

After Disenchantment

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(Outline of book ms. in progress)

I. Introduction

Motivates the project, places it in the historical and cultural context of the discipline of analytic philosophy and the particular subfield of contemporary Aristotelian ethics. Explains and motivates the feminist methodology of the project in terms of Iris Murdoch's "just and loving attention" and constructive endoxastic synthesis.

II. Part One (Chapters 1-3) "Ethics and the Great Chain of Being"

The assumption that there is an essential difference between *facts* and *values* is a widely-accepted starting point of contemporary ethics. I show that the fact-value distinction seems plausible and inevitable only because of the continued influence in contemporary ethics of the very paradigm that it supposedly replaces – an ostensibly-rejected ancient, medieval, and early modern picture of the world as a 'Great Chain of Being'. I identify illicit remnants of the Great Chain in the work of Christine Korsgaard (1996, 2018), Bernard Williams (1981), John McDowell (1996), Philippa Foot (2001) and Michael Thompson (2008).

The implication of the argument in these first chapters is that while some, one, or all of our current ethical theories may turn out to be very well suited to the human phenomena they aim to capture, we will not really be in a position to know this until we have first developed a theory of value and of humanity's place in nature that is less constrained by illicit survivals from the Great Chain worldview. At the same time, avoiding illicit remnants of the Great Chain does not mean eschewing an Aristotelian approach to ethics altogether. Indeed, in Part Two I argue for the opposite conclusion.

III. Part Two (Chapters 4-6) "Traditional Naturalism as Post-Darwinian Ethical Realism"

These chapters articulate a value theory that meets the standard for metaphysical innocence established by the argument of Chapters 1-3. And they explain the role of that value theory in an ethical theory that, while it is not Foot's naturalism, is in the spirit of Foot's naturalism in basic respects.

First, I argue that the natural world is replete with values and norms of many different sorts. Values and norms are inseparable from the world of fact: to the extent that there are many different *kinds* of things in nature, kind-constituting norms are part of the fabric of reality. This stage of the argument picks up where the criticisms of Foot and Thompson in Part One left off. Applying the feminist methodology of endoxastic just and loving attention to constructively develop and deepen Foot's inchoate naturalist views, I propose a conception of natural norms that is inspired by her (and Thompson's) view, but that is free of residual Aristotelian metaphysical influences.

Then, by applying my general conception of natural value to the case of ethical values and norms, and by drawing on Gavin Lawrence's Aristotelian conception of practical rationality (1995, 2006, 2018), I argue that norms for human action arise organically from facts about human practical capacities, just like facts about any kind of thing in the world give rise organically to corresponding norms. My view thus realizes the ambition of neo-Aristotelian naturalist ethics, by demonstrating how ordinary facts about human nature do (and do not) provide a secular, objective basis for the differences between right and wrong.