Naked: The Dark Side Of Shame And Moral Life

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Introduction

The Two Faces of Shame

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Abstract and Keywords

The introduction surveys the philosophical literature about shame. Philosophers have long been troubled by the dual nature of shame. On the one hand, it seems to be an emotion that is central to the development of virtue. On the other hand, it arises in cases that have no obvious moral import and it can hinder rather than help moral progress. Much of the philosophical literature has aimed to find a way to reconcile these two sides of shame by explaining away or de-emphasizing one of the two sides. This introduction raises questions about the viability of those strategies and provides an outline for the rest of the book.

Keywords: shame, sex, nudity, moral emotion, moral psychology, shamelessness

Agony. Who would have thought that my name and fortune
Could square so well together! My name is Ajax:
Agony is its meaning.

—AJAX (Sophocles 1969: 23)

Shame is a jekyll-and-hyde emotion with two faces. The first face is a positive one. Looking at this face, we can see an emotion that plays a valuable role in moral life. As moral philosophers frequently argue, shame is something of a moral companion to guilt. While we feel guilt about particular wrong actions and choices, shame has a broader scope. We feel shame when we fail to be the people that we hope or strive to be. Shame understood this way is a valuable emotion of self-assessment. It not only extends to aspects of our characters
rather than just to our actions and choices; it also helps us in the task of moral self-improvement. If we feel shame when we fail to live up to our values, we can use those painful feelings as a warning and a reminder. As Williams argues, a moral emotional landscape without shame is an impoverished one because it envisions “the moral self as characterless” (1993: 95). If we care (morally) about what sorts of people we are and what sorts of people we ought to be, then the first face of shame shows it to be a central part of moral life. (p.2)

But shame also seems to have another face—a negative one. We might feel shame when we fail to live up to our ideals, but we also feel shame about being low class or uneducated. We feel shame about being ugly. We feel shame about being seen naked, performing bodily functions, masturbating, and having sex. Victims of violence and abuse feel shame about their victimization, people feel shame when they struggle with mental illness and addiction, and people who are disabled feel shame about their disabilities. We feel shame about things that seem to have nothing to do with our moral character, and we also feel shame mostly in front of other people. If this is true, shame seems to be more about threats to our reputations or social standing than about our moral failings. What is perhaps most troubling is that shame seems to bear a connection to violence. People who feel shame sometimes engage in self-destructive behavior, and they sometimes engage in aggressive behavior toward others. Given these sorts of cases, not all philosophers are keen to defend shame’s place in moral life. Those who see this face of shame suggest that we ought to be wary of being too approving of it—they warn that its positive face comes at a high price. Some philosophers go further and suggest that we would make moral progress if we got over feelings of shame.

The two faces of shame give rise to two philosophical puzzles. First, why is shame so varied? Is it because there are two kinds of shame that correspond to each of the faces? Are both of these descriptions picking out shame, or is one of them picking out some other emotion? This first puzzle is a conceptual one: how should we understand the nature of shame given these divergent views? The second puzzle is about the moral status of shame. The positive face seems to suggest that shame is a valuable moral emotion. Yet the negative face seems to suggest that it is an emotion that is contrary to morality. How do we end up claiming that the same emotion is both moral and immoral?

The aim of this book is to tackle both of these puzzles. As I will argue, I believe previous ways of solving the mystery of shame have been unsuccessful to varying degrees. In this introduction, I give a very broad sketch of those attempts, which I then discuss in more detail in the chapters. For now, let me
provide a broad overview of the ways that moral philosophers generally try to reconcile the two faces of shame.

1. Reconciling the Two Faces

Moral philosophers have tried different strategies to try to reconcile the two faces of shame, but those strategies have downsides or odd consequences. Those who wish to defend the first face usually try to show that the second face is somehow mistaken. Consider, for instance, cases where we feel shame about being ugly. Short of plastic surgery, there is very little we can do about our appearances. We are for the most part simply born looking how we look. As such, we might think that feeling shame about our appearances is irrational. This response suggests that the shame we feel about being ugly is not really shame. But why should this be the case? Notice that we typically do not make these claims about other emotions. For example, survivor’s guilt is puzzling on many common philosophical accounts of guilt, but few people would deny that survivor’s guilt is guilt.¹³ Even if we admit that the negative face of shame is irrational somehow, such a conclusion does not entail that it is not shame after all. Further, even if these cases of shame are irrational, why should we then exclude them from our philosophical accounts of shame? We have, as Deigh writes, no reason to “regard the class of rational or reasonable experiences of a given emotion as privileged for the purposes of conceptual inquiry” (1983: 237). The claim that we can safely exclude the negative face of shame because it is irrational betrays an assumption that only the best or proper cases of an emotion are important. Yet when we are trying to do thorough conceptual analysis of an emotion, the decision to only consider the “good cases” seems arbitrary.

This strategy looks even more puzzling once we realize that it forces us to conclude that the most familiar cases of shame are by and large irrational. For example, most philosophers acknowledge that it is actually quite common to feel shame about things that are beyond our control.¹⁴ For those who want to defend the positive face of shame, this presents a problem, since feelings of shame are supposed to be a morally valuable form of self-assessment that helps us improve ourselves. How are we supposed to improve what we cannot change? If we claim that these cases are irrational, then we can maintain that “normal” feelings of shame can still help us improve ourselves. But if we commonly feel shame about things that are beyond our control, this means most common cases of shame are irrational. It seems at the very least odd that a philosophical account of an emotion ends up having to claim that some of the most paradigmatic examples of an emotion are irrational.

Philosophers who instead emphasize shame’s negative face can reconcile the two faces by arguing that we do not really need the positive face of shame. First, they argue that the downsides to the negative face outweigh the benefits of the positive face. Even if we concede that shame can sometimes play a positive role in our lives, that positive role does not mitigate the bad effects enough to justify
maintaining our liability to it. Nussbaum, for instance, claims that shame leads to a harmful pursuit of perfection and invulnerability (2004: 336). Even though she acknowledges that shame can sometimes be constructive, she believes it may still have this “concealed narcissism” at its core (216). As such, we ought not encourage others or ourselves to feel it. Second, those who are wary of the negative face of shame might conclude that whatever good work shame does can be done by other less problematic emotions. Kekes, for example, argues that instead of feeling shame, we should respond to our failures with “anger at ourselves, resolution to improve, the desire to make amends, and a quest for understanding why we did what we did” (1988: 292). If all of these responses are available and they are not as negative as shame, perhaps we are better off feeling them instead.

One of the downsides to this strategy, however, is that it has no ready explanation for why shamelessness is a serious fault or vice. If we would be better off without shame, then why are shameless people so obnoxious? There seems to be something wrong with the person who never feels shame. Consider Mason’s example from Graham Greene’s novella “Doctor Fischer of Geneva, or the Bomb Party” (2009: 408). Dr. Fischer has a circle of acquaintances called the “Toads.” The Toads try desperately to ingratiate themselves to Dr. Fischer by allowing him to humiliate them in exchange for gifts (409). They “allow their fingers to be crushed in the claws of live lobsters … or don bibs and eat cold porridge” (409). The Toads’ desire to ingratiate themselves to Dr. Fischer is shameless; they will sink to any level in order to get a gift or a favor. Examples like this seem to support the positive face of shame: if the Toads had a stronger sense of shame, they would not stoop to such lows. It appears that shame would prevent them from failing so spectacularly to live up to some ideals of character. Those who emphasize the negative face of shame might be right to point out its potential for damage, but the Toads illustrate the downside of having no shame at all.

The philosophical literature is dominated by these two faces of shame and attempts to reconcile them. The question seems to be, Which face is the true one? Is it the positive face that helps us realize our moral failings and improve ourselves? Or is it the negative one that causes so much pain and self-destruction that we would be better off without?

2. The One Face of Shame

I will argue that neither face is the true face of shame because shame does not have two faces; it just has one complex face. This book aims to contribute to the philosophical literature on moral emotions by presenting a unified account of shame. I will argue that, while we might feel shame in a wide variety of cases, we only feel one shame. The shame that we feel about our moral failings is the same shame we feel about being low class or ugly. Unlike those who emphasize the positive face of shame, I will argue that there is no need to think that the
troubling cases of shame are irrational. I will not try to deny or explain away shame’s dark side; doing so would require turning it into something that it is not. Unlike those who emphasize the negative face of shame, however, I will argue that shame is a valuable moral emotion. Acknowledging and accepting that shame has a dark side does not then mean we would be better off without it. There is no good shame or bad shame, false shame or real shame, natural shame or moral shame. There is just shame—a varied and complex emotion that plays an important role in moral life. (p.6)

I think the previous ways of trying to reconcile the two faces of shame go wrong in different ways. Those who emphasize the positive face of shame and those who emphasize the negative face of shame have approached shame in a way that is overly moralistic. Let us start with the positive attempts. Moral philosophers who work on moral emotions face two tasks. First, we need to give a good account of emotions as people experience and live them. Second, we need to explain how those emotions fit into moral life. In the case of shame in moral psychology, often accomplishing the second task has come at the cost of the first. Moral philosophers who want to defend the positive face of shame have tried to rescue it from those who only see its negative face—those who think it is a holdover from a world of warriors and puritans. Many moral philosophers have argued (successfully in several ways) that shame still belongs in modern moral psychology. The problem is that the account of shame that emphasizes the positive role that it plays in moral life is built on a conceptual analysis that does not fit how we experience shame. We convince the skeptics by appealing primarily to shame’s uncontroversial and ultimately moralized form.

Nowhere is this strategy more apparent than when we consider shame about our bodies. With a few notable exceptions, the shame we feel about sex and nudity is virtually absent from the literature on shame in moral psychology. Those who concentrate on shame’s positive face typically rely on examples that are either moral failings or relatively innocuous harms: people feel shame for stealing candy (Mason 2009), lying (Manion 2002), for displays of ingratitude (Murphy 1999), “making a vulgar gesture” (G. Taylor 1985: 59), lacking musical ability, cheating, and behaving cowardly (Rawls 2003). I do not mean to suggest that we do not feel shame about these sorts of things. Yet shame about nudity is considered one of the classic cases of shame. It is of course true that shame about sex and nudity is largely culturally determined. There are many places where public nudity is acceptable to varying degrees, but that there are different standards across cultures does not mean there are no standards. And why should we shy away from examining these cases just because they are not universal? We might risk making our accounts of shame overly narrow by focusing on culture-specific examples. But shame about nudity is not so particular to the United States that we can exclude it, and we run the same risk of an overly narrow account by not including it. If we take the task of giving a good conceptual analysis of emotions as seriously as we take the (p.7) moral
task, we cannot simply leave out one of the most familiar experiences of shame. The problem is that shame about nudity and sex seems to have no obvious moral import. Alternatively, it seems morally problematic: we typically think shame about sex and nudity is unhealthy or prudish. Since this shame experience appears to undermine the conclusion that shame is a morally valuable emotion, those who wish to defend shame as a moral emotion are then faced with the task of explaining why we feel this way. To do so, they might argue that shame about sex and nudity is irrational. As I pointed out above, this strategy requires us to claim that one of the most recognizable experiences of shame is irrational.

In their widely cited paper, D’Arms and Jacobson identify what they refer to as the moralistic fallacy. The moralistic fallacy occurs when we conclude from the fact that “it would be wrong or vicious to feel an emotion” that said emotion is therefore irrational (2000: 69). The move that the defenders of the positive face of shame make is, I suggest, a version of this fallacy. This version of the fallacy goes this way: we wish to conclude that shame is a moral emotion, but some cases of shame appear to be either immoral or non-moral. We then decide that these instances of shame are not really shame at all, but something else—false shame, irrational shame, or normal shame gone wrong somehow. As such, we tend to “correct” shame experiences that do not fit the philosophical model we have constructed. The problem is that we are “correcting” the way people often experience this emotion. This method allows us to maintain the claim that shame is a positive moral emotion, but that claim comes at the cost of providing a complete conceptual analysis.

Those who emphasize the negative face of shame also take a moralistic approach, but from a different direction. They make certain presumptions about our moral emotional lives that also do not do justice to its complexities. Those who point out shame’s negative face assume that if an emotion is dark and damaging we would be better off without it. They further assume that we can (with effort no doubt) temper, downplay, and ultimately root out feelings like shame. Here I do not wish to dispute the claim that it is possible for us to get over feelings of shame—maybe it is and maybe it is not, but I will grant that it is at least possible for us to try. The point is not whether we can or cannot get rid of shame; the point is that on this view it is better to not have negative emotions. Shame is not the only emotion that we treat this way; emotions like envy, hatred, and spite have a similarly bad reputation—they are the “nasty” emotions in moral psychology. We are often told that we would be better, more virtuous, and healthier if we rid ourselves of these feelings once and for all. Countless books, workshops, seminars, and (now in true twenty-first-century fashion) apps give step-by-step guides for banishing negative thoughts and feelings from our lives. The rejection of shame, I suggest, is partly motivated by this overly moralistic attitude toward our emotional life. That is, those who argue against shame equate a virtuous moral psychology with a positive moral psychology. What grounds do we have for thinking that this is true? Those who point out the
negative face of shame typically do not address this question. Their method is simply to show how bad shame is, and those reasons are meant to motivate us to undertake the project of trying to get over it. The claim that our moral emotional lives should be on the whole positive is taken for granted. The fact that an emotion has a dark side does not automatically license the conclusion that it is not morally valuable unless we already assume that morally good emotions have to be positive. We do not always have to feel good in order to be good.

The account of shame that I argue for in this book aims to take shame as it is—as we experience it in all its variety—and provides both a good conceptual analysis of it and an explanation of its role in moral life. Our moral emotional lives are complex, and the experience of shame is likewise complex. My hope is to do justice to that complexity by showing how an emotion with a dark side can still be a moral emotion.

3. Scope and Aims

My primary interest in this book is shame as a moral emotion. Shame is not a new topic in philosophy, but the views that I present and discuss here are mostly (though not exclusively) in the contemporary analytic tradition. Although I will talk about some of the historical views of shame, I do so largely to illustrate the roots of the contemporary views that I identify. Working out the details of, for example, Aristotle’s views about shame with care and attention would be a book unto itself. Rather than do a partial job of that, I have chosen to focus on accounts of shame from approximately the last forty years. I am taking what Bell calls a “bottom-up” approach to moral psychology: bottom-up approaches begin (p.9) “with a detailed investigation of [emotions] themselves and consider what role these emotions might play in a minimally acceptable morality” (2013: 274). As such, I will not assume any particular moral framework at the outset. I will start with shame considered on its own terms and work from there into moral questions. Although I will not assume any particular moral theory from the start, my approach is most compatible with broadly Kantian commitments.

Moral emotions are also not a new topic in philosophy, though they have also enjoyed a renaissance in the last fifty years or so, thanks in large part to the work of Iris Murdoch. When it comes to morality and the emotions, there are two main debates. The first is about whether emotions on the whole ground or give rise to moral judgments. The second is about how precisely to understand the nature of moral emotions—whether they are cognitive or non-cognitive, whether they are more like perceptions, more like beliefs, or more like judgments, or whether they are something altogether different. I will leave aside the first debate entirely. My main focus in this book is about shame’s relationship to moral life rather than about what role emotions generally play in moral life. With regard to the second debate, I will skirt its edges. Providing a philosophical account of the nature of one moral emotion does not necessarily have implications for the nature of all emotions. Also, the account of shame that
I provide could be compatible with either a cognitivist or non-cognitivist account of emotions. As such, I will not try to settle whether shame is cognitive, non-cognitive, or whether it is some mix of the two. When we examine the philosophical literature on this debate, I think we find much blurrier boundaries than we would have thought, but that is a topic for a book about the nature of emotions generally. I will, however, discuss different ways of understanding what makes an emotion moral (or immoral) in chapter 4.

Philosophy does not have the market cornered on moral emotions. Psychologists have long been working on emotions and on shame. I will discuss some psychological literature (both clinical and empirical), but not extensively. In part this is due to a lack of expertise that most moral philosophers face: I can read scholarly articles in psychology, but I am not versed enough in the literature to read them at a critical level. In my view, this lack of expertise has caused philosophical literature on the emotions to frequently err on the side of scientism. Moral philosophers sometimes treat empirical work on the emotions as authoritative rather than as one possible way of approaching the topic. The primary reason that I engage minimally with the empirical literature is because of my commitment to providing a conceptual analysis of shame that captures the phenomenology of shame. How do we know how people experience shame? I think we know that by how people describe those experiences. Transcripts from therapy sessions, memoirs, and fictional descriptions give us detailed accounts of people’s shame experiences from their own perspective. I do not mean to suggest that the first-person point of view is unassailable, but I think it is a mistake to assume that people must be confused or irrational just because their experiences of shame do not fit the conceptual models we have constructed. Although I do not think first-personal accounts can decide philosophical questions, I use them to raise doubts about the success of some of the dominant views about shame.

Additionally, some empirical studies about shame presuppose theoretical commitments. Many of the empirical studies about shame use the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA). This test is a questionnaire primarily used to distinguish guilt and shame responses. The person taking the test is given scenarios and then asked to select from a list of answers which one best describes her response to the imagined scenario. Since the main aim is to distinguish guilt from shame, the scenarios are already moralized. For example, here is one scenario: “You make a big mistake on an important project at work. People were depending on you and your boss criticizes you” (Tangney and Dearing 2002: 211). As such, the test assumes a definition of shame that aligns with one of the views I argue against in the book: shame is an emotion we feel when we fail to live up to ideals. The account of shame I am arguing for in the book is an alternative to this definition. Although I think there are some
important insights we gain from examining these studies, I will take them as a starting point for the conceptual discussion rather than as the focal point.

(p.11) 4. Chapter Sketch
To accomplish the task of giving a unified account of shame, I take a closer look at its dark side. In the first chapter, I introduce the story of Ajax to help illustrate three philosophical positions on shame: the traditional view, the naturalistic view, and the pessimistic view. Putting the pessimistic view aside until chapter 4, I begin an exposition of the traditional view and explain why it might be a tempting account of shame as a moral emotion. I then introduce the dark side of shame and show that the traditional view cannot account for it. Given these concerns, I introduce the naturalistic view as an alternative. I then show how the naturalistic view cannot explain how shame might be morally valuable. I end chapter 1 with a question: can we provide an account of shame that shows how it can be morally valuable while at the same time making sense of its dark side?

In the second chapter, I return to Ajax to point out of a feature of the story that often goes unnoticed. Ajax sees no problem with the idea of becoming a murderer, but the shame of looking like a raving madman drives him to suicide. Ajax is one illustration of a common phenomenon: people either prefer being violent to feeling shame, or their feelings of shame are alleviated by acts of aggression. This link has been suggested by some empirical research and clinical work in psychology, and there are numerous literary examples that illustrate it. I argue that neither the traditional view nor the naturalistic view can explain why we sometimes prefer violence to shame. I then argue that a close examination of the connection between violence and shame will reveal important aspects of the experience of shame more generally. I end chapter 2 by highlighting two features of shame that are present in the cases where shame and violence are linked. In these cases, (a) people feel shame about some aspect of their identities that they do not control, and (b) that aspect of their identities makes them self-conscious about how they come across to others.

In chapter 3, I provide my own account that tries to make sense of the dark side of shame. I argue that shame is an experience of tension between one’s identity and one’s self-conception. Those things about which we feel shame are part of our identities, but they are not part of our self-conception. When we feel shame, we feel defined or overshadowed by some aspect of our identities that we do not necessarily see as part of who we are. If I feel shame about my face, for instance, it is because I feel as though my face overshadows the rest of me or that the only thing that others notice about me is my face. I show how this account explains the common responses to shame, such as wanting to disappear. It also explains why we often (p.12) feel shame about things we cannot control; our bodies, our families, our race, and our class are all parts of our identities that we may nonetheless prefer not to see as fundamental to how we define ourselves. Hence we are caught between acknowledging them and feeling
alienated from them. The account I provide can also accommodate the moralized cases that the traditional view uses to support its own definition of shame. Finally, thinking of shame as a tension between identity and self-conception can make sense of the link between shame and violence.

Chapter 4 answers the question of shame’s moral value. Even if my account of shame as a tension between one’s identity and self-conception can accommodate the dark side of shame, does it make sense of the idea that shame is a moral emotion? Here I return to the challenge of the pessimistic view. Advocates of this view point out that shame causes self-destructive behavior and damaging forms of suffering to many people. People with mental illness, drug users, rape and abuse victims, and queer individuals often experience shame in ways that are troubling and harmful. The pessimistic view argues that these individuals ought not feel shame and that getting over shame (both as individuals and as a society) would be morally progressive. Against this view, I argue that shame is a morally valuable emotion, but not in the traditional sense.

To show that shame is valuable, philosophers typically argue that episodes of shame can be morally permissible. Determining an emotion’s moral permissibility involves examining the circumstances under which we should feel it and what objects it ought to be directed toward. But the traditional way of categorizing emotions as moral is not successful in answering the pessimistic view’s challenge. Even if there are cases when shame is morally good to feel, the pessimistic view can still claim that we would be better off without it—at most, they can argue, shame is morally neutral. By contrast, I argue for the moral value of shame by presenting a different way of categorizing moral emotions. I argue for a constitutive view of moral emotions. On this view, an emotion is moral because a liability to it is constitutive of valuable moral commitments or features of moral psychology. In the case of shame, a liability to shame is morally valuable because it shows that we do not take our self-conception as the final authority on the kinds of people we are. We can see this clearly by examining what is wrong with shamelessness. The shameless person takes her own self-conception to be the determining factor in her self-estimation. In this way, shame prevents us from ignoring unflattering features that undermine our own positive self-estimation. A liability to shame shows that we are open to moral criticism and that we recognize the moral standing of others. (p.13)

If feelings of shame are morally valuable, does it follow that we should try to make people feel shame? In chapter 5, I discuss how shaming punishments have increased in popularity and how social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have become mediums for public shaming of bad behavior. Can these practices be justified? I distinguish between three different practices that are all labeled “shaming”: invitations to shame, shaming, and stigmatizing. I argue that invitations to shame can be justified in certain circumstances, but that shaming and stigmatizing cannot be justified. The primary argument in favor of shaming
and stigmatizing is that both practices are powerful tools to change behavior. This conception of shaming as a tool relies on the premise that the practice itself is morally neutral—shaming, in other words, can be used for good or ill, and as long as it is used for good, it is justified. I argue against the claim that shaming as a practice is morally neutral. Shaming is the practice of holding up the flaws of others for public scorn, and I argue that this practice is unjustified even when it is done for noble reasons. When we shame, we attempt to define another person’s identity in social life, but this is an illegitimate exercise of power over another moral agent. In shaming, we take ourselves to be moral educators who are immune to the flaws that we point out in others. Engaging in shaming wrongly presumes that we have moral clarity and that we are permitted to try to enforce virtue in our fellow moral agents. The fact that shaming is morally suspect, however, does not entail that we would be better off feeling less shame or no shame at all.

I want to give the last word to John Deigh, who succinctly sums up the choice we are faced with when it comes to shame. He writes,

> Since we are capable of bringing our emotions under rational control, we may regard our feeling a specific emotion as incompatible with our moral principles and so try to make ourselves no longer liable to it. Alternatively, we may regard this emotion as essential to our humanity and so revise our principles. (1983: 238)

We can come to the conclusion that shame is in conflict with the moral commitments that we have or should have, and so try to get rid of it. Or we can discover that shame is essential to our moral lives and change how we see ourselves and our moral commitments. I will argue for the latter choice. Shame is complex and messy, but so is moral life. We can feel shame excessively. It can be ugly, violent, and destructive. But getting over shame would not be moral progress because shame is not a toxin, a holdover, or a byproduct. We are liable to it because we are moral agents, and we would not be good moral agents without it.

Notes:

(1) Indeed, the subtitle of one of the most recent works on shame is “The Faces of an Emotion” (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2012).

(2) We can see claims like this in Taylor 1985; Gibbard 1990; Williams 1993; Murphy 1999; Rawls 2003; Mason 2009; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2012.

(3) Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni divide this into two “dogmas” about shame: that it is inherently heteronomous and that it is an “ugly” emotion. They discuss these two dogmas at length (2012: 21-66).
Williams (1993), Velleman (2001), and Dolezal (2015) discuss shame about the body.

Maibom discusses victims of violence (2010). Shame is a common theme in addiction memoirs; see Knapp 1999; Wurtzel 2002; Jamison 1995. Psychologists show this link as well; see, for example, Mason 1991; O’Connor et al. 1994. For shame and mental illness, see Hinshaw 2007; Horan et al. 2008; MacAulay and Cohen 2014. Shame about disability can been seen in Grealy’s autobiography (1994) and in Nussbaum 2004.

Goldie (2000), Gibbard (1990), and Maibom (2010) make this point.

Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni argue against this view (2012). Kekes argues that this is true of shame (1988).

Psychologists have purported to show this link, see Tangney et al. 1992; Tangney 1995; Miller 1985; Gilligan 1997; Scheff and Retzinger 1991. For counterarguments, see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2012.


Isenberg (1949), Kekes (1988), and Nussbaum (2004) all make this argument.

Rawls introduces the distinction between natural and moral shame (2003: 390).

As Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni put it, “[W]e must wonder how it is possible to reach such radically contrasting assessments” about an emotion (2012: 3-4).

Greenspan addresses survivor’s guilt (1992).

Deigh (1983), Kekes (1988), D’Arms and Jacobson (2000), Velleman (2001), Nussbaum (2004), Mason (2009), Maibom (2010), and Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni (2012) all point out that we frequently feel shame about things over which we have little or no control.

Augustine (1998a), Williams (1993), and Velleman (2001) take this kind of shame seriously.

Mason argues that shame like this is not “properly focused” (2009: 418). Gabriele Taylor thinks this is false shame (1985: 163). Some philosophers argue that shame about sex or nudity is about failing to live up to a value, such as the value of modesty (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2012) or privacy (Velleman 2001). I argue against this possibility in chapter 1.

Both de Sousa (1987: 316) and Solomon (2007: 101) call them this.
Bagnoli argues convincingly that Murdoch was the earliest and loudest champion for making moral philosophy about one’s inner moral life, which had been largely ignored by logical positivism (2011: 3–4).

Of course, the arguments that emotions ground morality are indebted to Hume. For examples of contemporary sentimentalists, see Gibbard 1990; Prinz 2004, 2007.

Oakley has one of the best overviews of what is at stake in this discussion (1992). Of course, even using the terms “cognitive” and “non-cognitive” is fraught because there are different ways of conceiving of each of these. For example, some cognitivists think of emotions as judgments (Nussbaum 2004; Solomon 2007), but some think emotions merely involve judgments (G. Taylor 1985). Some non-cognitivists think of emotions as perceptions (D’Arms and Jacobson 2003), but some think of them as construals (Roberts 1988). To call a view cognitivist or non-cognitivist is thus not so straightforward.

For a thorough explanation of the TOSCA, see Tangney and Dearing 2002.

For all the scenarios, see Tangney and Dearing 2002: 207–213.