Chapter 1

Introduction: Many Sorts of Naturalism

> The most striking occurrence in the history of thought between Aristotle and ourselves is the rise of modern science.
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> —John McDowell, "Two Sorts of Naturalism,"174.

This dissertation is about ethical naturalism. But what is 'naturalism'? There is no consensus as to the meaning of the term. Should we then simply stipulate a meaning and move on? I do not think we should. Almost a century ago, Roy Wood Sellars said it well: "Questions of terminology are less superficial than is often supposed. Precision in terminology usually accompanies clear thinking, and is at once its condition and effect."[1] Sellars is one of many other philosophers over the last hundred years to have taken pains to clarify the difference between his view – naturalism – and materialism. Why? Is there any point in labeling any view, much less an ethical view, as "naturalistic"?

The answer, in part, is that the term 'nature' and its cognates 'naturalism' and 'naturalistic' are philosophically potent; they are what Richard Weaver calls "god terms." God terms are words and phrases that, though vague, have an indelible, inherently positive, con-

1. Roy Wood Sellars, "Why Naturalism and Not Materialism?" *The Philosophical Review* 36, no. 3 (1927): 216–25.

notation.[2] If this is right, then Sellars (and others) are so concerned to establish the naturalistic credentials of their view for two reasons: first, whatever philosophical theories earn the right to the label acquire an automatic positive connotation; and secondly, the potency of 'nature' derives, in part, from its connection to another god term – namely, science. 'Science' and 'nature' are often simply defined *in terms of each other*. To pull a few examples out of dozens: "nature is, more or less, what our latest and best science tells us it is;"[3] "moral facts exist only if they can figure in our best scientific explanations;"[4] "Natural facts are understood to be facts about the natural world, facts of the sort in which the natural sciences trade."[5] In short, the sciences study nature and nature is whatever the sciences study. This way of talking is very inadequate and very common. (I shall try state things more adequately in chapter 6.)

What, then, is ethical naturalism? Even before clarifying our terms, we can understand it as the venturesome pursuit a "scientific ethics" or "ethical science." If successful, ethical naturalists can attach to their moral theory part of the aura of objectivity we attach to science.

My project in what follows is to work toward a theory of virtue and practical reason that is consonant with, and reinforced by, a plausible version of scientific naturalism. To many, such a project seems depressingly ill-fated. On the one hand, a genuinely *normative* virtue theory that is consistent with scientific naturalism might seem impossible. For example, Stephen R. Brown's recent defense of neo-Aristotelian ethical naturalism argues that "an individual human being may be evaluated as good or bad according to how well that individual realizes the human way of life" but even he concedes that his account is "in

2. Richard M. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Psychology Press, 1985).

3. R. Stephen Brown, *Moral Virtue and Nature: A Defense of Ethical Naturalism* (Continuum, 2008), 2.

4. Terence Cuneo, *The Normative Web* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 50.

5. James Lenman, "Moral Naturalism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2014, introduction.

the end… fundamentally descriptive."[6] Arthur Ward, likewise, thinks that the "traditional objections to virtue ethics" are decisive. He argues that "facts about human nature do not on their own seem to generate reasons for humans to act in accordance with their nature."[7]

On the other hand, ethical naturalism might seem undesirable. For example, it runs afoul of the widely-assumed division between science and ethics. On this assumption, theoretical disciplines such as physics and biology study objects, their properties and so on, while practical disciplines study values and social norms, etc. The natural sciences study factual and descriptive matters, while the disciplines that used to be called the "moral sciences"[8] study evaluative and normative matters. On this assumption, each kind of discipline is autonomous. And most thinkers are content to leave it that way.

One of the many pitfalls into which a putative "scientific ethics" might fall is a scientific encroachment on ethics. For example, E.O. Wilson boldly stated that "the time has come for ethics to be removed temporarily from the hands of the philosophers and biologicized."[9] Thankfully, scientific thinkers are not usually so zealous to abduct a philosophical discipline (nor are philosophers, as a rule, eager to surrender them) but there is a legitimate danger of appearing to license such encroachment.

An equal and opposite pitfall would be that ethics might encroach on science. While working scientists must certainly adhere to legal, professional, and rational norms in conducting and presenting their research, it seems a bit much to suggest that they should be accountable to moral philosophers. In light of these pitfalls professional and philosophical pitfalls, perhaps the widespread assumption that science and ethics are autonomous is the safer course.

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6. Brown, *Moral Virtue and Nature*, 1.

7. Arthur Ward, "Against Natural Teleology and Its Application in Ethical Theory" (PhD thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2013), 35.

8. E.g., Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix I.

9. Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Harvard University Press, 1978) 562

There are two main ethical alternatives to naturalism that follow the safer course of accepting the fundamental divide between science and ethics. The first alternative is ethical *non-naturalism*, classically articulated by G. E. Moore and (more recently) by Russ Shafer-Landau.[10] Non-naturalist views argue that (even if moral facts are *realized* by natural facts) moral facts are neither identical to natural facts nor fully reducible to natural facts. Accordingly, philosophers such as Moore and Shafer-Landau conclude that moral philosophy proceeds independently of the methods of "natural philosophy" (i.e., the natural sciences). Non-naturalism allows one to embrace "robust realism" about morality and practical reasoning.[11]

The second alternative – equally safe for scientific naturalists – is to reject robust realism. This alternative encompasses a variety of quite different views, such as as error theory, expressivism, subjectivism, moral nihilism, and perhaps others. The underlying motivation for denying robust realism is the perceived incompatibility of robust ethical realism with the modern scientific worldview. This is evident in anti-realism's main defenders. For example, John Mackie admits that "the main tradition of European moral philosophy" accepts objective values but argues that modern science has overthrown all that. Likewise, Simon Blackburn commends anti-realism because it asks "no more of the world than we already know is there – the ordinary features of things on the basis of which we make decisions about them, like or dislike them, fear them and avoid them, desire them and seek them out. It asks no more than this: a natural world, and patterns of reaction to it."[12] And Jay

10. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge University Press, 1903); Russ Shafer-Landau, *Moral Realism: A Defence*, 4 (Oxford University Press, 2003).

11. Jay Wallace explains robust realism as the "idea that there are facts of the matter about what we have reason to do that are prior to and independent of our deliberations, to which those deliberations are ultimately answerable… [such facts constitute] an objective body of normative truths. R. Jay Wallace, "Practical Reason," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2014, section 2. Wallace cites Parfit (2011) and Scanlon (2014).

12. Simon Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Oxford University Press, 1985).

Wallace explains that expressivism offers a "naturalistic interpretation of practical reason… that may seem appropriate to the enlightened commitments of the modern scientific world view… it makes no commitment to the objective existence in the world of such allegedly questionable entities as values, norms, or reasons for action."[13]

1. Neo-Aristotelian Ethical Naturalism

In spite of these formidable difficulties, this dissertation commends the riskier course of pursuing ethical naturalism – specifically, neo-Aristotelianism. Contemporary neo-Aristotelians – among others[14] – have offered a serious challenge to the assumed divide between norms and nature or facts and values. Accordingly, they have challenged the comfortable assumption that science and ethics can be neatly divided. Perhaps it is possible to offer an account of human biology and society that is both scientifically robust *and* normatively significant. Perhaps there are moral facts about what human beings are and ought to be that we can discover by engaging in practical reasoning. Perhaps success as moral agents depends on how well we conform our lives to the ways human beings ought to live.

There are, of course, other forms of ethical naturalism, such as Cornell Realism and Frank Jackson's functionalism.[15] They share with neo-Aristotelian the insistence that some moral facts *are* identical to – or reducible to – natural facts – and hence that moral philos-

13. Wallace, "Practical Reason."

14. Cf. Justin L. Harmon, "The Normative Architecture of Reality: Towards an Object-Oriented Ethics" (PhD thesis, University of Kentucky, 2013).

15. Cornell realists such as Richard Boyd and Nicholas Sturgeon argue that moral facts supervene on nonmoral facts in much the same way biological facts supervene on physical ones. My dissertation cannot enter deeply into discussions with views of this kind, but the comparisons and contrasts are important to make. For example, why is it that Boyd, Sturgeon and Gibbard are consequentialists in their normative theory while neo-Aristotelians are not? I briefly address this question in chapter 4. And why do Boyd et. al. mostly focus their explanations of terms and facts like 'goodness' on instances of what is good for humans? It will be clear in chapter 2 that I am willing to countenance a larger set of normative facts about all organic life.

ophy *can* and *should* employ methods similar to those employed in the natural sciences. But what is remarkable is that neo-Aristotelian theory has avoided some of the pitfalls mentioned above. Rather than licensing unjust encroachment of some disciplines over others, it has become a thriving research program across disciplines. Neo-Aristotelianism is making inroads in moral philosophy, metaphysics, philosophy of science, as well as in the medical, social, and political sciences.

On the neo-Aristotelian account, the premises about human nature as practical reasoners are intrinsically related to normative conclusions about what one ought to do. As Rosalind Hursthouse explains, evaluations of plants, animals, and humans all "depend upon our identifying what is characteristic of the species in question."[16] In other words, the *normative evaluation* depends on the *descriptive facts* of the species: its activities, its life form, and so on. Evaluating things on the basis of what they are is central to neo-Aristotelian naturalism.

Alasdair MacIntyre articulates the intrinsic relationship between human nature and human ethics – a particular kind of 'is' and 'ought' – with his discussion of the three "elements" of morality.[17] The first element is "untutored human nature" (as it is). Understanding "human-nature-as-it-is"[18] is a task for philosophers, as well as psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, etc. and would include a conception of the human species as rational animals as it is *prior* to deep self-reflection or moral effort. The second element is humanity as it could be and should be – what MacIntyre calls "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-telos."[19] Understanding the natural human ends we can and *ought* to pursue is, for MacIntyre, "the whole point of ethics." The third element is the set of virtues, actions, emotions, etc., needed to move from the first to the second points. For MacIntyre, positing

16. Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1998), chap. 10, abstract.
17. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (University of Notre Dame, 1984), 54 ff.
18. Ibid., 55.
19. Ibid., 55.

a normative theory such as virtue ethics is futile without the other two elements.

I think MacIntyre's "three elements" also help to explain the puzzle of why 'neo-Aristotelianism' is both a substantive normative theory and a metaethical theory. Foot and McDowell not only defend ethical naturalism but commend the pursuit of virtues such as courage, moderation, justice, and practical wisdom, among others. Is the conflation of metaethics and normative ethics a philosophical foul? Not at all. First, other brands of moral realism closely align with particular normative commitments: Frank Jackson and the Cornell Realists tend to endorse a form of consequentialism or welfarism. Richard Boyd explains:

> Many naturalist moral realists have also advocated some version or other of consequentialism as the substantive naturalist moral theory to which they are committed. Indeed, although nothing like entailment between these positions obtains, the idea that moral questions are questions about how we can help each other flourish seems central to contemporary naturalist moral realism. In a certain sense, some version of consequentialism seems to be the natural position for naturalist moral realists.[20]

Secondly, the question of whether metaethics and normative ethics are even separable is a dispute that cannot be settled out of court. Allan Gibbard narrates how the hard line distinction between substantive ethical matters and formal metaethical matters originated in the writings of G.E. Moore. And, at the risk of understatement, not everyone agrees with Moore:

> Some philosophers have rejected the distinction; some Kantians, for instance, think that if you get the metatheory right, substantive ethical conclusions fall out as some kind of consequence, so that metaethics and substantive ethics are not really separate… Those who reject any systematic distinction between questions of meaning and questions of substance might likewise

20. Richard Boyd, "Finite Beings, Finite Goods: The Semantics, Metaphysics and Ethics of Naturalist Consequentialism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66, no. 3 (2003): 505–6.

> reject a sharp, separate subject of metaethics.[21]

Rosalind Hursthouse, Alasdair MacIntyre, Philippa Foot, and John McDowell are other good examples of philosophers who think that metaethics and substantive ethics are not ultimately separable. I follow them in this. My thesis will commend the acquisition of character and epistemic virtues *and* will analyze normative terms in a way consonant with a plausible version of scientific naturalism.

I think these brief comments are sufficient to demonstrate three truths about neo-Aristotelianism: (a) it is avowedly ambitious and unapologetically unsettling; (b) it faces titanic opposition on terminological and academic grounds no less than philosophical ones; and thus, (c) it is a significant theory in normative ethics and beyond.

The remainder of this introduction outlines the specific debate between John McDowell and Philippa Foot and summarizes the conclusions I shall defend.

2. Organic and Social Naturalism

Foot and McDowell are two contemporary representatives of neo-Aristotelianism who are united on the view that some properties (such as virtues) are instances of 'natural goodness' for creatures like us but divided on how to cash out the notion of *natural goodness*. It is worth quoting the opening passage of McDowell's "Two Sorts of Naturalism" to situate the convergence and divergence of their accounts:

> Philippa Foot has long urged the attractions of ethical naturalism. I applaud the negative part of her point, which is to reject various sorts of subjectivism and supernaturalist rationalism. But I doubt whether we can understand a positive naturalism in the right way without first rectifying a constriction that the concept of nature is liable to undergo in our thinking. Without such preliminaries, what we make of ethical naturalism will not be the radical and

21. Allan Gibbard, "Normative Properties," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 41, no. S1 (2003): 320.

> satisfying alternative to Mrs Foot's targets that naturalism can be. Mrs Foot's writings do not pay much attention to the concept of nature in its own right, and this leaves a risk that her naturalism may seem to belong to this less satisfying variety. I hope an attempt to explain this will be an appropriate token of friendship and admiration.[22]

McDowell, like Foot, is opposed to non-naturalism and in favor of *some sort* of naturalism. But he is also opposed to a cruder form of naturalism which he calls "bald naturalism." What is 'bald naturalism'? This is McDowell's term for metaphysical and epistemological commitments to crass materialism and scientism. On bald naturalism, nature is the complete spatio-temporal cosmos. Nature includes natural causal laws but excludes "non-natural" entities such as Platonic forms, values, norms, and reasons along with gods, ghosts, and angels that can only be known via empirical, scientific methods. On bald naturalism, there is no room at all for normative, ethical knowledge unless it can be acquired through the undue application of empirical methods to ethical matters. McDowell thinks, instead, that if our best ethical thinking cannot be squared with a particular dogma of empiricism, so much the worse for the dogma. Nevertheless, McDowell also rejects ethical non-naturalism, supernaturalism, and subjectivism.

While McDowell does not quite accuse Foot's view of slipping into bald naturalism, he is worried that it *might* do so or at least that it *might be misinterpreted* as doing so. What then *does* he endorse? He would concede that the conceptual space between non-naturalism and bald naturalism is admittedly tight. There are two main rivals jockeying for a position within that space. As Julia Annas explains, even rejecting non-naturalism and bald naturalism, some neo-Aristotelians emphasize the *biological* nature of humanity (in contrast to the odd normativity of our rationality) while others emphasize the *rational* nature of humanity (in contrast to the mundane descriptivity of biology).[23] Both views are

22. John McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard University Press, 1998), 167.

23. Julia Annas, "Virtue Ethics: What Kind of Naturalism?" in *Virtue Ethics, Old and New*, ed. Stephen Gardiner (Cornell University Press, 2005), 11–29

broadly Aristotelian and broadly naturalistic, but the small difference between them has large ramifications.

I shall dub these two rival views 'organic naturalism' and 'social naturalism' throughout these chapters.[24] The rivalry between organic and social naturalism is the primary theme of this dissertation, so it will be important to provide an initial explication of each here.

Social naturalism is the view that normativity and teleology are intrinsic to *human nature*. On this alternative, humans are naturally practical, social, and rational creatures who undertake to achieve their chosen ends, as individuals and in groups. Rosalind Hursthouse, the early MacIntyre, and (possibly) Iris Murdoch are social naturalists.[25] For example, in his earlier work, MacIntyre announced that his account of virtue is "happily not Aristotelian… although this account of the virtues is teleological, it does not require any allegiance to Aristotle's metaphysical biology."[26] The "metaphysical biology" MacIntyre refers to here is the metaphysically realist view that formal and final causes inhere in biological species. His ethics is teleological only insofar as *human society and rationality* are teleological. Otherwise, he would insist that the natural world described by the sciences is "bald" of moral facts unless and until it is observed, judged, and evaluated by rational agents such as ourselves.

Organic naturalism, by contrast, is the view that normativity is intrinsic to *organic nature*. On this alternative, natural properties such as being alive or being healthy are objectively normative, even prior to human evaluation. Michael Thompson, James Barham,

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24. James Barham calls his own version of the Footian view "reformed naturalism." (James Barham, "Teleological Realism in Biology" (PhD thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2011) 215.) I shall call my version 'recursive naturalism,' for reasons I explain in chapter 6.

25. Murdoch assumes that human life has "no external point or τελος," but that it has a point *from within.* Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts* (Mouette Press, 1998) 79

26. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 197.

Jennifer Frey, the later MacIntyre, and others are organic naturalists.[27] They argue that simply *to be alive* is to possess a natural good; to be healthy is to possess a natural good. Accordingly, death or extinction, sickness or injury would be natural evils. Plants, bacteria, and humans are similar in that thriving involves performing whatever movements are necessary for the organism to survive, develop into species-specific maturity, and reproduce. Organic naturalism insists that the complex biological system on earth cannot be exhaustively and scientifically described without normative concepts and terms.

McDowell is, by my lights, a social naturalist.[28] He argues that we are naturally social creatures who can speak, reason, and engage in intentional action by "second nature"[29] or "the space of reasons."[30] McDowell's social naturalism grounds ethics in "second nature" – human reasoning and all that comes with it. I call his view 'social naturalism' because he also argues that rationality is essentially social; we learn our first language and initial inven-

27. For a detailed exposition of the full menu of philosophical options, see Mark Perlman, "The Modern Philosophical Resurrection of Teleology," *The Monist* 87, no. 1 (2004): 3–51. And for particular defenses of natural normativity in the philosophy of science and the philosophy of biology, see: Larry Arnhart, "Aristotle's Biopolitics: A Defense of Biological Teleology Against Biological Nihilism," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 6, no. 2 (1988): pp. 173–229; Monte Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology* (Oxford University Press, 2005); Philippe Huneman, "Naturalising Purpose: From Comparative Anatomy to the 'Adventure of Reason'," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 37, no. 4 (2006): 649–74; Mariska Leunissen, *Explanation and Teleology in Aristotle's Science of Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

28. McDowell calls his view by a variety of names: 'liberal naturalism' (*Mind and World*, Harvard 1996, 89, 98); 'acceptable naturalism' (*Mind, Value, and Reality* 197); 'Greek naturalism' (*Mind and World* 174); 'Aristotelian naturalism' (*Mind and World* 196), 'naturalism of second nature' (*Mind and World* 86); or 'naturalized platonism' (*Mind and World* 91). Christopher Toner calls McDowell's view 'excellence naturalism' or 'culturalism.' Along the same lines, Goetz and Taliaferro distinguish 'strict' and 'relaxed' versions of naturalism: Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *Naturalism* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008). For further exploration of these distinctions, see Hans Fink, "Three Sorts of Naturalism," *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (August 2006): 202–21, 204.

29. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II; Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Part III, § 151.

30. Cf. Wilfred Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, § 36.

tory of concepts and beliefs from our family, culture, and education. In this way, McDowell aims to afford a place for norms and reasons in "nature" while still excluding a non-natural realm of divinity or platonic forms. The strength of social naturalism is that it captures the commonsense insight that human beings live in societies and create their own goals. We not only act but act *on reasons*. The cost of social naturalism, as I shall explain throughout these chapters, is an incorrigible cultural relativism and an undesirable nature/human dualism.

Foot is an organic naturalist. Rationality is unique to humans but is not fundamentally discontinuous with "first nature." The strength of organic naturalism is that it offers a more unified account of humanity's place within nature and promises a firm ground for the objectivity of morality. The cost of organic naturalism seems to be a picture of nature at odds with the scientific picture. For organic naturalism, the question is: Are "natural norms" natural objects like other natural objects? And how do we identify them – through normal scientific methods or not?

Even for a moral naturalist, there are a variety of sorts of naturalism on offer. The proper way to understand the debate between Foot's organic naturalism and McDowell's social naturalism is as a negotiation for the conceptual rights to the label 'ethical naturalism' without falling into either bald naturalism or non-naturalism. In what follows, I attempt to move this negotiation forward. I draw primarily on overlapping themes in the writings of Foot, McDowell, Hursthouse, and Alasdair MacIntyre and interact with other sources as needed: from historical sources (Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume), to other ethicists (Bernard Williams, Allan Gibbard) to other neo-Aristotelians (Jennifer Frey, Micah Lott, Chris Toner, James Barham, and Stephen R. Brown).

My argument is that organic naturalism is more plausible than social naturalism. I make this case by offering interlocking accounts of virtue, practical reason, human nature, and nature in general. My case is intended to be faithful to Foot's view against McDowell's,

but I also aim to extend her view. I hope to show that an account can be given of each theme that is plausible in its own right and even more plausible considered as a whole.

3. The Argument

In short, this dissertation defends the thesis that human beings are best understood as practical, rational primates with a set of natural ends, including the obligation to acquire virtues and practical wisdom. I argue that *every* organism has a natural life form and set of natural ends, where 'natural' denotes a property both normatively relevant and scientifically respectable. What is naturally good for an organism is, first, to be what it is and, second, to become fully mature. So, since human beings are natural organisms, it is essential to learn what we are in order to know what we ought to become. On my account, traditional virtues such as courage, moderation, and (especially) practical wisdom belong to 'the human being,' where that designation is both descriptive and normative. These virtues define our human life form and hence define for us what is to be pursued. Since human beings *are* practical, rational primates, we *ought* to become practically wise.

The attraction of this view is that we can avoid the twin dangers of relegating practical rationality and normativity to a non-natural realm or denying their objective reality altogether. The study of human beings and the human good is, in principle, open to contributions from philosophical ethics and the whole family of natural and social sciences. For example, moral anti-realists can deny natural normativity but only in the face of biological sciences. On my account, there is a single definitive criterion by which to judge how successful we and others are in living a good life: are we becoming what we are?

4. Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 defends the thesis that there are such things as natural normative facts. I give two examples: normative life forms and normative functions or teleological facts. These "natural norms" may not obtain everywhere in nature, but they do obtain in all living organisms.

Chapter 3 extends the case to argue that there are *human* natural norms. I argue that the life form of human beings is best understood as being practical, rational primates. The natural, normative function of human beings is to become fully formed, fully mature instances of their species who can practically reason *well*. Just as we discern what are normal or abnormal traits of oak trees, wolves, and bears not by making mere generalizations but by examining *exemplary* members of the species that are fully grown, healthy, and flourishing, we can discern what are normal or abnormal traits of human beings by examining exemplary members of the species – namely virtuous and wise humans.

Chapter 4 describes in more detail what traits count as virtues of character and practical reasoning. I offer a series of interlocking features that virtues have, and underscore the importance of practical reasoning within a "tradition" and culture. And I defend the notion that the acquisition of virtue is morally obligatory on all human beings against various misunderstandings and objections.

Chapter 5 returns to the notion of practical reasoning. I provide a more detailed account of what it means to engage in practical reasoning. I critique McDowell's equation of virtue with practical knowledge, in favor of the distinction between successful practical reasoning (which is practical wisdom) and rational practices and emotions (which are organized and managed by practical wisdom, but not identical to it). All practical reasoners are engaged in a substantive process, not merely an instrumental one. Success or failure in practical reasoning and rational practice determines whether one is living a virtuous or vicious human life.

Chapter 6 defends the foregoing account in light of a renewed discussion about nature and naturalism. I provide a full critique of McDowell's brand of naturalism, which, I argue, is ultimately inconsistent within itself. As alternatives, I explore two other forms of naturalism: "unrestricted naturalism" and the Footian form of "organic naturalism," and show how the accounts of virtue and practical reason already developed are compatible with both.

Chapter 7 concludes with a brief summary of the argument and some reflections on related topics.