

Jimenez, Marta. *Aristotle on Shame and Learning to Be Good*.
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In this lucidly argued book, Marta Jimenez argues that Aristotle gives shame a critical role in our moral development. Jimenez begins by addressing a puzzle in Aristotle's account of how we become virtuous. In *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) 2.1, Aristotle claims that we become virtuous by taking virtuous actions. In *NE* 2.4 he considers an objection to this view: if we can take virtuous actions, then we must already be virtuous, and so it cannot be true that we become virtuous by taking virtuous actions. Aristotle responds by arguing that we can take virtuous actions without yet being virtuous, for the virtuous person takes virtuous actions in a special way: with knowledge, for their own sake (or for the sake of the noble), and from a firm and unwavering character. But commentators have argued that this gives rise to a new problem: how does the learner go from taking actions that merely externally resemble the actions of the virtuous person, perhaps because an authority figure tells them to do so, to choosing these actions for the sake of the noble? There seems to be a gap between the learner's motivation for taking certain actions and the virtuous person's motivation for taking certain actions, and it is not clear how repeatedly taking actions that externally resemble virtuous actions would bridge that gap.

In chapter 1, Jimenez resolves this problem by stressing that the learner becomes virtuous not simply by taking actions that externally resemble the actions of the virtuous person but by performing those actions well, or in a way that resembles the way the virtuous person would perform them. According to Jimenez, this means that the learner must, at least on some occasions and in some way, choose certain actions for the sake of the noble. But why think a young learner can perform virtuous actions for the sake of the noble? Jimenez's intriguing suggestion is that there must be something innate in us that orients us toward the noble. In other words, the learner is not a blank slate but arrives on the scene with desiderative and emotional tendencies that orient them toward the noble. If this is correct, then the learner can, at least on some occasions, and perhaps imperfectly, take virtuous actions for the sake of the noble, even if they do not yet have the relevant practical knowledge or stable disposition of character.

In chapter 2, Jimenez considers a related problem. In *NE* 2.3 Aristotle argues that young people become virtuous by learning through habituation to take pleasure in the noble. How does this work? Some scholars argue that learners initially take pleasure in virtuous action because it is associated with pleasant rewards, or because repeatedly taking virtuous actions makes these actions familiar and thereby pleasant. But these views fail to explain how we ultimately come to take pleasure in the noble itself, which is characteristic of virtue. Accordingly, Jimenez favors Burnyeat's view, according to which it is through taking virtuous actions themselves that learners experience the pleasures of the noble itself. Burnyeat's critics argue, however, that learners cannot experience the pleasures of the noble without having a grasp of the noble, an appreciation of the value of the noble, and the ability to perform actions in the right way. In short, learners cannot experience the pleasures of the noble without already being virtuous. But Jimenez argues that this objection fails, since, as she has argued, there is reason to think that learners have an innate orientation toward the noble; they have, in other words, an innate grasp

of it, love of it, and ability to perform actions in the right way. Thus, the learner can take pleasure in noble actions.

In chapter 3, Jimenez turns to the question of what element in Aristotle's moral psychology orients us toward the noble. Drawing from Aristotle's discussion of the role of shame in citizen courage in *NE* 3.8, Jimenez makes a strong textual case for the view that shame is the emotion that orients the learner toward the noble. In *NE* 3.8, Aristotle discusses the various kinds of pseudo-courage and argues that citizen courage, the kind characteristic of citizen soldiers, is most like true courage, for these soldiers aim at the noble as recommended by law. While many commentators argue that Aristotle criticizes citizen courage on the grounds that it aims at external rewards, Jimenez argues that we should pay heed to Aristotle's distinction between fear and shame-based citizen courage. While Aristotle disparages the former on the grounds that those who are motivated by fear act to avoid painful (material) punishments, he has a more positive attitude toward shame-based citizen courage, for citizens motivated by their sense of shame aim at the noble.

In chapter 4, Jimenez defends the view that those motivated by shame aim at the noble. Many commentators think that shame and the corresponding love of honor aim at honor as an external good that is independent of considerations about nobility. But Jimenez argues that this view is mistaken. First, she points to textual evidence in Aristotle's discussion of citizen courage that suggests that shame aims at the noble (e.g., *NE* 3.8.1116a27–29). Second, she argues that while those who act from a sense of shame and the love of honor aim at the noble, they lack knowledge of what is noble and so rely on the praise and blame of others to recognize what is noble; this explains (in part) why those motivated by shame pay attention to the opinions of others. Finally, drawing on Aristotle's claim in *NE* 1.5 that the ultimate goal of those who pursue honor is to be virtuous themselves, Jimenez argues that those motivated by a sense of shame do not seek mere honor and reputation independently of whether they deserve it, but instead want to be worthy of honor and esteem. They want, in other words, to be noble.

In chapter 5, Jimenez turns to the complex nature of shame. She highlights two puzzles. First, in *NE* 10.9 Aristotle claims that shame is a quasi-virtue, a praiseworthy possession and a necessary requirement for young people to engage in virtuous activity and be receptive to arguments. But in *NE* 4.9, he says that shame is far from virtue and is not praiseworthy or even appropriate in virtuous people. While some commentators resolve this tension by drawing a distinction between two kinds of shame, Jimenez argues that we can explain this tension without drawing such a distinction. But before doing this (in chap. 6), she highlights a second peculiar feature of shame. In *NE* 2.5, Aristotle distinguishes among capacities, emotions, and dispositions and argues that emotions are not praiseworthy. But in *NE* 2.7, Aristotle claims that shame is a praiseworthy emotional mean. While some commentators argue that Aristotle has violated his own tripartite division in characterizing shame this way, Jimenez argues that Aristotle has good reason to posit this *sui generis* category of emotions, since it allows shame to play a role in moral development.

In chapter 6, Jimenez explains the tension between *NE* 4.9 and 10.9. She argues that Aristotle does not classify shame as a virtue for three reasons: virtues are perfections, while shame is related to openness to error; virtue is related to *prohairesis* and wisdom, but shame is independent of those things; and virtues are stable

dispositions, but shame is an emotional tendency that can disappear in adults. Nonetheless, Jimenez argues that Aristotle has good reason to think that shame is an emotion that is praiseworthy in the young, since it restrains people from acting on bad desires and orients them toward the noble. The reason that it fails to be praiseworthy in the old is that older people should be guided by reason rather than emotions, and they are sufficiently experienced in practical matters not to need guidance. Thus, shame has a crucial place in the moral development of the young.

Jimenez's book is a must read for anyone interested in Aristotle's account of moral development and shame. Jimenez makes clear a deep challenge for Aristotle's account of moral development and, in my view, points us in the right direction for a solution. Along the way she provides insightful discussions of crucial passages on pleasure, the pseudo-virtues, and shame. I agree with Jimenez that Aristotle's account of moral development is more plausible if we assume that the learner has an innate orientation toward the noble. I do, however, have some doubts about whether it is shame and the corresponding love of honor that provides that orientation. In what follows I will lay out two *prima facie* problems for this view and then suggest a closely related but alternative account.

First, there is some evidence that Aristotle thinks that it is not shame but reason which orients us toward the noble. In *NE* 9.8, Aristotle characterizes the true self-lover. While most people think of the self-lover as the person who awards themselves the larger share of goods like money, honor, and bodily pleasure, thereby gratifying their appetites and the nonrational part of the soul, Aristotle claims that the true self-lover strives to attain what is noble and thereby gratifies their reason. He says,

If someone always takes trouble that he of all people does what is just or temperate or whatever else is in accordance with the virtues, and in general always makes what is noble his own, no one will call him a self-lover or blame him.

But a person like this seems to be more of a self-lover. At any rate he assigns to himself what is noblest and best above all, and gratifies the most authoritative element within himself, obeying it in everything. And just as a city, or any other organized body seems to be above all the most authoritative element within, the same is true of a human being; and therefore someone who likes this part and gratifies it most of all is a self-lover. (*NE* 9.8.1168b25–30; Crisp translation)

This passage claims that when we attain what is noble, it is reason which is gratified. And this suggests that it is reason, not shame (a nonrational emotion), which is the source of our orientation toward the noble.

Jimenez might reply that shame orients us toward the noble when we are young, since we have not yet developed our reason and need the opinions of others to guide us, but once we mature, reason orients us toward the noble. And, indeed, Jimenez must say something like this, since she thinks that shame does not play a role in the virtuous person's moral psychology. Thus, something other than shame must orient the virtuous person toward the noble.

But there are problems with this line of response. In the first place, Jimenez insists that the learner must through the practice of virtue experience pleasures

that are the same as or at least similar to the ones the virtuous person experiences in the noble. But if shame orients the learner toward the noble (since they have not yet developed their reason), and if in the virtuous person it is reason which experiences the pleasures of the noble, and if we assume that the pleasures associated with shame and reason are distinct (perhaps the learner is experiencing the pleasures of being praised), then it seems that the learner is not experiencing the same pleasures in the noble as the virtuous person. And this raises a possibility which Jimenez wishes to avoid, namely, that there is a problematic discontinuity between the pleasures the learner experiences in habituation and the pleasures the virtuous person experiences when performing virtuous actions.

There is an additional problem with the above-mentioned line of response: if shame orients the learner to the noble when they are young, and reason orients the virtuous person toward the noble, then Aristotle would hold that two distinct elements in our psychology orient us toward the noble: the *sui generis* emotion of shame (and the corresponding love of honor) and reason. But I am doubtful that Aristotle would hold that two elements in our psychology orient us toward the very same object under the same guise, that is, the guise of the noble. These considerations might lead us back to the view that shame fundamentally orients us toward the good opinion of others, while reason aims at the noble itself.

A second problem with the view that shame orients us toward the noble is that it is not clear to me how this view squares with a standard account of the nature of the noble itself, the *kalon*. One of the most intriguing claims of Jimenez's book is that the learner is not a blank slate, but instead has an innate orientation toward the noble itself: the learner has an (imperfect) grasp of the noble, a sense of its value, and an ability to take pleasure in the noble. Given this striking claim, I was disappointed that Jimenez did not provide an account of the *kalon* in her book, for I think such an account could illuminate the issue of which element in the soul is the source of our orientation to the noble. Let me illustrate.

According to one standard account of the *kalon*, what makes actions *kalon* is that, very broadly, they have certain aesthetic features: they are fitting, or proportionate, or properly ordered toward some end. If this is the correct account of the *kalon*, then Jimenez's view suggests that we have an innate orientation toward actions that are fitting, or proportionate, or ordered in some way; in other words, we have the ability to grasp, value, and take pleasure in this feature of actions. Moreover, her view would hold that it is the sense of shame and the love of honor that orient us toward this feature.

While I find it plausible that we have an innate orientation toward actions that are fitting, proportionate, or ordered in some way, I find it less plausible that shame is the emotion that orients us toward this feature of actions. Instead, I find it more plausible that reason provides the ability to discern which actions are fitting or proportionate or ordered in some way and takes delight in such actions. Indeed, this might explain Aristotle's claim in *NE* 9.8 that it is reason which is gratified when we attain what is noble. But at what age do we have this rational ability? If the ability to discern that something is fitting or proportionate or ordered in some way comes later in life, then we might worry about the continuity problem that Jimenez so sharply raises; we might worry, that is, that there is a discontinuity between the pleasures the learner experiences in habituation and the pleasures the virtuous

person experiences in their virtuous actions. But if we have the capacity to discern these features at an early age, even if imperfectly, then we will not face the continuity problem.

Given these considerations, I am inclined to defend a closely related yet distinct account of the role of shame in moral development. The learner who is motivated by shame wants the approval of others. But, as Jimenez rightly emphasizes, they want to be worthy of this praise. This eventually leads them to think about what is in fact praiseworthy and noble and to aim at it in their actions. Nonetheless, at this stage, the learner's desire for the noble is tied up with their desire for the approval of others. But as the learner repeatedly takes these virtuous actions, she comes to appreciate, through her developing reason's orientation toward what is fitting, or proportionate, or ordered in some way, the value of the noble itself, and she begins to take pleasure in this feature of her actions, until she ultimately chooses virtuous actions for the sake of the noble itself, and not at all for the sake of the approval of others. On this view, the process of becoming virtuous begins with shame and the corresponding love of honor's desire to be praiseworthy, but it ends with reason's love of the noble itself. Learning to be good, then, crucially involves learning to love what is valuable for its own sake, independently of the confirmation and approval of others.

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Radzik, Linda, with Christopher Bennett, Glen Pettigrove, and George Sher. *The Ethics of Social Punishment: The Enforcement of Morality in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 200. \$28.99 (paper).

In *On Liberty*, Mill distinguishes between judicial and “social” punishment—between “legal penalties” and “moral coercion.” He finds the fact that social coercion can play a larger role than the law in our lives sufficiently worrying that he proposes that his harm principle should govern the use of coercion of all sorts. In *The Ethics of Social Punishment: The Enforcement of Morality in Everyday Life*, Linda Radzik explores the nature, justification, and practice of social punishment. She is primarily concerned with the “informal” social punishments dealt out among social equals, like angry rebukes and consumer boycotts. (“Formal” social punishments are imposed by those who occupy superior positions within hierarchies on those with lower status, e.g., the punishment of children by their parents or workers by their employers.) *The Ethics of Social Punishment* is based on the Descartes Lectures that Radzik delivered at Tilburg University in 2018. It also includes three commentaries that were delivered at Tilburg—from Christopher Bennett, George Sher, and Glen Pettigrove—and Radzik's replies.

In the first chapter, Radzik argues that informal social punishments exist. Of course, she does not need to persuade her reader to believe in rebukes and boycotts. What she may need to convince them of, however, is that these responses are genuine punishments. Her strategy is to show that they fit a common way of defining ‘punishment’, namely, as “*authorized, intentional, reprobative, reactive harming*” (9). Radzik