# Self-management through shame – Uniting governmentality studies and the 'affective turn'

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abstract     Critical studies of managing self-management and governmentality have primarily concerned the production of identities, subject positions and reflexive elements of self-management. The aim of this article is to challenge and contribute to the field of critical studies on managing self-management in two ways: Firstly, by considering management of self-management from the perspective of *the affective turn*; secondly, by showing how managing self-management has an ambiguous production of affects in everyday managerial processes of organisations. Drawing on examples of appreciative leadership and management (ALM) in a school setting, the article outlines an affective economy in which appreciation, interest and shame are produced and exchanged. Here, the article argues that the success of ALM relies not only on the production of positive affects related to recognition, but is also linked to the production of shame or at least potential shame. This argument is developed on the basis of Brian Massumi's theory of affectivity combined with Silvan Tomkins's theory of shame. The article draws on examples concerning management of self-management through the practice of ALM in a school setting.

## Self-management: From reflexivity to affectivity

This article contributes to the study of managing self-management by introducing concepts from what is known as 'the affective turn' (Massumi, 2002; Clough, 2007; Koivunen, 2010). In opposition to the growing literature on self-management and the management of self-management, which is aimed at increasing performance (Neck and Houghton, 2006; Manz and Neck, 2004), the point for critical studies of managing self-management is intervene with governmentality studies (Andersen, 2008b; Foucault, 1991; 2009; 2010; Raffnsøe, 2010). In these studies, the production of subjectivities is seen as an effect of discursive power (Rose, 1996; 1999), technologies of power (Dean, 1999), and discursive orders and patterns of the normative (Fleming and Spicer, 2003). They also show how the development of selves is entangled in organisational values and norms, and moves from outer to inner spaces of the Self (Knights and Willmott, 2002).

Several thinkers, informed by Foucault and Luhmann, have published seminal work on 'governmentality', i.e. how subjects and subject positions are produced by and govern by management technologies in companies and cooperation (e.g. Andersen 2009; Kunda, 1992; Miller & O'Leary, 1987; Townley, 1993). The concept of

governmentality has also been successfully applied in the literature. This demonstrates how education is important in governing mentalities (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998), 'flexible souls' (Fendler, 2001) and how (school) children contain a potential for the future (Hultqvist, 2005). While critical studies of management as well as education are very inspiring, these approaches have primarily been occupied with how the production of identities, subject positions, and the reflexive elements of self-management contribute to shaping the self in relation to a certain appropriate identity (e.g. the creative pupil or the self-developing employee). In addition, they often take a macro perspective on normative and moral orders and discourses while focusing less on the precise machinery of productive processes as they play out in life.

The narrow focus on reflexivity and the neglect of everyday human life, results in a blind spot concerning the affective aspects of organisational lives. The turn towards affectivity is therefore not meant as a corrective to the established research on governmentality. Rather, the aim is to add an additional dimension to the mentioned critical studies of managing self-management and governmentality.

The empirical trigger that made us turn towards theories of affectivity was the observation of how some managerial technologies seem designed to energize the register of affectivity. These technologies concentrate on the production and formation of intensity rather than identity. In other words, the subject is managed not (only) through offers of reflexivity, but also through offers of being moved by a special affectivity or intensity. In using the term 'intensity', we point to the increase and decrease of tensions and quality in affects, atmosphere, senses and emotions (Massumi, 2002). In management practices such as appreciative leadership and management (ALM), affects and affectivity are not simply by-products or something to be overcome, but the core matter to be managed by and through. Thus, these practices of management relate strategically and directly to the production of certain affects. Consequently, the new practices of management through affects seem to challenge the notion of what can become the object of management, the type of managerial capacity that might come into existence and, not least, who or what guides management. In this sense, affectivity is not a counter force to the discursive. Rather, affectivity is one of the precise mechanical parts that fits managerial purposes and makes governmentality work.

The main argument of the article is that management of self-management works through complex intra-actions between reflexivity and affectivity, within an ambiguous affective economy of both negative and positive affects. This ambiguity is the prerequisite for producing not only self-managing subjects who can handle themselves in the actual situation, but also self-improving subjects that create even better versions of themselves.

In the following, we unfold our theoretical take on affectivity based on Massumi's Deleuzian theory, where affectivity is conceptualised as gradually changing intensities (Massumi, 2002). This overarching conceptualisation of affectivity is combined with a certain perspective on the close relationship between interest and shame developed by the social psychologist Silvan Tomkins. His theory on shame defines shame as the most self-reflexive affect of all affects: 'Shame is an experience of the self by the self' (Tomkins, in Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 136), and shame therefore confronts us with

ourselves. In the theoretical section, we furthermore discuss the combination of governmentality and the affective turn as well as the coupling of Massumi with various shame theorists. The analytical section elaborates on the theoretical framework by carefully examining data from school settings.

In this article, we take appreciative leadership and management as our empirical point of departure in order to contribute to critical studies of managing self-management. Our ambition is to produce new knowledge of, and a conceptual language for, the type of management and managerial relations that unfold when appreciative leadership and management is played out – both, when successful and when these types of management seem to miss the target. In order to fulfil these ambitions, we turn to theories of affectivity. By asking whether appreciative leadership and management also produces shame or at least sensitivity to shame, we wish to challenge the idea of shame as something bad or as a feeling one ought to be freed from. Moreover we have no intention of criticising or accusing appreciative approaches of spreading shamefulness. Rather, our hope is to contribute a more complex analysis of the affective economy played out in the management of self-management when it goes through affective approaches. But first, let us describe the methodology and the data used in the article.

## Self-management through shame

At first shame does not seem to be on the agenda for ALM. Textbooks on modern leadership and pedagogy do not suggest 'better ways of shaming your employees or pupils'. Rather, reprimands and being sent to the corner have been replaced by motivational strategies, desire technologies and the imperative of self-management. ALM concerns the ways executives, such as school principals, can introduce, nurture and develop human values in organisations through recognition and encouragement. ALM is highly inspired by the work of Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) on appreciative inquiry. Their anthology *Appreciative Management and Leadership: The Power of Positive Thoughts and Actions* (Srivastva and Cooperrider, 1999) stands as one of the core texts in current ALM. Furthermore, ALM is inspired by the body of literature on positive emotions and positive psychology in studying organizations and learning (Fredrickson, 2001; 2003; Fried, 2001; Peterson and Seligman, 2003a; 2003b; Sansone et al., 1992). The strategy of ALM is part of the Psy-leadership trend, now spreading to educational institutions, which addresses the affective aspect of management practices with a focus on managing the intensity and quality of human relations. Below we present examples of how appreciative leadership and management are carried out by managers and teachers within a school setting, we should point out that the affective economy cultivated within these managerial processes bear a strong resemblance to affective economies. This emphasis the cultivation and exchange of recognition, desire, involvement, motivation and shame plays out in other organisational settings but is based on similar managerial technologies. The argument for teachers and executives to undertake appreciative leadership and management seems to be that, if pupils and employees should do their best at all times and engage in continuous learning processes, the driving forces must be desire, involvement and motivation. Pupils and students must have 'a desire to learn' and to be 'involved in the learning process'. Employees must be committed to their work. The 'positive' and the

'good' must be used as management tools in a type of affective flux and exchange. This turns the task of the teacher and the principal – as well as the business executive – into managing the development and unfolding of desire. As a precondition, appreciation and positivity of management must be translated into desire and involvement among employees and pupils. In turn, this must be translated into greater commitment, quality and competence (see for instance Andersen, 2008a; Borch and Molly, 2010; Hildebrandt and Fibæk, 2009; McAdam and Lang, 2009). Executives, principals and teachers have adopted the trends of ALM in their daily relations with employees and pupils as well as in certain managerial technologies, such as the staff development interview and the teacher-pupil appraisal conversation (a staff development interview at the child's level). These technologies are designed to help employees and pupils reflect, (re-)create, improve and thereby assist management (Staunæs, Juelskjær and Knudsen, 2009).

## Methodology

As the main argument is primarily theoretical, the data presented in this article is used mainly to illustrate the analytical perspectives in this approach. We here draw on data collected in connection with the project: *Schooling identities – (self) management in the multicultural school* (2005-2008). It consists of: 1) 60 video recordings of teacher-student appraisal conversations in two 7th and two 8th grade classes at a municipal school in Copenhagen; 2) 20 qualitative interviews with the principal, teachers and pupils about school life and the teacher-student appraisal conversations; and 3) around 4 months of participant observation. Furthermore, we draw on material from the ongoing project, *Psy-leadership – new perspectives on educational leadership* (2009-2012). Psy-leadership (Staunæs, Juelskjær and Knudsen, 2009) is leadership informed by the psy-sciences – psychology, psychiatry, and pedagogy (Rose, 1999). This material consists of a growing number of documents, handbooks, qualitative interviews (currently 30) with educational managers (Principals, Vice-Principals and heads of teams) and CEOs of large private companies, concerning the challenges of psy-leadership, and finally participant observations of seminars and meetings with HR staff and consultants.

In this article we use data from both projects. In other words, we bring different bodies of material, produced within the same theoretical and analytical framework, into juxtaposition, where certain themes are strategically scrutinised and theoretically developed (for the method of collapsing data see Kofoed, 2007; Lather, 2007). This does not imply an overload of data or comparing variables on the basis of narrow scientism in imitation of the natural sciences. The reason for using interviews, and quoting both children and grown-ups in different contexts, is that the affects, emotions and experiences conveyed are examples of those produced when ALM is unfolded in reality. Naturally, the manager-employee relations are not like teacher-pupil relations – different social and managerial technologies are in play. Nonetheless, management practices that employ appreciation as a tool share many features. Our material includes many examples of the 'caring' and 'understanding' teacher/principal who manages by, among other things, inviting conversations in which the pupils/employees help set the standards by which they are assessed. The teacher/principal/employer, together with the pupil/employee, facilitate the optimisation of personal resources through reflexive

questions and appreciative, dialogic forms of interaction. These forms of interaction take place within a more or less fixed scope and use fixed technologies. Our analytical starting point is empirical examples of management situations in which something still, vibrates, fails or is noisy. We examine how these interactions produce sensitivity to shame.

## Intensities and affects

In order to understand the production of affectivity as part of management of self-management (MSM), we are inspired by the affective turn in the human and social sciences (Clough, 2007; Gorton, 2007; Koivunen, 2010). The affective turn may be seen as a critique of the linguistic and poststructural turn but, in our perspective, it develops the insights into the performative from the linguistic turn (Barad, 2003; Butler, 2010; Du Gay, 2010), and expands the concept of performativity as a way of thinking in relation not only to language, but also affectivity and materiality. This means that more than 'just' language, as argued for in the linguistic turn, becomes constituent of subjects, organisations and management. Bringing together Foucault with the Deleuzian Massumi approach may seem somewhat contradictory, but as Deleuze (2006) points out in his book *Foucault,* his own texts should not be read in contradiction to Foucault, but rather as a further specification of the vitalisation, forces and lines of flight that are implied in Foucault. In that sense, the turn towards affectivity is not about turning away from the insights of poststructural discourse theory, but about returning to and complicating theories and analyses (Staunæs, Juelskjær and Ratner, 2010).

For Massumi, the very distinction between affect and emotion is a cardinal point, and Massumi would probably never venture into a linguistic definition of affectivity (Massumi, 2002). Sara Ahmed takes another approach and does not differentiate between emotions and affects, but uses them interchangeably in order to show the fluidity of conceptual boundaries (2004). Finally, Tomkins, according to Sedgwick & Frank (1995)[1], uses the word 'affect' for biological intensities – for instance, shame and interest. As an analytical strategy, we follow the distinction between undefined affectivity and linguistically defined emotions, but when the managerial technologies are supposed to be strategic acts upon affectivity, and when the act is an attempt to seize affectivity in specific ways, we need two different sets of conceptual tools: one that lets us follow the increase and decrease of affectivity, and another that lets us examine the quality of affects as such and of particular versions of affects.

In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi (2002) elaborates on anti-individualistic, Deleuzian and Spinozian ideas of forces and intensities. Discussing 'affects' and 'affectivity' instead of feelings or emotions, Massumi describes how the concept of affectivity includes moods, sensations, sense perceptions and sentiments that 'affect' and move us in different ways (*ibid.*). The use of the term 'affect', rather than 'feeling'

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1   Tomkins narrows affectivity down to nine distinct affects: Interest/excitement, enjoyment/joy, surprise/startle, distress/anguish, anger/rage, fear/terror, dismal, contempt/disgust, and shame/humiliation. The first part names the mild manifestation and the second, the more intense (Tomkins in Sedgwick & Frank,1995).

or 'emotion', is thus an attempt to conceptualise impounded aspects as well as to appreciate the intensities, as they are expressed in the body (such as blushing, rapid heartbeats, sweaty palms etc.), that have yet to be classified by a certain feeling (Massumi, 2002; Clough, 2007; Probyn, 2005). It is also an attempt to dissociate from the understanding that subjects *are* or *have* certain feelings (Ahmed, 2004; Deleuze and Guattarri, 1972/2004; Massumi, 2002; Probyn, 2005). Instead, we argue that affects can *have* or *seize* subjects and relations. Affectivity means to affect and be affected (Massumi, 2002) and thereby affectivity becomes a qualitatively different way of experiencing the world and yourself, than cognitive reflexivity as such (Thrift, 2004). Thus, the concept allows us to see how affects can be transformed and moved not only *in* people, but also *between* people or between people and other non-human actors.

Affectivity is another register of experience, which is being deployed politically (Thrift, 2004). One example is when a managerial technology, like the staff development interview, affects both, the employee and the manager taking part in the conversation. From the perspective of affects, the question is therefore not whether a person can or cannot be shameful, for instance, but rather how a given relation or situation may produce affects that influence or possibly even seize the intensity in the quality of shame. Moreover, this concept of affectivity also makes us aware of how the formation of affectivity happens, and how affects can be transformed. For instance, pain can turn into hatred, fear into shame, and longing into anger (Sedgwick, 2003; Ahmed, 2004).

Bringing together studies of governmentality and the affective turn, and following Thrift's idea of affectivity as another register of experience which is deployed politically (Thrift, 2004; Ahmed, 2004), we argue that affective management can be understood as a strategic endeavour to capture, generate and seize intensity in certain ways to allow the subject to create him or herself. In other words, management of affects may be described as an extension or a further specification of the governed subjectivities described in studying management of self-management. Understanding affective management contributes to MSM by paying particular attention to the fact that management of affectivity facilitates and makes specific certain possible self-relations and subject formations while simultaneously precluding, cancelling and paring off others.

## Affective economy, translations, and keen ears

To take our analytical perspective one step further, we employ the concept of affective economy. Affective economy is dealt with in a number of other texts; some use the term but do not incorporate it in a managerial or organisational context (Ahmed, 2004; Probyn, 2005). Others discuss affective economy in an organisational and/or managerial context but do not employ the term itself (Hochschild, 2003; Hardt, 2007; Fineman, 2008). 'Economy' denotes the careful use of money and supplies as well as management of activity. In an affective economy, however, affects rather than money are economised. Thus, affective economy is not a matter of simply having feelings. Management in and of an affective economy concerns the strategic administration and organisation of relations to ensure the potential of the organisational members to feel, experience, sense, act and create themselves and the organisation in certain ways

(Staunæs, 2009; 2011). The currency administered, exchanged and produced in the affective economy of a given organisation or management, begins as various affects that successively translate into productivity and quality – if the system works as intended.

Management, in this view, may be understood as the transformation of affectivity. Transformation of affectivity differs from the simple translation of a clear and direct message of action from the manager to the employee (or vice versa). Derrida offers an understanding of this transformation when he writes about translation: 'It is the ear of the other that signs' (Derrida, 1985: 51); and he stresses that the transfer of a message is not unaffected; it is not until the recipient transforms the message into his own understanding that the meaning and sense of the message come into existence. 'To hear him', Derrida writes, 'one must have a keen ear' (*ibid.*). To manage is, in this conceptualisation, an intra-action, or a relation between manager and employee, which seems to rely on their mutual capability of *tuning in* on certain frequencies in which the message is not simply heard, but translated in particular ways. It seems to us that the conceptualisation of managerial processes as translations becomes even more relevant when focusing on forms of management that aim at cultivating particular moods and sentiments. In order for these forms of management to work, they seem to rely heavily on the capabilities of managers and employees alike to tune in and be affected by the right frequency.

To sum up, applying concepts from the affective turn in studies of governmentality and self-management allows us to conceptualise management as processes of translation, in which both, managers and managed, are receptive to and moved by moods, affects, feelings, sentiments and sense perceptions. In that sense, affective management may be seen as a strategic action on the intensity of relations and, thereby, a strategic action on the possibilities to affect or be affected. Management, in the sense of making employees do your exact bidding, is impossible. Only the relation, not the subject, can be governed. Within this conceptual framework, ALM can be seen as presupposing a particular affective economy if the affective appreciation within the relation between manager and managed is to be translated or converted, not only into motivation, but also further into quality and efficiency.

In the following sections, we will seek assistance from Tomkins and take a closer look at what it may mean to be 'interested' and to have a 'keen ear' in managerial relations based on appreciation, i.e. which affective over- and under-tones the employees and the manager must be able to tune into for the translation to succeed. The analysis below draws on Tomkins' informed authors like Elspeth Probyn (2005), who has theorised shame in detail, and Sara Ahmed (2010), who has brought valuable insights to the question of shame in relation to the cultural politics of emotions. The latter was part of her critical scrutiny of the promise of happiness in current trends on positive approaches. We will emphasise that, in our discussion of affectivity, it has never been our intention to dwell on personal and private feelings a person may bring into an educational institution. We do not wish to subscribe to the ontogenetic explanations that found Tomkins' model. Instead, we look for aspects of Tomkins' theory that allows us to understand self-management as correlations of interest, desire and appreciation and shame. With reference to the concept of affective economy, we stress that our discussion concerns affects that are produced, cultivated and exchanged in relations.

The formulation of shame as the experience of the self by the self seems to cut through the span of time from the 1960s into the widespread forms of (managing) self-management by reflexivity that we see today (Andersen, 2009; Foucault, 1991; 2009; 2010; Raffnsøe, 2010).

## Producing interest, reflexive selves and shame

Tomkins' affect theory conceptualises how the cultivation of interest is closely connected to the cultivation of potential shame. This seems an analytically fruitful contribution to our attempt at unfolding how processes of translation within ALM may rely on a particular affective economy implying both, the cultivation of interest and also of shame through appreciation. According to Tomkins, 'interest' is decisive for humans to maintain focus/attention long enough for us to learn about and investigate our surrounding world (Tomkins, in Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 77). Thereby interest is tied to learning, development and change, which is a model of thought we recognise from pedagogical and managerial strategies.

Yet in Tomkins' theories we find a special complex of interest, desire and shame. This complex is productive in an analysis of ALM practices that work towards creating a learning environment that entices involvement and interest. Tomkins' contribution is how the positive affects of interest and desire are closely connected with the affective spectrum of shame and humiliation (*ibid.*: 136). To be able to feel ashamed of something or towards somebody, one must be invested or involved in the matter or person: 'Without positive affect, there can be no shame: only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush' (Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 16). The point here is that relations built on interest also seem to cultivate a sensibility towards shame. One may argue that shame profits from the fact that one has invested oneself in somebody or something. When a subject is constituted through the investment in somebody or something – a relation, a person, an object, a particular self-relation – this dedication also bears the risk of producing more or less terrifying shame, if and when the subject, for one reason or another, is not capable of meeting or maintaining the dedication and positive expectations invested therein. When focusing analytically on shame, we are very well aware that a number of other affects may also be produced when ALM is unfolded. Still, Tomkins' conceptualisation of shame seems particularly relevant in the analysis of managerial strategies aimed at appreciative relations, the production of interest and engagement, and the management of self-management through reflexivity. For Tomkins, shame is a central and powerful affect, because shame confronts us with ourselves: 'Shame is an experience of the self by the self. At that moment when the self feels ashamed, it is felt as a sickness within the self' (Tomkins, in Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 136).

When being shameful, the subject is confronted with both itself and the 'object' – the relation, person or activity outside the subject – that triggers shame. Shame is an ambivalent experience because it makes us look down and turn away in order to protect ourselves from the confrontation with the surroundings that triggered the shameful feeling. At the same time, the blush of the cheeks reveals the intense awareness of visibility, transmission and investment in the relation: 'In shame I wish to continue to

look and to be looked at, but I also wish not to do so' (*ibid.*: 137). When shame strikes so hard that the subject's cheeks blush and his eyes look down in an attempt to deny the surrounding world, it is because the subject has already 'invested some of himself' in the relation and expected a positive affect in return: 'One of the paradoxical consequences of the linkage of positive affect and shame is that the same positive affect which ties the self to the object also ties the self to shame' (Tomkins, in Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 138).

If the subject is to disengage himself from the shame, he must also disengage himself from the object or relation in which he has invested himself. This disengagement entails barring himself from both, part of himself and a source of positive affects. Herein lays the ambivalence of shame. Shame makes the self turn away from the object that triggered shame, but still keeps up the wish to maintain or re-establish the relation in order to regain access to the positive affect. That is why the involved person can become particularly sensitive to shame, which may be the affect that thwarts actions, due to its close ties to interest and involvement: 'The pluralism of excitement and enjoyment is without limit, and hence shame, too, knows no bound' (*ibid.*: 150). Just as the sources of excitement and enjoyment are multifarious, shame is boundless, as Tomkins writes. Linking up to the concept of translation through 'keen ears', we may argue that when appreciation is actually heard, the ear becomes equally alert or sensitive to frequencies that may translate into interest as well as shame. A keen ear to appreciation is also the ear that may potentially blush from shame.

## Using tone and mood

In this last section of the article we exemplify the dynamics of affect and intensity in ALM and self-management strategies, with particular focus on the production of interest and sensitivity to shame. We include excerpts from interviews from different empirical contexts, with a focus on interviews with a school principal, a teacher, and a pupil in order to elaborate on the theoretical arguments presented above. Handbooks on educational leadership, such as ALM, often pay special attention to atmosphere and environment as important fields of management. The specific claim of appreciative leadership and management is that development is best facilitated in an appreciative and respectful atmosphere (Srivastva and Cooperrider, 1999; Andersen, 2008a). This approach is elaborated in an interview with Jill, who is a school principal in a large Danish town.[2] Jill has enthusiastically plunged into ALM, practised both, as a manner of conduct and management. Here she focuses in particular on how the precondition for management is characterised by the overall culture, mood, tone and approach of an organisation. As such, her way of practising ALM may be seen as a case of affective translations unfolded within the relationship between manager and employee:

> It has to do with respecting my employees' and co-managers' diversity. They are not supposed to be like me. That would just be dull. Appreciation and management are very much about being seen and being heard and being taken seriously, and that you can get your communication tested. So, if I go out and make a decision, and naturally I do that often, then I have to test whether I have been understood correctly.

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2    This interview stems from the database of the *Psy-leadership* project.

When listening to Jill's descriptions, the relational character of management, understood as strategic ways of acting on social relations and the intensity in these relations, becomes clear:

> When I enter a room it's almost like being the class teacher for children. I have my ear to the ground and notice how people look, where they are and who needs me for something, and whether there are any urgent matters. And every single day, someone has a special need to see me. So, it's a matter of managing a multitude of relations simultaneously.

For Jill, ALM is about tuning in to moods and emotional needs. This applies both, when she enters the teachers' common room as well as in the classroom. Also, it extends all the way to the pupils' homes and families. ALM is a matter of giving the employees a sense of being seen and heard, and a matter of facilitating shared reflection and decision-making processes. In her own words, Jill previously practised a more 'result-oriented style': 'I think we should do this and that and then just power ahead'. Now she takes the relation – to the employee/teacher (to the pupils and their parents) – as something she should not only 'act' on, but also mould. Her task is not simply to facilitate the (desirable) actions of others; it is also to strategically facilitate a desirable intensity in the social relations. Jill's practice of ALM may be in the high and advanced end of the scale, and not least in her self-demand to tune into the affective frequency of each and every person she meets professionally – from the employees and the pupils, to the occasional workman. Many of the ideas in her approach to management resonate with current trends in educational institutions and across the wider managerial landscape regarding attention to management of relations through appreciation, and by creating desire, motivation and involvement. Indeed, this includes managing by means of 'the good' and 'the positive'.

## Trying to become better – Encouragement of shame

In this section, we shall see how the management of self-management is both practised and experienced within a teacher-pupil relationship. The case is constituted by teacher-student conversations in the seventh grade at the Sea School in a large Danish city. Firstly, we turn to an interview with the teacher, Anne Marie, on how she practices these forms of pupil self-management, and subsequently we shall turn to how these conversations are experienced by a 14-year old pupil, David.[3] The point is to see how this form of management of self-management works not only through the production of self-reflexivity but is also facilitated through the cultivation of affects, where the potential of shame plays an important part.

Anne Marie conducts the obligatory teacher-student conversations as dialogues, with the aim of facilitating self-management. She contemplates the types of reflections that may increase pupil awareness of their potential for (self-)development:

> Naturally, I see them as being in development. It's a process and here at the school we help them in that process. An important thing is to open your eyes for some of the possibilities they have.

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3    Both interviews stem from the project *Schooling identities*.

> And that they think more about themselves in relation to others; "Who am I?" and "What do I do?" and "Why do I do these things?"

Anne Marie uses metaphors to speed up pupil reflection processes. In video recordings of the teacher-student conversations in the seventh grade, she opens the conversation by drawing a ball, which she refers to as a symbol of knowledge. She asks the pupils where they see themselves in relation to the ball/knowledge using questions like: 'Are you far from the ball? Can you see it? Are you about to catch it? Have you kicked it away?' Some of the students immediately relate to the drawing and describe their academic and personal standpoint in relation to their idea of knowledge and of the level at which they interact with the ball/knowledge. Other pupils however, mumble, hesitate and seem to ponder on why they are supposed to talk about a ball when they expected to be talking about maths or learning Danish. Anne Marie senses the pupils' position and tries to invite them into the conversation by means of various types of interview techniques. After the introductory metaphor exercise, the teacher-student conversations develop into talks about areas in which the individual pupil is doing well and about his or her competency development, but also about areas in which they are less successful academically, socially and personally. Yet, sometimes Anne Marie is dissatisfied with the progress of the conversation. In one interview she says:

> Sometimes you just get upset that you can't speed things up – to make things happens. It bothers you that they don't have a better understanding, but at the same time, you know it is a process that takes time.

During the teacher-student conversations, Anne Marie tries to facilitate self-reflection, which may help the pupil get 'beneath the surface', as she says, but often she feels that her attempts are far from successful. How can we configure this teacher dissatisfaction through the issue of shame? Anne Marie believes pupils should not just reflect on their current life, they should do so in a particularly 'profound' way and at a faster pace or, we might add, in a more intense manner. It is against the background of the production of intensity and increased investment of the self that we suggest an analytical perspective on how the appreciation, the dialogue and the reflection may not function without the production of potential shame or sensitivity to shame. If the social technology of the conversation is to provoke and move the self and the self-relation in the manner Anne Marie wants and seeks, specific affects must be cultivated. In our perspective, social technologies, such as teacher-student conversations/staff development interviews, constitute affective contact zones that potentially open up very emotional, but also ambivalent, opportunities. In order for the self to experience itself in a sufficiently intense manner, self-reflection must hold the possibility of shame as the torment of self-consciousness (Tomkins, in Sedgwick and Frank, 1995: 136). The pupils must invest themselves in their relation with the object – 'the ball', the subject, the teacher and the self – in ways that produce shame when they do not manage to perform or do not show improvement. It is a matter of positive investment that produces vulnerability: 'Shame reminds us about the promises we keep to ourselves' (Probyn, 2005: XIV). It could be added that shame reminds us of the promises of development and improvement we made to ourselves but were not able to meet.

In Anne Marie's assessment of the teacher-student conversations and the pupils' reflections, she wishes for more depth in some cases. Within our perspective she is

looking for intensity and committed investment. The pupils need to be committed to self-management to succeed. In another interview, 14-year-old David reflects on a video recording of his own teacher-student conversation with Anne Marie. He says:

> It's difficult to explain how you feel. I mean, it's not bad, but it's not good either. It feels a bit strange. It's like you're excited. Like you are about to do something great, and at the same time it's as if something *really* bad is about to happen, because you're always afraid of being told off and that they will only say bad things. It's just a really weird feeling. You know, it's not a good sensation sitting with the teacher, who's telling you all sorts of strange things. I want to leave because I don't like it at all, and it's really uncomfortable feeling like that.

In this excerpt, David describes – somewhat hesitantly – how affectivity can unfold and affect interlocutors during an appraisal and development conversation. He uses words such as 'feeling' and 'sensation'. He articulates excitement and fear, and he talks about 'weird' and possibly confused feelings and about feeling 'uncomfortable'. He also talks about the action triggered by this complex of affectivity: the desire to walk away. David's comment can hardly be characterised as superficial or lacking 'depth' when he describes how the sensation of excitement, and a trembling and unresolved atmosphere, fill the room. This situation could go either way. At the moment it is no fun, but he hopes it will end well. David stays despite his desire to leave and his urge to turn away his face. Even though the excitement increases, even though he is 'uncomfortable' and even though the discomfort prods at him and makes him anxious, something makes him stay. David has difficulty explaining; he breaks off his sentences, rephrases and tries to articulate how he senses something that might ease the discomfort*:* 'Something is telling you that you must. Something is telling you that you'd better know. So you can try to improve'.

Here it is important to mention that David is not talking about 'someone' who motivates him to stay and listen. Rather, what makes David stay is his recognition that 'you can try to improve'. David's reaction to the discomforting situation may be seen as a tingling sensation, which involves not only self-reflection but also a trembling sensitivity to shame or potential shame. In an attempt to escape, David and several of his classmates 'just say something to say something'. This may be the surface talk that displeases Anne Marie. However, by speaking, the pupils commit themselves to the relation and the premise of improvement. They may therefore be expressing not apathy, but rather intensity, which makes the situation and relation nearly unbearable.

The teacher-student conversation as a method of self-management opens up an entirely different affective economy than is the case in the talks between David and the principal:

> If it's at the principal's office you practically know what you're about to hear. If you've done something, they'll just tell you not to do that. But unexpected things may come up *there* [i.e. the teacher-student conversation] if it's like a private room conversation. Suddenly [you] are told something about something; like you think you're doing well in something and then, then in fact you're not doing particularly well after all.

In these exchanges, the principal identifies a wrongdoing and reprimands, while the pupil is asked to acknowledge the wrongdoing (Knudsen, 2010; Kofoed, 2007). In the teacher-student conversation, however, defectiveness creeps into the talk. One does not know beforehand what will be valued as good and what will be deemed as requiring improvement. It is not made clear from the start, and nobody will tell you straight away. It slowly emerges through self-reflection. The conversation takes its point of departure in potentiality and excitement but as it progresses, words and reflections are captured that indicate a direction one did not know beforehand. You think you are doing well and then suddenly in the middle of the 10-15-minute conversation you may be hit by a different mood. In that sense the teacher-student conversation opens up an entirely different, more unpredictable realm of possibilities and a more complicated exchange of affectivity. Our analytical suggestion is that, to be efficient at instigating a quest for self-improvement and self-management, the conversation relies on the complex or paradoxical affective exchange of recognition and potential shame.

The exploration of opportunities for improvement within the conversation does not simply evolve from reflection but is supported by an intense sensation of the need to catch up, and this intensity thrives on a strong engagement with recognition. Only ears keen to hear appreciation attune to the sensation of inadequacy of oneself in oneself. The affective economy ties interest and investment, produced through appreciation, to sensitivity to and readiness for shame: 'If you don't care, then attempts to shame won't move you [...] the things that make me ashamed have to do with a strong interest in being a good person' (Probyn, 2005: XIV). Or, from another perspective: 'Shame can also be experienced as the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence' (Ahmed, 2004: 107). Here, shame is the fear of not living up to what is recognised as the standard. Furthermore, shame is the fear of contempt and exclusion (Probyn, 2005). David's description of how he is affected during the conversation may be summarised with Probyn's words: 'Shame makes us feel small and somehow undone' (*ibid.*: 2). David's ears seem to be very keen indeed. He not only listens but also reaches out for his potential self, and it seems that he is not only moved by the promise of appreciation but also by the strong impetus of avoiding shame. In this example, we notice how shame emerges through the threat of separation from the appreciation and recognition of the other.

In the following section, we discuss how shame may also emerge through the relation to oneself, and how shame seems to be an inevitable player when improving the self. Indeed, it is pivotal in self-management.

## The time of self-shame

The analysis of the excerpts above shows how the production of shame requires a relation characterised by interest and, we add, positive investment. Thus, shame may also be perceived as the fear of not being worthy of the other's appreciation and may be intensified when witnessed by others. Ahmed writes:

> Shame feels like an exposure […] To be witnessed in one's failure is to be ashamed: to have one's shame witnessed is even more shaming. The bind of shame is that it is intensified by being seen by others as shame. (2004: 103)

The witness could be the one who comes close as, for instance, the principal/teacher who takes part in the facilitation of the reflection process in the peer review conversation. The teacher offers you appreciation, is disappointed by your inadequacy and witnesses your sensation of shame when you realise your inadequacy. It feels humiliating when one's inadequacy is revealed, but it may be even more humiliating to be recognised as one who is ashamed. David expresses how he longs to feel 'comfortable', which may produce a desire to act in order to escape the shame and to reconstruct the relation to the other by becoming worthy of appreciation again. Maybe this is what creates the urge to improve that David mentions. By giving in to this urge, one accepts the responsibility for the improvement.

The sense of shame that may be produced by ALM may also make the individual assume responsibility for restoring the relation to the other. In the movement from being wrong to trying to improve lies a crucial difference between the 'naughty corner' and the self-technology based on affectivity. While an authority controls the use of the naughty room, which points out and places shame, the development interview (with adults or children) leaves it to 'self-managing', to reflect on the discrepancy between the present and the desired position. Thus, it is also up to the employee to shame himself, to practice self-shame. The principal/teacher does not point out inadequacy or place shame. She simply facilitates the investment process, which is a prerequisite for the production of shame. Contrary to the talk at the principal's office, shame is thus personified as an inner authority in the development conversation. Self-management takes the form of self-shame. Self-shame has thus been encouraged (!) in the person who is supposed to feel ashamed.

## Economising of intimacy

The described affective economy within the teacher-student conversation presupposes a subtle interplay of intensity and intimacy in management relations. The teacher-student conversation may be seen as an example of a self-technology resembling, for instance, the staff development interview. Our point here is not to deem shame as a solely negative or unproductive feeling, and appreciation as a solely good or productive action. Rather, the affective economy, which forms the backbone of ALM, seems to have appreciation, shame and interest as different interchangeable currencies and this exchange opens and closes different types of involvement. Rather than appraise the individual affects, we find it more interesting to look at what the currencies can do – together and to each other (Probyn, 2005).

As illustrated above, Jill aims at achieving a certain quality and intensity in her relations to her employees. The aim is to make them feel seen, appreciated and heard. However, inherent in these intensive relations is also the danger that the intensity may get out of hand and complicate – or even obstruct – the managerial work. Jill cannot imagine socialising with her colleagues or co-managers privately because the increased closeness and intimacy could make it more difficult to separate the relation of professional appreciation – with a dash of care and empathy – from personal emotional involvement.

Jill seems to be aware of transgressed boundaries for the 'intensity sphere' that threatens to make the relation between her and an employee so close that 'it becomes too relation-like in a way that involves emotions', as Jill explains in an interview. Hereby she draws a sharp distinction between wanted and unwanted emotions, and productive and unproductive types of closeness and intensity. According to Jill guarding the frontier between too much intimacy and wrong intimacy has two purposes: one is to protect yourself as a manager and the other is to protect the employees. From the perspective of shame, the issue can be interpreted in various ways.

One reading could be the responsibility of protecting the employee against potential shame if, for instance, an employee was to become exposed in some manner. Here, the manager can choose to take care that the employee does not get himself into a situation that – successively – may be perceived as more or less shameful. The danger of a relation where the manager-employee relation becomes too personal or too close to a friendship (Staunæs et al., 2009) is that it potentially undermines the position of manager. The manager is supposed to be the one in charge of the relation through which shame is produced. Jill notices the importance of 'maintaining the asymmetrical relation; it must be present', she says. Otherwise she would no longer be able to help and manage her employees in the best possible way. Another interpretation could be that a breakdown of the asymmetrical relation would dissolve the configuration of who is receptive to shame. As the manager distances herself, she chooses to maintain and protect the option of triggering shame in the employee. A co-manager may be introduced into this situation in order to reduce the intensity and intimacy of the relation between Jill and the employee, and help her maintain her position as chief executive (and shame executive).

A different configuration of shame can be identified in a case, in which Jill has a problematic relation to a senior employee who struggles with failing qualifications. 'For some reason he keeps a distance to me', she explains. The teacher in question is partly in need of guidance regarding teaching and partly in relation to his (in)capacity to manage his position as a teacher. Jill explains how her relation to this particular employee is characterised by distance, which she relates to her own position of being the principal; but she is also open to the possibility that it might have 'something to do with my personality'. According to Jill, the communication between the concerned teacher and the vice-principal is much better:

> That's why I tell my vice-principal I think it's important you deal with it, because you have a better approach. If it's you, we get a more honest, real and appreciative process and I'm afraid he would clam up on me.

Here, the relation is problematic not because of closeness but because of distance, and Jill must act strategically by using a co-manager to moderate the relation. Thus, in connection with shame, there can be both too much and too little shame. On the face of it, the employee's distance suggests that he has not invested enough of himself in the relation with his principal, who therefore cannot use appreciation or potential shame as management tools. On the other hand, the situation could also suggest that the shame is too intense in this relation between the female principal – competent, involved and respected – and the male teacher – senior, possibly worn out – who finds it difficult to manage his own teaching. Jill's diminution of the manager-managed relation could be

seen as a form of consideration for the employee, although it may also be a way of protecting herself against the embarrassing and potentially shameful situation of witnessing another person's shame. By carefully guarding the frontiers of intimacy, Jill offers the employee a chance to escape from his shame and enter into a relation with another person in which less seems to be at stake, possibly because of higher degree of appropriate closeness.

## Intensifying shame, intensified shame, intensified self-management

We have discussed how affective management, as it has emerged in appreciative leadership and management strategies, can be perceived as a management tool that motivates pupils through personal recognition and interest, and through the promise of positive affects such as self-fulfilment, excitement and challenge to invest and manage themselves. We have shown that when those who are to be managed are encouraged to invest themselves in activities, other subjects (e.g. the manager) or in parts of their selves, they become sensitive to the fact that these relations could produce shame. At the same time, the individual's investment of self in the relation makes it complicated for him to reject or disengage from the shame-producing relation or activity, as that would also entail disengaging from one's self. Yet, if those who are to be managed are met with management strategies of contempt and reprimand (as in the case of the conversation at the principal's office), it is easier for them to escape from a given relation, as it does not presuppose or produce positive investments of the self. As a consequence, the distribution of the self in relations will be less extensive (Tomkins, in Sedgewick and Frank, 1995: 138).

Our point is that precisely because new management practices such as self-management create selves, and draw attention to selves through recognition, individualisation and (self-) reflection, the cultivation of (potential) shame is neither replaced nor dismantled, but rather intensified and developed. With reflexivity and affectivity as a close couple, one has reason to assume that the affective economy of the ALM style operates with currencies other than positive affects, and that affects like shame may be an important catalyst of (self-) improvement. The affective economy is thus a more complicated form of self-management than described in the celebratory literature. Consequently, it adds to the production and possibly even the acceleration of its challenges. Negative affectivity is not only an aspect of the organisations or managerial strategies of the past. In fact, it may be the flipside and a driving force of the mechanisms in today's management of self-management. Shame is not solely a negative or unproductive feeling, and appreciation is not solely a positive or productive managerial tool. As a result, this kind of management of self-management runs in variable directions, which leads to ambivalent challenges. And these challenges require a language more sensitive towards complexity than we have traditionally been presented with in the praise literature.

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