

A chicken-and-egg-problem in the epistemological justification of natural goodness

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Abstract: In *Natural Goodness* Philippa Foot claims the discovery of a special grammar of goodness (*natural goodness*), where living things are evaluated as good or bad in light of their species' life-form. She hopes that her discovery will also be a fresh start for metaethics because, provided that moral judgments are subject to this natural grammar of goodness, they would not merely express attitudes, as the emotivists hold, but propositions that can either be true or false. However, critics have objected that the truth conditions of the discovered grammar are obscure as Foot's interpretation of the lifestyle of species is incompatible with biology (FitzPatrick, 2000, Millum, 2006; Woodcock, 2015). In response to this objection of a lacking epistemological justification some have grounded natural goodness in logic (Hacker-Wright, 2009; Lott, 2012), others in biological science (Brown, 2008; Moosavi, 2019). I argue that these proposed options lead to a chicken-and-egg-problem, because we cannot decide whether logic or biology would be prior to the other in the epistemological justification of natural goodness.

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