

Publication

## Natural Goodness and the Political Form of Human Life

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Ethical Naturalism attempts to explain the objective normativity effective in human practices by reference to the relation between a living individual and the life-form it exhibits. This explanation falls short in the case of human beings (1) – not merely because of their essential rationality, but because the idea of normativity implicit in practice is dependent on the form of normativity's being made explicit (2). I argue that this explicit form of normativity's force and claim – the law in general – implies a tension between an explicit norm's claim to absoluteness and the particularity of the situational case it is applied to. This tension may seem to produce an inherent violence corrupting the very idea of objective normativity inherent in the human form of life (3); in fact, it shows that the human form of life is essentially political. That the human form of life is essentially political does not contradict the idea of objective normativity – provided that this objectivity is not derived from a conception of "natural goodness", but rather from the actuality of human practice and its principle, justice (4).

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