
CRITICAL NOTICE

Natural Goodness, PHILIPPA FOOT. Clarendon Press, 2002, 125 pages.

Philippa Foot begins her short but intriguingly rewarding book on *Natural Goodness* by recounting a story about Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein interrupted a speaker who had realized that he was about to say something that, although it seemed compelling, was clearly ridiculous, and was trying (as we all do in such circumstances) to say something sensible instead. “No,” said Wittgenstein. “Say what you *want* to say. Be *crude* and then we shall get on.” (p. 1)

So it is no surprise that *Natural Goodness* itself is full of bold sayings which, although elegantly cast, will shock many readers’ philosophical sensibilities. In this discussion of Foot’s book I will complete compliance with Wittgenstein’s advice by way of a crude attempt to interpret Foot’s bold sayings.

There are two sets of claims at the core of *Natural Goodness’s* naturalism. I shall begin with these sets of claims and then move on to the philosophical structure within which they are housed. The first set of claims concerns all non-human living things, that is, all plants and (non-human) animals. Each type of non-human living thing has a “life form”, by which I understand Foot to be saying that each type of non-human living thing has an evolved strategy for overcoming the barriers in its environment to its survival and reproduction. Each life form involves the possession of certain capacities, dispositions to use those capacities in certain ways, and behaviors. Our evaluations of the actual capacities, dispositions, or behaviors of any given living thing turn on the conformity of its capacities, dispositions, or behaviors to the life form of its kind. Thus, roots that anchor an oak tree against wind and storm and provide it with certain nutrients support a capacity that is part of the life form of the oak tree; and the roots of a given oak tree are evaluated as excellent or defective on the basis of their actualizing or failing to actualize this capacity. Swiftiness in a deer is a capacity which is part of its life form. Deer that are swift have a deerish

excellence while deer that are slow are defective as deer. Participating in the hunt conducted by its pack is part of the life form of wolves. A wolf who is so disposed to participate in her pack's hunt has a wolfish virtue, while a wolf who is not disposed to contribute to the hunt is deficient as a wolf.

We start from the fact that it is the particular life form of a species of plant or animal that determines how an individual plant or animal should be. . . . And all the truths about what this or that characteristic does, what its purpose or point is, and in suitable cases, its function, must be related to this life cycle. The way an individual *should be* is determined by what is needed for development, self-maintenance, and reproduction: in most species involving defense, and in some the rearing of the young. (pp. 32–3)

The second set of claims concerns human beings. Human beings also have a life form which is our evolved (and, to some extent, invented) strategy for overcoming the barriers that exist within our environment to the attainment of human good. This much more complex and flexible life form also involves the possession of certain capacities, dispositions to use those capacities in certain ways, and behaviors. Our evaluations of the actual capacities, dispositions, or behaviors of a given human being turn on the conformity or disconformity of her capacities, dispositions, or behaviors to the life form of the human species. There is no gap in conceptual structure between our evaluation of the sharpness of an owl's sight, the acuity of a human's memory, or the willingness of a human to cooperate in some endeavor that requires cooperation for mutual benefit. In all cases, the capacity or operation is as it should be if it conforms to the strategy that the type of creature involved has for the attainment of the good of that type of creature. In all cases, the capacity or operation is as it should not be if it fails to instantiate that type of creature's life form. Lionesses who do not teach their young to hunt are naturally defective and "like lionesses, human parents are defective if they do not teach their young the skills that they need to survive" (p. 15). The evaluation of human capacities and operations has the same "logical grammar" as the evaluation of the capacities and operations found in sub-rational living things (p. 27).

According to Foot, who on these matters especially draws on the views of Elizabeth Anscombe, moral norms, for example, the norms of justice and charity, are themselves part of "the life form of our own species" (p. 24). We cannot get on without "the teaching and following of morality" (p. 17). Compliance with these norms "is necessary because and in so far as good hangs on it" (p. 15). Dispositions to abide by these norms are virtues; and, citing Peter Geach's remark that "Men need virtues as bees need stings", Foot maintains that "virtues play a necessary part in the life of human beings as do stings in the life of bees" (p. 35). For instance, the virtue of

fidelity is one of the tactics that human beings have hit upon to help us maintain and promote human good; promising is “a special kind of tool invented by humans for the better conduct of their lives”. The excellence of achieving a given virtue is, then, akin to the excellence of having good sight, as is also the excellence of a good will, which consists in being disposed to adopt and be loyal to what are perceived as moral excellences. Thus, Foot maintains that,

... the grounding of a moral argument is ultimately in facts about human life... [I]t is obvious that there are objective, factual evaluations of such things as human sight, hearing, memory, and concentration, based on the life form of our own species. Why, then, does it seem so monstrous a suggestion that the evaluation of the human will should be determined by facts about the nature of human beings and the life of our own species? (p. 24)¹

We should note here that Foot’s description of the norms of justice as “natural norms” is consistent with what Hume had in mind in describing justice as an artificial virtue. The norms of justice do not correspond to primitive natural sentiments; but reason can recognize that, given our nature and enduring circumstances, allegiance to them is necessary to human good.² Hume’s differentiation of natural and artificial virtues does, however, alert us to a distinction between the *natural good* of human beings, which is *served by* virtuous action and disposition, and the *life form* of human beings, which is partially *constituted by* virtuous action

¹ I am reminded of the core contention of another Aristotelian moralist, she than whom none was ever less concerned about her listeners’ sensibilities.

[T]he fact that living entities exist and function necessitates the existence of values and of an ultimate value which for any given living thing is its own life... [T]he validation of value judgments is to be achieved by reference to the facts of reality. The fact that a living entity *is*, determines what it *ought* to do. (Rand (1964, p. 17))

Rand also invokes the plausibility of extending our positive evaluation of the capacities and operations of plants and animals that serve their lives to a positive assessment of human capacities and operations that serve the lives of those human agents; and she says that morality, like mobility and good perception, is an “*objective necessity*” which we need to get on successfully; morality is not a “subjective luxury” (p. 14). She then faces the questions of whether all that is good and virtuous in human life is good and virtuous because of its conduciveness to survival, and whether the centrality of the virtue of rationality itself affects the content of the human good.

² The goodness of a human being’s living in accordance with the life form of the human species is, then, not quite as natural as the title of Foot’s book may suggest. One is reminded of Hayek’s discussion (in *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, Volume I, especially, pp. 20–21) of why the standard dichotomy between the natural and the artificial (conventional) cannot accommodate certain phenomena – especially evolved norms that serve human life. It is no accident that Hayek, too, thinks that these norms have a directive force that is not reducible to their (case-by-case) utility in serving the human good, which explains their existence.

and disposition. So alerted, we can expect questions to arise about the relationship of the human good and human goodness.

Human beings differ from plants and animals not only in the complexity and inventiveness of their strategy for securing the good of their type of living thing but, also, in the fact that the good of human beings does not consist solely in survival (and reproduction). The survival of each type of living thing will differ in character from the survival of each other type of living thing. And, at least for this reason, the character of the strategy of survival for each type of living thing will differ from the strategy of survival of each other type of living thing. But, according to Foot, there is another, more distinctive, difference between human beings and all sub-rational living things. Only in the case of human beings is the function of the species's life strategy not just its biological survival. Thus, although Foot seems to toy with the idea that our life form is different from other living things solely because "the good of survival itself is something more complex for human beings than for animals" (p. 42), she moves quickly to the claim that, in the special case of human beings, "the teleological story goes beyond a reference to survival" (p. 43). In this strong sense, "Human good is *sui generis*" (p. 51).

But how do we know this? And what else, beyond survival (and reproduction) is there to the human good? Foot's answer seems to be that we know that certain conditions or activities of human life are part of the human good because we see that a human life without these conditions or activities is *deprived* and that this deprivation is not itself a matter of less (expected) survival (or reproduction). For example, understanding stories, joining in songs and dances, and laughing at jokes are conditions or activities without which "human beings may survive and reproduce themselves, but they are deprived". (p. 43) If I am reading Foot correctly, the broader "human ends having to do with love and friendship" (p. 44) are also among the things which benefit us, independent of their contribution to survival and reproduction. Later in *Natural Goodness*, Foot tells us that a kind of "creativity, freedom, and lightness of spirit" is "a great part of human good" (p. 107).

Yet this more catholic understanding of the human good is supposed not to undermine the basic parallel between evaluation of animal and human capacities and operations.

In spite of the diversity of human goods – the elements that make up good human lives – it is . . . possible that the concept of a good human life plays the same part in determining goodness of human characteristics and operations that the concept of flourishing plays in the determination of goodness in plants and animals. (p. 44)

In my language of problem and solution, Foot's view is that: (a) the lesson to be drawn from our evaluation of the features and actions of

plants and animals is that excellence in a living thing of a particular kind consists in features and actions that accord with that kind of creature's solution to the problems it faces in the attainment of its good and the avoidance of its bad; (b) only in the case of human beings does good (benefit) extend beyond survival and bad (deprivation) extend beyond non-survival; (c) so, only in the case of human beings does the species's solution to the problem of attaining its benefit and avoiding its deprivation extend beyond strategies that exist for the sake of attaining survival and avoiding non-survival; hence, (d) only in the case of human beings does excellence in features and actions extend to strategies that do not exist for the sake of attaining survival and avoiding non-survival.

Talk about our need for morality, for example, our need for norms of justice, along with talk about the need of bees for stings, suggests that Foot's view has a consequentialist structure. Norms and excellences seem to be vindicated by the good that they serve. Against this appearance, Foot insists that she is not endorsing any sort of consequentialism. She says that any form of consequentialism "has as its foundation a proposition linking goodness of action in one way or another to the goodness of *states of affairs*. And there is no room for such a foundation proposition in the theory of natural normativity" (p. 48–9). Foot goes on to insist that her (and our) favorable evaluations of the hunting skills of the tiger, the running skills of a deer, or the deep roots of the oak do not start with the judgments that it is good that the tiger, the deer, and the oak live (pp. 49, 50). I take her to mean that, although such judgments may be on hand, it is not through the conjunction of these judgments and a foundational proposition which links these judgments about the value of states of affairs to the goodness of actions (or capacities or dispositions) that we are in position to make those favorable evaluations of the hunting skills of the tiger and so on.

How are we to interpret this disavowal of consequentialism? Surely Foot is not merely disassociating herself from those specific forms of consequentialism that identify the good with particular types of states of affairs, for example, with occurrences of pleasure or preference satisfaction, and then tie their evaluations of actions (or capacities or dispositions) to the promotion of those particular states of affairs.³ She seems, instead, to be saying that there is a primacy or at least an independence in our evaluations of a living thing's capacities and operations. In evaluating any living thing's capacities and operations we consult "a natural history account of the life of [that] particular kind of living thing" which (except for the qualification just noted for human beings) "tell[s] how [that] kind

³ Nor is she merely saying that certain of the norms we create, like the norm of promise-keeping, will best advance human good only if the norm involves "an obligation that harmlessness [in not complying with the virtue on a specific occasion] does not annul" (p. 51).

of plant or animal, considered at a particular time and in its natural habitat, develops, sustains itself, defends itself, and reproduces" (p. 29). This natural history account for a given species constitutes its life form; and, for a living thing of any particular kind, we assess its capacities and operations on the basis of their conformity or disconformity with the life form of that kind of living thing. Goodness and badness attach directly to capacities, dispositions, and behaviors as they conform or disconform to the life form of the species in question. This is why whole packs of wolves who are good wolves in virtue of their wolfish capacities, dispositions, and behaviors may yet die out because of some alteration in their external circumstances and why a good deer may die precisely because its swiftness leads it into some hunter's trap. And some defective wolves, for example, wolves who do not know enough not to eat food with human scent on it, may survive precisely through that defect. Yet that contingent survival does not make them good wolves. Similarly, a human may benefit herself or others by violating a norm which is part of the human strategy for the securing of human good and the avoidance of human bad. But that benefit does not make this agent or her conduct praiseworthy. Foot's position seems to be that, while the good of a given species plays a central role in explaining why it has the life form that it has, goodness for that species consists of conformity to that life form and not in the promotion of that good *per se*.

Let us pause, though, to note why it is not so clear how this belief in the primacy or independence for evaluations of capacities and operations can be sustained – especially with respect to evaluations of human capacities and operations. For all types of living things, it is that type of thing's good (usually in the form of its survival) along with the circumstances in which things of that type must attain their good that determines that type of thing's life form. In the case of human beings, "the concept of good human lives plays the same part in determining goodness of human characteristics and operations" (p. 44). But, among human beings, there is dispute about which human characteristics and operations are part of the human strategy for securing good human lives. Competing moral principles or competing lists of virtues are put forward. And, within Foot's framework, it seems that a given set of moral principles or list of virtues can be vindicated as part of the human life form, that is, as part of the human strategy for securing good human lives, only by showing that it better secures good human lives than the alternative sets of moral principles or lists of virtues. Yet, if this is how we are to settle disputes about which purported principles or virtues actually instantiate goodness,⁴ then it seems that judgments about what is valuable in human life are in the driver's seat. There seems to be a tension

⁴ The alternative seems to be a type of moral conservatism in which these disputes are settled by an investigation into which principles or character traits "we" actually endorse.

within Foot's position between the thought that goodness in a living thing of a particular kind attaches primarily to conformity (in capacities and operations) to the life form of that kind of thing and the thought that the life form of each kind of living thing is to be understood as a strategy that serves the *good* of that kind of thing.

Foot's biocentric understanding of goodness (and defectiveness) involves a radical rejection of belief in a fundamental gap between fact and value. And, indeed, the first chapter of *Natural Goodness* is devoted to opening a way for Foot's naturalism by challenging the non-cognitivist thesis that moral evaluations are fundamentally different from factual assertions and, hence, that no factual truth, for example, that a human's nourishing and teaching her child sustains the human life cycle, can ever ground any moral expression, for example, that a human being acts as she *should* when she nourishes and teaches her child. Foot takes the crux of this non-cognitivist position to consist of two ideas: (a) factual judgments are not inherently action-guiding while moral expressions are; and (b) the action-guidingness of moral expressions is a matter of their consisting, as least in part, not of factual judgments, but of attitudes or feelings had by the speakers who utter those expressions sincerely. Foot's view is that it is perfectly reasonable for philosophers to insist that an account of moral judgments explain, or at least accommodate, the fact that such judgments are inherently action-guiding. But she holds that this fact can be explained or accommodated, without recourse to the non-cognitivist picture. The action-guiding character of moral evaluations – let us say of the form "I should do X" – can be explained by the conjunction of two un-Humean thoughts. The first is the thought that we human beings are moved (i.e., tend to be moved) by reason. Whatever we recognize we have reason to do, we will be moved to do. The second is "the (most un-Humean) thought that acting morally is part of practical rationality" (p. 9). Why especially is the second thought necessary?

One might accept the first thought, that we are moved by reason, while holding to a very narrow view about what we have reason to do, for example, that we have reason to do only what satisfies our desires. Indeed, one might accept the seemingly general proposition that we are moved by reason *only because* of the conjunction of one's *very* narrow view about what we have reason to do, namely, that we only have reason to do what satisfies our desires, and one's belief that the prospect of desire satisfaction is motivating. Or one might accept the first thought while holding to a *fairly* narrow view about what we have reason to do, for example, that we have reason to do only what satisfies our desires or promotes our interests. Indeed, one might accept the seemingly general proposition that we are moved by reason *only because* of the conjunction of one's *fairly* narrow view about what we have reason to do, namely, that we only have reason to do what satisfies our desires or promotes

our interests, and one's belief that the prospect of desire satisfaction and interest promotion is motivating. Foot thinks that if one accepts the first thought but holds to the very or fairly narrow view about what we have reason to do, one will not be able to account for the action-guidingness of "I should do X" *qua moral judgment*. For, *qua moral judgment*, "I should do X" expresses the *goodness of my doing X* – although we should recall that, according to Foot's naturalism, the goodness of my doing X is the conformity of my doing X to the human life form. *Qua moral judgment*, "I should do X" does not express the conduciveness of my doing X to the satisfaction of my desires or my interests. So, *qua moral judgment*, "I should do X", provides me with reason to do X and, hence, (given the first thought) is action-guiding, if and only if the goodness of my doing X itself provides me with reason to do X. *Qua moral judgment*, "I should do X" is action-guiding if and only if "acting morally is part of practical rationality".

The crucial move here is not so much the proposition that we are moved by reason but, rather, the transcendence of the very narrow and even the fairly narrow view about what practical rationality is. In *Natural Goodness*, Foot rejects the strategy of starting with the very narrow, or fairly narrow, view of practical rationality and then attempting to show that moral behavior is part of practical rationality by showing that the behavior which we label "moral" really does satisfy our desires, or really does promote our interests. She rejects the common enterprise of starting with a narrow "theory of rational action, and then try[ing] as best we can to slot in the rationality of acts of justice and charity" (p. 10). Instead, she holds that,

[T]he rationality of, say, telling the truth, keeping promises, or helping a neighbour is *on a par* with the rationality of self-preserving action, and of the careful and cognizant pursuit of other innocent ends; each being a part or aspect of practical rationality. (p. 11)

There is a suggestion here that one just starts with a recognition that truth-telling, promise-keeping, self-preservation, and so on are rational, and one builds an account of what practical rationality calls for inductively. (This parallels the suggestion that one starts with a recognition of what is a benefit and what is a deprivation for human beings, and one builds an account of the human good inductively.) But this inductive approach would leave us without any hope of an explanation for why any element of practical rationality is such an element. So, Foot quickly reassures us that there is "a unity to these different grounds of practical rationality" (p. 11). That unity, as we have already seen, is that each of the grounds of practical rationality is an aspect of the strategy by which human beings secure the benefits of human life and avoid its deprivations. The unity is a unity of *goodness* among those aspects, each of which is a *ground* of practical

rationality – because in Foot’s “account of the relation between goodness of choice and practical rationality, it is the former that is primary” (p. 11).

One important competitor to Foot’s view about practical rationality remains to be considered. This is the view that “practical rationality is the pursuit, and nothing but the pursuit, of happiness” (p. 81). Foot is eager to show that, without adopting this view, she can accommodate what makes it appealing. What makes the view appealing is the idea that being practically rational (which, for Foot, consists in goodness of choice and action) at least tends to be beneficial and, more particularly, at least tends to the benefit of happiness. Indeed, what is appealing, and what Foot seeks to accommodate, is the yet more specific idea that, for any given person, that person’s being practically rational at least tends to be beneficial to that person; for each given person, her realizing goodness of choice and action at least tends to her happiness.⁵ I say that Foot is seeking to accommodate this yet more specific idea of a linkage between each individual’s practical rationality and goodness and *her own* happiness for two reasons. First, the happiness Foot seeks to link with an individual’s rationality and goodness is always *that individual’s* happiness. For Foot, it is not enough to show that any given individual’s rationality and goodness tends to *someone’s* happiness. Second, Foot seeks, in her final chapter, to respond to the challenge of the immoralists “to show that the just man was happier than the unjust” (p. 99). She seeks to show that each man’s justice must at least tend to *his own* happiness. Within this final chapter, Foot even says that the basic scheme of her earlier chapters is that “a genuine virtue would have to be such as to fit an individual for his own good” (p. 112). So, although early in *Natural Goodness* Foot denigrates the thought that rational action must be advantageous to the actor – she says that only some lingering attachment to psychological egoism could lead one to think the goodness in human action is to be assessed “by reference only to good that each person brings to himself” (p. 16) – in her final chapter, she seeks to accommodate something like this idea.⁶

The key to accommodating a linkage between an agent’s happiness and her goodness is the identification of a sense of “happiness” such that this happiness can plausibly be said to be humanity’s ultimate good *and* that “combining [this happiness] with wickedness is a priori ruled out” (p. 96). According to Foot, the happiness that can plausibly be said to be humanity’s ultimate good is not the happiness of enjoyment or contentment. Rather, the happiness we are seeking has to have depth; it has to be enjoyment, contentment, or gladness *about* the possession, attainment, or realization of “things that are basic in human life” – albeit

⁵ Or, more guardedly, a given person’s goodness of choice and action at least does not tend to the sacrifice of her happiness. See the case of the letter-writers, pp. 94–6.

⁶ Cf. especially, the last 9 or so paragraphs of Foot’s early paper, “Moral Beliefs” (1958/59).

these basic things range from the possession of a patch of fertile land to the attainment of exotic truth. The problem is whether basic *bad* things – for example, Nazi death camps – can be excluded as sources of deep happiness. Can we say that the dedicated Nazi who seems to have greatly enjoyed his deadly work and, because of that work, feels deep satisfaction about how his life has gone is not really happy? Foot wisely does not rely here upon the claim that this Nazi would not really *feel* satisfied and, hence, would not really be satisfied about deep (albeit, bad) things. Guardedly she relies instead on the claim that the Nazi could not be happy in the eudaimonistic sense of living according to virtue and recognizing himself as doing so. In this eudaimonistic sense, the Nazi would have been happier had he rejected Nazism, fled into exile, and lived out his days in grinding and unhonored poverty.

But can we plausibly link the happiness that consists in one's realizing in one's life the crucial elements of the human good – which, unfortunately, the former Nazi seems to lack – with one's living virtuously in a way that rules out wickedness – which the former Nazi seems to achieve? Or in the language of flourishing, can we plausibly link the flourishing that consists in one's attaining in one's life the elements that make up good human lives with the flourishing that consists in a goodness in one's choices and actions that rules out wickedness? Clearly, one cannot justify this linkage simply by first characterizing human flourishing as the realization of “the elements that can make up good human lives” (p. 44), then later characterizing human flourishing as “instantiat[ing] the life form of [the human] species”. (p. 91) I have understood this life form – from which we read off how humans should act – as a general strategy which has evolved as an overall solution to the sorts of problems which individuals at large face in the pursuit of the elements that make up good human lives. If this is correct, some fairly impressive argumentation will be needed to show that, for all human beings, goodness in choice and action at least tends to *that individual's* attainment of the elements of a good human life.

The natural form of such argumentation is to show that the character of conspicuous elements of the human good is such that an individual's attainment of that good also constitutes goodness on the part of that individual. I think this is the sort of argumentation that Foot is offering when she invites us to contrast calculating friendship, which does not involve concern for the good of the befriended and does not involve goodness on one's part, with genuine friendship, which does involve concern for the befriended and does involve goodness on one's part (pp. 101–3). The lesson is that the sort of friendship which is more beneficial for one is the friendship that involves goodness on one's part. Foot then invites us to think about justice in the same way. Is not a genuinely just man – one who acts out of a recognition of the claims of others to a certain kind of respect – better off than a man who, without goodness, merely

does the just thing? One wants to answer, "yes". But one also wants some sort of explanation for why being a non-calculating friend or a just man makes one's life better. One wants to know why not being a friend and not being just are, like not understanding stories and laughing at jokes, deprivations. I will return to this desire after pursuing a somewhat different question about Foot's belief in the congruence of one's good and one's goodness.

As we have noted, Foot disavows the project of first identifying what counts as genuine human well-being, and then showing that the conduct which we label as moral is rational because that conduct (perhaps contrary to initial appearances) really does promote genuine well-being. When Foot disavows this project, she is thinking of narrower understandings of genuine human well-being than she herself comes to express. But her disavowal is perfectly general. She rejects any attempt to bring "moral action . . . under a pre-established concept of practical rationality" (p. 10). Yet, when she attempts to respond to the immoralist, is Foot not engaging in this disavowed project? Is she not saying that, if we start with a proper understanding of the human good and of practical rationality as the promotion of that good, we can respond to the challenge of Thrasymachus and Callicles by revealing how being just is truly advantageous to the just man? We can put the question another way. If Foot really believes that goodness of choice has priority over practical rationality, it seems that she should agree with Prichard that it is a deep mistake within moral theory to attempt to answer Thrasymachus. She should say, with Prichard, that justice is justice and the fact that a certain behavior is just itself provides us with reason for choice and action; just behavior does not have to be justified by showing it to be advantageous. So, does Foot's attempting to answer Thrasymachus not indicate her abandonment of the thesis that goodness of choice has priority over practical rationality?

Foot's answer to these questions depends upon two features of her position. The first is her understanding of practical rationality as being itself a type of "master virtue" (p. 62). Foot holds that there is a telling indication that the achievement of practical rationality is itself a central part of the human good. The indication is that even adherents of the view that practical rationality is nothing but the promotion of preference or interest satisfaction ascribe an *importance* to people being practically rational, which cannot be accounted for by their own views about what practical rationality is for. Whatever these theorists *say* the human good consists in, they implicitly take being practically reasonable as itself a central part of that good. The second feature is the direction from which the linkage between a person's goodness and her good is forged. Since goodness of choice has priority over practical rationality, the recognition of the goodness of a certain choice (or disposition or action) makes it practically reasonable for one to make that choice (or foster that disposition

or perform that action). But, since it is practically reasonable for one to make that choice, through making that choice one achieves the human good of being practically reasonable. By providing one with reason to make it, the goodness of the choice provides one with the opportunity for attaining in one's life the excellence of practical reasonableness. At least part of the benefit for a man of being just consists, then, in the reasonableness of being just; and that reasonableness obtains because of the goodness of being just. In this respect, the linkage between goodness and the good – between justice and advantage – exists because what is good and advantageous for us tracks goodness and justice, rather than because goodness and justice tracks what is good and advantageous for us. Thus, the type of response that Foot offers to the immoralist does not contravene, but rather depends upon, her claim that goodness has priority over practical rationality. And it accords with Prichard's central demand that the directive force of justice not be reduced to the directive force of an independently specified advantage.

Having said this, it is essential to recall that, on another level, goodness itself is determined by the good. As I understand Foot, we have what one hopes is a mutually reinforcing cycle. The achievement of the diverse elements of the human good are served by the life form of our species. And goodness is nothing but conformity in our capacities, dispositions, and behaviors to this strategy for the promotion of human good. Nevertheless, conformity to the moral norms within that life form may sometimes seem to be disadvantageous to specific conforming individuals. Yet, even in these cases, an individual's goodness tends to be to her benefit. Part of the reason for this is that, independent of our having reason to instantiate various modes of goodness, for example, friendship and justice, instantiating those modes of goodness is really beneficial to us. Part of the reason is that, because the goodness of certain modes of being, for example, friendship and justice, provides us with reason to instantiate those modes, by instantiating those modes (for those reasons) we achieve the good of being practically reasonable. This reinforcing cycle between the good and goodness may be the resolution to the previously noted tension between Foot's view that the human good determines the human life form and her view that the human goodness associated with instantiating that life form has some sort of priority or independence vis-à-vis the human good.⁷

Still, one must note the considerable weight borne by Foot's claims about *which* modes of being are the elements of the human good, *which* modes contribute to the flourishing of a human being and, thus, to

⁷ Thus, there is a feedback loop from human goodness to the human good that does not exist in the case of creatures who cannot act from reason. In *this* way there is a difference between the "conceptual structure" of evaluations vis-à-vis humans and vis-à-vis sub-rational creatures.

eudaimonia. Along with understanding stories, joining in songs and dances, laughing at jokes, and being creative, we have the crucial additions of friendship, justice, and practical reasonableness. Is our list of the elements of the human *good* simply induced from a series of insights about what is truly beneficial to us (beyond survival)? When faced with the prospect of a comparably induced list of human capacities and operations that manifest human *goodness*, Foot reassures us that there is “a unity to these different grounds of practical rationality” (p. 11). That unity, we saw, consisted in those grounds being strands of the human strategy for maintaining and promoting the human good. In parallel fashion, it would seem that Foot ought to reassure us that there is a unifying explanation for creativity, freedom, friendship, and justice (but not deliciously refined cruelty) being modes of the human good. Moreover, that unifying explanation ought to account for the central place within the human good of the realization of practical reasonableness. And, finally, it ought to account for why the realization of these modes of human good in the life of a particular individual is the flourishing or fulfillment of *that* individual.⁸ All the different Aristotelian aspects of Foot’s doctrine lead us to the threshold of an Aristotelian doctrine of human nature, the presentation of which would, if successful, provide unity to the components of the human good, assign a special place to practical reasonableness among those goods, and explain why one’s realization of these goods in one’s own life is one’s good. But bold as Foot’s claims in *Natural Goodness* are, that is a threshold over which she is unwilling to step. This may show sensibility; yet, in this project, how else but by pursuing such an account of human nature shall we get further on?

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⁸ In her inductive approach to the elements of human good and her assignment of a special place among those elements to practical reasonableness, Foot’s doctrine is like the type of neo-Thomism developed in John Finnis’s *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (1980). Nevertheless, Foot differs radically from this sort of neo-Thomism in her naturalism, in (what I have called) the biocentrism of her naturalism, and in the way in which the good determines goodness.