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Image Credit: Christine and the Queens

ABSTRACT

Aristotle [1] has much to say about emotional appeals in *On Rhetoric*. In Book II, he defines emotions and explains their conditions. He positions “Shame” and “Shamelessness” as contrary feelings, though agitated by common pains, and chronicles the tendency of all emotions to interact together. This emotional interaction is similar to Sara Ahmed’s [2] concept of “sticky” emotions, which she describes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Although emotions come into contact via circulation, Aristotle does not describe how “Shame” and “Shamelessness” interact with “Pride,” which might be assumed to be an antonym of the former and synonym of the latter. Ahmed takes this idea up in her chapter, “Queer Feelings,” and suggests that these are queer feelings, uniquely embodied by queer subjects. This essay tests how Redcar [3], a French pop singer known as Christine and the Queens, queerly embodies queer feelings in his song, “The Walker” and reveals where Aristotle and Ahmed fail to agree on the rhetoric of queer feelings.

KEY OUTCOMES

- » The direction of Redcar’s gaze indicates that shame dwells in his eyes, and shamelessness dwells in his chin.
- » Redcar’s bruises represent shame’s physical impression and a queerly obstructed way of gazing.
- » Hate, anger, calmness, and fear “stick” to Redcar’s shame and shamelessness, but pride does not.
- » Redcar reconciles with past and present wounds, while anticipating future ones.
- » Redcar keeps his transgressors anonymous, so we cannot hold them accountable.

(Chorus): I am out for a walk
And I will not be back 'til they're staining my skin
This is how I chose to talk
With some violent hits, violent blossoms akin
Every night I do walk
And if they're looking down
I'm offering my chin
This is how I chose to talk
With some violent hits, violent blossoms akin
(Verse 1): There's a way to truly be seen
By furiously skimming in
Forget the jewels, I'm livid
Veins are shutting out fine on their own
Blood on my cheeks, birds come by
One of my stomps and they fly
People politely smile to make sure I won't come any closer
(Verse 2): Now a swollen eye is four days
Of curious calm, snow in May
Way better off on my own
Since no one cries there's no one to blame
It hurts, I feel everything
As my sense of self's wearing thin
Such pains can be a delight
Far from when I could drown in my shame

- “The Walker,” Christine and the Queens

[1] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, translated by W. R. Roberts, 350 BC.E.
[2] S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. City, Country: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
[3] Redcar, “The Walker,” *Chris (English Version)*, released as Christine and the Queens: Because Music, 2018.