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*The Inquiring Mind: On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology*. By JASON BAEHR. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. viii-235. Price: £35)

Leading virtue epistemologists (e.g. Sosa 1991; 2007; 2009 and Greco 1993; 2010) have spilled plenty of ink in analysing the nature and place of (to use Baehr's terminology) *intellectual faculties* (like vision and memory) in epistemology. These cognitive faculties are thought to qualify as intellectual virtues in part because they are reliably truth-conducive, and (as Sosa and Greco argue) they deserve a prominent place within the projects of traditional epistemology: we can (they argue) analyse knowledge *in terms* of these reliable faculties.

Jason Baehr's *The Inquiring Mind* is an extremely clearly written book that, in an admirably systematic way, challenges this picture on several fronts: as Baehr notes, virtue epistemologists of a reliabilist bent too often overlook the importance of *character virtues* (as opposed to mere reliable faculties) in successful inquiry. Intellectual character virtues include such traits as open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual integrity, perceptiveness, creativity, fair-mindedness, inquisitiveness and curiosity.

Given the comparative dearth of work on *character* virtues in epistemology, two guiding questions are deserving of attention: firstly, is the concept of intellectual *character* virtue (hereafter intellectual virtue) useful for addressing (one or more) problems in *traditional epistemology* (i.e. the analysis of knowledge)? Secondly, can the concept of intellectual virtue form the basis of an approach to epistemology that is *independent* of traditional epistemology?

These broad questions guide the direction of the monograph, and provide a helpful way to cut up the landscape. Baehr labels '*Conservative VE*' the view that the first question should be answered affirmatively, *Autonomous VE*, the view that the second should. He notes there is scope for strong and weak forms of both. Within *Conservative VE*, there is scope for arguing that the concept of intellectual virtue is useful for addressing problems in traditional epistemology by playing either (i) a central and fundamental role (i.e. *Strong conservative VE*), or (ii) by playing a secondary or background role in these

projects (i.e. *Weak Conservative VE*). Similarly, one could endorse *Autonomous VE* by holding either that an independent focus on intellectual character and virtues (i) should *replace* or supplant traditional epistemology (*Strong Autonomous VE*) or (ii) *complement* traditional epistemology (*Weak Autonomous VE*).

Baehr endorses the weaker version of both *Conservative* and *Autonomous VE* and so thinks that the concept of intellectual virtue should play a *secondary role* in traditional epistemology while at the same constituting an independent research program that complements (rather than replaces) traditional epistemology.

Why think intellectual virtue is stands to play *merely* a secondary background role in traditional epistemology? After some helpful introduction and set-up in Chapters 1 and 2, Baehr uses Chapter 3 to argue for just this point (and so to reject *Strong Conservative VE*.) As Baehr sees it, intellectual virtue deserves a central place in epistemology if, and only if, we can provide a plausible virtue-theoretic analysis of *knowledge*. By considering Zagzebski's (1996) attempt to do just this, Baehr concludes the prospects are not at all good--satisfaction of a virtue condition is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge--and so *Strong Conservative VE* can be dismissed.

Nonetheless, he thinks, traditional epistemology needs the concept of intellectual virtue in the background, specifically, in order to plausibly account for the nature of epistemic justification. Baehr's positive argument for *Weak Conservative VE* spans Chapters 4 and 5; in Chapter 4, he argues that reliabilist accounts of justification will (on their own terms) need to make room for intellectual character virtues in order to account for 'much of the knowledge that we as humans care most about' (p. 67).

Chapter 5, one of the most engaging chapters in the book, argues that, in the absence of an intellectual virtue codicil, evidentialism is inadequate as an account of epistemic justification. One particularly interesting variety of case that motivates such a codicil involves *defective inquiry*. Suppose (for example) that my belief that p is well supported, but that the reason my belief is well supported traces back to defects in my intellectual character (e.g. intellectual laziness or tunnel vision, in my acquisition of my evidence). As Baehr suggests, 'Perhaps there is some epistemic value simply in having a belief that

fits one's evidence--regardless of whether this evidence is the result of defective inquiry' (p. 72) but he denies that whatever justification they do instantiate is 'particularly worthy or significant.'

Having made his positive case for *Weak Conservative VE*, Baehr shifts his focus from the place of intellectual virtue in traditional epistemology to the concept of intellectual virtue in its own right. Chapter 6 is particularly important as Baehr here articulates his novel account of intellectual virtue, which is a *personal worth* conception of intellectual virtue. Baehr thinks, generally speaking, that a person is good or better (qua person) to the extent that she is 'positively oriented toward or loves what is good and is negatively oriented towards or hates what is bad' (p. 97); narrowing the scope of this position, we can define the basis of personal *intellectual worth* as follows: a subject S is intellectually good or better qua person to the extent that S is positively oriented toward or 'loves' what is intellectually good and is negatively oriented toward or 'hates' what is intellectually bad (p. 101). With reference to this position about what accounts for an agent's personal intellectual worth, Baehr articulates the conditions under which a trait qualifies as an intellectual virtue as follows: 'an intellectual virtue is a character trait that contributes to its possessor's personal intellectual worth on account of its involving a positive psychological orientation toward epistemic goods' (p. 102).

Baehr proceeds in Chapter 8 to defend the personal worth conception of the good against rival positions, and in Chapter 9 and 10, he explores (in some detail) the nature of two particular intellectual virtues: open-mindedness and intellectual courage. In his closing chapter, Baehr offers some considerations against *Strong Autonomous VE* (as defended by Kvanvig 1992) and proposes some further research projects in accord with *Weak Autonomous VE*.

Overall, Baehr's book should be mandatory reading for anyone interested in virtue epistemology. Character virtues, and their place in epistemology, have never been explored before in such a systematic way, and Baehr's presentational style should be emulated.

I have several critical worries, but they should be viewed as suggestions for improvement and not as issues I have with the direction of his project more generally. I'll mention briefly two specific worries.

The first concerns his personal-worth conception of intellectual virtue, the second highlights a potential regress worry for his account of open-mindedness (and when it should qualify as an intellectual virtue)..

A worry I have for Baehr's account of intellectual virtue is that the positive psychological orientation condition is too strong. Suppose I don't reflect on intellectual goods, *per se*. I do, however, want (for instance) to know who won the game, where my keys are, whether the Baigong Pipes are man-made and how Fermat's last theorem was proven. Generalizing, suppose the motivations that drive my inquiries are always particular in this way, and involve no psychological orientation toward any more general epistemic good or goods. It strikes, me that I could carry on this way with not a moment's reflection on truth or epistemic goods, as such, (and without any positive psychological orientation to them) and nonetheless exhibit intellectual virtue in my inquiries, so long as my inquiries were conducted with the appropriate sort of intellectual responsibility. Accordingly, Baehr's psychological requirement makes for an account of intellectual virtue that is overly restrictive.

I want to turn now to Baehr's discussion of open-mindedness, which includes (i) both an account of open-mindedness, and (ii) an account of the conditions under which open-mindedness is intellectually virtuous. His account of the nature of open-mindedness states: 'An open minded person is characteristically (a) willing and (within limits) able (b) to transcend a default cognitive standpoint (c) in order to take up or take seriously the merits of (d) a distinct cognitive standpoint' (p. 152). When is open-mindedness *virtuous*? He claims 'A person S's engaging in the activity characteristic of open-mindedness under circumstances C is intellectually virtuous *only if* it is reasonable for S to believe that engaging in this activity in C may be helpful for reaching the truth' (p. 160). And finally, an account of such reasonableness: 'Its being 'reasonable' for S to think that being open-minded in C may be helpful for reaching the truth is generally a function of the comparative strength of S's grounds concerning: (1) P itself; (2) S's own reliability relative to the propositional domain to which P belongs; and (3) the reliability of the source of the argument or evidence against P' (161). Surely, one fails to be open-minded in C, vis-a-vis p, if not also, a the same time, open-minded about (1) P itself; (2) S's own reliability relative to the propositional domain to which P belongs; and (3) the reliability of the source of the

argument or evidence against P. But then a regress looms: for S to be open-minded about (1-3), it would (on Baehr's view) have to be reasonable for S to think that being open-minded about whether (1-3) would be helpful for reaching the truth (about 1-3), and this reasonableness will be a function of a further (1\*-3\*), about which S would have to be open-minded in order to be open-minded about (1-3), and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Baehr may well have the resources to non-circularly get around this regress for open-mindedness (and also, perhaps, to avoid the worry I sketched for his positive psychological condition on intellectual virtue). Regardless, though, there is much of merit in this book, and I hope it receives the attention it deserves.

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