Noell Birondo & S. Stewart Braun, eds. *Virtue's Reasons: New Essays on Virtue, Character, and Reasons*. Routledge 2017. 210 pp. $140.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781138231733).

In recent years, a plethora of edited collections have appeared on both the topics of virtue and reasons. A few (but by no means exhaustive) selections of the former include Chienko Mi, Michael Slote, and Ernest Sosa's *Moral and Intellectual Virtues in Western and Chinese Philosophy* (Routledge, 2016); Julia Annas, Darcia Narvaes, and Nancy E. Snow's *Developing the Virtues: Integrating Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2016); and Lorraine L. Besser and Michael Slote's *The Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (Routledge, 2015). Among the latter are Errol Lord and Barry Maguire's *Weighing Reasons* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and Kieran Setiya and Hille Paakkunainen's *Internal Reasons: Contemporary Readings* (MIT Press, 2012). As Birondo and Braun note in opening the volume, 'Over the past thirty years or so, virtues and reasons have emerged as two of the most fruitful and important concepts in contemporary moral philosophy' (1). While these two topics often intersect, their overlap and interaction is ripe for deeper exploration. The present volume aims to contribute to this opportunity. And while there is considerable focus on both reasons and virtue in the literature on the intellectual virtues, only two of the ten essays in this collection focus on intellectual virtue at length; the majority of the collection's attention is focused elsewhere.

According to the editors, the volume's two primary aims are 'to foster a greater appreciation for the multiplicity of reasons surrounding the concept of the virtues and to shed light on what is presumably the paradigm case, of an individual agent responding to an array of potential reasons, often in diverse circumstances and contexts' (2-3). It's not clear that all the contributors understand the stated primary aims, at least not in the same way as others. As sometimes happens with edited collections, not all of the contributors use the terminology in the same way, nor have the same understanding of the nature of reasons or virtue in mind. As an example, while numerous authors clearly state that they think virtuous actions are possible independent of virtuous character, the same assumption doesn't seem to be at play in other chapters. While a certain degree of such divergence may be expected in a collection, the reader would benefit from these differences being made more explicit by the authors. Relatedly, as all too often happens with edited volumes, there's too little interaction between the chapters, even where such interaction would be both beneficial to the volume as a whole and fairly easy to accomplish. Particularly given that it doesn't aim to develop (much less assume a unified approach to) the nature of virtue, there are places where the volume evidences internal tensions. Nevertheless, the volume contains some excellent material and scholars interested in the contemporary literatures on reasons, particular virtues, and moral character will certainly be interested in engaging this collection.

Part I focuses on 'Reasons, Characters, and Agency.' Here, the volume's first stated aim is clearest; each of the four chapters in this section explores connections between normative reasons and virtue, as well as how these connections can be used by an agent to form a virtuous character. The volume opens with Garrett Cullity's 'Moral Virtues and Responsiveness for Reasons.' Cully thinks that being virtuous requires responding to the relevant moral reasons well. Cullity then argues that a taxonomy of many, though not all, moral virtues can be generated from features of the reason for the response, the object of the response, and the characteristic of the response itself. While there is much in this particular chapter of interest, a number of claims made in passing (e.g., that judgments of virtuous character are not normative judgments or that questions of permissibility do not arise for feelings) may well strike the reader as in need of defense.

In 'Remote Scenarios and Warranted Virtue Attributions,' Justin Oakley argues that using remote or probabilistically unlikely scenarios to evaluate whether an agent is virtuous requires that we look not only at their behavior in those scenarios, but also their reasons for acting in them.

Oakley's focus isn't on whether the agent *has* the particular virtue, but rather whether attributing that virtue to the agent is epistemically warranted. His concern here is that 'if genuinely virtuous character traits and actions can never be justifiably attributed to individuals or indeed have never existed at all, this would seem to be very problematic for virtue ethics' (35). Christian Miller and Robert Adams, among others, have questioned the second disjunct in the stated antecedent. But we also think Oakley doesn't do enough to establish the connection between the first disjunct, given its epistemological nature, and the consequent. I wonder even about the first one. Nevertheless, Oakley provides a really interesting and largely persuasive argument that the agent's reasoning process in those remote situations may be more important than their behavior as a source of evidence regarding their virtue.

Damian Cox's 'Vice, Reasons, and Wrongdoing' focuses on the relationship between virtuous actions and deontic judgement about action. For Cox, 'roughly speaking, virtuous actions are supererogatory, the rejection of vicious action is obligatory, and actions that are neither virtuous nor vicious are merely permissible' (51). He then uses this trichotomous structure to argue that while agents have *pro tanto* reasons never to perform vicious actions, they often (though not always) only have *prima facie* reasons to perform virtuous actions. He also provides a framework for defining right action in terms of the avoidance of vicious action rather than the performing of virtuous actions, developing an approach he labels 'vice ethics.' His chapter ends by exploring advantages that such an approach has over virtue ethics.

The first section concludes with Peter Shiw-Hwa Tsu's 'Can Virtue Be Codified? An Inquiry on the Basis of Four Conceptions of Virtue.' Tsu reviews John McDowell's uncodifiability thesis ('the thesis that *the requirements of virtue cannot be codified into a "set of rules"*' (66)) and questions the conception of virtue upon which it is based. Tsu argues that virtue might in fact be codifiable under certain conceptions of virtue, which is enough to cast doubt upon the uncodifiability thesis, broadly understood. Tsu presents four conceptions of virtue that, while not exhaustive, he thinks are significant. Out of the absolute conception, the pro tanto conception, the prima facie conception, and the particularist conception, Tsu investigates the absolute and pro tanto conceptions and concludes that McDowell has not provided a sufficient argument against the possibility of their codeifiability, which means that it is too soon to say that virtue *simpliciter* is uncodifiable.

The second section of the volume, 'Reasons and Virtue in Development,' continues with Ramon Das's 'Virtue, Reason, and Will.' Das thinks that while much virtue ethics holds that 'acting *from* virtue' is morally superior to either merely acting based entirely on virtuous motives ('acting virtuously') and to the same action done at least partly on the basis of vicious motives or bad reasons ('acting [merely] in conformity with virtue'), both acting from virtue and acting virtuously are problematic when taken to be the standard for morally right action. The reason is that both 'acting from virtue' and 'acting virtuously' are beyond that ability of anyone not already possessed of the relevant virtue, thereby making the process of developing the virtues problematic. For Das, 'virtue ethics accords far too much importance to relatively fixed traits of character that are *beyond the agent's control at the time of action*, and not nearly enough importance to the agent's ability effectively to *transcend* relevant aspects of her character at the time of action, to act as she should' (92). Das argues that virtue ethicists such as Paul Audi, John McDowwell, and Valare Tiberius don't sufficiently distinguish between acting from a virtuous motive and acting for a good reason. A distinctively virtue-ethical construal of acting for a good reason requires that the agent already have the virtue in question. Insofar as this is implausible given the processes by which virtue is presumably formed, the virtue ethicist ought to hold that acting for a good reason is compatible with the agent having the ability to act out of character. But such a construal is not a distinctly virtue-ethical approach to acting for good reasons. Such a dilemma will likely be familiar to those acquainted with Das's previous work.

Emer O'Hagan's 'Self-Knowledge and the Development of Virtue' is, in our view, one of the highlights of the volume for its thought-provokingness. O'Hagan is interested in deliberate attempts to develop virtue, particularly how agents can shape their reflective and motivational systems to foster acting for the right reasons. While she's largely sympathetic to Robert Audi's work on virtue requiring a relatively stable character and sensitivity to normative reasons, she thinks that he requires too much direct control over our ability to discern good reasons. Instead, agential self-knowledge is an under-explored resource for moral development and can aid the agent in developing the capacity to act for the right kind of reason that virtue requires. Self-knowledge serves self-regulation and can aid in virtue formation even when sheer acts of self-determination fail.

O'Hagan's chapter engaging Audi's view is followed by a contribution from Audi himself: 'Aretaic Role Modeling, Justificatory Reasons, and the Diversity of the Virtues.' It's full of the careful distinctions, delicate reasoning, and richness of insight that characterizes so much of Audi's work, both on virtue in particular and more generally. He argues that 'reasons for action and hence, indirectly, right and wrong acts and good and bad acts are, in the normative order, conceptually more basic than virtues,' given the importance of proper responsiveness to proper reasons in the formation of virtue (133). He's trying to show what virtue cannot be understood in isolation from the role of normative reasons, which in some ways can be seen as one of the central themes of the collection as a whole. It's also, unfortunately, an instance of the lack of interaction between the contributions, coming immediately after O'Hagan's chapter on his view, that could have made for a more unified and polished volume.

Part III of the volume is entitled 'Specific Virtues for Finite Rational Agents.' Here the volume is less unified than in the first two parts—though that doesn't mean the chapters in the section aren't valuable contributions to the literature. This section opens with Andrés Luco's 'Practical Wisdom: A Virtue for Resolving Conflicts among Practical Reasons.' Luco's chapter is the most explicit consideration of intellectual virtue in the volume, focusing on normative practical reasons and how they can justify actions. Normative reasons can sometimes conflict with one another and, in certain cases, varied degrees of strength can help resolve the conflict. However, some conflicts seem impossible to resolve using this method because the conflicting normative reasons are not rationally comparable. Luco argues that, in these cases, what he terms the *Override Principle* can serve as another way agents with practical wisdom can resolve the conflict. According to the Override Principle, a reason or set of reasons A overrides (i.e., should be the reason that guides the agent's action) reason or set of reasons B if reason A is necessary to promoting some good and not acting according to reason B will not involve the loss of a good. (These are intended as sufficient conditions, not necessary conditions, for overriding.) After defending it against a number of objections, Luco concludes that the Override Principle can help resolve some seemingly unresolvable normative reason conflicts even when the reasons are not of the same type.

S. Steward Braun develops a novel understanding of the nature of the modesty in 'The Virtue of Modesty and the Egalitarian Ethos.' He wants to synthesize previous approaches to modesty under what he calls the 'Egalitarian Account,' which 'identifies equal social status and respect as the underlying value that explains or motivates the different behavioral dispositions of modest agents' (176). Braun thinks that this approach can provide a unified theory of modesty while also explaining its related behavior and value. And while it's an interesting contribution to the literature on this virtue, it's not obvious that reasons play a sufficiently important role in the account to make it a clear inclusion in the volume.

The volume closes with Noell Birondo's 'Virtue and Prejudice: Giving and Taking Reasons.' Birondo argues that 'a failure to appreciate both the giving and the taking of reasons in sustaining an ethical outlook … can distort one's understanding of what an "internal" validation of the virtues would ultimately amount to' (190). An example of the kind of distortion that Birondo has in mind is

found in Jesse Prinz's criticism (the 'Normativity Challenge') of virtue ethics, which says that neither internal nor external validation of ethical virtues is likely to succeed in its purpose. Birondo argues that Prinz's challenge rests on the 'long-standing criticism' of virtue ethics, which only interacts with external validations (189). Birondo goes on to show that this criticism is misunderstood in Prinz's analysis, leaving virtue ethicists with the tool of internal validation to answer this challenge. He then suggests a method of giving and taking reasons in rational exchange as a way of understanding internal validation.

Reflecting on the set as a whole, *Virtue's Reasons* contains much of value. The editors describe the collection as a 'kind of kaleidoscope of issues surrounding the notion of *virtue's* reasons' (2), and as indicated above, the collection is at times unfortunately fragmented. The volume could have been more unified and benefitted from a greater degree of editorial direction to increase the internal interaction between the chapters. At times, it also would benefit from more interaction with a broader range of topics, such as existing work on prudence and other intellectual virtues, Aristotle (who is engaged less frequently than is Kant's scrupulous shopkeeper), the communal elements of virtue formation, and even with reasons-responsive views of agency. Nevertheless, this is a worthwhile collection which includes work that will be of interest to scholars working on a wide range of issues.

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