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A Thesis Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri–St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I describe two notions of normativity: John Broome's theory of 'true normativity' and Philippa Foot's theory of natural normativity. Both theories attempt to explain what determines how an individual ought to behave. Broome argues natural normativity is not true normativity. He claims natural normativity only describes the good of an organism and does not account for what a person ought to do. I argue this is a mistaken claim, based on the assumption that what is evaluative and descriptive are necessarily separate. In addition, I argue Broome expresses inconsistent views. He thinks prudence is a source of true normativity. While natural normativity is not identical to prudence, it is comparable and at least entails prudence. If Broome thinks prudence is truly normative, he should not assume natural normativity, or the good of an organism, is not also truly normative.

I. Introduction

In his book *Rationality Through Reasoning*, John Broome offers a requirement of rationality called the principle of 'Enkrasia.' The principle, also known as the enkratic requirement, is that to be rational, one must intend to do what one believes one ought to do. As an illustration: if a person believes she ought to refrain from smoking and simultaneously intends to smoke, she fails in some way at rationality. It may seem obvious that people intend to do what they believe they ought to do, but we can imagine many scenarios in which they do not. So what compels us to meet the enkratic requirement? How does the belief you ought to do something cause you to intend to do that thing? This is 'the motivation question.' (Broome, 2013, pg. 5) To answer it, Broome must explain what he means by the normative concept 'ought.' To explain ought, Broome must explain what he thinks is 'normativity.'

The ought in the motivation question–what Broome calls the 'central' ought–is normative in a particular way. He calls this sense of normativity 'true normativity.' Broome distinguishes true normativity from Philippa Foot's theory of 'natural normativity.' I believe his explanation of this is incomplete and gives short shrift to Foot's view. In the second section of this paper, I inspect Broome's criticisms of natural normativity. I explain what I think are his objections to Foot. Then I offer how Foot might respond to these objections. In the process, I try to

explain what Broome means by true normativity and what Foot means by natural normativity.

In the third section of this paper, I argue Broome's claim that natural normativity is not true normativity may be inconsistent with his view of prudence. Broome describes natural normativity as classifying what helps an individual organism complete its life cycle. He claims you cannot derive a truly normative conclusion based on the good of an organism. If that is true, you cannot derive a truly normative conclusion based on the good of a human being. We might interpret the good of a human being as what is prudent for a human being. But Broome believes prudence issues truly normative reasons and these reasons partly explain what a person ought to do. If he thinks prudence issues truly normative reasons and is truly normative, and natural normativity is similar to or at least entails prudence, then Broome should think natural normativity also issues truly normative reasons and is truly normative.

Broome and Foot share significant views about normativity, but Broome's view of prudence may be similar to that of Foot in her early work "Morality As A System of Hypothetical Imperatives." (1972) In the fourth section of this paper, I consider how Foot changes her view of prudence in that article to her view in *Natural Goodness.* For late Foot, prudence is part of practical rationality and is aiming at the good rather than simply desire-fulfillment. If Broome defines prudence in the same way late Foot does, he can see natural normativity is not necessarily incompatible with true normativity.

Late Foot's answer to what compels us to do what we ought to do is our capacity for practical rationality, which functions out of the goodness of choice or acting well rather than desire-fulfillment. "I want to say baldly, that there is no criterion for practical rationality that is not derived from that of goodness of the will." (Foot, 2001, pg. 11) Moral judgments, or judgments about what one ought to do, are necessarily guiding based on goodness of the will as expressed in practical rationality. Goodness of the will exists in aiming at the good.

II. True Normativity and Natural Normativity

Broome's True Normativity

Broome identifies meanings of 'normativity' through uses of the word "ought" in various sentences. As Broome does, I refer to what one ought to do as *an* 'ought' without quotation marks. He says "You ought to look both ways before crossing the street" is a normative statement. The speaker expresses a prescription or an attitude about how a person should behave. If there is a reason the listener ought to look both ways, the ought here is 'truly' normative. Philosophers often discuss reasons as 'reasons for action,' but our discussion here refers not only to action of the body but also 'action' of the mind, such as the act of intending or believing. Reasons "explain why a person ought to do something, or believe something, or

to like something, or in general to *F*, where *'F'* stands for a verb phrase." (Broome, 2013, pg. 47) What is truly normative, according to Broome, issues truly normative requirements that constitute reasons.

He demonstrates the slipperiness of the concept of normativity with another example: "Christine ought to know her seven-times table by the age of nine." The ought here may express at least two different kinds of ought. One, it expresses what Christine is expected to know from what is normal, or standard, relative to her circumstances. If Christine lives in an industrialized nation and has a decent education, we expect Christine will know her seven-times table by the age of nine. This is "normative" in the sense that it describes expectations about the world. If you thought the fact that something is normal determines what one ought to do, you would think this sort of normativity is truly normative. But Broome does not think what is normal determines true normativity. It may be standard in some contexts for children to be child laborers, but that does not mean there is a truly normative reason children ought to be child laborers. Two, the statement expresses some sort of directive by the speaker.

> One implication of this sentence is the non-normative one that Christine would know her seven-times table by the age of nine if her skills were to develop typically. On the other hand, the sentence also seems to carry some of the implications that go with the normative ought. It seems to imply someone is at fault—perhaps Christine or perhaps her teachers—if

> Christine does not know her seven-times table by the age of nine.
>
> (Broome, 2013, pg. 9)

I should note Broome sometimes uses the word "normativity" for the concept true normativity as well as other senses of normativity. He suggests a sign of true normativity is that someone is responsible for an ought. A breach of true normativity seems to mean someone is at fault. This may be why Broome thinks the central ought, which ultimately determines what one ought to do, is 'owned.' An owned ought ascribes a requirement to a particular agent and not states of affairs. In "It ought to be the case that Christine knows her seven-times table," the ought is unowned. Whereas in, "The teacher ought to see that Christine knows her seven-times table," the ought is owned by the teacher. The ought in first statement about Christine may or may not be owned by Christine. The fact that the central ought is owned could inform Broome's critique of natural goodness, which I consider briefly later.

In addition to 'owned' and 'unowned,' Broome views normative oughts as 'qualified' or 'unqualified.' Qualified oughts are ones which can be overridden and cannot really make it true what you ought to do. Broome assumes principles of morality, prudence, rationality, and more can require you ought to do something. These sources of oughts may issue competing oughts: morality may require you ought to *F* and at the same time prudence may require you not to *F*. One source of oughts may also dictate various oughts to you at once. Perhaps

prudence dictates Joe ought to go to the gym, but it is sleeting outside, so it also dictates Joe ought to stay home. Oughts that can be overridden are qualified. The central ought, which marks what one ought to do for certain, is unqualified. Through a process of weighing reasons that compose any truly normative oughts, (Broome, pg. 52, 2013) we come to the central ought.

Before we go into Broome's criticism of natural normativity, let me summarize what I think Broome's terms about normativity mean. He uses the word "normative" to denote three concepts represented in the word "ought." One, "normative" is used to describe what is normal or expected or 'to do with norms.' In this case, it does not refer to an evaluative judgment but describes an expectation about the world. Because what is normal does not dictate what ought to be the case, Broome calls this use of "normative" not really normative. Two, Broome calls an ought normative if it offers a tentative prescription of what one ought to do. According to requirements of prudence, Joe ought to go to the gym. The ought here is truly normative in a loose sense, because though it offers a prescription of how Joe ought to behave, it does not say for certain what Joe ought to do, since he really ought not drive while it is sleeting. It is a truly normative ought, but it is qualified and not necessarily what Joe ought to do. Third, there is an ought that refers to what a person really ought to do. It is sleeting outside, so Joe really ought not drive. This ought is truly normative and unqualified, because it refers to what Joe should do all-things-considered. It is the central ought in Broome's motivation question.

Broome's Criticism of Natural Normativity

To further distinguish what he means by true normativity, Broome tries to explain what he does not mean. He claims Philippa Foot's notion of natural normativity is not truly normative. Natural normativity is based on what Foot calls 'natural goodness.' Natural goodness is based on the idea of 'Aristotelian necessity,' which is explained by Elizabeth Anscombe as "that which is necessary insofar as the good hangs on it." (Broome, pg. 11, 2013) As Foot puts it: "These 'Aristotelian necessities' depend on what the particular species of plants and animals need, on their natural habitat, and on their ways of making out that are in their repertoire." (Foot, 2001, pg. 15) What is naturally good is that which elevates the *life* of a creature.

Foot introduces natural normativity in *Natural Goodness*. She applies it as a theory of evaluation to all living things, from plants to non-human animals to human beings. While Broome tends to use the word "ought," Foot uses the word "should," but as before I take these words to mean the same thing. Broome does not think natural goodness issues truly normative reasons that compose truly normative oughts. Foot introduces natural goodness within the context of the life of an oak, or "natural history." (Broome, 2013, pg. 11)

> We are, let us suppose, evaluating the roots of a particular oak tree, saying perhaps that it has good roots because they are as sturdy and deep as an oak's roots should be. …Oak trees need to stay upright because, unlike creeping plants, they have no possibility of life on the ground, and they are tall, heavy trees. Therefore oaks need to have deep, sturdy roots: there is something wrong with them if they do not. …The good of an oak is its individual reproductive cycle, and what is necessary for this is an Aristotelian necessity in its case. Since it cannot bend like a reed in the wind, an oak that is as an oak should be is one that has deep and sturdy roots. (Foot, 2001, pg. 46)

Broome thinks the evaluation of an oak's roots in the context of the oak's life does not constitute truly normative evaluation. He says, "If I understand Foot right, '*A* should *F*' in this sense simply means that *F*ing is necessary for the good of something of *A*'s species." (Broome, 2013, pg. 11) To say an oak should have deep, sturdy roots is only to say it should have them to complete its life cycle, according to Broome. He thinks even if you think it is naturally normative for an oak to have sturdy roots, you may also think it is not truly normative for an oak to have sturdy roots and "you would not be contradicting yourself."

Foot applies natural normativity to human beings too. A human being should *F* means *F*ing is necessary for the good of a member of the human species. Foot separates human beings from non-human animals by their capacity for practical rationality. While for simpler beings, the good is what helps complete their life cycles, the good for a human being is more elaborate, partly because

humans can reflect and decide on their actions, which changes the nature of their aims. A human being's goods are more far-ranging than an oak's and may even require intentional self-sacrifice. What is good for a human being is not only completing one's life cycle but also being virtuous, according to Foot. To say a human being should be virtuous is analogous to saying an oak tree should have deep, sturdy roots. One important difference between a human and an oak is that a human can access her reasons.

As Broome describes it, natural normativity refers to what a thing should do or be for its own good or what will help its life cycle. He objects to this as a notion of true normativity, saying what is good for a member of a species does not necessarily indicate what the organism really ought to do or be. (Broome, 2013, pg. 12) Broome does not see the connection between the good of an oak, the good of a human, and what is truly normative. I take his argument to be this:

> P1 Natural normativity states *A* should *F* if *F*ing is necessary for the good of something of *A*'s species.
>
> P2 According to natural normativity, the good of an oak is parallel to the good of a human.
>
> P3 The good of an oak is not truly normative.
>
> C1 The good of a human being is not truly normative.
> C2 Natural normativity is not true normativity.

Broome does not say specifically why the good of an oak is not truly normative, but we can conclude he does not think natural normativity issues truly normative reasons for how an oak ought to be.

Broome may think an oak cannot have truly normative reasons that play a role in determining what it ought to do. This may be because he thinks an oak cannot have a reason at all. Remember his example of ought in "Christine ought to know her seven-times table by the age of nine." If the ought is truly normative, he suggests someone is at fault if the requirements of the ought are not met. For Broome, a truly normative ought implies a "personal obligation," or ownership of the ought. (Broome, 2013, pg. 18) Since we do not think of an oak tree as having control over its state of being, we cannot say it is at fault if it does not develop in accordance with what is considered naturally good. The ought in "An oak ought to have deep, sturdy roots," is unowned, and translates to "It ought to be the case that an oak have deep, sturdy roots." Broome may think that truly normative requirements do not hold for oak trees and that while we would expect an oak tree to have deep sturdy roots, oak trees are not *required* to have deep sturdy roots. This is why he thinks natural normativity can be said to be "normative" in the having 'to do with norms' sense, but not the action-guiding sense.

Assume oak trees cannot be personally obligated by truly normative requirements. Natural normativity may still issue truly normative requirements to human beings through the same evaluative category that makes true the statement "It ought to be the case that an oak have deep, sturdy roots." It may not make

sense to say an oak tree owns the ought in this statement, since an oak does not apprehend how it ought to be and direct itself accordingly. A human being, on the other hand, can understand reasons for why she ought to be certain way and behave in accordance with those reasons. “It ought to be the case that Joe brushes his teeth” is comparable to “Joe ought to brush his teeth,” since Joe can be aware of reasons to brush his teeth and is free to brush them. Through this relationship with an ought, a person owns an ought. “For me, owned oughts are central, because they play a role in our practical rationality, and this book is about rationality.” (Broome, 2013, pg. 22) Just because an oak does not own oughts based on natural normativity does not mean a human being does not own an ought based on natural normativity, if a human being can access reasons issued by natural normativity. And while an oak tree may not be able to access reasons, it still may be the case there are normative reasons for it being a certain way. These reasons are not only explanatory reasons, which explain why an oak tree is the way it is, but actually are reasons for why it should be a certain way. There is something wrong about an oak having flimsy roots, even if the oak cannot be blamed for it.

Broome’s problem may not be with an oak owning an ought though. He may just think what is naturally normative cannot be translated to truly normative oughts. “That human beings should be virtuous leaves it an open question Whether they should in the truly normative sense be virtuous.” (Broome, 2013, pg. 12) Broome’s phrase “open question” hearkens to G.E. Moore’s ‘open-

question argument,' which Moore used to support the thesis that normative judgments are not derivable from or reducible to non-normative judgments. In *Principia Ethica*, Moore defends an anti-naturalist view of morality, or more generally normativity, in which what is good is unanalyzable in non-normative terms. For Moore, one cannot reduce goodness to the state of an oak's roots. An oak tree's roots may be strong and sturdy, but it is an open question whether its roots are good. But it seems odd for Broome to say it is an open question Whether human beings should be virtuous. It is as if he is saying it is an open question that human beings should do what they ought to do, as being virtuous seems to be doing what one ought to do.

Broome must think there can be instances when a person ought not be virtuous. According to his view, what determines what one ought to do is a correct weighing of reasons, but he does not explain the a point of this weighing of reasons. It is not to be moral, since Broome thinks it is possible moral oughts can be overridden by other sorts of oughts. (Broome, pg. 25, 2014) Perhaps he assumes practical rationality actually determines what a person ought to do, though he claims that rational oughts can possibly be overridden as well. But since his view is that what determines the central ought is a correct weighing of reasons and this is done through practical rationality, he must think practical rationality is primary to other sources of reasons for action. Broome must see proper rationality as a coherence of attitudes independent of aims at any normative truths related to morality, virtue or being good.

Broome's most clear worry with natural normativity is that we cannot derive what ought to be the case from what is good for the life of an organism. He describes natural normativity as only based on what is normal or beneficial to the life cycle of a member of a species, but this is not a comprehensive explanation. As I explain in the following, what is naturally normative is not based on what is typical about the members of a species, and the good of an organism is not necessarily what actually completes its life cycle. The good of an organism is what is essential to the organism's life form, which is determined by its way of living and that it is a living thing. What a human being ought to do cannot be separated from her life, so it seems whatever determines what a human being ought to do must be pertinent to the life of a human being. The particulars of what makes a human life and what determines natural normativity may be difficult to pinpoint, but conceptually it makes sense that what is truly normative for a human being is the good of a human life.

Natural Goodness as an Evaluative Category

Philippa Foot and John Broome share two metaethical views. As moral realists, they believe there are deontic facts, truths about what one should do. As cognitivists, they believe these truths are knowable. Broome does not give a metaphysical account of true normativity. It appears from his criticism of Foot he does not think true normativity is reduced to natural properties. Unlike Broome,

Foot is a moral naturalist. She thinks objective normative facts and properties are natural facts and properties. Moral naturalists believe the concept 'good' refers to something in the natural world. Foot explains the goal of *Natural Goodness*:

> …I believe that evaluations of human will and action share a conceptual structure with evaluations of characteristics and operations of other living things, and can only be understood in these terms. I want to show moral evil as 'a kind of natural defect.' (Foot, 2001, pg. 5)

While Foot is concerned specifically in moral goodness or badness, virtue or vice, her theory attempts to explain general 'true' normativity, or what determines what humans ought to do. She argues goodness and badness exist in the capacities of living things; what is good bolsters the aims of a living thing. Goodness and badness do not exist in non-living things, such as rocks, with no aims. To understand how human beings ought to be, we need to understand the essence of what is good for living things. To understand human goodness in particular, we need to understand aims of human life. If natural normativity, based on the aims of human life, provides truly normative requirements and reasons, then it explains what humans ought to do according to John Broome's view and is compatible with Broome's view of true normativity.

Foot is a moral naturalist, while Broome appears to be an anti-naturalist. As moral realists, Foot and Broome both oppose noncognitivism and subjectivism, views that assume judgments about how one ought to act are not

based on anything real and are subjective. Philosophers sometimes call these views forms of 'expressivism.' According to expressivism, a moral judgment is not perception of a moral fact. It is an articulation of an emotion or opinion. If you say, "Joe ought not to lie," an expressivist would say you expressed a pro-attitude towards Joe not lying but you did not say anything with truth-value. Broome and Foot, on the other hand, both think your sentence has truth-value.

Though Broome is a cognitivist and a moral realist, he shares an assumption with anti-naturalistic views. He assumes the descriptive and the evaluative are separate. Metaethicists have made this assumption over the past seventy years. (Foot, 2001, pg. 6) In her opening chapter of *Natural Goodness*, Foot asks readers to consider a "fresh start," open to the idea there is a grammar of evaluation independent of human language or point of view. She says anti-naturalism is based on two assumptions. One, there is a distinction between the descriptive and the evaluative. Two, in order for a person to have a reason she ought to do something, she must already in some way be motivated by it. This is what she call's Hume's 'practicality requirement': only a person with certain conditions (i.e. a pro-attitude) can make an evaluative judgment about what she ought to do. According to this, unless I am already willing to intend to do what I believe I ought to do, I have no reason to fulfill the enkratic requirement. Foot thinks instead we can objectively describe and at the same time normatively evaluate the world. For instance, we might describe someone as showing 'courage' or 'prudence.' Anti-naturalists suppose the descriptive content here does

not include value. Foot, on the other hand, sees courage and prudence as values featured in the world, independent of language we use about them.

There are a couple of ways Foot might respond to Broome's criticism of natural normativity that it explains norms but not true normativity. She may respond by saying Broome assumes there is a distinction between the evaluative and the descriptive and that this assumption is a mistake. If we set the assumption aside, we are open to the possibility that natural goodness gives reasons. Whatever gives reasons exists in the world, and whatever gives reasons is natural goodness in the world. Foot might also argue that Broome misrepresents natural normativity, as I think he does. Broome is not clear what he means by natural normativity being for the 'good of' a member of a species' life cycle. He says that Foot says what is naturally good is what is good for an oak's life cycle. His wording could imply what is naturally good simply benefits members of a species. This is not quite natural goodness. Broome says:

> Her [Foot's] premise is that each human should be virtuous, where this is a matter of natural normativity. This means simply that being virtuous is necessary to the good of human beings. No truly normative conclusion follows. (Broome, 2013, pg. 12)

Natural goodness is not as simple as what benefits human beings or any individual organism. What is good for members of a species, human beings or an oak, Foot might call 'secondary goodness.' Secondary goodness is derivatively

valuable, based on the interests of individuals. But natural goodness refers to an "autonomous" goodness existing in capacities of living things. It is an objective goodness that might be observed by martians, if martians had no stake in the quality of living things on Earth. While what is good for a living thing and the good of a living thing may connect, they reflect two distinct kinds of evaluation. I consider this more in this paper's section on 'prudence.'

Natural goodness reflects the value of a living thing measured against its 'life form.' 'Life form' refers to how organisms of a certain kind live. (Foot, 2001, pg. 27) Whether a state of being or behavior is good depends on the relation of an individual to the way its species lives. We can understand what is meant by life form by considering how we talk about living things. In the case of an oak, that we can describe an oak at all is because we understand basic qualities an oak has to maintain itself properly. We know there is something wrong with an oak that cannot hold itself upright because its roots are weak. However, what is naturally good about an oak is not just what benefits the oak. What is naturally good about an oak occurs in the features and operations that make an oak a good oak, or adept at living the life of an oak.

What Foot calls 'Aristotelian categoricals' determine a life form. They explain the features and operations of an organism based on its species. With an understanding of evolution, critics may have trouble seeing how there could be essential characteristics to a species. Living things are evolving. However, Aristotelian categoricals refer to a species in a given time and environment.

Aristotelian categoricals are determined by the interaction of a species with its changing environment and overall context of its life. They reflect the most general characteristics of a species, which make talking about the species possible. (Foot, 2001, pg. 29) When we talk about a tiger, we have features in mind that make a tiger a tiger. Aristotelian categoricals explain what is good for a living thing to be, relative to its time and place in its natural environment, founded on the natural history of what its species has been before.

Aristotelian categoricals do not refer to simply statistical norms about a species. A species of bird may happen to have a blue spot on its head, while this characteristic plays no important role in the life of that kind of bird. Whether the bird has or does not have this spot does not affect its life or indicate natural goodness. Aristotelian categoricals refer to characteristics that are relevant to a living thing's way of life. For plants and non-rational animals, we assume 'way of life' refers to sustaining life. There are teleological and non-teleological descriptions of a species. What is teleological is pertinent to the life and functioning of a member of a species. Aristotelian categoricals refer to teleological descriptions of a species. They refer to norms in the sense that a member of a species should exhibit certain features and operations in order to function as a member of its species. The evaluation of an organism occurs in the meeting of an Aristotelian categorical with a proposition about an individual being evaluated. (Foot, 2001, pg. 33) For instance, "This tiger is weak." We can

understand this proposition as an evaluation based on a general understanding of what a tiger ought to be like.

'Goodness' and 'badness' are abstract terms used to stand for what Foot calls 'patterns of normativity,' which we understand concretely in terms like 'healthy,' 'diseased,' 'slow,' 'fast,' 'weak' or 'strong.' How we normatively evaluate a living thing is by contrasting it with its life form. If a cheetah cannot run fast, and it needs to run fast to catch nourishment, it exhibits a negative quality for its life form. Foot notes what makes a feature good in a creature does not always benefit a creature. Sometimes the fastest deer is the one to get eaten first, even if fastness is goodness in a deer. Natural goodness does not support only an individual's survival. Part of the life of an animal may be acting cooperatively or other-regarding. (Foot, 2001, pg. 33) And whether or not a deer gets eaten is not good or bad. Natural goodness has nothing to do with consequences. It is only an evaluation of being or doing in a living thing, regardless of the particular outcome. It is not necessarily what is good for an organism to actually complete its life cycle but to fit with its life form.

In order to evaluate an organism according to natural normativity, we must consider four things. First, as Broome points out, we look at the life cycle of a species. What is a life cycle of species, as in the case of rational animals, may be more complicated than biological reproduction. Second, we look at how a species achieves the things that amount to its life cycle. Third, we derive normative requirements based on how a species achieves its life cycle. In the case of

cheetahs, cheetahs should be fast. In the case of humans, perhaps they should be imaginative or other-regarding. Last, we evaluate a member of a species by comparing it to these norms. Foot's thesis is that "…there is no change in the meaning of 'good' between the word as it appears in 'good roots' as it appears in 'good dispositions of the human will.'" (Foot, 2001, pg. 39) Natural normativity explains a kind of evaluation that is applied to all living things. Plants, non-rational animals, and human beings all exhibit natural goodness or defect based on their respective life forms.

Broome believes natural normativity may be said to be normative in that it has 'to do with norms,' but that it is not action-guiding. He and Foot use the term 'norms' differently. What Broome means by 'norms' Foot calls 'normalities.' Broome describes norms as an expectation of what should occur based on what is typical. 'Norms' for Foot refers to what an organism should be like in order to achieve its life form. These norms may be typical, but they are also action-guiding due to being relevant to an organism's life. 'Normalities' for Foot refer to what is typical but not action-guiding about a species. Broome thinks natural normativity is only normative in that it explains normalities. However, natural normativity is not simply determined by what is typical for a species but by what actually matters to its way of life. On the face of it, natural normativity, based on what is relevant to the way of life of a species, must issue reasons. While it may be difficult to accurately describe a life form, it seems even more difficult to prove something is action-guiding if is not related in some way to the life of a living

thing. If there are facts about what we ought to do, it seems we are most justified in thinking that they exist in the world in relation to us as living things.

Broome assumes normative facts, or facts about what one ought to do, exist (Broome, 2013, pg. 6), but he does not explain on what these facts are based. This is one reason why I do not understand why he is so quick to dismiss Foot's theory. If we consider natural normativity may exist, it can account for what Broome assumes to be sources of requirements, because those requirements must in some way relate to human life. In particular, an intuitive view of prudence suggests it is connected to the good of human being. Broome assumes prudence is a source of truly normative requirements, yet he assumes the good of an organism is not a source of truly normative requirements. If we think prudence and a person's good are intertwined, Broome's assumptions are inconsistent. In the next section, I consider what Broome may mean by prudence and if the good of a human being, or natural normativity, is compatible with it. If Broome thinks prudence is a source of truly normative requirements and prudence can be derived from natural goodness, then Broome should think natural goodness is a source of truly normative requirements too.

III. Prudence as a Source of Reasons

Broome on Prudence

For Broome, a truly normative 'source of requirements' helps determine truly normative oughts. A source of requirements (e.g. the law) issues constraints that may guide a person. There are many sources like these, including fashion, convention, etiquette, morality, rationality, and prudence. Some of these sources of requirements may not be truly normative because the fact they require something of you is not in itself a reason for you to fulfill that requirement. For example, you may think rules of fashion are not inherently governing but think rules of morality are. Any requirements on you in a given moment may factor into the central ought, or what you really ought to do all-things-considered. If a requirement factors into the central ought, it gives you a reason and is truly normative. "This is what I called 'true normativity' on page 11. More exactly, to say a requirement on you to *F* is normative is to say that the requirement constitutes a reason for you to *F*." (Broome, pg. 28, 2013) Any truly normative requirement comes from a truly normative source and constitutes a truly normative reason.

Broome lists among his examples 'prudence' as a source of truly normative requirements. He does not go into detail about his view of prudence but calls it the same as 'self-interest.': "However, no doubt some sources do issue

requirements that are normative. Morality and prudence (by which I mean self-interest) are presumably among them." (Broome, pg. 123, 2013) It is not clear what Broome means by self-interest. It is puzzling that he assumes it issues truly normative requirements whereas the good of an organism does not issue truly normative requirements. Broome must not think self-interest stems from the good of a person or else he would think natural normativity is also truly normative. This makes me wonder what he thinks makes self-interest action-guiding as opposed to the good of a person.

Broome may think that prudence hinges on interests and desires or a conative state of a person. By 'conative state,' I mean a preexisting condition in the mind that makes one receptive to a reason. He may think what is in a person's self-interest depends on her already being receptive or convinced by it. In this way, self-interest can meet Hume's practicality requirement. Broome may assume that self-interest is necessarily reason-giving for the fact that people are moved by what already personally interests them. Since Broome thinks that morality also issues sources of requirements, it cannot be the case that he thinks natural normativity is not truly normative on the grounds that it does not move a person through her personal desires.

A view of prudence as self-interest is at odds with the natural goodness of an organism. A free-riding wolf may profit as an individual by not cooperating with the pack and taking without giving. It may live a more comfortable life than others and have no regrets. But according to natural normativity, as part of a

species whose members cooperate, wolves that are free-riding are in one way defective or malfunctioning. “And it will surely not be denied that there is something wrong with a free-riding wolf that feeds but does not take part in the hunt, as with a member of a species of dancing bees who finds a source of nectar but whose behavior does not let other bees know its location.” (Foot, 2001, pg. 16) Likewise, a person who acts out of desire-fulfillment when it is at odds with what he normatively ought to do based on the good of a human is not acting as she should.

Prudence as self-interest may not be as simple as desire-fulfillment though. What is really prudent for a person may not be what serves her interests or even what she perceives to serve her interests. It might be what is really prudential for a person is to be a good human being, which does not depend on the satiation of particular desires or interests. We know Broome thinks prudence is truly normative and gives us reasons. If we think prudence is connected to the good of a human being, the good of a human being should also issue reasons and be truly normative. In the following, I consider how prudence can issue reasons and be encompassed by natural normativity.

Bernard Williams, in his well-known article "Internal and External Reasons," characterizes what he calls ‘internal’ and ‘external’ reasons. An internal reason is one that is based on an agent’s “subjective motivational set” or what William’s calls an agent’s *S*. (Williams, 1981) Because an internal reason stems from a person’s motivations, it is necessarily rationally binding. If Joe wants to lose weight, Joe has an internal reason to exercise. An external reason is one that is divorced from any agent’s *S*. Since an external reason is not connected to an agent’s *S*, it does not necessarily motivate according to Williams. Because of this, Williams thinks external reasons are not real reasons and that all real reasons for why one ought to do something are actually internal reasons.

To illustrate the differences between internal and external reasons, Williams gives a thought experiment, which I paraphrase here. Say Joe wants a gin and tonic. He believes he holds a bottle of gin and tonic, but really he holds a bottle of petrol. (Williams, 1981) If you were determining his reasons based only on what he thinks he has a reason to do, you might say he has a reason to drink what is in the bottle. He believes it is a gin and tonic, and since he wants a gin and tonic, it would not be unreasonable for him to drink from the bottle. But to say Joe has a reason in this sense is only to say there is an explanation for why he could drink and not be unreasonable.

> It looks in the wrong direction, by implying in effect that the internal reason conception is concerned only with an explanation, and not at all with the agent's rationality, and this may help to motivate a search for other sorts of reasons which are connected with his rationality. But the internal reasons conception is concerned with the agent's rationality. (Williams, 1981)

Williams thinks the fact that Joe believes what he holds is gin and tonic is an explanatory reason and not a real internal reason Joe ought to drink the petrol. His motivation to drink from the bottle is based on the false belief that he holds gin, and since drinking from the bottle is actually at odds with Joe's *S*, he does not have an internal reason to drink. In fact, he has an internal reason not to drink from the bottle, according to his *S*, if his *S* includes motivations to not drink toxic substances.

If you think Joe has a reason not to drink the bottle because objectively it is dangerous to drink petrol, you might think Joe has an external reason not to drink from the bottle. But Williams thinks external reasons do not exist, because there is nothing that binds a person to an external reason. There is nothing motivating about a reason that is disconnected from a person's *S*. He thinks for a reason to be real, a person must be able to deliberate from it or to it. One's subjective motivational set is not static but changes with new information and conclusions. If an external reason is outside Joe's field of deliberation, it is not a real reason for Joe.

The nonexistence of external reasons seems to present a problem for those who think there are objective normative truths about what one ought to do. Suppose Joe would be able to kill his wife without getting caught and receive her million dollar life insurance policy. Perhaps Joe is aware of nothing related to his *S* that indicates he has an internal reason *not* to kill his wife. Joe may conclude he has no reasons not to kill his wife and has reasons to kill his wife. For those who think there are truths about what Joe ought to do independent of what Joe thinks he ought to do, and that not killing people is among them, this is unsettling.

Williams replies to this problem by saying an internal reason can be based on elements of *S* of which a person might not be aware. Joe's subjective motivational set may dictate that he not kill his wife, even if Joe is not aware of it. If Joe were better informed and deliberated carefully enough, he might find while he is immediately motivated to kill his wife, in the larger scheme of his motivational set, he should not kill his wife. If we agree with Williams that reasons depend on a person's motivational set and we believe there exists objective normative reasons, we could also respond by saying Joe's personal motivational set extends to a universal motivational set. (Chappell, 2014) A universal motivational set includes objective normative reasons, and it is what Joe would accept if he were fully informed and able to reason about his reasons correctly. If internal reasons stem from this universal set, then it may be that Joe is required not to kill his spouse based on internal reasons. This universal motivational set could be based on natural normativity. We could say that our

shared, universal motivations are based on the nature of Joe as a human being or the nature of Joe as a rational agent.

In defining prudence as self-interest, Broome may mean prudence is satisfying the contents of a person's subjective motivational set. This could mean what a person consciously desires or it could mean what is actually good for a person if she were to accurately deliberate over her internal reasons. If self-interest includes a universal motivational set, which a person arrives at through practical rationality, then prudence may look a lot like what is naturally good for a human being. What is naturally good for a human being by definition seems to give people reasons.

IV. Practical Rationality and Aiming at the Good

In Foot's earlier work, "Morality As A System of Hypothetical Imperatives" (1972), Foot argues against a distinction Kant makes between moral judgments and hypothetical imperatives. An imperative is an assertion about what ought to be done (or not done). If something ought to be done for the possible or actual benefit of something else, it is a hypothetical imperative. If an action is good in itself, it is a categorical imperative. Kant's view is that only if an action is good in itself can its imperative entail moral judgment. By "good in itself," I mean a moral judgment expresses an unconditional requirement about what one

ought to do, independent of a person's interests. (Foot, 1972) The action is good regardless of any advantageous or detrimental outcomes for anyone.

Requirements of self-interest as desire-fulfillment translate to hypothetical imperatives. Kant says, "All material practical principles are, as such, of one and the same kind and belong under the general principle of self love or one's own happiness." When one ought to do something for one's personal interests or desires, one ought to meet a hypothetical imperative. Kant's "moral man" accepts a moral duty regardless of his interests even if he is interested in being a moral man. It seems a tall order that anyone would be motivated by something she has no stake in at all, which is why early Foot believes Kant's view of human nature is impractical and wrong. She thinks a person has reasons to help others insofar as she desires to see others helped.

According to Foot, the challenge for Kant is to show that moral truths are inescapable. If you tell Joe it is wrong to murder his wife, he can still ask why and decide not to care about the "wrongness" of murder. For Joe, it is an open question whether he ought not murder his wife, which is why Foot compares morality's principles to those of etiquette. People may have no interest in being moral, or doing what they ought to do, in the same way people may have no interest in being good mannered. Even if etiquette issues reasons for people to behave a certain way, without touching people's personal interests and desires, people have no reason to comply with them. For early Foot, a person acts irrationally only when he does something "calculated to be disadvantageous or to

frustrate his ends." (Foot, 1972, pg. 310) This is why early Foot thinks prudence as self-interest is necessarily normative (i.e. truly normative) and morality as a set of categorical imperatives is not. Since the rationality of moral action cannot be explained independent of an agent's desires, early Foot supposes, only interests or desires can make moral action practically rational.

Foot adamantly changes her mind in *Natural Goodness*, where she argues against an "end-neutral, Humean" theory of rationality, in which the good of an end plays no role in the operation of rationality. Human beings are rational creatures because they are able to act on their reasons. By this, Foot means humans can do something for an end and at the same time apprehend it as an end. If Joe wants to lose weight, he can see this as his reason or end and see going to the gym as his means. Humans have reasons based on what they see as good, such as health. Like Broome, later Foot thinks the all-things-considered ought determines what a person ought to do, and this ought is based on the balance of reasons. If a person irrationally does not do what she ought to do, she is "*ipso facto defective*." (Foot, 2001, pg. 59) If Joe perceives he ought not drive while it's sleeting outside but decides to do it anyway, he is being irrational and doing something wrong. His desire to be fit does not mean he has more reasons to leave home, when it is better that he not drive in dangerous conditions.

It is tempting to think of prudence as desire-fulfillment because desire-fulfillment is an easy way to explain why a person is motivated to do what she ought to do. What will serve our desires is inherently motivating, but this does not

mean people only determine what they ought to do through hypothetical imperatives. It is conceivable that people also act for reasons based on what they believe to be the good thing to do. Practical rationality, in Foot's view, is what helps people to recognize the good. A problem for Broome's conception of practical rationality as being just a coherence of attitudes is that it makes it so any other virtue must comply with practical rationality and there is no aim to practical rationality. For Broome, any source of requirements can lose to rationality, so that we are required to be rational for the sake of being rational. This allows that what one ought to do may be to behave immorally, because it may be "rational" to do so. It is also possible for people to be irrational by doing the moral action if the moral action is at odds with their self-interest.

This is one of Foot's criticisms of her earlier work and of philosophers who assume practical rationality is a tool for desire-fulfillment or that it must govern all other virtues and what a person ought to do. Rather than making what is normative comply with what is practically rational, it may be the other way around: practical rationality is determined by what one ought to do, or what is good. "The argument depends on the change of direction that [Warren] Quinn suggested: seeing goodness as setting a necessary condition of practical rationality and therefore as at least a part-determinant of the thing itself." This is Foot's response to her earlier self and what might be a response to Broome, when he asks why one ought to be virtuous or do what is good for the life of a human. What is prudent and good of a human are intertwined in a person's practical rationality.

V. Conclusion

John Broome claims Philippa Foot's natural normativity is not true normativity. He thinks what is truly normative is a source of reasons. He thinks while natural normativity may describe what is normal, it does not give reasons that explain what one ought to do or be. Why Broome thinks this is not exactly clear, but he seems to charge natural normativity with David Hume's is-ought problem. He may think you cannot derive an evaluative conclusion from a descriptive conclusion.

Foot may respond to Broome by saying the descriptive-evaluation distinction rests on a mistaken assumption. She may also say that Broome misrepresents her theory of natural goodness. Natural goodness is not dependent on the perspective of an individual but is a kind of evaluative grammar, independent of what benefits any one creature or set of creatures. It exists in the capacities of living things' features and operations. It provides reasons because it determines what is good for a life. If anything is action-guiding, what is good for a life seems to be a likely candidate. Natural normativity meets Hume's practicality requirement through practical rationality.

Broome believes prudence, or self-interest, issues truly normative reasons. He does not elaborate on what he means by 'self-interest.' It could be that he thinks it is a kind of desire-fulfillment, which would suggest that he thinks what gives a person reasons relates to her desires. However, since he thinks morality

also issues reasons, he must not think that reasons depend on a person's desires. It could be that what is in a person's self-interests are internal reasons, which she could arrive at through practical rationality. If this is the case, self-interest could include the good of a human being, or what constitutes natural goodness in a human being.

There are advantages to normativity being reduced to natural properties. While many philosophers consider normativity by how it is represented in human language, Foot's theory places it in the world or "life." (Foot, 2001, pg. 5) If goodness is an otherworldly thing, it is difficult to explain how it affects our existence. It also accounts for goodness in living things other than human beings. If there are objective normative truths, normativity must extend beyond the perspective of just human beings. By its definition, it seems that natural normativity just does issue reasons, whether a creature is aware of its reasons or not. An oak may not perceive a reason for it to have sturdy roots, but that does not mean there are not normative reasons for it to have sturdy roots. That it cannot see its reasons means an oak is not responsible for itself in the same way as an agent, but there are still ought-facts for oaks and other non-decisional creatures. The difference between human beings and sub-rational species is that we can know our reasons.

We see our ends and means to those ends. We can reflect on what we want to do and presumably determine our actions. For Foot, that we can choose what Broome calls the 'central ought' is part of the life form of human beings. That we

can choose what we ought to do all-things-considered is part of what is to be a good human being. This ability stems from our capacity of ‘practical rationality.’ By exhibiting practical rationality, human beings exhibit natural goodness in the same way an oak that has sturdy roots does. If a person fails in practical rationality, they show a defect in the same way an oak with weak roots does.

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