The Importance of Making Ashamed: 
Regarding the Pain of (Animal) Others

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Abstract

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag broaches the subject of photography of atrocities, pondering how spectators would respond to images of suffering. While it is believed that people look askance at painful images because sympathy for others makes them refrain from looking, Sontag contends that sympathy can be “an impertinent—if not an inappropriate—response” (102). What then is the “pertinent” response that Sontag has in mind? It seems that the emotion of shame, compared with sympathy, is not that impertinent a response as it enables us to reflect on “how our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may—in ways we might prefer not to imagine—be linked to their suffering” (103). What can be inferred from Sontag’s argument is that shame may anticipate the possibility of change. Nevertheless, she does not explain why exposure to distressing or appalling images would evoke shameful emotions, nor does she further investigate whether the affect of shame can create conditions under which moral action becomes possible. To fill the lacunae in Sontag’s discourse and accentuate the political dimension of shame to which it vaguely points, this paper seeks to analyze the mechanism of shame and its relation to the gaze from a Lacanian perspective. In the first two sections of this paper, I will elucidate why the emotion of shame arises when images of suffering are seen, or, to be more precise, are seeing us. Moreover, I will deal with Lacan’s proposal of “making ashamed” and discuss in what sense shame can become a blessing. While the distressing photographs Sontag addresses are mainly concerned with the pain of human others, the third section of this paper also ventures to explore whether the viewer will be made ashamed by the pain of animal others. I will examine how animal cruelty is represented in Taiwan’s media coverage, with a view to answering the following question: What kinds of images are able to make the spectator feel ashamed and call for a halt to cruelty?
Keywords
Lacan, Sontag, photography of atrocities, shame, gaze, animal other, Taiwan’s media coverage

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Introduction

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag broaches the subject of photography of atrocities, pondering how spectators would respond to images of suffering. While it is believed that people look askance at painful images because sympathy for others makes them refrain from looking, Sontag contends that sympathy can be “an impertinent—if not an inappropriate—response”: “So far as we feel sympathy, we feel we are not accomplices to what caused the suffering. Our sympathy proclaims our innocence as well as our impotence” (*Regarding 102*).

What then is the “pertinent” response that Sontag has in mind? For Sontag, it seems that the emotion of shame, compared with sympathy, is not that impertinent a response as it enables us to reflect on “how our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may—in ways we might prefer not to imagine—be linked to their suffering” (103). What can be inferred from Sontag’s argument is that shame may anticipate the possibility of change: if you feel ashamed because “you walked away or did not do enough in a hateful world” (Rose 1), it is likely that you may start thinking about means to lessen the pain of others.

Sontag’s humanitarian plea, no doubt, aims to awaken the subject to feel the pain of others and to assume one’s ethical responsibility. However, Sontag fails to explain why exposure to distressing or appalling images would evoke shameful emotions. Likewise, she does not further investigate whether the affect of shame can create conditions under which moral action becomes possible. To fill the lacunae in Sontag’s discourse and accentuate the political dimension of shame it vaguely points to, this paper seeks to analyze the mechanism of shame and its relation to the gaze from a Lacanian perspective. However gratuitous they may appear, the passing references to shame that Lacan makes in *Seminar XVII*—“There is no longer any shame” (182), for example—attract the attention of some psychoanalysts, who unanimously extrapolate from them the importance of shame in Lacanian psychoanalysis. For example, Jacques-Alain Miller construes Lacan’s avowed intention of “making ashamed” as “an effort to reinstate the agency of the master signifier” (23). Charles D. Hackett, in a similar vein, argues that the subject’s “ability to sense suffering” and to find some alternative to it results from the awareness of his shameful lack (191). Drawing from these Lacanians, in this paper, I will elucidate why the emotion of shame arises when images of suffering are seen, or, to be more precise, are seeing us. Moreover, I will deal with Lacan’s proposal of shaming and discuss in what sense shame can “become a blessing” (Rose 8). While the distressing photographs Sontag addresses are mainly concerned
with the pain of human others, this paper also ventures to explore whether the viewer will be made ashamed by the pain of animal others. I will examine how cruelty against animals is represented in Taiwan’s media coverage, with a view to answering the following question: What kinds of images are able to make the spectator feel ashamed and call for a halt to cruelty?

I

[T]here is shame as well as shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror. Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it—say, the surgeons at the military hospital where the photograph was taken—or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be.

—Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*

Linking the withdrawal of sight to the affect of shame, Sontag echoes the generally approved assumption that “shame is an emotion that is routed through the eyes and that the logic of shame is a scene of exposure” (Leys 126). Placed in the perspective of psychoanalytic terms, we may assume that shame arises when the spectator is exposed to the other’s gaze and thus becomes conscious of one’s own lack. The lack which makes the subject ashamed, according to Freud, is genital deficiency. However, this narrow explanation is no longer tenable for today’s

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1 Freud has suggested that shame is a feminine characteristic *par excellence* because of women’s sexual inferiority. Though “at a later time shame takes on other functions,” its original purpose is to conceal genital deficiency (132). Since for Freud shame is tied to nakedness, it stands to reason that he finds small children “essentially without shame” (they show an ‘unmistakable satisfaction’ in exposing their bodies)” (Rose 2). However, Freud also contends that “cruelty in general comes easily to the childish nature’ since the obstacle that ‘brings the instinct for mastery to a halt at another person’s pain—namely a capacity for pity,’ develops rather late” (Rose 2). From Freud’s unnoticed connection between small children’s self-exposure of nakedness and their instinct for mastery, between shamelessness and the lack of pity, Jacqueline Rose infers that it is “at least an open question whether it is nakedness or cruelty of which we feel—or should feel—most ashamed” (2). Rose’s implication is that Freud’s conception of shame may not be as narrow as it is commonly believed. Notably, as Lacan’s definition of shame is different from Freud’s, for him small children are far from shameless. On the contrary, they are no less conditioned by the primordial shame. I will give a full explanation of primordial shame later.
shame theorists: “moving away from any exclusive emphasis on the exposure of nudity and sexual difference, [they] believe that one can be ashamed of virtually any aspect of the self—indeed it is the self as such, with all its attributes, that is put in question in shame” (Leys 129). Moreover, since it is the other’s intrusive gaze that draws the self’s attention to his shameful lack, shame has been consistently theorized as the experience taking place in the intersubjective field. For Jean-Paul Sartre, shame is by definition “shame of oneself before the Other; these two structures are inseparable” (222). Following Sartre, Emmett Wilson Jr. construes the role of shame as “leading from an undifferentiated experiential matrix to the development of two self-conscious subjects”: “Because of shame, because of my concern with how I appear to the other, I become aware that others exist together with me in an intersubjective field” (169). Likewise, in Léon Wurmer’s discussion of the three forms of shame, the experience of shame presupposes intersubjectivity. Notably, if it is the other’s gaze that propels the subject to be highly conscious of oneself and thereby wary of involuntarily exposing limitations, the observer in question can be either an internalized spectator or an external one. According to Bernard Williams, the more “ethical considerations are involved, the less a watcher needs to be in the actual offing, the idealized other will do. But that other still performs a function of recalling to the subject a person in the eyes of whom the subject has failed, has lost power, is at a disadvantage” (qtd. in Wessely 12-13).

2 To be more precise, Sartre construes shame as “by nature recognition”: “I recognize that I am as the Other sees me. There is however no question of a comparison between what I am for myself and what I am for the Other as if I found in myself, in the mode of being of the For-itself, an equivalent of what I am for the Other” (222). Notably, it is debatable whether the standard Sartrean version of shame overemphasizes the annihilating power of the Other’s look. Joseph Adamson, for example, finds that in Sartre’s philosophy, the dependence on the other defines “the negative aspects of the inescapable condition of human intersubjectivity, in which one remains inevitably alienated and estranged from oneself” (8). In a similar vein, Kelly Oliver contests the Sartrean notion of the objectifying gaze. Oliver believes that the look of the Other, instead of catching me in the act and turning “my consciousness back on itself to confront the dialectic of being and nothingness at my core” (3), can be “reformulated as a loving look, which connects us to others” (1). For a detailed analysis, see Oliver’s “The Look of Love (Denigration of Vision in Modernism and Psychoanalysis).”

3 According to Wurmer, the word “shame” covers three concepts, which are all related to the intersubjective experience: ‘Shame is first the fear of disgrace, it is the anxiety about the danger that we might be looked at with contempt for having dishonored ourselves. Second, it is the feeling when one is looked at with such scorn. . . . Third, shame is also almost the antithesis of the second one, as in ‘Don’t you know any shame?’ It is an overcall character trait preventing any such disgraceful exposure, an attitude of respect toward others and toward oneself, a stance of reverence” (67-68). He concludes that we can discern in all three forms “an object pole, in front of whom one feels ashamed, and the subject pole, for what one feels ashamed” (68).
That is to say, what is involved in shame “is not just how we appear to the other but how we imagine we appear to the other” (Adamson and Clark 8). So far, we find that most theories of shame converge on the view that the imagined other may also evoke the affect of shame, but we still have no clue as to how photography of atrocities will make spectators ashamed. How do spectators, the viewing subjects, turn out to be the ones exposed to the gaze of the Other? What elements in these photographs make them conscious of their lack? Further, if the shameful lack is not reducible to one’s genital deficiency, what exactly does it refer to? A Lacanian account of the relation between shame and gaze, I suggest, will cast new light on these questions.

Lacan’s theory of the gaze is in agreement with Sartre’s in the sense that for both, the gaze is “not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other” (Lacan, FFC4 84). Lacan finds that when Sartre seeks to explain the emergence of the gaze, he refers to “the sound of rustling leaves, suddenly heard while out hunting, to a footstep heard in a corridor” rather than something that concerns the organ of sight (84). In other words, what surprises the Sartrean voyeur and reduces him to shame are the sounds that function as the Other’s gaze. At first, for the voyeur looking through the keyhole, there is a spectacle behind the door presented “to be seen” (Sartre 259). However, when the footsteps in the hall announce the intervention of the Other’s gaze, the voyeur is, all of a sudden, made ashamed.5 Being fixed by the Other’s gaze, the subject recognizes the fact “that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging,” and such recognition consequently brings “shame of self” (261). To be more precise, Sartre is convinced that the subject is “no longer master of the situation” once the Other’s gaze intervenes (265). It is at this point that Lacan’s notion of the gaze diverges from that of Sartre: for Lacan, the subject under the gaze is not so much deprived of mastery as “sustaining himself in a function of desire” (FFC 85). The Lacanian gaze is not emitted from a panoptic Other “who cares about what or where you are, who pries, keeps tabs on your whereabouts, and takes note of all your steps and missteps” (Copjec 36); rather, it is the object a in the scopic field (Lacan, FFC 83). Take the ocelli of the moth for example: for those who do not prey upon it, the...

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4 The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, abbreviated as FFC.
5 Lacan notices that for Sartre, the gaze always possesses the privilege to have the subject scotomized (FFC 84). According to Sartre, “we cannot perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us; it must be either one or the other. This is because to perceive is to look at, and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world (unless the look is not directed upon us); it is to be conscious of being looked at” (258). Later, I will explain why “to look at” and “being looked at” are far from mutually exclusive for Lacan.
eyespots on its wings are “blind.” Nevertheless, the *ocelli* do impress its predators because they will be made to “see” by the predators’ own desire. In a homologous way, if the subject apprehends a look, it is because his object *a*, “the unfathomable X which ‘concerns’ the subject, which animates his desire,” is materialized into the gaze of the Other (Božović 171-72). Lacan thus concludes that the gaze is “presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety” (*FFC* 72-73). More simply, the subject is caught by the gaze only insofar as his object cause of desire is animated; he is, under such circumstances, “called into the picture” that concerns him (Lacan 92).

Different notions of the gaze thus lead to a divergence of opinions on the question of shame. According to Jacques-Alain Miller, the Sartrean conjunction of gaze and judgment “produces what looks like a slide from shame to guilt”: “A judgment is something different. In order to judge, one has to begin to talk. I may have very good reasons for looking through the keyhole. Perhaps what is happening on the other side should be judged and reproached” (14-15). Lacanian shame, on the other hand, is related to “an Other prior to the Other that judges”: it is “a primordial Other, not one that judges but instead one that only *sees or lets be seen*” (Miller 13; emphasis added). Originating from the “imaginary experience of powerlessness and passivity” (Hackett 188), the Lacanian version of shame can be independent of “anything of the order of misdeed, harm, or transgression that might give rise to it” (Miller 13). In this light, if the spectacle that “lets be seen” reminds the spectator of his primordial shame, namely, the anxiety that he is not what he appears to be, then the looking subject is likely to slide into the position of the being-looked-at. As Charles D. Hackett explains, there is inevitable narcissistic pathology in what Lacan calls the mirror-stage, as it entails “the fear that the truth will be discovered and the I will be shamed”:

> It [the mirror stage] is . . . suggestive of a stage in which the baby’s former diffuse or fragmented self-experience is first made coherent through the experience of self-image. It is, however, as we have seen, a faulted self-image which carries with it the pathologically narcissistic split between the I as I sense myself to be and the I which it seems to me that others sense me to be. The dilemma is that there is no way to merge the two images. (186)

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6 The significance of being “called into the picture” will be further explicated in the third section.
The primordial anxiety of shame, as Hackett succinctly puts it, is connected to “a perceived chasm between mirror-image or appearance and inner, hidden reality” (187). Mladen Dolar further identifies what causes the said chasm to be exactly the object \( a \):

the object \( a \) is precisely that part of the loss that one cannot see in the mirror, the part of the subject that has no mirror reflection, the nonspecular. The mirror in the most elementary way already implies the split between the imaginary and the real: one can only have access to imaginary reality, to the world one can recognize oneself in and familiarize oneself with, on the condition of the loss, the “falling out,” of the object \( a \). . . . We can now see the trouble with the double: the double is that mirror image in which the object \( a \) is included. So the imaginary starts to coincide with the real, provoking a shattering anxiety.\(^7\) (13)

Paradoxically, it is our primordial shameful lack that makes the Other, or, our double, appear to possess the object \( a \) that falls out of us.\(^8\) Thus, whenever we feel

\[\text{The association between narcissism and object } a \text{ appears to be dubious if we (mis)construe the mirror stage as a phase guaranteeing the child’s sense of mastery through vision. In fact, while Lacan seems to emphasize how the child constitutes his Gestalt on the basis of the visual image of the other in his early presentation of the mirror stage, he later modifies this theory by highlighting the lack in the imaginary. According to Philippe Julien, in Lacan’s later version of the mirror stage, he points out that “there is limit to the body’s libidinal investment in the image of the other” and thus “the libido does not pass in its entirety onto the specular image” (153). As the narcissistic satisfaction is evanescent, the hole in the imaginary is likely to trigger our primordial shame: “Through the vision of the image of the other’s body, I anticipate my own mastery and totalize my specular image: therein lies the origin of the ego’s narcissistic satisfaction. But, before this origin, that is to say, primordially, what am I? A being that is looked at, looked at from everywhere, handed over, un-covered, exposed” (Julien 155). In this light, Lacan’s introduction of the gaze as objet petit \( a \), instead of being incompatible with the notion of narcissistic pathology, “has a direct relationship to narcissism and, thereby, to the mirror stage” (Julien 158).}

\[\text{As I have mentioned earlier, the Lacanian gaze of the Other is not a seeing eye but a blind one: “if you are looking for confirmation of the truth of your being or the clarity of your vision, you are on your own; the gaze of the Other is not confirming; it will not validate you” (Copjec 36). However, unless we have traversed the fantasy to find out that the Other is also barré, crossed-out, by a fundamental impossibility” (Žižek, \textit{Sublime Object} 122), we tend to misplace the object } a \text{ in the domain of the Other. Due to this misrecognition, we also believe that “the double is the same as me plus the object } a \text{” (Dolar 13). As Dolar explains, a wink or a nod should suffice to prove that the mirror image contains the object } a \text{: “in the mirror, one can see one’s eyes, but not the gaze which is the part that is lost. But imagine that one could see one’s mirror image close its eyes: that would make the object as gaze appear” (13). That is, when I close my eyes...} \]
as if we are under the Other’s gaze, we are actually confronted by our object a. What must be added is that while the child will seek to heal the narcissistic wound by having recourse to the symbolic, this does not mean the anxiety is bound to fade away once he passes this primitive stage. Rather, whenever the subject is involuntarily exposed to the Other, his sense of vulnerability is likely to reactivate this primitive fear of being found out. That is to say, what constitutes one’s shameful lack is not merely the difference between the Ideal Gestalt and his incomplete being; the failure to assume one’s symbolic identity will also expose one to the unbearable shame. Shame arises as long as there is a gap which “separates the fantasmatic kernel of the subject’s being from the more ‘superficial’ modes of his or her symbolic and/or imaginary identifications” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 147).

As Žižek rightly puts it, Lacanian shame is “as an attitude of discretely covering up the fact of being castrated” (“Neighbors” 171). However, what Lacan means by castration is not so much “a fantasy of the mutilation of the penis” as a form of lack (Evans 21). As I have suggested at some length above, what constitutes the lack is the object a that falls out of the subject. But lack and surplus are actually two sides of the same coin, for that which cannot be integrated by the symbolic turns out to be the leftover. Since the body has already been “colonized by the symbolic order” as soon as one is subjectivized, if the lack is not covered up, the subject is apt to be made ashamed by “the wound, the disfiguration/distortion” which inflicts upon the body (Žižek, “Neighbors” 174). In the mechanism of shame, most importantly, I am ashamed not only in the moment when my lack is involuntarily exposed, but also when the other displays the fact of being castrated:

This is why, when I see my crippled neighbor “shamelessly” pushing toward me his disfigured limb, it is I, not he, who is overwhelmed by shame. When a man exposes his distorted limb to his neighbor, his true target is not to expose himself, but the neighbor: to put the neighbor to shame by confronting him with his own ambiguous repulsion/fascination with the spectacle he is forced to witness. (Žižek, “Neighbors” 171)

Here, “what one adopts in the contagion of shame is not the other’s shame but only the latter’s vulnerability to being shamed” (Leys 152): “I put myself in the

before the mirror, instead of visualizing my double with its eyes closed, I feel anxious as if I am under its gaze. The object a that I missed, in this light, appears to be possessed by my double.
place of the other only insofar as I recognize that I too am prone to shame” (Crimp 65). Since the truth about castration is something that I would like to cover up, if the other openly displays his wound, it is very likely that I will be reminded of my own vulnerability and consequently, lose my symbolic consistency. In war photography, for example, the “real person’s unspeakably awful mutilation” (Sontag, Regarding 42) is openly displayed and the spectator is thus forced to encounter the “grimace of reality” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 147). The disintegration of the victim’s image is nothing less than “the forced actualization in social reality itself of the fantasmatic kernel of my being,” and it constitutes “the worst, most humiliating kind of violence, a violence which undermines the very basis of my identity” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 148). Simply put, though what I see in the photograph in question is the defacement of my double, through an affective connection to the shaming of the other, I become the one who experiences the loss of face.10

Seen in this light, it stands to reason that we look askance at photography of atrocities: we feel too ashamed to look at the distressing images of others because we are reluctant to witness our own passivity, our shared vulnerability. The crucial question that remains to be answered is whether the affect of shame will result in the subject’s low self-esteem and thereby bring some catastrophic outcome. For example, won’t those distressing images leave the shamed onlookers at the mercy of a debilitating state? Or can shame constructively serve as the catalyst for the shamed subject to “endeavor to assume a new face more acceptable to the environs” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 147)? For Lacanian psychoanalysts, the answer is definitely the latter. In Section Two, I will further explain why Lacanian psychoanalysis casts shame as a potentially positive emotion.

II

Today I have brought you the dimension of shame. It is not a comfortable thing to put

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9 What must be added is that Leys is actually against the theory about the contagion of shame. She thinks that “the contagion works by highlighting personal difference” (152) and consequently avoids the moralisms associated with guilt theory: “shame means not the experience of guilt for some real or imagined deed but simply some personal experience that is unique to you and that defines you as who you are. . . . [it] does so in terms that avoid the moralisms associated with the theory of guilt. For it is certainly true that the notion of guilt, however theorized, carries with it the notion of responsibility” (185).

10 According to Žižek, the experience of “losing one’s face” is tantamount to the experience of defacement (“Neighbors” 147).
forward. It is not one of the easiest things to speak about. This is perhaps what it really is, the hole from which the master signifier arises. If it were, it might perhaps not be useless for measuring how close one has to get to it if one wants to have anything to do with the subversion or even just the rotation of the master’s discourse.

—Jacques Lacan, Seminar XVII

As I have stated at some length above, the mention of “making ashamed” in Seminar XVII is interpreted by Miller as “an effort to reinstate the agency of the master signifier” (23).11 Lacan notes that the master signifier, the singular unit of value, has been effaced gradually under the discourse of capital because “subjects are no longer represented by ‘a signifier that matters’—by an S1 or Master signifier that is the condition of their singularity, their dignity, and the vehicle of their transcendence” (Newman 373). When the subject ceases to be represented by S1, it is as if his visiting card is torn up. As nothing really matters for the subject any more, what follows, predictably, is the disappearance of shame (Miller 18). It is in this context that Lacan “proposes to ‘make ashamed’” (Miller 23). That is to say, Lacan highlights the importance of shaming in the hope of countering the trend which acquiesces or even endorses the decline of the master signifier.

But in what sense is shame “the hole from which the master signifier arises”? As I have pointed out in the first section, the subject feels ashamed when he is exposed to the unbearable real. If the subject in question can stop attempting to “avoid the final encounter with non-being” defensively (Hackett 191), his S1, the signifier that matters, is likely to emerge from his encounter with the real. In fact, “making ashamed” can be situated as a version of the “analyst’s discourse” in terms of Lacan’s theory of discourse. Thus, I will further elucidate Lacan’s notion of the

11 Citing Lacan’s warning, “Henceforth, as subjects, you will be pinned down by signifiers that are only countable signifiers and which will efface the singularity of S1,” Miller contends that Lacan is cautioning his students against transforming the singularity of the S1 into units of value. After all, the master signifier “is the singular unit of value, which cannot be quantified, which will not fit into a calculus in which everything is weighed” (23). Notably, the master signifier that Lacanians seek to reinstate through shaming is by no means “the S1 of the pure imperative,” that is, the absolute signifier which designates “the I of the master” as a transcendental I identical to itself (Lacan, Seminar XVII 62). Nor is it to be conflated with the “master” that “the (self-proclaimed) revolutionaries are after,” as one of the reviewers suggests. I will shortly expound Lacan’s theory of four discourses to clarify the difference between the master and the master signifier S1.
analyst’s discourse to prove that to be made ashamed is to be granted the possibility of finding one’s own master signifier.

As we know, Lacan’s four discourses share the same basic structure:

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\text{agent} \rightarrow \text{work} \rightarrow \text{production} \quad (\text{Lacan, } \text{Seminar XVII 169})^{12}
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In the analyst’s discourse (a/S2 \(\rightarrow\) S/S1), it is the object a that occupies the dominant position of the agent, with S2, knowledge, functioning in the place of the truth: “It’s on his [the analyst’s] side that there is S2, that there is knowledge—whether he acquires this knowledge through listening to his analysand, or whether it is already acquired, locatable knowledge, which at a certain level can be limited to analytic know-how” (Lacan, Seminar XVII 35). As for “the one up here on the right that does the work,” it refers to the barred subject, and the meaning of the work is to get the truth emerge, namely, to produce S1, the master signifier (Lacan, Seminar XVII 105). As Paul Verhaeghe explicates, in the analyst’s discourse, it is the lost object which grounds the listening position of the analyst, and it “obliges the other to take his own divided being into account” (113). Therefore, while it seems “fairly curious that what he produces is nothing other than the master’s discourse, since it’s S1 which comes to occupy the place of production,” it is actually “another style of master signifier”\(^{13}\) that emerges from the analyst’s

\(^{12}\) Lacan’s four discourses are the master’s discourse, the university’s discourse, the analyst’s discourse, and the hysteric’s discourse. For a detailed analysis, see Seminar XVII. As for secondary references, Verhaeghe’s “Lacan and the Discourse of the Hysteric” in Does the Woman Exist?, Žižek’s “Four Discourses, Four Subjects” in Cogito and the Unconscious, Mark Bracher’s “On the Psychological and Social Functions of Language: Lacan’s Theory of the Four Discourses” in Lacanian Theory of Discourse, to name but a few, have clearly expounded the mechanism of these discourses.

\(^{13}\) The product of the analyst’s discourse is “another style of master signifier” because it no longer functions as a privilege signifier which occupies the position of the master to create the illusion of the transcendental I. As a matter of fact, S1 functions differently in Lacan’s four discourses. In the master’s discourse, S1 is the agent “pretending to be one and undivided” (Verhaeghe 107), the master subject which “asserts itself on the basis of his equality with himself” (Lacan, Seminar XVII 80). Expected by the hysterical subject to bring her the knowledge she thirsts for, S1 plays the master’s function in the position of the other in the hysteric’s discourse. Lying on the side of the receiver, the S1 “is summoned to respond to the hysterical subject’s message by providing a master signifier, a secure meaning that will overcome anxiety and give a sense of stable, meaningful, and respectable identity” (Bracher 67). In the university’s discourse, S1 is the ultimate value situated at the level of truth, turning S2 “pure knowledge of the master, ruled by his command”: “every question about the truth of this sign, about the fact that the sign of the master occupies this place, is properly speaking quashed” (Lacan, Seminar XVII 104-05). That
discourse (Lacan, Seminar XVII 176). To put it more clearly, since the analyst has to “function at the opposite pole from any conscious desire for mastery” (Verhaeghe 114), the patient is forced to subjectivize the hidden truth of his symptom:

Instead of offering his problems to someone else to solve, the patient is confronted with a permutation through which he has to see himself as the centre of the problem. In this way, it is possible for the analysand to come to the truth of his symptom, by exploring his fundamental fantasy. (115)

The aim of the analyst’s discourse, therefore, is for the analysand to find his S1, to learn to gain access to what determines his subjectivity by coming to terms with his symptom, and so is the goal of making ashamed. Regarding the question, “[W]hat does psychoanalysis do with shame?” Žižek finds that the answer lies not in dissolving “the specific ‘pathological’ formula onto which the subject’s jouissance is stuck,” for one “loses the minimal consistency of one’s own being” when one dissolves the sinthome and gets fully unstuck (“Neighbors” 175). Rather, the subject is supposed to face his shame by assuming “the full ontological weight of ‘stuckness’” (175). In a similar vein, Miller asserts that in the dimension of shame, psychoanalysis insightfully points out that “the shameless are shameful” (26). The action of shaming is to confront the subject with his primordial lack, and only when the barred subject takes his shameful lack into account can his master

“almost anything can be represented by those ‘petites letters’” of Lacan’s formal structures, according to Verhaeghe, is not so much a disadvantage of Lacan’s theory as his major breakthrough, for it is this level of abstraction that makes Lacan’s S1 outweighs Freud’s “primal father.” While the Freudian primal father reminds us of “an ageing silverback gorilla, running riot among his females,” it is “very difficult to imagine this ape when writing S1 . . . and it is precisely this that opens up the possibility of other interpretations of this very important function” (Verhaeghe 98).

14 In Lacan’s own words, the analyst is “not supposed to know very much at all”: “The analyst says to whoever is about to begin—’Away you go, say whatever, it will be marvelous.’ He is the one that the analyst institutes as subject supposed to know” (Seminar XVII 52). Under such circumstances, even though the analyst occupies the place of the agent, “he is absolutely not there for himself”: “It is to the analyst and to him alone that this formula I have so often commented on, this ‘Wo es war, soll Ich warden’ is addressed. . . . It is there where the surplus jouissance, the other’s jouissance, was that I, as proffering the psychoanalytic act, must come” (53). Even though we cannot deny the possibility for the analyst’s discourse “to spin off into the discourse of mastery,” Lacan claims that it “has to be located at the opposite of any wish, at least any declared wish, for mastery” (Seminar XVII 69).
signifier emerge from this unbearable real. Making ashamed, in this sense, can be construed as one species of the analyst’s discourse.\textsuperscript{15}

As Miller observes, at the time of “an eclipse of the Other’s gaze as the bearer of shame” (15), Lacan finds it urgent to reactivate the gaze that has the power of shaming. Today, the problem becomes more severe because the gaze is even “castrated of its power to shame” in this “society of the spectacle”:\textsuperscript{16}

... your gaze, far from conveying shame, is nothing other than a gaze that enjoys as well. It is the “Look at them enjoying so as to enjoy!” The secret of the spectacle is that you look at it because you enjoy it. It is you as subject, and not as Other, that is looking. (Miller 15-16)

Here, Miller implies that “the new mode of social relation is one of hyper-permissiveness, in which there is an injunction to enjoy (jouir) as much as one wants, without the judging gaze of the Other in front of whom one might have once felt shamed” (Newman 373). Miller’s view is echoed by other Lacanians: Eric Laurent contends that in this age of “the generalized reality show,” anyone can become “the slave of today’s regime of voyeurism” (239); and Žižek finds that today, “anxiety arises from the prospect of not being exposed to the Other’s gaze all the time” (“Neighbors” 180). To put it simply, nowadays, we are paradoxically both voyeurs and exhibitionists. As the intimidating gaze of the Other has disappeared, the subject may well enjoy looking without feeling ashamed of his voyeuristic

\textsuperscript{15} The main purpose of psychoanalysis is to disrupt the discourse that aims at mastery; therefore, the analyst’s discourse is postulated as the exact opposite of the master’s discourse. The affect of shame, likewise, is expected to bring forth “the subversion or even just the rotation of the master’s discourse” (Lacan, \textit{Seminar XVII} 189), as the epigraph of this section indicates. The identification of “making ashamed” with the analyst’s discourse is thus further vindicated in terms of the goal. Moreover, as Eric Laurent points out, unlike psychotherapies, psychoanalytic action never attempts to alleviate the affects such as shame and guilt. Instead, psychoanalysis foregrounds the importance of recognizing and admitting these affects. The master discourse, on the other hand, does not allow the subject to confront with his traumatic kernel of being. The subject is asked to be blind to his own truth so that he will not fall from the position of the master. The master discourse, seeking “to treat guilt through the act of forgiving,” is once again proved to be “[c]ontrary to ‘making ashamed’” (Laurent 231), which is one version of the analyst’s discourse.

\textsuperscript{16} Miller borrows the term from Guy Debord’s book title, \textit{The Society of the Spectacle}. Todd McGowan, on the other hand, dubs the contemporary society “a society of enjoyment”: “Whereas formerly society has required subjects to renounce their private enjoyment in the name of social duty, today the only duty seems to consist in enjoying oneself as much as possible” (2). The society of enjoyment is surely commensurable with the society of the spectacle, for the command to enjoy “is at once a command to see everywhere and everything” (135).
pleasure. On the other hand, the subject “needs the camera’s gaze as a kind of ontological guarantee of his or her being” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 180). Reality, in a word, has been turned into a spectacle.

The disappearance of the shaming gaze of the Other, however, does not mean that the status quo has been radically challenged. On the contrary, if the function of shame is annulled, then nothing will surprise us any more, and consequently we will take every spectacle for granted. The exposure of the inside and the revelation of everyday life in contemporary society, according to Renata Salecl, are anything but subversive as they go “hand in hand with the dominant ideology” (5). Taking the designs of some fashionable new restaurants for example, Salecl argues that while the work process in these restaurants is deliberately exposed to the public, the spectator sees nothing but a spectacular view:

Everywhere, one now finds restaurants in which, when a customer walks in, he or she sees low-paid workers preparing the food or washing the dishes. We do not think about the hardship that these people might endure or the discomfort they might feel being exposed as if they were in a zoo. (5)

Moreover, if the vulnerability of the human body has once been a crucial factor in producing the feeling of shame, today, its exposure often aims at producing the novel effect. As Anna Wessely notices, it is not uncommon for self-exposing

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17 As a form of the university’s discourse, the society that obeys the command to enjoy/see is in complicity with the dominant ideology in the sense that “one finds nothing else at the level of its truth than the master signifier, insofar as it brings the master’s order” (Lacan, Seminar XVII 104). Matthew Sharpe further illustrates the register of the university’s discourse as follows: “the small a on the top right-hand corner of university discourse is not there simply insofar as knowledge [S2] in university discourse faces, and educates, a more or less uniformed, ignorant individual. The content of the knowledge in question . . . is knowledge of the individual considered as an object, in his or her Truth as a real suffering or enjoying Thing” (309). That is to say, even though the subject appears to be the agent of enjoyment, he is actually passively addressed by the system of knowledge. Indeed, he obeys “the command to see everywhere and everything,” and yet he doesn’t really see anything of importance: no encounter “ever involves the Real; that is, something that might take the subject by surprise and disrupt her/his symbolic order” (McGowan 135). To be more specific, the contemporary subjects who commit themselves to maximal enjoyment actually “remain within the confines of the symbolic order, but they do not recognize these confines” (McGowan19-20). They fail to notice that the enjoyment they seek to maximize is nothing but imaginary enjoyment; it remains “a confined and policed enjoyment, an enjoyment relatively amenable to symbolic authority” (19). For the distinction between imaginary enjoyment and enjoyment in the Real, see McGowan, particularly pp. 28-40.
home videos and artworks to feature “dissected, enlarged, or otherwise mutilated bodies and body parts” (13). While these practices “iconoclastically attack the integrity of the human body as the symbol of autonomous personhood,” the challenge does not reach the level of social control (13). Such practices, as a matter of fact, simply suggest the valorization of the voyeuristic/exhibit ionistic pleasure accompanied by the weakening of shame. Nowadays, bodies are either overexposed or aestheticized into art:

For example, in the case of television reports on war, we can see all kinds of suffering exposed on the screen: the bodies being torn in front of our eyes, people killing each other and even recording their acts with video cameras. In the arts we have similar trend, with violence against the body presented today as art-work. (Salecl 4)

Under such circumstances, even the pain of others is “canonized”: swinging “from privacy and modesty toward public nakedness and display,” “from the seclusion of curtained windows toward glass walls that reveal interior rooms,” our culture now slips further into “the canonization of the intruding investigative reporter” (Nathanson 5). Therefore, in news coverage, we see how distressing images are turned into canonical spectacles: “Wars are now also living room sights and sounds. Information about what is happening elsewhere, called ‘news,’ features conflict and violence—‘If it bleeds, it leads’ runs the venerable guideline of tabloids and twenty-four-hour headline news shows” (Sontag, Regarding 18).

As I have argued, it is the vulnerability we share with others, the unbearable shameful real we encounter, that enables us to reflect on the ethical question, “Do I exist in the first place? Am I not, rather, a hole in the order of being?” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 156). Originating from our narcissistic wound, shame paradoxically protects us from narcissistic omnipotence by alerting us to the fact that perhaps the Other does not share our view of ourselves, or perhaps “I am a hole in the order of being.” The affect of shame inhibits the unconditional celebration of personal enjoyment and thus reduces the risk of the inflation of the ego.18 The threat posed

18 Of course, this is not to say that in the struggle “between a loyalty to the self and an internalized archaic agent directing shame at the self” (Adamson and Clark 11), it is always the latter that gains the edge over the self. The injured self, striving to defend itself against the disapproval of the other, sometimes succeeds in holding the feeling of shame at bay. However, if shame “generates the torment of self-consciousness” (Sedgwick and Frank 136), unacknowledged shame entails more negative responses. See also note 20.
by the inflated ego lies in that, when it comes to the situation in which only personal enjoyment matters, the meaning of life will be totally altered:

... the disappearance of shame alters the meaning of life. It changes the meaning of life because it changes the meaning of death. ... When honor retains its value, life does not prevail over honor. Where there is honor, life is purely and simply devalued. This pure and simple life is what traditionally expressed as *primum vivere*. ... The disappearance of honor instates the *primum vivere* as supreme value, the ignominious life, the ignoble life, life without honor. (Miller 18)

While “feelings of shame concern aspects of selfhood that are imagined to be amenable to correction or change” (Leys 124), the disappearance of shame, on the other hand, inclines the subject to construe saving life as the supreme value, to cling to the idea of “live first” at the cost of his master signifier.19 To put it in Lacan’s words, we actually “run up against an outlandish shame of living” when we take shame to be useless: “Be a bit serious and you will notice that this shame is justified by the fact that you do not die of shame, that is, by your maintaining with all your force a discourse of the perverted master—which is the university discourse” (*Seminar XVII* 182). In terms of the theory of the four discourses, the denial of shame ends up colluding with the university’s discourse because this defense mechanism simply makes us remote from our object a. Whereas the analyst’s discourse encourages the subject to confront with his shameful lack so as to find his own master signifier, the university’s discourse “presumes a nonknowledge on the part of its addressees” (Sharpe 308). As a result, “the more knowledge one uses to reach the object, the more one becomes divided between signifiers, and the further one moves away from home, that is, from the true cause of desire” (Verhaeghe 117).20

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19 As McGowan notes, the role that the master signifier plays “in putting an end to the slippage of meaning and cutting off possibilities has made it unfashionable throughout the emerging society of enjoyment” (42). Its privileged place has been gradually eliminated as we “seem to lack the self-referential signifier that puts a definite end to the slippage of meaning” (42). Predictably, the master signifier will be in eclipse if we become more and more indifferent to the Other or more and more concerned with the tolerance of individual enjoyment. The master signifier “seems the enemy of tolerance and inclusivity” that the enjoying subject is not willing to side with: Because it has the function of excluding certain meanings, to side with the master signifier “is to side with exclusivity” (McGowan 42).

20 Adamson and Clark explain the outcome of the denial of shame in a simpler way: “Excessive and unconscious feelings of shame and guilt, especially feelings of inferiority and unworthiness, and fears of punishment, may prevent one from necessary self-assertion, so that
So far, I have elucidated the importance of shame from a Lacanian perspective. But if the society we live in is more shameless than what Lacan had in mind in the context of 1968, does this mean that we are no longer able to experience shame with regards to the pain of others? In the society of the spectacle, images of suffering may no longer be able to arouse feelings as acute as they used to be. However, it would be hasty to assume that, as we have become habituated to all kinds of spectacular things, it is superfluous to provide more images of atrocity for us to reflect upon. As Sontag points out, “there are cases where repeated exposure to what shocks, saddens, appalls does not use up a full-hearted response” (Regarding 82). Repeated exposure to shaming images, I would argue, is among the aforementioned cases, for we are unlikely to become habituated to the sheer vulnerability to death which we share with others:

Still, there are pictures whose power does not abate, in part because one cannot look at them often. Pictures of the ruin of faces that will always testify to a great iniquity survived, at that cost: the faces of horribly disfigured First World War veterans who survived the inferno of the trenches; the faces melted and thickened with scar tissue of survivors of the American atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the faces cleft by machete blows of Tutsi survivors of the genocidal rampage launched by the Hutus in Rwanda—is it correct to say that people get used to these?21 (83)

one remains indefinitely in a state of shame, feeling weak and powerless” (27). That is to say, if shame is the affect of “indignity, of defeat, of transgression, and of alienation,” which Silvan Tomkins believes to be “felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul” (Sedgwick and Frank 133), it torments the subject more severely when he manages to defend against it. The unacknowledged shame not only leaves the subject “at the mercy of an unidentified but debilitating feeling-state,” but also threatens to become the source of rage and anger (Adamson and Clark 13, 16).

21 Laying bare the unbearable shameful lack of being, the said pictures of war crimes are designated in this paper as “shaming images” even though Sontag herself does not use the term. For Sontag, these images can evoke far more abiding feeling than images which simply shock. Take the shock-photograph printed on the pack of cigarettes for example. The “cancerous lungs, or a stroke-clotted brain, or a damaged heart, or a bloody mouth in acute periodontal distress” may be “sixty times more likely to inspire smokers to quit” than a pack with only the verbal warning (81-82). But shock still has its “term limits”; its power declines as soon as one becomes habituated to the horror of these images (82). The shaming effect of pictures of atrocity, on the other hand, seldom wears out in the same manner, for we can hardly become habituated to the fundamental vulnerability of which the suffering of our others reminds us.
Noting that modern people, as consumers of spectacles, tend to be cynical about the possibility of being moved by images of atrocity, Sontag contends that “it is probably not true that people are responding less” (111, 116). In fact, it may be more true to say that the cynical attitude is simply used to justify our turning away from these images. What Sontag’s appeal—“Let the atrocious images haunt us” (115)—seeks to highlight is the fact that we are still able to respond to and think about the suffering of others as long as we allow ourselves to be “assaulted” by these images (116). Sontag believes that even though atrocious images cannot directly dictate a course of action, they function to invite us “to pay attention, to reflect, to learn, to examine the rationalizations for mass suffering offered by established powers” (117). However, if what is involved in “mass suffering” is the animal, are those atrocious images still able to remind us “of how much suffering caused by human wickedness there is in the world we share with others” (Sontag 114)? To put it another way, if the other that “loses his face” is neither “my imaginary double/semblant” nor “the purely symbolic abstract ‘partner in communication’” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 162) but the animal,\(^{22}\) will we feel ashamed when its vulnerability, in the manner of the traumatic real, is exposed to us? In the last section, I will delve into Taiwan’s media coverage of animals’ suffering to answer this question.

III

Once considered to be a negative emotion, shame, as Leys notices, is now identified as “more productive, even possibly healing, in its very nature” (124). If shame may serve to “defend against egotism and coldness” by curbing the narcissistic need, which sometimes pushes one “to violate the other’s physical or personal boundaries” (Adamson and Clark 27), the question to be raised is whether the other includes the animal whose boundaries are constantly violated by humans. For example, will media coverage of animals’ suffering make us ashamed by reminding us of our own shameful lack? As I have argued, the development of the sense of self in the mirror stage necessarily entails the primordial shame. Since

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\(^{22}\) For Žižek, Levinas’s ethics toward the other should be faulted for failing to take into account the “faceless” neighbor who “hits upon one’s responsibility toward the Other at its most traumatic.” He thus suggests that “we restore to the Levinasian ‘face’ all its monstrosity.” Notably, when Žižek talks about the inhuman neighbor, what he has in mind is not so much the animal other but the “faceless” Muselmann (“Neighbors” 162).
there is no way to make complete the flawed self-image, we are haunted by the primitive fear that our hidden lack will be found out. Even when it is not ourselves but our doubles that are found to be deficient, we experience shame all the same, inasmuch as the feeling of shared passivity is evoked. Theoretically speaking, we can be made ashamed by the animal other as well, for “the question of our shame is connected to that of a passivity, or suffering, or vulnerability that we share with animals in relation to death” (Leys 126). Jacques Derrida, for example, has accounted for the experience of feeling ashamed when caught naked in front of his cat (“The Animal” 372). Postulating the animal as the seeing other that has been looking at us (372), Derrida believes that the animal also has the shaming gaze to bring man to consciousness of his fundamental lack, just like his cat’s presence suffices to make him ashamed of his nakedness. Likewise, if the animal’s “inability” is exposed to us, we are apt to feel ashamed, owing to “the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of this impossibility, the anguish of this vulnerability” (Derrida, “The Animal That” 396). However, “it is rare for someone to declare that he experiences shame when exposed to the

21 Deliberately opposing the questions about whether animals can speak or reason, Derrida departs from the Benthamian question “Can they suffer?” to argue that being able to suffer is “no longer a power” as it testifies to “a not-being-able” (“The Animal” 396). For Derrida, the question concerning power or capability, such as “having the power to give, to die, to bury one’s dead, to dress, to work, to invent a technique, and so on,” mainly focuses on the power consisting in “having such and such a faculty.” But as soon as the question “Can they suffer?” is posed, “what counts is not only the idea of a transitivity or activity; the important thing is rather what impels it towards self-contradiction”: namely, concerning the ability of inability, “‘Can they suffer?’ amounts to asking ‘can they not be able to?’” (395-96).

22 For Derrida, “a human subject is constrained in its autonomy, thrown into a pregiven complex situation which remains impenetrable to him and for which he is not fully accountable” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 137). For Lacanians, “in the core of my being, I am irreducibly vulnerable, exposed to the Other(s)” (Žižek 138). Notably, while they both ground the responsibility toward the other in the primordial finitude, they are not unanimous in terms of ethical stances. According to Žižek, the Derridean ethical gesture implies “a stance of fundamental forgiveness and a tolerant ‘live and let live’ attitude” as it calls for the acceptance and respect of each other’s vulnerability and limitation (138). However, the appeal to tolerance of others is not radical enough for Žižek. He believes that the foundation of the true ethical step is universal indifference: “I am indifferent toward All, the totality of the universe, and as such, I actually love you, the unique individual who stands/sticks out of this indifferent background” (183). Employing the Lacanian formula of sexuation, Žižek argues that “I do not love you all’ is the only foundation of ‘there is nobody that I do not love,’” while “the universal proposition ‘I love you all’ acquires the level of actual existence only if ‘there is at least one whom I hate’” (183).
gaze of a cat rather than that of another human being” (Leys 126). That is to say, we are seldom made ashamed by the animal which does not have a human face for us to identify with as our other.\textsuperscript{25} Worse, the news media rarely offers readers the opportunity of encountering the look of animals. Unable to meet our gaze, these animals in pain can hardly make us ashamed by reminding us of our own mortality.\textsuperscript{26}

Cary Wolfe suggests that the law of culture has arranged its species significations on a kind of grid. This species grid, according to him, consists of animalized animals, humanized animals, animalized humans, and humanized human (101).\textsuperscript{27} In our culture, we find that once the animal is pigeonholed as the animalized animal, its sacrifice is taken for granted. We continue to legitimize our ongoing practices of violence against these non-human others and even mark the killing of them as “a noncriminal putting to death” (Wolfe 100).\textsuperscript{28} Accordingly, their anguish or death will not be rendered as suffering in the news media. On the contrary, the violence involved in the subjection of animals will be either downplayed or legitimized. Take Taiwan’s media coverage of the animalized animals for example. In 2007, a report published by the Environment and Animal Society of Taiwan (EAST) showed that inhumane animal slaughter is still prevalent in the country’s meat markets. A film that formed part of the report showed slaughterhouses where panicked live hogs are hung head down before having their throats cut. The electronic media, however, seems to have taken a low-key approach

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Derrida asks us to rethink if it is justified to postulate radical discontinuity between animal and human. When he poses the question, “In order to break with the image and with the likeness of a fellow must not this beyond of partnership—thus beyond the specular or imaginary duel—be at least situated in a place of alterity that is radical enough to break with every identification of an image of self, with every fellow living creature, and so with every fraternity or human proximity, with all humanity?” (“And Say the Animal” 134), the ahuman Other he has in mind certainly includes the animal.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Though it is likely that a wounded animal’s gaze may strike deep into the heart of man, I am not suggesting that to be made ashamed by an animal presupposes that the animal’s gaze must literally be caught in the full glare of the media. As I will argue later, the reason why animals in Taiwan’s media coverage seldom meet our gaze is because the representation does not “photograph” the spectator by capturing his object cause of desire.
\item \textsuperscript{27} The categories I am going to discuss are animalized animals and humanized animals. As for the other two categories, Wolfe construes the humanized human as a wishful category that is nothing but ideological fiction. Animalized humans, on the other hand, compose “the most troubling category” in the sense that “all manner of brutalizations carried out by cultural prescription can serve to animalize humans, as can reminders of human beings’ mammalian, or even merely bodily, organic existence” (101). Wolfe further uses The Silence of the Lambs as a case in point to illustrate the meaning of animalized humans. See Wolfe 100-07.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Wolfe borrows this term from Derrida, who criticizes carno-phallogocentrism for justifying its ingestion of the corpse of the animal (Derrida, “Eating Well” 112-13).
\end{itemize}
to the news and has refrained from broadcasting the more disturbing footage. Relevant debate, meanwhile, was scarce in the print media. As a result, the story had one day of exposure before quickly vanishing from public view. As long as hogs are categorized as animalized animals in the service of the so-called well-being of humankind, we are allowed to remain unaffected by their suffering. Animal experiments, likewise, are justified on the ground that sacrifice of lab animals can contribute to major advances in medical sciences. Therefore, when the newspaper shows the picture of a rat being installed with a titanium intravital hepatic (liver) imaging chamber on its belly (Fig. 3), the goal of this report is far from awakening our compassion or drawing our attention to the welfare of lab animals. Rather, the journalist lauds the researchers and marvels at the advanced technology, highlighting how this window-like device may provide valuable information on medical treatment. Notably, when one of the researchers is asked if the technique could begin clinical trial, he replies that “installing a ‘window’ in a person's abdomen might not get the greenlight from the hospital’s ethics committee” (Lu 2). The implication seems to be that the use of lab animals, instead of being an ethical controversy to be engaged in, is indisputably justified. Thus marginalized and objectified, the animalized animals in the media representation are not allowed to look at us, not to mention shame us through their suffering.

If the animals in pain are what Wolfe calls the humanized animals, that is, animals we exempt from the sacrificial regime by “endowing them with ostensibly human features” (101), will their suffering attract further attention in the papers and thus succeed in making us ashamed? Closer investigation would reveal that the media still plays down the infliction of pain these humanized animals endure,

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29 The aforementioned passage is cited from my article “Deconstructing Animal Slaughter,” translated by Lin Ya-ti. For a detailed analysis, see Huang 8. The Chinese version, titled “Face the Truth of What is Going on in Abattoirs,” was published earlier in China Times, 23 Apr. 2007.

30 On the other hand, if deaths of animals, instead of resulting from the cruelty human beings inflict upon them, are caused by some natural disaster, there will be much sensational reporting in the press. For example, a tornado hit a pig farm in Tainan county in 2007; some pigs died after they were plucked from the ground and thrown through the air. At least two newspapers gave over their front-page to the incident. Both China Times and United Daily News showed the headline-grabbing picture of a pig slumped over the top of a fence (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). The reports, notably, were not meant to encourage us to spare a thought for pigs. One newspaper even focuses on how fortunate it is that no person was injured in the tornado (Tsai A1).

31 I am not suggesting that the success of in vivo multiphoton microscopy and its contribution to human welfare are not worthy of celebration. What I want to stress is that the pain lab animals generally endure should not be naturalized. Only when we face the fact that lab animals can suffer will we seriously ponder how to spare them from some cruel and unnecessary experiments.
especially when it is humankind that perpetuates animal cruelty and abuse.\textsuperscript{32} During the past few years, many instances of animal abuse in Taiwan have been reported, but the media is inclined to show pleasant pictures in which the abused animals are either affectionately cared for by animal rights activists or properly looked after by veterinarians (Fig. 5, Fig. 6, and Fig. 7). Instead of representing the abused animals in a way that may remind us of our own vulnerability, these reports intend to delight readers, consoling them with the fact that the animals have miraculously recovered from severe injuries.\textsuperscript{33} Given that “to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude” (Sontag, \textit{Regarding 46}), we have reasons to claim what most media coverage manages to exclude are scenes that would make spectators ashamed.

In the aforementioned cases, I find both the photographed images and the captions flawed in terms of the effect of making ashamed. It is evident that media coverage of this sort is reluctant to facilitate the meeting of gaze between readers and the abused animals. Nonetheless, I am not suggesting that those pictures in which the exposure of wounds figures centrally are necessarily capable of making the spectator ashamed.\textsuperscript{34} Nor am I going to insist on the Benjaminian stance which, according to Sontag, suggests “that the right caption beneath a picture could ‘rescue it from the ravages of modishness and confer upon it a revolutionary use value’ (\textit{On Photography} 107). As Sontag contends, “even an entirely accurate caption is only one interpretation, necessarily a limiting one, of the photograph to which it is attached” (109). Once we take into account the fact that “no caption can permanently restrict or secure a picture’s meaning” (108), we will find it vain to

\textsuperscript{32} If the animal’s anguish is caused by other animals rather than human beings, then media reports are willing to make use of the incident to present a spectacular view. For example, \textit{China Times} once gave front-page coverage to the incident of a mother squirrel’s fighting a huge stray dog to protect her young against injury. In addition to showing four consecutive shots of the very incident (Fig. 4), the caption graced the mother squirrel as a selfless defender of progeny and described the young squirrel’s survival as testifying to the victory of maternal love (Dung A1). This sensational report, tainted by anthropomorphism, categorizes the squirrels as humanized animals in order to cater to readers.

\textsuperscript{33} Even when the abused animals fail to survive the torment, sometimes media reports still do all they can to dissimulate the cruelty. For example, when \textit{China Times} carried the story of how the stray dogs adopted by Mr. Chung and his sister were ruthlessly poisoned to death, the picture it used to illustrate the story was one in which the dogs appeared to be lively and cheerful (Chen A14).

\textsuperscript{34} As Steve Baker notices, sometimes the stories of badly mistreated animals get into the tabloids simply “as a form of sensationalist display . . . which is broadly equivalent to their enjoyment of animals the rest of the time” (193). The distinction between mere spectacles and the images which solicit the spectator’s gaze, as this paper argues, mainly lies in that the latter may enable the subject to be confronted by the sense of uncanniness resulting from his fundamental lack.
urge the reporters to spell out the truth of certain photographed images by “right” captions. That is not to say the caption thus plays no part in supporting any ethical plea or social concern. John Berger has indicated a direction for incorporating photography into social action:

If we want to put a photograph back into the context of experience, social experience, social memory, we have to respect the laws of memory. We have to situate the printed photograph so that it acquires something of the surprising conclusiveness of that which was and is. What Brecht wrote about acting in one of his poem is applicable to such a practice. . . . “So you should simply make the instant stand out, without in the process hiding what you are making it stand out from.” . . . the better the photograph, the fuller the context which can be created. (65)

According to Berger, even though the system of capitalism can easily accommodate any photograph, an alternative photographic practice which resists against the system is still possible (60). One way to realize such an alternative photographic practice is “to construct a context for a photograph, to construct it with words, to construct it with other photographs, to construct it by its place in an ongoing text of photographs and images” (64). Compared with the news media which tends to “wring the last drops of sensationalism from the issue” of animal cruelty (Baker 203), some animal activists’ tactics of representing the scenes of animal abuse, I would argue, are far more competent to re-create the context of animals’ suffering and thereby enable us to be affected by these photographs. The activists who force us to witness the animals’ suffering by showing us graphic images, however, are often denigrated as “terrorists.”

As Baker points out, the common factor in many of the most effective animal rights photographs is precisely that “they are not pleasing to look at” (220). For example, in 2005, EAST showed

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35 According to Baker’s observation, sometimes the activists are almost “seen as a greater danger than those perpetrating animal cruelty and abuse” (195). What is more, they are even accused of faking the pictures of atrocities. As Sontag points out, the standard response to “photographic corroboration of the atrocities committed by one’s own side” is that “the pictures are a fabrication, that no such atrocity ever took place” (Regarding 11). Little wonder that some people would try to disavow the cruelty we human beings inflict upon animals by arguing that such horrible images are nothing but fabrications.

36 Baker also notes that “the ‘reality’ of the image will count for nothing if that reality seems too horrific to be countenanced” and thus acceptability of the imagery is a difficult question that
video footage of the Chinese fur farm at which animals including foxes and minks were skinned alive. While fur fashionistas were thus severely faulted for endorsing the cruel fur industry, their defenders claimed that it was the animal activists that should be criticized, for they ruthlessly launched scathing criticism of their fellows, as if only the welfare of animals mattered (“Complications of Anti-Fur” 2). The report even implied that it was unethical to force us to see how those fur-bearing animals meet their gruesome deaths. Despite charges of this sort, EAST’s anti-fur campaign attracted much attention and won much support. To a certain extent, the success can be attributed to their compelling anti-fur video, in which fur-bearing animals were brutally killed. Once we learn from the representation that some animals were “breathing in ragged gasps and blinking slowly” even after they were skinned, we can no longer consider fur to be a symbol of elegance (“Shocking has to be carefully dealt with. Activists have to “strike a balance between the responsibility to reproduce the often gruesome pictorial evidence of animal abuse, and the awareness that it would be counterproductive to sicken readers to the point where they would no longer be prepared to look at it and read about it” (220). Baker’s warning is a reminder that the exposure of animal cruelty can be political effective as well as offensive. Indeed, as one of the reviewers suggests, aggressivity may arise in the subject when he encounters his fundamental lack. In this paper, I cannot resolve the difficult question concerning how the subject can successfully overcome his aggressivity caused by the fundamental lack. Nevertheless, as I have pointed out, the denial of shame would be more disastrous in the sense that, as the catalyst for aggressivity, it often leads to the subject’s own detriment as well as the violation of the other’s boundaries. Lying bare how aggressivity is actually an ineffective defense mechanism we adopt to counteract our primordial shame, this paper may at least make us rethink if the acknowledgement of the sheer animal vulnerability is a better way to deal with our fundamental lack. According to Cora Diamond, the core thought of Costello’s lectures is that “[t]he awareness we each have of being a body with limbs that have extension in space, of being alive to the world” (33). Indeed, we are not told what we can do to cope with the terror and repulsion resulted from the shared vulnerability. However, through Costello’s lectures, Coetzee does give us “a view of a profound disturbance of soul” and express “a mode of understanding of the kind of animal we are” (Diamond 11). Given that social change is not possible unless the subjects make use of “the insights attained concerning their own conflicting desires” (Bracher 78), we have reasons to believe that the exposure of the real, referring the subjects to their innermost desires, is a way to bring about revolutionary alternations. In this light, even though the sheer animal vulnerability is wounding (Diamond 22), the very acknowledgment of this wound may enable the subjects to actively assume their ethical responsibility toward the (animal) other.
Look”). It is also inconceivable that we can unhesitatingly disavow the dying animal’s gaze by assuming that “after all, it’s only an animal.” According to the report, one undercover investigator recorded “a skinned raccoon dog on the heap of carcasses who had enough strength to lift this bloodied head and stare into the camera” (“Shocking Look”). Though the said animal’s skin had been stripped off, it remained conscious for nearly an hour, all the while struggling to swivel its head to cast a look at its own bloody body (“It is Still Alive” A1). When the picture of this debilitated raccoon dog appears in the print media (Fig. 8), it not only startles many readers but threatens to make them ashamed. Whether the look in these dying animals’ eyes conveys a sense of disbelief or even accusation is debatable. But unless we deny the animal any possibility of intentional responsiveness and attribute the apparently self-reflexive glance to a programmed reaction, we can hardly hold fast to the anthropocentric idea that man is the only metaphysical subject capable of questioning its Being.

As the animal’s gaze “exceeds the ‘thingness’ of a nonhuman being and penetrates the human sphere” (Lippit 1119), would it not become a shaming gaze reminding us of our shared vulnerability? What must be added is that the gaze which makes possible the “irrevocable contact between human and nonhuman beings” (Lippit 1119) is not necessarily a seen gaze. According to Lacan, the gaze “is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which . . . I am photographed” (FFC 106). Disrupting the hegemony of the diagram of vision in which the one-who-looks is situated at the site marked “geometral point,” Lacan brings the point of light into his diagram to

37 An advocate of anti-fur campaign, for example, interprets the wounded animals’ gaze as accusing humans of their barbarity and calls on the public to “understand that look of disbelief in their eyes” (Jyothsnay).

38 According to the Cartesian tradition of animal-machine, “in the case of the animal, the very word response signifies nothing more than a programmed reaction, deprived of all responsibility or even of any ‘intentional’ responsiveness” (Derrida, “And Say the Animal” 173). In other words, like a machine that obeys a fixed program, the animal is said to be incapable of responding; it merely reacts to stimuli.

39 The difference between human and animal posited by Heidegger, for Henry Staten, smacks of such anthropocentrism insofar as he alleges that the animal cannot return to itself and cannot reappropriate itself; “Lacking the power to reflect or to pose the question of Being, it is always too close to itself for any such return, and must remain forever exiled from authentic self-proximity” (348).

40 For the diagram of vision, namely, the perspectival model, see Lacan’s FFC 91. On the same page, we find another diagram which introduces the point of light. For Lacan, it is the superimposition of the two triangles in the third diagram that may account for the mechanism of gaze, for it indicates how the viewer, the geometral subject, is at the same time a picture under the gaze (106).
argue that the subject is literally “called into the picture, and represented here as caught” (92) as long as he is illuminated by the light of the object he looks at. But under what conditions will the viewing subject receive the effects of light and become himself a picture? Directing our attention to the hyphen which splits the term *photographed* into “photo” and “graph,” Copjec hints at the possibility of relating the latter to Lacan’s “graph of desire” (32). Simply put, it is because the subject is split by desire that he feels as if he is photographed by the light emitted from the object of his own look. Copjec’s interpretation echoes the view I mentioned in the first section; that is, the subject will be looked at whenever his object cause of desire is animated. Considered in this light, it is evident that the counter-gaze which calls the subject into the scene may have nothing to do with gaze in its literal sense. Take the front cover image of *Mourning for the Dogs* for example (Fig. 9). On the bottom of a cage used to confine stray dogs, there is only a pair of legs left stuck in the gap. The stray has been put to death by electrocution, but the dried-up limbs that were torn from its body, as the caption says, still “display the most heartbreaking posture of the animals in Taiwan.” In this case, the animal in pain is not directly represented in the picture, and thus, literally speaking, there is no way for us to meet its gaze. At first sight, we may not even know what we are looking at. Nevertheless, the image of the disjointed limbs, appearing in the form of a stain like the moth’s *ocelli*, will be made to see at the moment when it reminds us of our primitive fear of fragmentation. Despite the subject’s tendency to cling to a unified self, the image of a synthetic ego is likely to disintegrate if he is confronted by “images of castration, emasculation, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, and bursting open of the body” (Lacan, *Écrits* 85). Therefore, even though the stray itself is absent in this very picture, as the uncanny image of its disjointed legs uncovers how the corporeal body of the human is also prone to fragmentation, it has the potential to solicit the spectator’s gaze by gazing at him.

There is no denying that photographs in themselves do not narrate and that they just “preserve instant appearances” (Berger 55). Therefore, we can hardly take for granted that the activists’ representation of animal cruelty will necessarily achieve their intended effect. On the other hand, it is just because “the photographs carry no certain meaning in themselves, because they are like images in the memory

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41 In 1997, Life Conservationist Association conducted a research on the public stray dog shelters in Taiwan and published a book titled *Mourning to the Dogs—Surveyed Report on the Current Status of the Stray Dogs Pounds and Shelters in Taiwan*. Here, the English translation of the book’s title is modified.
of a total stranger, that they lend themselves to any use” (Berger 57). In other words, if the news media is inclined to use photographs of animals to endorse voyeurism or sensationalism, animal rights activists can turn the tables by using it in an alternative manner. Capturing the animal’s vulnerability and creating an adequate context for it, as I have indicated, is one way to make the shaming gaze stand out from the photographed image. And the mechanism of this alternative practice is not unlike the mode of the analyst’s discourse we explained earlier in this paper. In the analyst’s discourse, the analyst’s knowledge functions in the position of the truth without occupying the place of the agent, the object a. This “learned ignorance” of the analyst, paradoxically, opens up a way for the subject to “gain access to what determined his or her subjectivity” (Verhaeghe 114). Likewise, if the photographer, knowing how to reactivate the gaze of the Other and provide a context of the image, can think of himself “not so much as a reporter to the rest of the world but, rather, as a recorder for those involved in the events photographed” (Berger 62), then his intention to use photography alternatively will not turn him into a self-appointed spokesman seeking to pronounce the sole truth. Instead, the photographer may enable the spectator to be confronted by the object a standing out from the photographed image, and the confrontation may thereby create an impetus for the spectator to produce new master signifiers.

Ostensibly, encouraging different subjects to produce new master signifiers for themselves seems to be an ineffective way to bring about social change. In fact, as Mark Bracher suggests, a procedure promoting change without offering advice, without imposing the master signifier upon the subjects, “not only makes the challenge more forceful” but also “constitutes a different ethical position”.

It is more powerful in that, as experience demonstrates and as Lacan’s account of psychological change explains, merely asserting a new system of knowledge or belief (the discourse of the University,

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42 Actually, Lacan has cautioned the student of Vincennes against the danger of the revolutionary aspiration: “I would tell you that, always, the revolutionary aspiration has only a single possible outcome—of ending up as the master’s discourse. . . . What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one” (Seminar XVII 207). Bracher further elucidates Lacan’s stance by claiming that for Lacan the best thing to do to make revolution possible is to be not anarchists but analysts, “which means positioning oneself in such a way as to interrogate how culture participates in the position of mastery”: “any real social change must involve not just changes in laws and public policy but alterations in the ideals, desires, and jouissances of a significant number of individual subjects—precisely the sorts of alteration that psychoanalytic treatment involves” (73).
which promotes S2) or insisting on new ideals or values (the discourse of the Master, asserting S1) or lamenting or protesting the current state of affairs (the discourse of the Hysteric, asserting S) often has little effect. . . . The psychoanalytic path outlined here thus has the potential to be less violent and authoritarian . . . in addition to being more effective in undermining oppressive structure and promoting collective psychological and (thereby) social change. (78-79)

Viewed in this light, even though spectators’ interpretations of a certain shaming image do not necessarily coincide, as long as each one is inclined to reinstate the agency of the master signifier for himself, the political potentials of photography of atrocities can still be realized. Putting the photographer in the seat of the analyst, I suggest, may serve as a way to deal with the eclipse of the Other’s gaze without falling prey to the tyranny of a new master discourse.

**Coda**

Echoing Lacanians’ admonition, this paper stresses the importance of making ashamed in the hope of reinstating the agency of the master signifier. I suggest that we manage to retrieve the shaming gaze in spite of the eclipse of the seeing Other. Take the representation of animal others’ suffering for example. Instead of satisfying spectators’ voyeurism or misleading them into naturalizing the pain of others, representation of this sort should aim at making them ponder the ways to call a halt to cruelty. As the media coverage of animal abuse today seldom seeks to arouse spectators’ feeling of shame, I contend that we turn to animal rights activists’ representation for discussion to see if it achieves the purpose of making ashamed. Of course, I am aware that photographs of an atrocity, as Sontag rightly points out, “may give rise to opposing responses. A call for peace. A cry for revenge. Or simply the bemused awareness . . . that terrible things happen” (Regarding 13). However, the fact that spectators’ responses may not be unanimous does not mean it is useless to proffer them atrocious images to contemplate, or it is unnecessary to “bring the animal into the visibility it is currently denied” (Baker 217). On the contrary, just because more and more people tend to explain away the suffering of others by assuming that “things like this happened,” distressing images which have potential for making spectators ashamed cannot be accentuated too much. In addition, this paper stresses that the experience of being shamed by the animal’s suffering is far from absurd. In fact, the shaming gaze does not presuppose some figure of the
human other, for it is “not a determinate gaze of a person in reality, but of the nonexistent pure Gaze of the big Other” (Žižek, “Neighbors” 177-78). If we are made ashamed only when confronted by the suffering of human beings, it means we are still “privileging a One as the neighbor” (182). Justice, however, “begins when I remember the faceless many left in shadow in this privileging of the One,” and thus it “must disregard the privileged One whom I ‘really understand’” (182). In this light, being shamed by the pain of the animal other may serve as a point of departure for us to assume our ethical responsibility toward our faceless neighbor.

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Žižek contends that, in order to practice justice, one must avoid the vicious cycle of “understanding”: “One can ‘understand’ everything; even the most hideous crime has an ‘inner truth and beauty’ when observed from within” (184). That is to say, if we remain caught within this vicious cycle, we will ignore our primordial ethical obligation toward the Other.
Appendix

Fig. 1
Fig. 2
After the Tornado.
From Lin A1.
Fig. 3
The Installation of IHIC in a Mouse, with its Metabolism Now Viewed In Vivo.
From Li A10.
Fig. 4
Fighting with Stray Dogs, a Mother Squirrel Saved Her Child.
From Dung A1.
Fig. 5
The Teacher’s Care Transforms the Stray Dog into a Well-Trained Ball-Catcher.
From Ju C3.
Fig. 6
I Will Miss You.
From Wang C3.
Fig. 7
“Mrs. Blackie” on Guard as the School Watchdog: The Maimed Dog Patrols to Express Gratitude for Saving Its Life.
From Gan A11.
Fig. 8
It is Still Alive.
From “It is Still Alive” A1.
Fig. 9
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