.)

Compiled on the following page are a series of definitions of shame I have gathered, from scholars, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances.

In all the definitions, I see the common threads of fear, standards that are out of reach, and a diminished sense of self. Though each person had a slightly different focus, these main themes always exist. Though each person’s specific definition may vary, everyone can surely recall the shrinking, confronting feeling of shame.

Shame versus guilt

In every bit of research I found, a distinction is always made between shame and guilt. The two *are* related. Tagney and Leary group them (as well as *embarrassment* and *pride*) in the family of “*self-conscious emotions* that are evoked by self-reflection and self-evaluation” (Leary, Tagney, *Handbook of Self and Identity*). These emotions are connected to one’s characteristics and actions. This is where the distinction comes in. Guilt focuses on the action: I *did* something bad. Shame, on the other hand, focuses on the self: I *am* bad. Both shame and guilt are powerful influencers of future action. However, shame, in research, has been found to “more likely be the cause of destructive and hurtful behaviors” (Brown, *Daring Greatly*). Shame eats away at our sense of self-worth, and thus our ability to build empathetic connections with other. Whereas guilt and empathy have been found to go hand-in-hand, shame interferes with empathy.

Regarding theatre, I believe the distinction between shame and guilt is important, because *empathy* – the ability to understand and share the feelings of another – is at the core of theatre. As actors, we are taught to empathize with the characters so that the audience can empathize with us. It’s also important because, as a theatre consumer, we are not likely to feel *guilt* based on a theatrical experience because *we* didn’t *do* the thing. We are, however, presented with opportunities to experience shame. Whether we see a character on stage being shamed or connect with a character and begin to feel shame of our own, a core element of theatre is the idea of reflection and evaluation – elements related to the self-conscious emotions.

Shame (*noun*)

“A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries

“A painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety” – Merriam Webster Dictionary

Shame is deeply felt belief that if we are seen that we cannot also be loved.

A deeply-rooted and complicated combination of embarrassment and guilt

These bad feelings are processed instead as beliefs about ourselves. I'm too needy, too much, too loud, too stupid, too overwhelming.. etc. This is shame. If I show my true thoughts and feelings I cannot possibly be met and cared for.

Shame is developed, I think, through the opinions and standards of other

Shame is real pain.
Shame punishes immoral behavior.

Shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we can change and do better.

Fear of being fully seen and fully known

Shame weaves itself through my silence, I have begun to believe—not all the time, but more often than I once thought possible—that nakedness and terror do not have to go hand-in-hand

The fear of being exposed, the myth of the strong silent type, our hesitance to admit when we are not doing well

Shame is the fear of disconnection - it's the fear that something we've done or failed to do, an ideal that we've not lived up to, or a goal that we've not accomplished makes us unworthy of connection.

A peer pressure construct that makes you feel bad for anything that you do

Having my failures broadcast to the world

Shame keeps us small, resentful, and afraid.

Societal pressure to be a certain way or avoid certain things

Shame is the overwhelming sense of self defeat. Often times it is the only thing that can show the areas in ourself where we are self conscious. Shame can cause us to feel many things: anger, resentment, embarrassment, etc.

Shame , to me is a manifestation of wanting to be approved of and accepted by others. Boil that down and it's FEAR.

How do we experience shame?

Shame takes many different forms. The reasons *why* we experience shame and how we outwardly express or deal with that shame vary greatly from person to person.

Outward physical expressions of shame have been identified as blushing, downward cast eyes, slack posture, and lowered head, as Darwin noted in his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. In general, shame elicits a “shrinking or a compressing of the body,” (Lewis).

How we react and respond when we feel shame is often very different. In some situations, shame can cause withdrawal and disengagement. It can cause anger, blame, embarrassment, and disconnection.

Then there is the question of *what* makes people experience shame. If it is a universal human experience, as proposed by multiple researchers, what types of things cause us to feel shame? In researching this question, I found two collections of shame categories.

Researcher Joseph Burgo broke shame down into four categories:

Unrequited love
Unwanted exposure

Exclusion
Disappointed expectation

Researcher Brené Brown found twelve shame categories:

Appearance
Money/Work
Motherhood/Fatherhood
Family
Parenting
Mental/Physical Health

Addiction
Sex
Aging
Religion
Surviving Trauma
Being Stereotyped/Labeled

These categories formed the basis of my research. They provided the lens through which I could analyze plays.

Shame in American Drama

Selection of Plays

The first play published and produced by an American playwright was *The Contrast*, written by Royall Tyler in 1787. For the next few decades, American theatre was dominated by European influenced operettas, variety/vaudeville shows, and revues. Drama in the United States really began to flourish after WWI, when one act shows were gaining traction. Playwrights began experimenting more with theatrical forms and theatre was becoming more popular.

My senior year of undergrad, I took an American Drama course, which provided an overview of American theatre and significant works. Many of the shows mentioned in this thesis are a part of the general canon of American drama. They range from 1936 at the earliest to 2012, most recently. Below are the selected plays:

THE MAGIC TOWER	TENNESSEE WILLIAMS	1936
THE LITTLE FOXES	LILLIAN HELLMAN	1939
TALLEY'S FOLLY	LANFORD WILSON	1979
BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS	NEIL SIMON	1982
GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS	DAVID MAMET	1984
HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE	PAULA VOGEL	1997
PROOF	DAVID AUBURN	2000
BODY AWARENESS	ANNIE BAKER	2008
DISGRACED	AYAD AKHTAR	2012

The sample size is not extremely large. These are nine shows out of a countless number of scripts that exist. When discussing findings, it is important to keep in mind that the results might have been slightly different given a different selection of shows.

There is a significant time gap within the show selection as well. Because of this forty-year gap, and the uneven distance of publication years, it would not be appropriate to make any assertions on trends of shame throughout American history. Instead I will focus on the existence of shame and the prevalence of certain categories.

Analyzing and Categorizing

For my research, I decided to use both Brown's and Burgo's shame collections to look at shame themes in American Drama. Using Brown's more specific categories allowed for a closer look at specific issues. Burgo's general categories give a wide overview of the *types* of shame we see most often on stage.

As I got into this research, some of it was tedious and difficult. *How deeply do I need to look into each line and the motivations behind it? Do I need to analyze each character to get a full sense of their shame? Should I only take note of shame that characters onstage feel and not think about what an audience might feel/understand?*

I decided to focus on two types of data. First would be specific lines in each play that bring about shame. These are noted in Appendix 1. In these lines, a character is either specifically partaking in shame self-talk, or a character says a line specifically to shame another character. Theoretically, this is the shame that can explicitly be experienced and witnessed.

The second type of data is a bit more elusive and interpretive. This comes from analyzing the motivations behind characters' and lines and actions. As actors and theatre practitioners, we are taught to look deeply into characters to see the core of their objectives, feelings, and actions. This work is definitely open to interpretation; two people might look at a character differently and see different factors as influencing their actions. In life, we aren't always confronted with shame face to face. There is shame that has settled in us, and that, I believe, theatre has the ability to dust off so we can see what's really there.

This analysis is not meant to be an exhaustive list. All art is interpretive, and these are merely my interpretations. Each play could be more closely examined to discover more depth to the overall themes and characters. However, my purpose is to study the overall trends of shame in theatre drama and do my best to give a comprehensive look at each show and its characters and how they deal with shame.

Playscript Analysis

THE MAGIC TOWER BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

The Magic Tower is an early one act written by prolific American playwright Tennessee Williams. It shows a day in the life of Linda, an ex-Vaudeville actress and her young husband Jim as they struggle to survive as artists in New York. Linda's old friends Mitch and Babe try to convince her that leaving Jim would be best for him, and ultimately, she concedes.

The most noticeable example of shame in the show is the main action: Mitch and Babe play on Linda's shame about her **age**, **work**, and status as a wife (**family**), resulting in pushing her to leave him. Linda has many lines that show a lack of self-confidence and self-worth – results of shame.

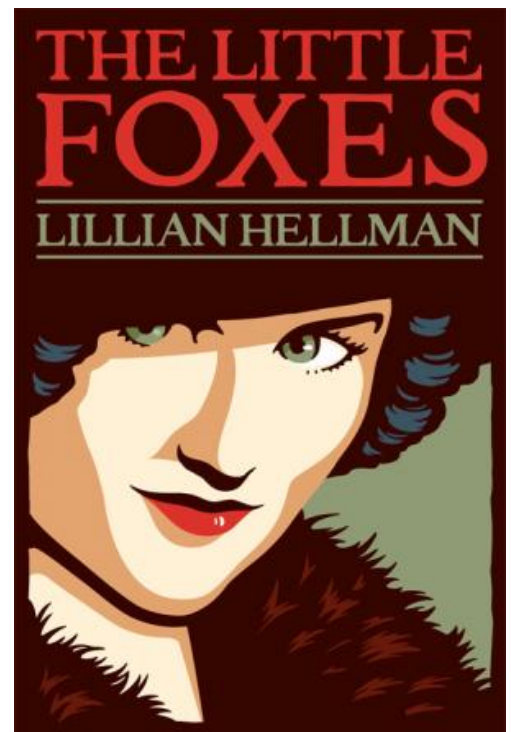
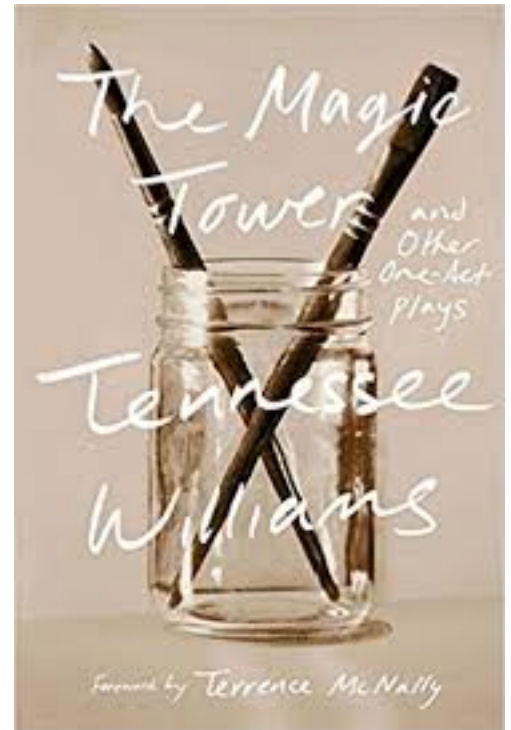
Initial analysis of this show was slightly more difficult. Time and time again, people say things to Linda about how she isn't good enough for Jim or will only hold him back. While clearly holding a shameful intent, it was not easy to categorize them using Brown's categories. Per Burgo's categories, she clearly deals with huge worries of **unrequited love** and **disappointed expectation**.

THE LITTLE FOXES BY LILLIAN HELLMAN

The Little Foxes by Lillian Hellman follows the Hubbard family as they put together a deal with a cotton mill company. The three siblings, Ben, Regina, and Oscar, all fight to get the deal to come through while ensuring the most success for themselves. Through lies and blackmail, Regina is able to guarantee a 75% share for herself, but this is not without ruining the relationships between herself and her daughter, angering her brothers, and essentially killing her sick husband.

The main driving force of this show is the idea of **money and work**. Regina's actions throughout the show are tied to a long-standing resentment that she was left out of her father's will. The greed of each of the Hubbard's is a contentious point throughout the show. Much talk is made of their mistreatment of the town for their own benefit. Regina's husband, Horace, decides to punish Regina for her greed, which eventually leads to his death and her disconnection from the rest of her family. (This is an important factor of shame, that it can lead to disconnection.)

The show also focuses heavily on relationships between the **family**. Regina's shame is brought upon by her place in her family, and the feeling that she was always behind her brothers and not able to get what she wanted as they had. Per Burgo's shame categories, I think this would fall into the idea of **exclusion**. Horace is ashamed of his wife and her brother's actions and treatment of the workers/townspeople and tries to adjust his actions accordingly (though he does so by further angering and diminishing Regina). Birdie, the other Hubbard in-law, is very aware that she was married fully because of her money and the benefits that came along with her (which leads to her alcoholism [**addiction**]).



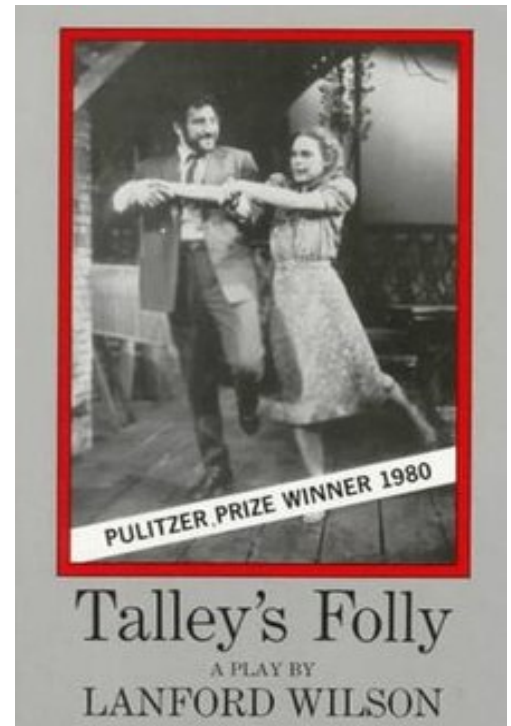
TALLEY'S FOLLY BY LANFORD WILSON

Talley's Folly follows the story of Sally Tally and Matt Friedman as Matt tries to finally win Sally over after a year-long relationship between them. Though they have an obvious chemistry and rapport, they are walking on eggshells with each other, both afraid to fully commit and share their lives with each other.

Most of this fear comes from shame related to **motherhood/fatherhood**. Matt grew up in Europe in the midst of World War One and experienced extreme violence and **trauma**. This has led him to the resolve that he does not want to bring any children into the world, a factor which has kept him for years from having a long-term relationship with a woman. Add to this the fact that he is Jewish (**religion**), of European decent, and over forty (**aging**), and **stereotypes** galor keep Sally's family from fully accepting him as a suitable partner.

Sally herself was engaged in her youth but contracted TB, which then spread to her fallopian tubes and left her unable to carry children. The shame associated with her **health** and being unable to be a **mother** has kept her from pursuing men and committing to Matt. The show is set in the 1940's, a time when society held the family unit in the highest regard; it was expected to be able to have a family. Matt and Sally's shame around not being able to live up to this standard holds them back from being able to fully connect with each other.

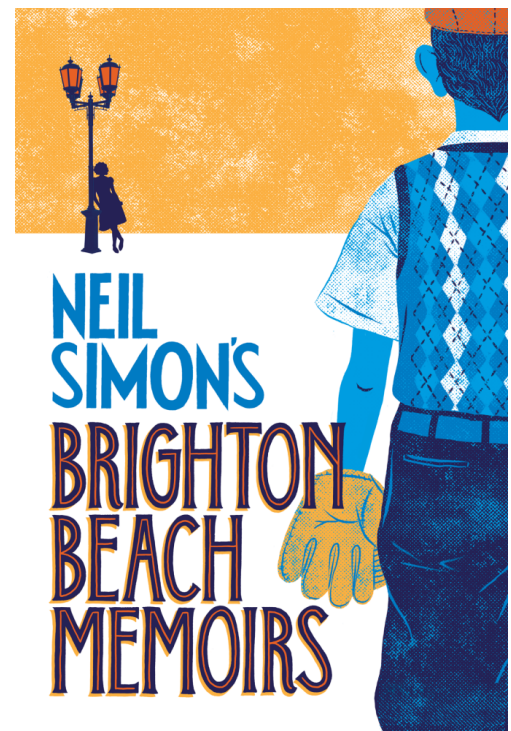
Looking at Burgo's shame categories, I see most all of them at work in this show. Sally is afraid of being **exposed**, because then she is confronted with feeling like she isn't living up to **expectation**, and thus whatever **love** she might have will not be reciprocated. Matt goes through this same cycle. I think this is a good example of how shame can often be compounding.



BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS BY NEIL SIMON

Brighton Beach Memoirs follows the extended Jerome family during the late 1930's/early 1940's. Blanche and her two daughters Nora and Laurie have moved in with Blanche's sister Kate, her husband Jack, and their two sons Eugene and Stanley. This has been the living arrangement for six years since Blanche's husband died unexpectedly. The show is a comedic family drama, following the characters' lives as they deal with financial burdens left over from the Depression and the impending WWII, convoluted family dynamics, and the questions that come with growing up. The time period of the show plays heavily in the type of shame existing in the world: Kate often **stereotypes/labels** people based on their race, a problem which was exasperated by the impending war; the family is still reeling from the Great Depression which has left them struggling financially.

Most of the conflict in the show arises from issues with **money and work**. Jack is the primary provider for the family of seven. His tiring, nonstop work eventually leads to a small-scale heart attack later in the show.



Jack often mentions his struggles and shame surrounding his ability (or, inability) to provide for his family. His oldest son, Stanley, finished high school but did not go to college so that he could also work to help provide for his family. This brings shame on Jack as a parent and provider (**money/work, parenting, fatherhood**). When Stanley unintentionally gambles away his salary, he feels his only option is to run away from his shame and his home (**money/work, family**). Blanche constantly deals with her own feelings of failure and dependency for relying on her sister and brother in law for support. This ties tightly to feelings of shame regarding her own **parenting, family, and money**. In it all is the fear of **disappointed expectations** – they aren't living up to some ideal that they either think is right or necessary.

Permeating all these issues are the dynamics that occur within the family. Blanche and Kate have a complicated sister relationship, drawing back to lifelong issues dealing with their **family** growing up and their relationship with their own parents (**motherhood/fatherhood**). Both deal with feelings of shame regarding their own **parenting**, whether it be because of the struggles to provide a good meal (Kate) or the lack of providing a father and their own home for her children (Blanche).

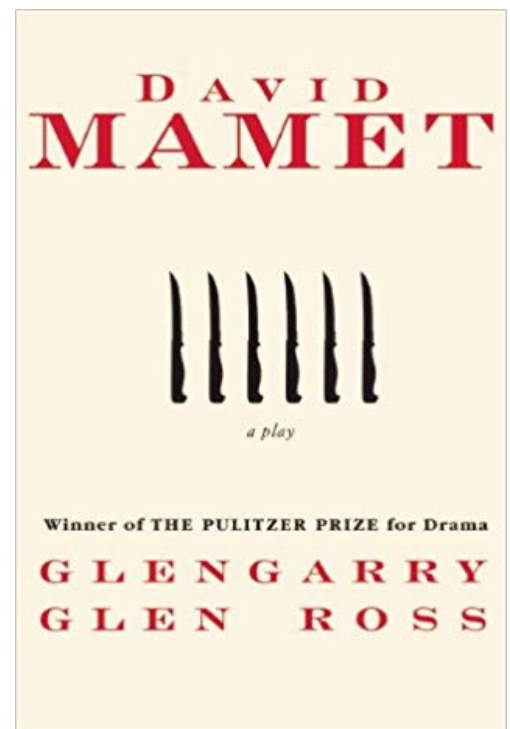
An interesting shame category that I found in this show is shame relating to specifically **physical health**. Throughout the show, when characters mention different diseases/ailments, it is indicated that the disease is whispered, as though keeping the ailment a secret. It is as though the family doesn't want to broadcast any physical struggles, even ones like cancer that are completely out of their control. (Kate has no problem calling out **addictions** though, even while they affect one's health.) I believe this *hush-hush* attitude towards **health** points to a larger struggle with both the ability to provide and to appear stable.

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS BY DAVID MAMET

In *Glengarry Glen Ross*, we follow four men, Roma, Levene, Aaronow, and Moss from a real estate agency in Chicago. (The manager Williamson and customer Lingk are also characters in the play.) The men are all frustrated with a new competition in the office. A board is set up to track the sales of each agent. At the end of the month, the person with the top sales will win a Cadillac, and the two men with the worst sales numbers will be fired. Under this pressure, we follow as the men lie, bribe, and steal to try and maintain their livelihood.

The main shame category I noticed throughout the work was that of **money and work**. Contextually, this seems obvious, since the plot centers around a work situation and even at the office. All of these men are feeling the pressure of not being enough in their work and not making enough money (**disappointed expectation**). They all deal with the fear of failure, which brings about deep shame. From this shame, we see different results: desperation (Levene and Moss robbing the firm), defeat (Lingk tucking his tail between his legs in his interactions with Roma), and intense defensiveness (Roma and Levene going to any length to keep their money).

The other shame category that is present throughout the show is the idea of **being stereotyped/labeled**. Specifically, these men are battling with the stereotypes related to **masculinity**. They are plagued by the idea of failing, which Brown notes as one of the core shame experiences of men.



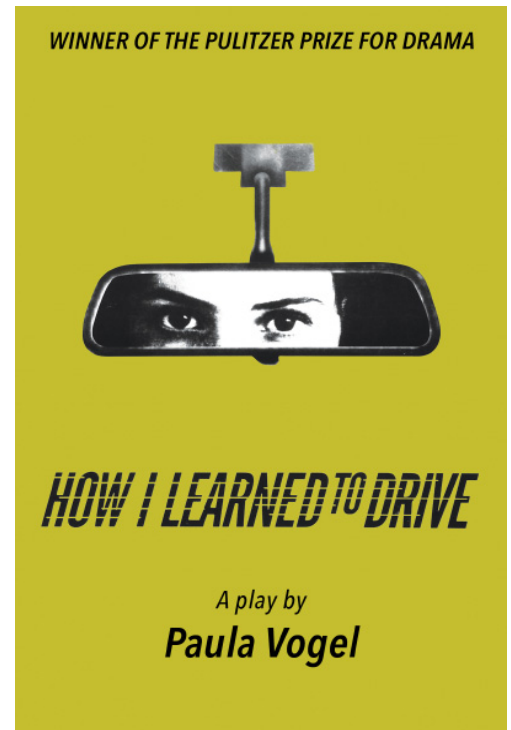
HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE BY PAULA VOGEL

In *How I Learned to Drive*, we follow the story of Li'l Bit and her Uncle Peck, who has been sexually abusing her since she was eleven. The play shows important moments in the manipulative relationship between Li'l Bit and Peck, as well as interactions with Li'l Bit's mother and grandparents, and school mates.

This show is chockfull of shame. An interesting aspect of this show is that in multiple instances, Uncle Peck actively calls out shame. Once, he is fishing with a young nephew, and the boy begins to cry because he feels bad for the fish. At first, Peck tells him not to let anyone see him cry (**being stereotyped/labeled**), but then quickly says that he doesn't want the boy to be ashamed of crying because all men actually do cry. He speaks to him, "There's nothing you could do that would make me feel ashamed of you." He then uses this as a ploy to get the boy to go to a treehouse with him, where it is insinuated that he molests the boy. He makes sure to tell the boy that it is a secret to be kept between them, ensuring that there is no **unwanted exposure**. Later in the show, we see a scene between Peck and fourteen-year-old Li'l Bit. Uncle Peck is taking photos of Li'l Bit and mentions that she could model for *Playboy* magazine. Li'l Bit does not like this idea and hates the notion of the photos being shared or shown to others. Uncle Peck quickly turns it around on her, saying, "I'm very proud of you. I think you have a wonderful body and an even more wonderful mind. And of course I want other people to *appreciate* it. It's not anything shameful." Again, Peck takes something that in society is labeled as shameful and uses this to his advantage: he creates a connection and builds the idea of acceptance and support – things we long for when we are feeling ashamed.

The two biggest shame categories we see in the show are **sex** and **appearance and body image**. These are very much intertwined within the show. Early in the show we are told that each family member has a (nick)name that is based on their genitalia. Throughout the show, comment after comment is made on the size of Li'l Bit's chest, much to her discomfort. There is a sequence of memories from Li'l Bit's school days when she is harassed multiple different ways by students for the same reason. Add this on to comments from her grandfather about how her main purpose in life is to "lie on her back," and multiple conversations in which the topic of sex is ignored, and a breeding ground for shame is created.

One topic I found that had been fairly uncommon in my research so far is the idea of **surviving trauma**. In the next to last scene, Li'l Bit is eleven and asking to stay on vacation longer and to have her Uncle Peck drive her back later. Li'l Bit's mother is not a fan of the idea, saying that they haven't had good luck with men in the family and that she doesn't like how much attention Peck gives Li'l Bit. After some persuading, the mother finally agrees to let Li'l Bit stay with the caveat that if anything were to happen, she would hold Li'l Bit responsible. Though chronologically the trauma was not shamed, in its theatrical presentation, we see the shame that is attached to the trauma.



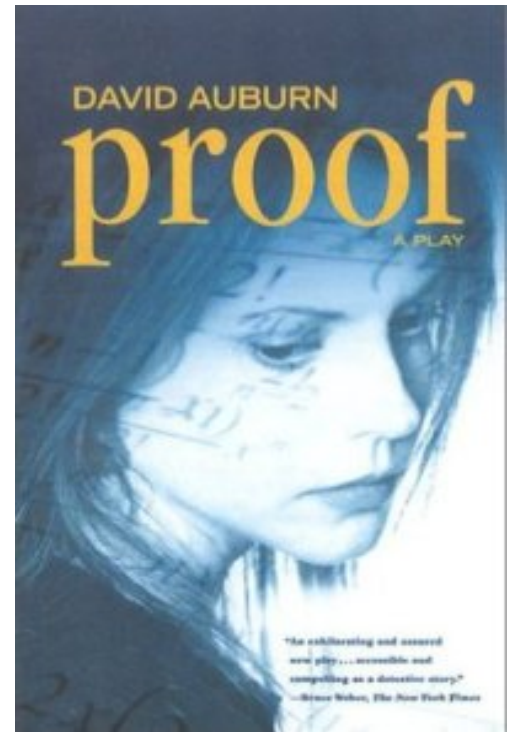
PROOF BY DAVID AUBURN

Proof follows the lives of two sisters, Catherine and Claire as they deal with the death of the mathematician father, Robert. Robert was a world famous, genius mathematician. As he aged, his mental health started to decline, and he ended up suffering from near complete dementia. Catherine, the younger and more math inclined daughter, dropped out of college in order to take care of him. However, she didn't completely stop pursuing math – in fact, she reveals to her sister Claire and to Hal, her romantic interest/fellow math mind, that she wrote a great mathematical proof. However, her own mental state is questioned, and thus is the validity of her writing the proof.

The idea of **mental and physical health** plays a huge importance to this story. Robert's dementia weighs heavily on all the characters. In flashback scenes between him and Catherine, we see him lash out in anger when Catherine brings up his illness. When he is confronted with his dementia coming back, he breaks down. These are two ends of the spectrum when it comes to dealing with shame.

Aging is brought up throughout the show. Robert, Hal, and Catherine all bring up the idea that math is a young man's game. They fear that as they get older, they will become irrelevant. Hal feels shame about where he is at career wise; he compares himself to the great mathematicians who were successful in their youth. He is **disappointed** in himself based on what he was expecting.

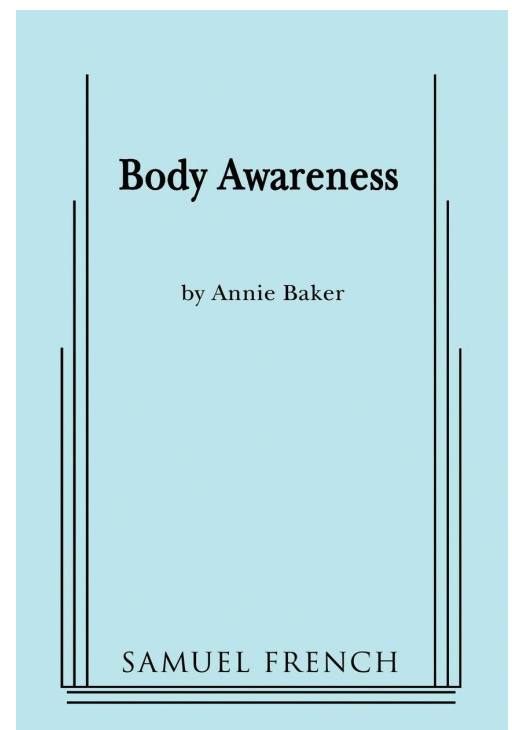
Overall, the biggest example of shame I found in this show does not fit in to one of the categories proposed by Brown. It is the idea of shame surrounding **education/intelligence**. Hal repeatedly says that Catherine could not have the skills and intelligence to do such difficult math; after all, she doesn't have the same level of education as he does. Catherine and Claire battle for power in their sibling relationship, and Catherine plays the card that she is smarter than Claire. Shame surrounding education/intelligence can tie into other things – feelings of failure, unworthiness in the family, or fear of the future.



Body Awareness by Annie Baker

Body Awareness is one of Baker's early plays. It follows the middle-aged couple, Phyllis and Joyce, and Joyce's son Jared. For a week they are housing photographer Frank Bonitatibus, who is in town visiting for the Body Awareness Week festivities put on by a university in town.

As the title would suggest, two common shame categories in this show are **appearance/body image** and **sex**. Frank's photographs focus on naked women, he claims as a way to help them reclaim their bodies. Joyce finds beauty in these images and wants to have a photograph taken of herself. Phyllis takes big offense to this and does not understand why Joyce would want to objectify herself in that way. While battling her own self esteem issues, Joyce attempts to help her son deal with his own discomfort with his body.



In attempt to be more sexual, Jared shows his penis to a girl at a lake. The girl is rightfully upset, and Jared jumps into the lake. He later shamefully tells his family the story. He is worried about being **exposed** for his actions.

At the same time, the family is also dealing with Jared's mental health. Phyllis is convinced that he has Asperger's. This conjecture is deeply upsetting to Jared. In response to his **mental health** being questioned, he lashes out in anger against his mom and her girlfriend. He is concerned with the being grouped in [**stereotyped**] with a group of people he does not view highly. Joyce does her best throughout the show to remain fairly PC (politically correct) and engage in discussion about these often shameful topics.

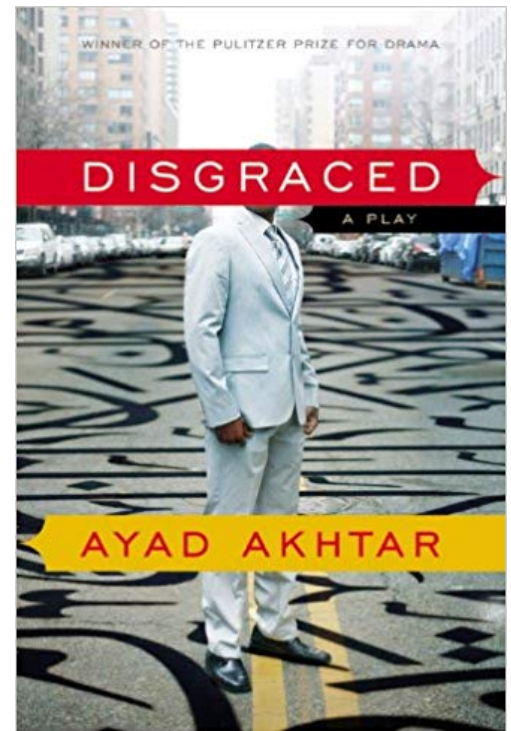
DISGRACED BY AYAD AKHTAR

Disgraced, the 2013 Pulitzer Prize Drama winner, was written by Pakistani-American Ayad Akhtar. The story follows five diverse characters: Amir, an apostate Muslim lawyer; his wife, Emily, a white American artist; Amir's nephew Abe/Hussein, a more radical Muslim; Amir's colleague Jory, an African American lawyer; and her husband Isaac, a Jewish art dealer. The diverse heritages of each person come to a head over the course of the show, which deals heavily with Islamophobia and the existence of Islam in the Western world.

The two biggest shame categories I found in this show are **religion** and **being stereotyped/labeled**. (Often, these are in tandem.) Though Amir has renounced his Muslim faith, he still struggles with many of the core values that were ingrained in him. (The idea of **disappointed expectations** is huge for Amir in his culture.) A crucial and vulnerable moment happens in the show when Amir admits that he felt a blush of pride at the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He admits feeling deeply shameful about this, and the other characters are upset by this news as well. This shame related to his culture and religion is a huge source of conflict for Amir. Emily, his wife, is very enchanted by the Islamic culture, which causes more tension between them. In the last scene of the play, Amir is talking with Abe, and Abe has lines which give the play its title "disgraced." Abe talks about the oppression his culture/religion has faced, and how his people have been disgraced by those actions. There is inherent shame within that statement, one that, within context, leads to anger and violence.

Also present throughout the play are many examples of **stereotyping**. Racial comments are made about Muslims, Jews, and African Americans, all with the intent of causing hurt and shame amongst the characters. They discuss their experiences with racism and sexism, and how that affects their actions. Due to anticipated racial profiling, Amir shares how he offers himself up to be searched in airport security. Though dealt with a matter-of-fact, perhaps passive aggressive attitude, these actions clearly have a negative effect on Amir and his wife.

At the end of the show, Amir and Emily are going through a divorce. In the heat of an argument, Amir physically assaulted Emily, and they have since been out of contact. In a last plea to Emily, Amir apologizes and says that he hopes that Emily was proud that she was with him. Emily responds with telling him not to contact her again. In this moment, Amir is seeking for a sense of pride in himself. He is battling the guilt and shame of his actions. Unfortunately, he ends the show living in the shame that is deeply rooted in his religion, culture, and self.



Discussion

After finished the analysis for each show, I wanted to compile the data. Below, in Chart 1, I have listed the 12 shame categories (as presented by Brené Brown) and charted their occurrence in the shows. Chart 2 is of the presence of Burgo's shame categories in the selected dramas.

Chart 1 Brown Shame Categories in Selected Drama

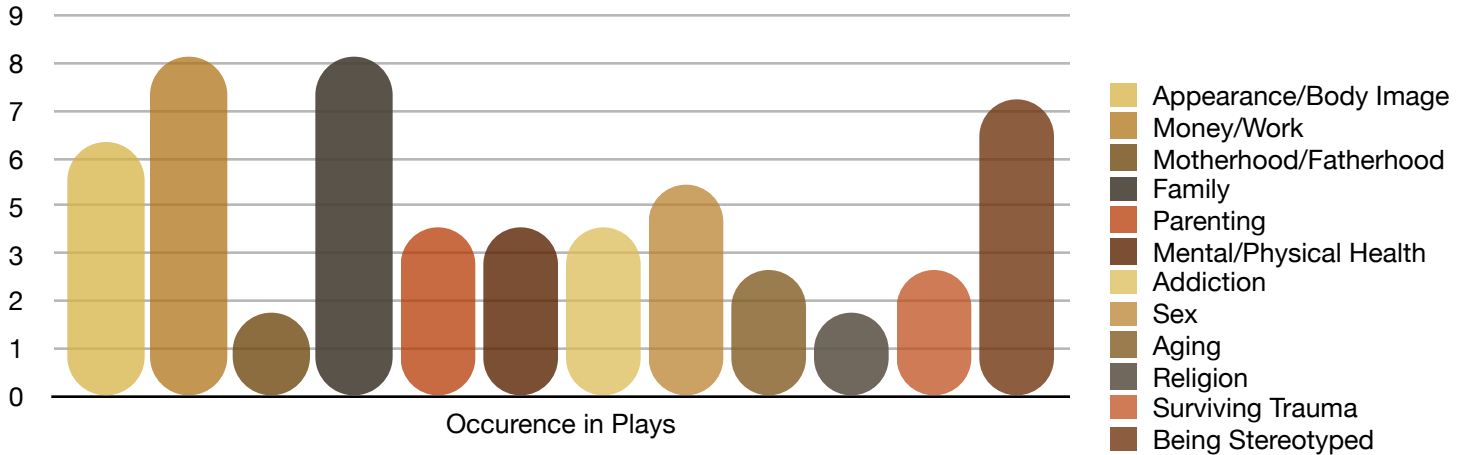
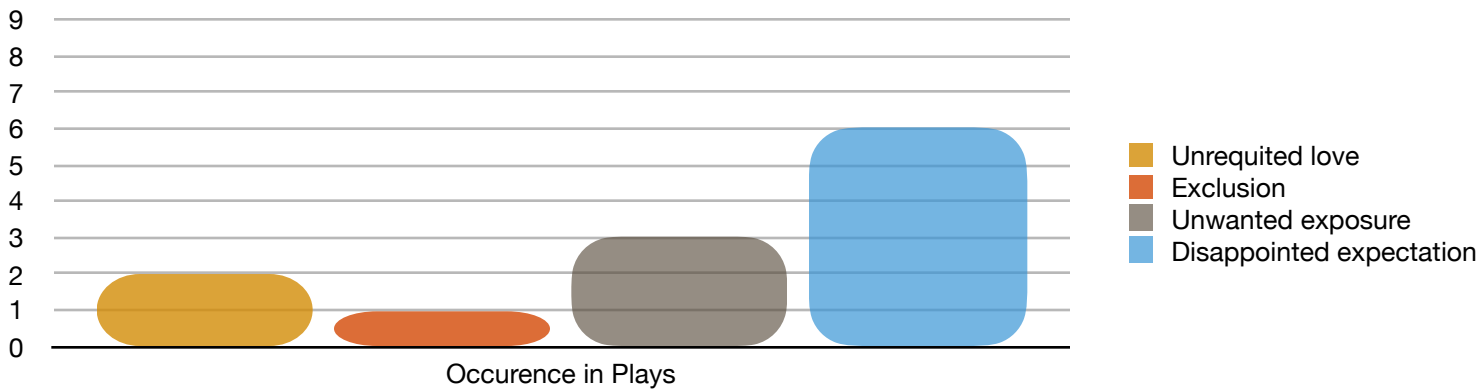


Chart 2 Burgo Shame Categories in Selected Drama



In Brown's categories, the three most common categories are **money/work**, **family**, and **being stereotyped/labeled**. I believe there are a few reasons for this.

First, let's look at it in conjunction with Burgo's shame categories. The most common type of shame I saw in these works was the idea of **disappointed expectations**. This ties together well with the three most common Brown categories. Money and work tie in to the basic expectation that a person will be able to provide for themselves. The goal is to provide well. If this expectation is not met, it can cause shame. Families are a breeding ground for disappointments. Family members all have different expectations of each member, and of themselves within the family unit. Failure to live up to those expectations of one's self or others creates the prime opportunity for shame. Stereotypes and labels exist *because* of expectations. We create ideas in our heads of ways things should be. We have certain schemas, and when something fails to fit that schema, we don't know how to react. When we create schemas about people and try and fit them into boxes, or when we try and label ourselves, we are easily set up for failure and subsequent shame for not fitting the expectations.

Secondly, I believe these categories are most prevalent because they are things that connect with everyone.

Everyone has to deal with money and work. It is a basic part of our survival. Though each person has a different kind of work, and though we all have very different relationships with money (America on the whole is hugely diverse economically), we all have to deal with money and work as a way to live.

Everyone has a family. By focusing on issues within a family, drama has the ability to connect with the most people, because everyone has some sort of family relationship. As we all grow up, we experience different facets of these familial relations. This allows for dramas to connect to audience members at different levels and stages of life and allows for the same story to affect each person differently.

Everyone has to battle stereotypes that exist in our culture, every day. Gender stereotypes exist at the core of our culture. America has had a huge battle historically with racial stereotypes and racism; from our history as slave owners, to the rush of racism against European immigrants in the late 1800's/early 1900's, to the insurgence of racism against people of Middle Eastern descent, America has a habit of finding some sort of racial scapegoat.

The prevalence of these topics, I believe, just points back to theatre's place as a reflection of life. It has the ability to connect people because it shows us how people live. It presents us with stories that we might not have lived but that we have dealt with similar struggles.

By using elements that we all have some sort of experience with, a foundation of connection is built. From there, even if the details look different, we can connect and explore. In this exploration lives the power of theatre. In this exploration, theatre can ask us to see things from another point of view. It can question our world view. It can challenge our hidden thoughts. It can show us that we aren't alone. It can push us to question why things happen. It can push us to analyze our own life and treatment of others.



Let's connect that back to shame. Shame is only powerful when it festers. Brené Brown says in both her book *Daring Greatly* and her TED Talk, "The less we talk about shame, the more we have it... shame derives its power from being unspeakable." When ideas about shame are presented on stage, it sheds a light on the topic. As the actors speak the lines, or tell these stories, they are speaking out about shame. They are casting a light on the shame that exists in our world. This platform is a hugely powerful tool to show where shame is lurking in our world, or where is it front and center.

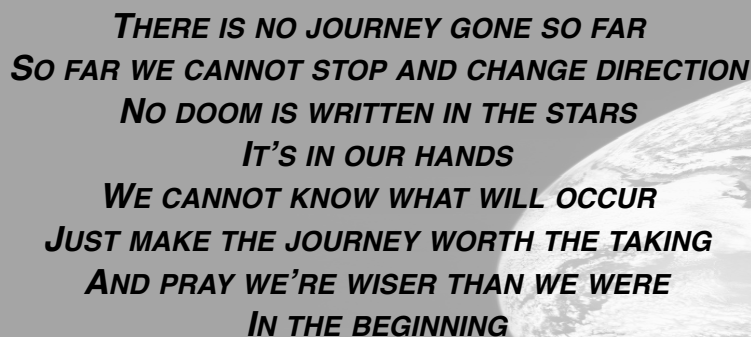
From there, the people encountering the work are asked to reflect on the ideas shown. The audience is asked to connect with the characters onstage, to feel their story, to *empathize*. With this empathy, shame regarding these tough and universal issues can begin to dissipate.

Conclusion

As I'm sitting here writing this conclusion, I am watching Brené Brown's Netflix special *The Call to Courage*. When I saw on Brown's Instagram in March 2019 that she was producing a Netflix documentary, I was so excited. This was just a few weeks after I had first found her TED Talk, and a few days after I had finished reading *Daring Greatly*. Then, when the special premieres is right during the weekend when I have set aside to officially finish this thesis. It has all seemed too coincidental.

When coincidences happen, when things fully fall in to place together, I can't believe that it is all by chance. There is some reason behind it, some force, some meaning that can be learned. So as Brené leaves the stage and the credits roll and I turn back on the Fireplace for your Home program (the Birchwood edition), I ask myself, "*What did I need to learn from this? What lesson do I hope others take from this thesis?*"

The summer before my senior year of high school, I auditioned for the musical *Children of Eden* by Stephen Schwartz. It was being produced by the Warrick County Summer Musical program. For three years prior, I had been involved in a different summer musical program. Deciding to audition and then participate in the Warrick County show was scary. I didn't know anyone there, I was leaving some of my best friends from the other program, and I had an exciting but difficult role in the show. I went in to the first week of rehearsals dreading our thirty-minute dinner break every night because I didn't know who to sit with and I was scared to take a chance and reach out to anyone. The second week though, this girl came in to rehearsals. We had met briefly during auditions, and then she'd been on vacation the first week of rehearsals, so this was her first week back with the show. I forget how exactly it happened, but on a whim, we decided to go out to Sonic after a rehearsal. This started was is now a lifelong friendship. It marked the turning point in the summer for me. From then on, I went in to rehearsals confident, connected, and willing to interact and enjoy my time with others. I had such an incredible experience in the show. The show ends with a song titled "In the Beginning." The song is beautiful and touching; most of the cast would cry when we sang it each night during the run of the show. The lyrics to the entire song are beautiful, but these lines stick out to me especially:



**THERE IS NO JOURNEY GONE SO FAR
SO FAR WE CANNOT STOP AND CHANGE DIRECTION
NO DOOM IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS
IT'S IN OUR HANDS
WE CANNOT KNOW WHAT WILL OCCUR
JUST MAKE THE JOURNEY WORTH THE TAKING
AND PRAY WE'RE WISER THAN WE WERE
IN THE BEGINNING**

When it comes to being vulnerable, we cannot know what will happen. It involves risk taking. But we have the power to change: change ourselves and change the world around us. Theatre is just one of the tools we can use to do that. Theatre gives us a chance to practice empathy and vulnerability. It gives us a practice ground to combat shame and to lift others up. It gives us the chance to learn, gain wisdom and understanding, and use that to connect with our hearts and the hearts of others.

After spending this time researching shame, asking my friends about it, looking at how it is used in drama, becoming cognizant of it in my own life and world, I have one hope for myself. I hope that I am wiser now than I was when I started that trip down to Mississippi.

Appendix 1

Below is a collection of lines from each play that I pulled out as specific examples of shame. The corresponding shame category is noted under the line.

THE MAGIC TOWER BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

- “I’m hardly as old as all that, Mrs. Flynn!” Mrs. O’Fallon
 - **Aging**
- “Yer a bit older than Jim is yerself, ain’y you, Mrs. Flynn?” Mrs. O’Fallon
 - **Aging**
- “Yer an able-bodied young woman- why don’t yer go back to work?” Mrs. O’Fallon
 - **Aging, Money/Work**
- “Oh, so it was *show business* you was workin’ in, was it?”
 - **Money/Work, Being Stereotyped/Labeled**
 - “I think what a bother I am. How happy you’d be without me. Just think, if it wasn’t for me, you’d still be a gay young student without a care in the world!” Linda
 - **Family**
- “This is really the stuff. Atmosphere. Color. Cockroaches and a leaking roof – well, where’s the master of the house?” Mitch
 - **Money/Work**
- “You know what I mean – he’ll never get nowhere tied to your apron strings.” Babe
 - **Family**
- “If he wasn’t tied up like this he could go to Europe and study in one of them fancy schools over there! That’s where all the real artists go!” Babe
 - **Family, Money/Work**
- “Lookit her hands, Mitch! She’s got dishwater hands!” Babe
 - **Family, Appearance/Body Image**
- “He’ll get tired of you maybe. He’ll look at you while you’re bending over the washtub with your face all red and sweaty and your hair in your eyes and he’ll say to himself, “There she is! My ball and chain! If I wasn’t tied to her apron strings...”” Babe
 - **Aging, Appearance/Body Image, Family**
- “You’re still just a boy. You’ve got years and years, he said. Years and years of what? I asked him. Starvation? He said I was taking it much too hard – Oh, Linda! I’m so terribly disgusted with things!” Jim
 - **Money/Work, Aging**
- “Magic tower, boloney! It’s Mrs. O’Fallon’s attic that we’re up in, Linda! Mrs. O’Fallon’s lousy, leaking attic! And we’re five weeks behind on the rent!” Jim
 - **Money/Work**
- “Twenty-one – how marvelously young that is! I’m twenty-six, Jim. You didn’t know that?” Linda
 - **Aging**
- “Yes, I know. Before you got yourself tied up with a dame!” Linda
 - **Family**

THE LITTLE FOXES BY LILLIAN HELLMAN

- “You have had too much wine. Get yourself in hand now,” Oscar
 - **Addiction**
- “Oh, they [distinctions] have been made for us. And maybe they are important distinctions.” Ben
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Money and work, family**
- “What do the doctors think caused your bad heart? They didn’t think is possible, did they, that your fancy women may have –“ Regina
 - **Sex**
- “Nor did I tell them that my wife has not wanted me in bed with her for – How long is it, Regina?” Horace
 - **Sex**
- “Why, there ain’t a mountain white or a town nigger but wouldn’t give his right arm for three silver dollars every week, eh, Horace?” Ben
 - **Money/Work, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “Why should I give you the money? To pound the bones of this town and make dividends for you to spend? You wreck the town, you and your brothers, *you* wreck the town and live on it.” Horace
 - **Money/Work, Family**
- “I hope you die. I hope you die soon. I’ll be waiting for you to die.” Regina
 - **Health**
- “She said she was old fashioned enough not to like people who killed animals they couldn’t use, and who made their money charging awful interest to ignorant niggers and cheating them on what they bought.” Birdie
 - **Money/Work**
- “My family was good and the cotton on Lionnet’s fields was better. Ben Hubbard wanted the cotton and Oscar Hubbard married it for him.” Birdie
 - **Family, Money/Work**

TALLEY’S FOLLY BY LANFORD WILSON

- “Of course, your mother and Olive stayed up there on the screened-in porch protected from the mosquitoes and communists and infidels.” Matt
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “Why would Sally tell every person with whom she works that if this hairy Jewish accountant comes down like a crazy man to see her... everybody tell him she’s not here and Sally will hide in a closet.” Matt
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Appearance**
- “Between being what they consider out-and-out anti-American and being over forty years old, and having a beard, you made a grand hit with Mom and Dad, let me tell you.” Sally
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Appearance**
- “What they were hoping was that I would be a proper Christian suitor and take crazy Sally off their hands.” Matt
 - **Religion**
- “Maybe you go to the boathouse to forget your family. Maybe you have a cigarette to unwind, knowing you can’t smoke up at the house; maybe you take a nip from a whisky bottle you keep here somewhere.” Matt
 - **Family, Addiction**
- “She is *well over* how old? All her friends and all her relatives were married by what age?” Matt
 - **Aging, Family**

- “And what woman would be interested in such a grown Probable Lit with such a resolve?”
Matt
 - **Family, Motherhood/Fatherhood, Surviving trauma**
- “...his father killed himself... he was in debt. He thought he would lose the factory. He didn’t know how to live poor.” Sally
 - **Money/Work**
- “I couldn’t bear children! I can’t have children! Let go of me.” Sally
 - **Motherhood/Fatherhood, Mental/Physical Health**
- “By then Dad was looking at me like I was a broken swing.” Sally
 - **Motherhood/Fatherhood, Family**

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS BY NEIL SIMON

- “She gets all this special treatment because the doctors say she has kind of a flutter in her heart... Girls are treated like queens.” Eugene
 - **Mental/Physical Health, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “The same filthy bunch as live across the street.” Kate
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “They never say the word. They always whisper it. It was – cancer!” Eugene
 - **Mental/Physical Health**
- “We all owe Aunt Kate and Uncle Jack enough as it is...” Blanche
 - **Money/Work, Family**
- “The drunk! The man can’t find his way into the house at night. He slept in the doorway once... Let him meet someone lying in the next doorway.” Kate
 - **Addiction**
- “Because we can’t afford a roast beef for seven people.” “I suddenly felt vulgar and cheap.” Kate, Eugene
 - **Money/Work**
- “I wrapped my life up in Dave so much, I never learned to be their mother.” Blanche
 - **Motherhood/Fatherhood, Family, Parenting**
- “You mean there’s nothing wrong with you if it [a wet dream] happens?” Eugene
 - **Sex**
- “I don’t have to meet that kind. I just have to smell his breath when he opens the window.”
Kate
 - **Addiction**
- “Kate, when are you going to give up being an older sister?” Blanche
 - **Family**
- “I never got past the eight grade and that’s why I spend half my life on the subway and the other half trying to make a few extra dollars to keep this family from being out on the street.” Jack
 - **Money/Work**
- “It seems no matter *what* I do, I only make it worse.” Blanche
 - **Motherhood/Fatherhood, Family, Parenting**
- “I wish I could have sent *you* [to college. I’ve always been sick about that, Stanley.” Jack
 - **Money/Work, Motherhood/Fatherhood, Family, Parenting**
- “Really? Well, where’s your salary this week, Pop?” Eugene
 - **Money/Work, Family**
- “I want you to be somebody important someday... because I’m not... I’m no damn good.”
Stanley
 - **Money/Work, Family**
- “Me? Attractive? You really must think I’m dying, don’t you?” Jack
 - **Appearance/Body Image**

- “I will do *anything* anybody asks me, but I will *never* be a burden to anyone again.” Blanche
 - **Money/Work, Family**
- “Because of me, the whole family is breaking up... Don’t turn out to be like me.” Stanley
 - **Family, Money/Work**

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS BY DAVID MAMET

- “I’m no fucking good,” George
 - **Money and Work**
- “It *means*, Dave, you haven’t closed a good one in a month...” Ricky
 - **Money and Work, Disappointed Expectation**
- “A man’s his job and you’re fucked at yours.” Shelly
 - **Money and Work, Being Stereotyped/Labeled**
- “I don’t have the power [to negotiate].” Jim
 - **Money and Work, Disappointed Expectation**
- “Who ever told you you could work with *men*?” Richard
 - **Being Stereotyped/Labeled**

HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE BY PAULA VOGEL

- “You’re not...you’re not going to start drinking again, are you, Uncle Peck?” Li’l Bit
 - **Addiction**
- “So why is your mother disappointed in you, Uncle Peck?” “Every mother in Horry County has Great Expectations.” Li’l Bit, Peck
 - **Family**
- “...he’ll end up with rubber burns on his fingers before he can steal your virtue-“ Female Chorus
- “*That’s* what you’re thinking about? ... Don’t tell her that! She’s too young to be thinking those things.” Teenage Greek Chorus (Grandmother)
 - **Sex, Parenting**
- “If she stops and thinks before she takes her knickers off, maybe someone in this family will finish high school!” Teenage Greek Chorus (Grandmother)
 - **Sex, Family**
- “I think you have a wonderful body and an even more wonderful mind. And of course, I want other people to *appreciate* it. It’s not anything shameful.”
 - **Appearance, Sex**
- “I’m going to tell her the truth! Unlike you...” Female Greek Chorus (Mother)
 - **Parenting, Family**
- “Why don’t you just go out and rent a motel room for her, Lucy?” Teenage Greek Chorus (Grandmother)
 - **Parenting**
- “Alright. But I’m warning you – if anything happens, I hold you responsible.” Female Greek Chorus (Mother)
 - **Surviving Trauma**

PROOF BY DAVID AUBURN

- “When your dad was younger than both of us, he made major contributions to three fields: game theory, algebraic geometry, and nonlinear operator theory.” Hal
 - **Aging**
- “He was filthy. I had to make sure he bathed. My own father.” Catherine
 - **Family, Mental/Physical Health, Appearance/Body Image**
- “You don’t have the math...if there was anything up there it would be pretty high-order. It would take a professional to recognize it...I know your dad taught you some basic stuff, but come on.” Hal
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “They think math’s a young man’s game. Speed keeps them racing, makes them feel sharp. There’s this fear that your creativity peaks around twenty-three and it’s all downhill from there. Once you hit fifty it’s over, you might as well teach high school.” Hal
 - **Aging**
- “Really original work – it’s all young guys.” Hal
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “My papers get turned down. For the right reasons- my stuff is trivial. The big ideas aren’t there.” Hal
 - **Money/Work**
- “Now that he’s dead you fly in for the weekend and decide you want to help? *You’re late.* Where have you been?”
 - **Family**
- “Or maybe some real professional care would have done him more good than rattling around in a filthy house with *you* looking after him. I’m sorry Catherine, it’s not your fault. It’s my fault for letting you do it.” Claire
 - **Family**
- “I think you have some of his talent and some of his tendency toward... instability.” Claire
 - **Mental/Physical Health**
- “There were *library books* upstairs stacked up to the ceiling, do you remember that? You were trying to decode *messages*—” Catherine
 - **Physical/Mental Health**
- “I’m not doing much right now. It does get harder. It’s a stereotype that happens to be true, unfortunately for me – unfortunately for you, for all of us.” Robert
 - **Aging**
- “I am so sorry. I used to have a pretty good memory for numbers. Happy birthday... I am so sorry. I’m embarrassed.” Robert
 - **Physical/Mental Health, Aging**
- “It would be a real disaster for you, wouldn’t it? And for the other geeks who barely finish their Ph.D.’s, who are marking time doing *lame* research, bragging about the conferences they go to- *wow*- playing in an *awful* band, and whining that they’re intellectually past it at twenty-eight, *because they are.*” Catherine
 - **Aging,**
- “I’m... *afraid* I’m like my dad.” Catherine
 - **Physical/Mental Health**

BODY AWARENESS BY ANNIE BAKER

- “This is really gross. Talking about this [masturbating].” Jared
 - **Sex**
- “I am not fucking retarded.” Jared
 - **Mental/Physical Health, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “A high school teacher is not an academic.” Phyllis
 - **Money/Work, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “It’s like you’re not allowed to do anything involving naked women anymore. If a woman is naked, you’re a misogynist.”
 - **Sex**
- “I DON’T HAVE IT. FUCKING SHIT.” Jared
 - **Mental/Physical Health, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “We don’t drink it this house.” Phyllis
 - **Addiction**
- “I don’t want anyone to see me naked. Even if I get a girlfriend. I don’t want her to look at me.” Jared
 - **Appearance/Body Image, Sex**
- “Well, my own embarrassment. My own self-consciousness. All that stuff you always talk about. Like being able to look in the mirror? And feel proud?” Joyce
 - **Appearance/Body Image**
- “Why is my family... aren’t we supposed to support each other?” Joyce
 - **Family**
- “You *have* to know this is all about your dad. You can’t admit to yourself that he did something really bad but now you want to strip naked in front of some random sleazy guy and have him take your picture and this just...” Phyllis
 - **Family, Sex, Surviving Trauma**
- “I find myself repulsive.” Jared
 - **Appearance/Body Image**
- “I showed it [his penis] to her for like a second. It was literally for like a second. I was trying to be sexy.” Jared
 - **Sex**

DISGRACED BY AYAD AKHTAR

- “My mother will roll over in her grave.” Amir
 - **Family, Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “Then I spit in *her* face.” Amir
 - **Religion**
- “White women have no self-respect. How can someone respect themselves when they thing they have to take off their clothes to make people like them? They’re whores.” Amir
 - **Sex, Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “You know what you’re going of be accused of... Orientalism. I mean, hell. You’ve even got the brown husband.” Isaac
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “On top of people being more and more *afraid* of folks who look like me, we end up being *resented*, too.” Amir
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “We might actually start getting a little too comfortable about our suspicions...” Isaac
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “See, honey. An exemplary instance of spousal support. He never compliments me on my cooking... Because you don’t show me any love when I do.” Jory
 - **Family**

- “You erase a face, you erase individuality. Nobody’s making men erase their individuality. Whys it always come down to making the woman pay?” Jory
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “I was horrified by it [feeling pride at 9/11], okay? Absolutely horrified.” Amir
 - **Religion**
- “I don’t have the marriage you do.” Emily
 - **Family**
- “Isaac... London...was a mistake.” Emily
 - **Sex**
- “I had no idea your husband was such a mess. And a fucking alcoholic to boot.” Isaac
 - **Family, Addiction**
- “I’m sorry, but sometimes you people have a problem... Jews. You see anti-Semitism everywhere.” Emily
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “If what happened that night in London was a mistake, Em, it’s not the last time you’re going to make it. A man like that... you *will* cheat on him again. Maybe not with me, but you will.” Isaac
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Family**
- “You have any idea how much of myself I’ve poured into that place? ... Were you ever the ast one to leave? Cause if you were, I didn’t see it. I *still* leave the office after you do! You think you’re the nigger here? I’m the nigger!! Me!!” Amir
 - **Money/Work**
- “There’s a reason they call you people animals.” Isaac
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled**
- “Amir, I’m so disgusted with myself. If I could take it back.” Emily
 - **Sex**
- “You’ll always turn on your own people. You think it makes these people like you more when you do that? They don’t They just think you hate yourself. And they’re right! You do!” Abe
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “For three hundred years they’ve been taking our land, drawing new borders, replacing our laws, making us want to be like them. Look like them. Marry their women. They disgraced us. They disgraced us. And then they pretend they don’t understand the rage we’ve got?” Abe
 - **Being stereotyped/labeled, Religion**
- “I just... I just want you to be proud of me. I want you to be proud you were with me.” Amir
 - **Family**

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