In Defence of Good *Simpliciter*[*]

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Abstract

Many including Judith Jarvis Thomson, Philippa Foot, Peter Geach, Richard Kraut, and Paul Ziff have argued for good *simpliciter* skepticism. According to good *simpliciter* skepticism, we should hold that there is no concept of being good *simpliciter* or that there is no property of being good *simpliciter*. I first show that *prima facie* we should not accept either form of good *simpliciter* skepticism. I then show that all of the arguments that good *simpliciter* skeptics have proposed for their view fail to show that we have good reason to accept good *simpliciter* skepticism. So, I show that we do not have good reason to accept good *simpliciter* skepticism.

1. Introduction

Many philosophers including Peter Geach, Philippa Foot, Richard Kraut, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Paul Ziff have argued that there is no such thing as being good *simpliciter* or being of final value (*simpliciter*). According to these good *simpliciter* skeptics, ascriptions of good *simpliciter* and final value are either ascriptions of a different type of goodness or value or they are meaningless or fail to refer. And several philosophers have argued that it is very important whether there is such a thing as being good *simpliciter* or of final value. Some have argued that if there is no such thing as being good *simpliciter*, consequentialism cannot be maintained.[1] Others have argued that once we see that there is no such thing as being good *simpliciter* we see that we should be optimistic about the prospects of meta-ethical naturalism.[2] And others still have argued that the fact that nothing is good

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[1] Or at least that it is very seriously undermined. See Thomson (1994, p. 7 and pp. 12-13) and Foot (1985, pp. 198-199 and p. 204).

[2] See Foot (2001, esp. pp. 2-3).

simpliciter shows that an intuitively appealing argument against the view that it is wrong to eat meat fails.[3]

In this paper I argue against good *simpliciter* skepticism. By good *simpliciter* skepticism I have in mind skepticism of good *simpliciter in particular* and not more general skepticism of all moral or normative properties or all non-end-relational or non-relative moral or normative properties. In this paper I am not arguing against error theories according to which nothing is or could be good *simpliciter* because there are no moral and normative properties. And in this paper I am not arguing against relativist views according to which there is no concept of good *simpliciter* because 'good', 'wrong', 'reason', and 'ought' should all be understood relativistically or end-relationally. There are many interesting arguments for error theories and relativism generally but in this paper I am concerned with skepticism about good *simpliciter* in particular.[4]

There is another type of good *simpliciter* skeptic that I am not arguing against in this paper. This skeptic is a substantive normative good *simpliciter* skeptic. According to this type of good *simpliciter* skeptic, for every proposed instance of good *simpliciter* there are good first-order normative ethical arguments that show that these things are not good *simpliciter*. (In the second half of Richard Kraut's *Against Absolute Goodness* Kraut pursues such a form of substantive normative good *simpliciter* skepticism. According to Kraut, substantive normative ethical theorizing shows us that neither equality, pleasure, beauty, biodiversity, love, nor persons and other animals are good *simpliciter*).[5] Showing that this type of good *simpliciter* skeptic is mistaken is beyond the scope of this paper. In this paper I am only concerned with those who hold that there is something suspicious in particular about the concept of or the property of being good *simpliciter* rather than those who hold that that our best first-order theories of goodness will tell us that nothing

[3] See Korsgaard (2014, lecture 1).
[4] Some relativists such as Stephen Finlay argue that we should adopt a relativistic semantics for 'good' and it might seem that Finlay's arguments for this view are independent of his arguments for adopting relativistic semantics for 'ought', 'reason', and 'wrong'; see Finlay (2014). However, this is not the case, since if we should make the moves that Finlay makes to explain why we should adopt a relativistic semantics for one of these terms, and to explain away the surface appearance of absolutism, we should make analogous moves with regards to these other terms too. The good *simpliciter* skeptics that I am concerned with in this paper would take the argument that if they are skeptics about good *simpliciter*, then they should be skeptics about non-end-relational notions of 'reason', 'wrong', and 'ought' as a very serious objection to their good *simpliciter* skepticism.
[5] See Kraut (2012, chapters 16-27). The arguments that Kraut makes in the first half of his book are the arguments that I am concerned with in this paper.

is good *simpliciter*. (We might say that I am concerned with non-substantive, formal, or meta-ethical good *simpliciter* skepticism).

Some argue for the view that there is no such concept as the concept of being good *simpliciter* and some argue for the view that there is no property of being good *simpliciter*. In section 2 I characterise both types of good *simpliciter* skepticism. I then show that unless we are given good reasons to accept either variety of good *simpliciter* skepticism we should not accept either view. In sections 3-4 I discuss Thomson, Geach, and Ziff's arguments for conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism. And in sections 5-6 I discuss Thomson, Kraut, and Foot's arguments for metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism. I argue that all of these arguments for good *simpliciter* skepticism fail. So, the combination of my arguments in section 2 and sections 3-6 shows that we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism.

2. A *Prima Facie* case against Good *Simpliciter* skepticism

Peter Geach, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Paul Ziff deny that we have a concept of being good *simpliciter*. According to Geach, Thomson, and Ziff, ascriptions of goodness refer implicitly or explicitly to certain particular ways or standards relative to which something is good. On this view, there are toasters that are good *as toasters*, actors who are good *as Hamlet*, people who are good *with children*, textbooks that are good *to use in teaching introductory logic*, and food that is good *for cats*.[6] When we say that something is good in one of these ways we are saying that it is good as a particular kind of thing, good for a particular purpose, or good *for* something or some being. But to say that something is good *simpliciter* is not to say that that thing is good as a particular kind of thing, good for a particular purpose, or good for something or some being but rather to say that it is just good *full stop*.[7] So there is nothing that is good *simpliciter* and no such thing as being good *simpliciter*.[8]

[6] See Thomson (2008, p. 6), Geach (1956), and Ziff (1960, ch. 6 esp. pp. 216-217 and pp. 236-237).
[7] We can perhaps further positively characterise what it is to say that *X* is good *simpliciter* in the following way: the claim '*X* is good *simpliciter*' is synonymous with the claim, '*X* is desirable for its own sake'. See *infra* note 23.
[8] See Thomson (2008, pp. 1-12).

Geach, Thomson, and Ziff's views are versions of conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism. According to conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism, all ascriptions of good *simpliciter* can either be conceptually reduced to ascriptions of other forms of goodness or they are meaningless.[9] And people who believe that there is a concept of good *simpliciter* (that cannot be so reduced) are conceptually confused.

Conceptual goodness *simpliciter* skepticism entails but is not entailed by metaphysical skepticism about goodness *simpliciter*. Metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism holds that there is no property of being good *simpliciter*. Some, such as Richard Kraut, hold metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism but do not hold conceptual goodness *simpliciter* skepticism. According to those who accept this combination of views, although it is not meaningless or conceptually confused to talk of something being good *simpliciter* nonetheless there is no property of being good *simpliciter* (and so all ascriptions of good *simpliciter* are false).[10]

There are two reasons why *prima facie,* other things equal, and by default we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism of both varieties. That is, there are two reasons why we should not accept conceptual and metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism (at least) unless we are given good reason to accept either view.[11]

Firstly, conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism renders several substantial debates in normative ethics and political philosophy pseudo-debates and metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism settles these debates. And if we accepted either version of good *simpliciter* skepticism without having any reason to accept such good *simpliciter* skepticism, we would by accepting this view be arbitrarily rendering these substantive debates pseudo-debates or arbitrarily settling these debates.

Consider several debates in normative ethics and political philosophy. Firstly, (a) some people claim that democracy, freedom, and equality are good over and above the effects that they have on people. Some people think that democracy is good but not

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[9] See, most clearly, Geach (1956, p. 34).
[10] See Kraut (2012, p. 27).
[11] I mean to be—and can be for the argument in this paper—agnostic on whether these two reasons to refrain from accepting conceptual and metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism are sufficiently weighty that they could outweigh reasons to accept conceptual or metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism.

only because of the benefits or effects that democracy has on individuals. These people claim that making decisions democratically is independently valuable.[12] Others claim that democracy is only good or of value because it benefits particular people. (Both groups agree that democracy is good as a way of making decisions, so they are not disagreeing about whether democracy is good for a particular purpose or as a particular kind of thing.) Similarly, some people think that there is value to a society being free and/or equal above the benefits to the individual members of that society (or society as a whole) of that freedom and equality.[13]

Secondly, (b) some hold that friendship is good *for* people who are friends because it gives them pleasure. And some hold that friendship is good *for* people who are friends but not just through providing them with subjective feelings such as pleasure. But others hold that friendship is good *simpliciter* as well as being good *for* friends. According to these people, friendship is good *simpliciter* and this goodness cannot be reduced to friendship's goodness *for* particular friends.[14]

Finally, (c) some favour punishment on the grounds that it will have beneficial effects: deterrence or rehabilitation. But others, retributivists, hold that even if punishing someone who committed an egregious wrong had no such beneficial effects on any beings, it would be good to punish them.[15] But such punishment would not be good *for* anyone, nor is there any clear kind of thing this punishment would be good as or purpose that this punishment would be good at serving. So, retributivists favour some instances of punishment on the grounds that these instances of punishment are good in a way that cannot be reduced to their goodness *for* particular beings or their goodness as particular things or for particular purposes; that is, on the grounds that these instances of punishment are good *simpliciter*.

If conceptual good *simpliciter* skeptics are right, these debates and disagreements about whether democracy, freedom, equality, friendship, and punishment have a value over and above the benefits that they bring are impossible. Those who hold that democracy, freedom, equality, friendship, or punishment have a value beyond that

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[12] See, for instance, Cohen (1995, p. 261) and Dworkin (2001, pp. 185-190).
[13] See, for instance, Carter (1999, ch. 2) and Temkin (1986, p. 100).
[14] See Helm (2009, §2.1).
[15] See, for instance, Nozick (1981, pp. 374-379).

identical with the benefits that they bring and the purposes they serve are not just mistaken but are either saying something that is meaningless or are not in fact disagreeing with those with whom they believe they are disagreeing. According to conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism, these debates are pseudo-debates. And if we accept metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism without being given any reason to accept this view, we will accept the arbitrary settling of these debates about the value of democracy, freedom, equality, friendship, and punishment. It might be that neither friendship, punishment, liberty, equality, nor democracy is good *simpliciter*. But, other things equal, we should not arbitrarily settle the debates about whether these things are good in this sense by holding that people who think that these things are good *simpliciter* are making meaningless claims, are mistaken about the claims that they are making, or are ascribing a property that there are no instances of. (Note that I am not here claiming that Geach, Thomson, and Ziff arbitrarily settle these debates; they seem to not be doing so since they give arguments for their good *simpliciter* skepticism. But in sections 3-6 of this paper I argue that their arguments, and others, for good *simpliciter* skepticism fail, and so to accept their good *simpliciter* skepticism would be to accept the arbitrary settling of these debates).

Secondly, it seems conceptually possible to hold that *X* is good in a way that exceeds *X*'s goodness *for* others or as a particular kind of thing. If we say that 'it's good that the Nazis' lost the war', we don't just mean that the Nazis' loss met or meets some standard, whatever this might be, and we don't seem to just mean that the Nazis' loss was good *for* the people who would have suffered, died, or been forced to live under the yoke of the Nazis if they had won; if we say that 'the Nazis' loss was good *for* a lot of people', it seems like we've said something different.[16] (Good *simpliciter* skeptics might object that when ordinary speakers assert that particular things are 'just good', they are often speaking elliptically. I am not disputing this claim here; in section 3, however, I argue against the argument that we should hold that there is no concept of being just good *simpliciter* on the grounds that few ordinary speakers in fact use this concept).[17]

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[16] Cf. Olson (2005, pp. 34-35).

[17] Good *simpliciter* skeptics might object to my claim that it is conceptually possible to hold that *X* is good in a way that exceeds *X*'s goodness *for* others or as a particular kind of thing on different grounds. Good *simpliciter* skeptics might hold that we should doubt that any ordinary speaker would assert that it is just good *simpliciter* that the Nazis lost the war because it would seem bizarre for an ordinary speaker to say that 'it was good that the Nazis' lost, but by that I don't mean that it was good *for* anyone that they lost'; call this claim *claim*. However, if there is anything bizarre about *claim* it is that it is hard to read *claim* and not read the bizarre implication that (a) *the fact that the Nazis' lost was not good for anyone* and *claim* implies that (b) it is not the case that at least

The fact that it seems conceptually possible to hold that *X* is good in a way that exceeds *X*'s goodness *for* others or as a particular kind of thing *prima facie* provides a reason not to accept metaphysical goodness *simpliciter* skepticism too. Since, if we have no reason to think that these ascriptions of goodness *simpliciter* always fail to refer and that it is always false to say that something is good *simpliciter* in this way, then we should not accept that these ascriptions are always false and always fail to refer. (To clarify, I'm not assuming without argument, and *contra* the Wittgensteinian tradition that Geach and Thomson follow, that ordinary speakers and philosophers always know when their assertions are meaningful. I am only assuming that we need to be given reason to believe that ordinary speakers and philosophers' assertions which seem meaningful are not meaningful; I discuss arguments for the view that we have such reasons in the rest of this paper). So, I have shown that we have two *prima facie* reasons not to accept good *simpliciter* skepticism.[18]

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part of what was good about the Nazis' loss was that their loss made many peoples' lives go better than they would have done otherwise. The bizarreness of (a) and (b) explains the bizarreness of *claim*. But although (a) and (b) seem false, their falsity does not entail that the Nazis' loss was not good *simpliciter*. So we can explain why *claim* is bizarre without holding that it is bizarre to claim that the Nazis' loss was good *simpliciter*.

[18] It also seems to me that given the resources that I have just utilized to argue that other things equal we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism we can show that if we are not provided with a reason to accept good *simpliciter* skepticism, we should also *reject* good *simpliciter* skepticism. Remember that in the last section I clarified that the types of good *simpliciter* skeptic that I am arguing against are those, such as Geach, Thomson, Ziff, and Kraut, who hold that: (i) we should be skeptics about good *simpliciter* in particular, that is, there are reasons to be skeptical of good *simpliciter* that are not reasons to be skeptical of other moral and ethical notions; and that (ii) there is something suspicious in particular about the concept or property of good *simpliciter*, that is, it is not that because of first-order normative arguments we have good reason to believe that there are no instances of good *simpliciter* but rather that we should believe that even if there were good substantive first-order arguments for there being things that are good *simpliciter*, we should doubt that there could be things that instantiate the property of being good *simpliciter* or that fall under the concept of good *simpliciter*.

Given that the only versions of good *simpliciter* skepticism that I am discussing are views that instantiate (i) and (ii) we should not only not accept but also reject (such) conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism if we are given no reason to accept (such) conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism because, as I have been arguing, and argue further in the next section, many normative ethicists, other philosophers, and ordinary people seem to use the concept of good *simpliciter*. And if we are given no reason to doubt that these people are mistaken or conceptually confused, we should accept that they are not mistaken or conceptually confused and so reject conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism.

It seems to me that it is a little more complicated whether we should reject metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism if *prima facie* we should not accept metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism for the reasons that I have discussed in this section (that is §2) and if there are no reasons to accept metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism. Suppose that, other things equal we should posit as many properties as we need so long as we do not thereby posit any new fundamental kinds of properties—see Rowland (forthcoming b, §2)—and that, as I argue in §5 below, positing a

3. The Philosophers' Usage Argument

Thomson, Geach, and Ziff argue that we can hold that there are no meaningful ascriptions of good *simpliciter* without providing an impoverished account of 'good' because only confused philosophers and philosophers with theoretical axes to grind make ascriptions of good *simpliciter*.[19] According to Thomson, Geach, and Ziff there are no everyday judgments or ascriptions of good *simpliciter*.

However, non-philosophers often claim that things are good *simpliciter* or clearly use the concept of something's being good *simpliciter*. For instance, in discussions about the provision of funding to the arts and the humanities people refer to the value of the arts and the humanities, and when they do so they are making an ascription of non-elliptical value or value *simpliciter* for it would be pointless to assert that the arts produce aesthetic value in such debates. Other claims that non-philosophers make about goodness seem to be claims about good *simpliciter* too such as the claim that it's good that a community rallied round to support one another after a disaster, that a small community's keeping their post office open by volunteering and running it themselves is good, that it is good that the UK pardoned Alan Turing, and that it would be good if the U.S. apologised for slavery. Charles Pigden draws our attention to the fact that non-philosophers say things such as 'friendship is a good we tend to neglect' and 'economists tend to speak as if maximizing g.d.p were the sole good'.[20] And, many people claim that it is good for its own sake that wrongdoers are punished. So Geach, Ziff, and Thomson are mistaken that only philosophers claim that certain things are good *simpliciter*.

It *is*, however, hard to think of non-philosophical contexts in which certain ascriptions of good *simpliciter*, such as 'pleasure is good' and 'friendship is good', would

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property of good *simpliciter* does not commit one to positing a new fundamental kind of property. In this case it might be that given that (a) the only type of metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism that I am concerned with is a form of good *simpliciter* skepticism that instantiates (i) and (ii), (b) that we should not accept metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism, and that (c) many normative ethicists, other philosophers, and ordinary people claim that many things have the property of being good *simpliciter* (see §5 below), then other things equal, that is before engaging in substantive first-order normative ethical debates about whether anything is good *simpliciter*, we should reject metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism.

[19] See particularly Geach (1956, p. 36). See also Ziff (1960, pp. 216-217 and pp. 236-237) and Thomson (2008, p. 13).

[20] Pigden (1990, p. 141)

not sound extremely strange. Perhaps this oddness somehow grounds skepticism about goodness *simpliciter*.[21] But, firstly, this oddness is not restricted to good *simpliciter*. It would seem just as odd for someone to claim (in a non-philosophical context), whilst pointing to a particular child on a playground that 'it would be wrong to kill this child'.[22] But we should not take this oddness to count in favour of the view that it is not wrong to kill this child. So we should not take the oddness of claiming that 'pleasure is good' and 'friendship is good' in non-philosophical contexts to count against there being instances of good *simpliciter*.

Secondly, I suggest that claiming that 'pleasure is good' in most ordinary contexts would be strange because the vast majority of people know that pleasure is good and the vast majority of people know that the vast majority of people know this. The claim, 'pleasure is good [*simpliciter*]' is synonymous with the claims, 'pleasure is worth pursuing for its own sake', and, 'pleasure is desirable for its own sake'.[23] And because the vast majority of people know that pleasure is worth pursuing for its own sake and know that the vast majority of others know this it seems odd to say things such as 'pleasure is good' because saying such things is not informative; claiming that 'pleasure is good' tells people something they already know, and that you know they already know. We might say that in most everyday contexts claims such as 'pleasure is good [*simpliciter*]' and 'it is good [*simpliciter*] that the Nazis lost the war' violate Grice's first maxim of quantity for conversational exchange, namely, 'make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)'.[24] (In contrast, in philosophical discussions claims that would in non-philosophical discussions seem obvious are debated and are used to assess certain views). So, we can explain the oddness of making certain ascriptions of good *simpliciter* in non-philosophical contexts without holding that nothing is good *simpliciter*.

This explanation of why it is often strange to claim that 'pleasure is good' and/or that 'friendship is good' also provides us with the resources to explain another possible source of skepticism about good *simpliciter*. It might seem that the fact that there are relatively very few ascriptions of good *simpliciter* outside of philosophical discussions

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[21] Cf. Thomson (2008, p. 13).
[22] See Pleasants (2009, esp. p. 677).
[23] Even those, such as Moore, who hold that good *simpliciter* is unanalysable accept this view; see Moore (1993, p. 68, p. 237, p. 242).
[24] See Grice (1989, p. 26).

provides us with reason to doubt that there is such a thing as something's being good *simpliciter*. But this may well be because we assume that others agree with us about what things are good *simpliciter*. Or at least assume that others agree with us for all intents and purposes, since, for instance, whether someone believes that friendship and freedom are non-instrumentally good *simpliciter* rather than only instrumental to other things that are good *simpliciter*, such as pleasure—or even whether they believe that friendship, freedom, and pleasure are good *simpliciter* rather than only good *for* people—will not alter how they respond to friends, freedom, and things that are conducive to pleasure in ordinary circumstances. (For instance, if you think that only pleasure is good but you still get pleasure out of having friends—as most of us do—you won't act very differently from someone who thinks that friendship is itself of value). In contrast, we and others are often ignorant, and realise ourselves and others to be ignorant, about which things are good for particular purposes, good as particular kinds of things, and good means to our ends; for instance, we might believe that others are ignorant about whether a particular film or computer is a good one. So, we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism on the basis that there are far less non-philosophical ascriptions of good *simpliciter* than of other types of goodness. Since there is a good explanation of this fact that does not entail that there is no such thing as something's being good *simpliciter*.

4. The Unity of 'Good'

Thomson, Geach, Ziff, and Michael Ridge provide another argument for conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism. According to this argument,

The Unity of 'Good' Argument

(A) If there were a concept of being good *simpliciter*, then 'good' would be ambiguous between standard-relative and non-standard-relative senses of goodness.

(B) But other things equal we should hold that 'good' is not ambiguous.

(C) So, other things equal, we should hold that there is no concept of being good *simpliciter*.[25]

[25] See Thomson (2008, pp. 13-14), Geach (1956, p. 35), Ziff (160, p. 203), and Ridge (2014, p. 23).

The only argument that Geach, Ziff, Thomson, and Ridge seem to give for (B) is that other things equal we should not hold that a word is ambiguous because (a) it is unlikely that a word is ambiguous and (b) we should not posit more ambiguity than we need.[26] But (a) doesn't seem quite right, since some words are ambiguous: 'bank' is ambiguous between 'financial bank' and 'river bank' for instance. And, furthermore, in section 2 I argued that we have good reason to believe that there is a sense of good *simpliciter* that cannot be reduced to a standard-relative sense of goodness because this non-standard-relative sense is used by many people and in many debates in normative ethics and political philosophy.[27] And in this case, presuming that there is a standard-relative sense of goodness in addition to a sense of good *simpliciter*—because to say that a knife is a good one is not to say that it is good *simpliciter* for instance—we have good reason to believe that 'good' is ambiguous and so to believe that it is not unlikely that 'good' is ambiguous. And, although (b) may be true, at least understood *pro tanto*, my argument in section 2 that we have good reason to believe that there is a sense of good *simpliciter* that cannot be reduced to a standard-relative sense of goodness shows that even if (b) is true we should not accept (B) since when it comes to ascriptions of goodness it seems that we need to posit ambiguity. So we should not accept (B) on the basis of (a) and (b).

The truth in (B) is that if for some word 'X' we think that there is something in common between two claims that utilise 'X', then other things equal, we should not hold that the two claims that utilize 'X' have as little in common as 'financial bank' and 'river bank' have in common. In this case, something like *The Unity of 'Good' Argument* gets off of the ground only if

(D) We think that 'pleasure is good [*simpliciter*]' has something in common with 'she's a good *person*', 'she's a good assassin', and 'eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day is good *for* you'.

But if (D) holds, it does not follow that (B) holds, for, as I will argue, we can explain (D) even if good *simpliciter* is a distinct sense of 'good' from other (standard-relative) senses of 'good'. All that follows from (D) is that proponents of good *simpliciter* and conceptual

[26] See Geach (1956, p. 35), Ridge (2014, p. 21), and Ziff (1960, p. 44).
[27] See also *supra* note 18.

good *simpliciter* skeptics both face an explanatory challenge of the following form: What explains why

(E) Being good *simpliciter* seems to have something in common with being good as a kind of thing and being good *for* some being.

(E) can be explained by

(F) If *X* is good *simpliciter*, good as a kind of thing, or good *for* some being, then there are reasons for some set of agents to respond to *X* positively (such as to desire *X*, protect *X*, admire *X*, or promote *X*).

I have argued for (F) at length elsewhere.[28] If *X* is good *simpliciter*, then there are reasons for everyone to respond positively to *X*; if *X* is good *for S*, there are reasons for everyone who cares about *S* (at least) to respond positively to *X*; and if *X* is good as a *K*, then there are reasons for everyone who wants or has reason to want a *K* to respond positively to *X*; for instance, if *X* is a good knife, there are reasons for anyone who has reason to want a knife to want *X*, and if *X* is a good assassin, there is reason for anyone who wants an assassin to want *X*.[29] (F) explains (E) (and (D)) without entailing that nothing is good *simpliciter* and so without entailing that many people who make ascriptions of good *simpliciter* are making meaningless or incoherent claims and without rendering many debates in normative ethics and political philosophy pseudo-debates.[30]

In contrast, good *simpliciter* skeptics' explanation of (E), that ascriptions of good *simpliciter* are just ascriptions of goodness of a kind or goodness *for* some being, renders

[28] See Rowland (forthcoming a). In *ibid.* I also argue that all claims about goodness can be analysed in terms of claims about reasons; this view would explain (E) even if (F) did not.
[29] See *ibid.* and Schroeder (2010, esp. pp. 45-48). As I argue elsewhere (Rowland, forthcoming a, §5), seeming counter-examples to (F) such as 'good roots' and 'good doomsday device' are not really counter-examples. Since if *F* is a good doomsday device, there are reasons for merely possible agents who want or have reason to want a doomsday device to want *F* even if no actual agents want or have reason to want a doomsday device.
[30] It might be argued that other claims entail claims about reasons for positive responses but do not seem similar to claims about goodness; for instance, claims about rightness might entail claims about reasons for positive responses. However, we can distinguish claims about goodness from claims about rightness because claims about goodness do not entail claims about the appropriateness of certain reactive attitudes such as blame but claims about failing to do what's right do, or often do, entail claims about the appropriateness of such reactive attitudes.

several debates in normative ethics and political philosophy pseudo-debates and entails that many people who do not think that they are saying, and do not seem to be saying, incoherent or meaningless things are saying incoherent or meaningless things. Given my argument in section 2 that we have good *prima facie* reason to hold that it is not incoherent to claim that some things are good *simpliciter*, we should prefer an explanation of (E) in terms of (F) to good *simpliciter* skeptics' explanation of (E). So, we should reject good *simpliciter* skeptics' explanation of (E). So, neither *The Unity of 'Good' Argument* nor a revised version of this argument counts in favour of conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism.

5. Metaphysical and Epistemological Darkness

Judith Jarvis Thomson claims that

(i) Good *simpliciter* is metaphysically or epistemologically dark, mysterious, or hard to get at in a way that other types of goodness are not.

And that (i) licenses metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism.

5.1. Thomson's Argument from the Grasp of Standards

Thomson argues that because the goodness of things that are good of a kind is established by the kind in question, and the *S* that things are good *for* establishes whether something is good *for S*, we can go out into the world with an understanding of particular kinds and particular *S*s and discover which things are good of a particular kind and which things are good *for* particular *S*s.[31] According to Thomson, once we know what it is for something to be a ham sandwich or a tennis player we can easily ascertain what it is for something to be a good ham sandwich or a good tennis player. And once we know what a person or a cat is we can easily ascertain what is good *for* people or cats. In contrast, according to Thomson, we don't know how to find out whether something is good *simpliciter* or not.[32] So, according to Thomson, (i) holds because (ii) holds:

[31] See Thomson (2008, p. 36).
[32] *ibid.* p. 11

(ii) It is unclear what it takes for something to be good *simpliciter*. In contrast it is not unclear what it takes for something to be good as a particular kind of thing (or good *for* some particular thing or being).

A bad argument for (ii) would be that for every goodness of a kind property we know at least something about what it takes for *X* to be a good *K*, namely that *X* must be a *K*. This argument would be a bad argument for (ii) because when trying to ascertain whether *X* is a good *K* it is unhelpful to be told that *X* is a *K*. Since being a *K* is merely a necessary condition on *X*'s being a good *K*. Similarly, if ought-implies-can holds, then it is a necessary condition on anything that you ought to do that you can do it. But this does not make it easy to figure out what you ought to do.

Thomson seems to believe that (ii) holds because if *X* is good as a *K*, then we can see that there is some standard that we have at least a vague understanding of such that *X* performs well on that standard, and this is at least part of what it is for *X* to be a good *K*. A good tennis player, for instance, is good at playing tennis, and so performs well on the standards relevant to playing tennis. And we can figure out what it is to perform well on this standard by understanding the rules of tennis, the skills that a good tennis player manifests, and how well tennis players normally do in games of tennis. But there is no such standard that we have even a vague grasp of when it comes to good *simpliciter*. So according to Thomson, (ii) is true because (iii) is true:

(iii) For every goodness of a kind property, we have a grasp of a standard in virtue of performing well on which something becomes good as that kind of thing. But we do not have a grasp of such a standard when it comes to good *simpliciter*.[33]

But those who hold substantial views about what it takes for something to be good *simpliciter* hold that there are standards something must meet in order to be good *simpliciter*. For example, some hold that things that are good *simpliciter* are things that produce more than average conscious states of pleasure. Others hold that something is

[33] See *ibid.*

good *simpliciter* if and only if given full information everyone would desire it for its own sake. And many hold that we can analyse goodness *simpliciter* such that for *X* to be good *simpliciter* is just for there to be sufficient reason to respond positively towards *X* (such as to desire, admire, respect, or promote *X*) or for *X* to be good *simpliciter* is for *X* to be the fitting object of a positive attitude.[34] If any of these views are plausible, then (iii) is false.

Thomson might argue that the plausibility of any of these views would not establish that (iii) is false. Because if any of these views about the nature of good *simpliciter* or what things are good *simpliciter* is plausible, that would not establish that there is a standard that *we grasp* performing well on which makes something good *simpliciter*. Thomson might argue that the fact that there is much disagreement about whether any of these views holds demonstrates that we do not have a *grasp* of any of these standards *qua* standards for figuring out whether something is good *simpliciter*.

But if disagreement about the standard performing well on which makes something *F* is sufficient to make it the case that we have no grasp of a standard performing well on which makes something *F*, then (iii) is false for a different reason. Namely, because for some *K*s people do not agree about the standard performing well on which makes something a good *K*. 'Good person', 'good human being', as well as 'good food' and 'good film', are instances of goodness of a kind. And there is as much disagreement about what constitutes a good person, good food, and a good film as there is about whether formal analyses of good *simpliciter* and substantive views about which things are good *simpliciter* hold. (Similarly, there is a large amount of disagreement about which first-order view about which things are good *for* us is correct, and thus about what standard something must meet in order to be good *for* us).

According to Thomson, once we understand that human beings, unlike other animals, can act morally well, we understand that a good human being is a human being who acts morally well.[35] For Thomson, a good human being is a human being who does well on a moral standard. But there is as much disagreement, if not more, about moral standards as there is about what makes something good *simpliciter* and whether we can analyse good *simpliciter*—and there is a similar level of disagreement about what makes

[34] For an introduction and survey of such buck-passing and fitting-attitude accounts of goodness see Suikkanen (2009).
[35] Thomson (2008, pp. 20-21)

something a specifically moral standard. And these disagreements will transfer over to disagreements about what makes someone a good human being if Thomson is right that a good human being is a human being that performs well on a moral standard.

So, given the amount of disagreement regarding what it is to be a good person and moral standards either

(a) We have as little understanding of what it would take for someone to be a good person as we have of what it would take for something to be good *simpliciter*, or
(b) The fact that there is much disagreement regarding the standard that *X* must meet in order to be *F* does not establish that one of the standards proposed as the standard that *X* must meet in order to be *F* is not the standard that we grasp as the standard *X* must meet in order to be *F*.

But neither option will help Thomson. Since if (b) holds, then (iii) is false because we have no reason to believe that there is no standard that we grasp the doing well on which makes something good *simpliciter*. And if (a) holds, (iii) is false because we do not grasp a standard in virtue of which someone becomes a good person.

So, we should reject

(iii) For every goodness of a kind property we have a grasp of a standard in virtue of performing well on which something becomes good as that kind of thing. But we do not have a grasp of such a standard when it comes to good *simpliciter*.

And since we should reject (iii) we should reject Thomson's argument for (i) on the basis of (iii) via (ii).

It might seem that Thomson can respond to my argument against (iii) by arguing that 'good person' is not in fact a goodness of a kind property; rather it is an instance of something's being good *simpliciter*. But if 'good person' is not a goodness of a kind property, this would not help Thomson. Because if to be a good person is to be a person that is good *simpliciter*, then Thomson's metaphysical good *simpliciter* scepticism entails

that our talk about good people is in systematic error. (Furthermore, this strategy would not help since, as I mentioned, there are analogous problems with regards to 'good *for* us' and 'good film').

Alternatively, it might seem that Thomson can respond to my argument against (iii) by arguing that for every goodness of a kind property including 'good person' we have paradigmatic instances of things that are good as that kind of thing but we do not have such paradigmatic instances of things that are good *simpliciter*. But this is simply false: innocent pleasure, friendship, the Nazis losing the second world war, and beauty are paradigmatic instances of good *simpliciter*. Although there is disagreement about whether these things are good *simpliciter* there is also disagreement about examples that would seem paradigmatic for many goodness of a kind properties at least: some people hold that Mandela is a not a good person for instance.

Finally, my argument against (iii) might seem to depend on our accepting a particular substantive view about which things are good *simpliciter* or what it is for something to be good *simpliciter*. But this is not the case. Rather, my argument against (iii) just depends on our accepting that the standards that we might grasp or utilise when we judge that '*A* is a good person', that '*X* is a good film', and that '*Y* is good *for* us' are as controversial as the standards that we might grasp or utilise when we judge that '*X* is good *simpliciter*'.

5.2. Detachment from Human interests

It might seem that there are other good grounds on which to hold that

(i) Good *simpliciter* is metaphysically or epistemologically dark, mysterious, or hard to get at in a way that other types of goodness are not.

Many who are puzzled by the idea of good *simpliciter* and so hold something like (i) believe that goodness *simpliciter* would have to be detached from human beings in an objectionable way. For instance, Philippa Foot seems to believe that good *simpliciter* would have to be something like goodness from the point of view of the universe or

goodness just built into the nature of things entirely independent of living beings.[36] More specifically, Foot seems to think that

(iv) Good *simpliciter* would not be tied to human interests and perspectives (and perhaps the interests of other beings), but

(v) If a type of goodness and value is not tied to human interests and perspectives (or the interests of other beings), it is metaphysically or epistemologically dark, mysterious, or hard to get at in a way that other types of goodness are not.

So,

(i) Good *simpliciter* is metaphysically or epistemologically dark, mysterious, or hard to get at in a way that other types of goodness are not.

However, (iv) is false: it is not the case that good *simpliciter* must not be tied to human interests. It might be that things are good *simpliciter* or of final value just because we do or would (in idealized conditions) judge them to be. Presumably in response good *simpliciter* skeptics will say: 'Ah, but if this were the case, then these things would not be good *simpliciter*, rather they would be *good for or from the perspective of those who do or who would judge them to be good*'.

But this response conflates the distinction between meta-ethics and normative ethics. Normative ethics deals with which things are good *simpliciter*, and what properties something has to have in order to be good *simpliciter* (and good in other ways). Meta-ethics—among other things—deals with the different question of what makes it the case that the properties that make something good *simpliciter* are the properties that make something good *simpliciter*. According to one view in meta-ethics, for instance, if hedonism holds, what makes it the case that the only thing that is good *simpliciter* is pleasure is that we would judge that hedonism holds if we were ideally rational. It might be that our best normative ethics tells us that there are things that are good *simpliciter* and that our best meta-ethics tells us that some form of response-dependent view holds. In this case some things would be good *simpliciter* but these things' being good *simpliciter* would depend on humans or human interests and perspectives. (It is easiest to see this if

[36] See, for instance, Foot (1985, p. 202) and cf. Foot (2001, pp. 2-3).

we imagine that our best normative ethics tells us that set of objects or states of affairs *X* are good *simpliciter*, set *Y* are good *for* humans, set *Z* instantiate all the various goodness of a kind properties, and *X* is not co-extensive with *Y*, *Z*, or the combination of *Y* and *Z*. In this case, our best normative ethics would entail that there are three distinct types of goodness but this is consistent with it being the case that we should accept a response-dependent meta-ethical view).[37]

We can reinforce this point by distinguishing between resultance bases and constitutive grounds.[38] The resultance base for something's being good *simpliciter* is what makes it good *simpliciter*, the features it has in virtue of which it is good *simpliciter*, its good-making features. Similarly, a wrong action's resultance base is the feature in virtue of which that action is wrong; utilitarians and Kantians, for example, disagree over the property that an action's wrongness is the result of. A property's constitutive grounds are what makes it the case that it has the resultance base that it does. If utilitarians are right, the constitutive grounds of wrongness are whatever makes it the case that an action is wrong if and only if it does not maximise general utility. Reductive naturalists, subjectivists, constructivists and non-naturalist realists in metaethics disagree about the constitutive grounds of wrongness. But reductive naturalists, subjectivists, constructivists, and non-naturalist realists can all hold that it's good *simpliciter* that the Nazis lost the war. Similarly, reductive naturalists, subjectivists, constructivists, and non-naturalist realists could all hold that what makes an outcome good or bad *simpliciter* is its (absolute or comparative) level of general utility. They just disagree about the constitutive grounds of good *simpliciter*.

5.3. Naturalism

Finally, it might be argued that we should hold that there is no property of being good *simpliciter* because holding this view provides us with metaphysical or epistemological advantages, since it enables us to hold a naturalistic view about the nature of goodness. If the view that there is no such thing as being good *simpliciter* did in fact furnish us with metaphysical or epistemological advantages, then this would override the *prima facie*

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[37] Furthermore, denying that the above defence of (iv)—the defence that begins: 'Ah, but….'—conflates the difference between meta-ethics and normative ethics entails that all response-dependence theorists hold that there are no actions that are morally wrong but only actions that are morally-wrong-*for-us* or from our perspective; but many proponents of response-dependent views precisely do not make this claim.

[38] See Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000, pp. 36-37) and Dancy (2004, p. 86).

reason that I gave in section 2 to hold that there is such a thing as being good *simpliciter*. However, as I argued in section 5.1-2, there are no epistemological or metaphysical advantages to holding that there is no such thing as being good *simpliciter* in particular.[39]

6. Kraut's Double-Counting Objection

Richard Kraut provides a very different argument for metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism.[40] Kraut claims that

> (*) At least in many cases in which ϕ-ing is supposedly both good *simpliciter* and good *for* us, ϕ-ing's being good *simpliciter* does not seem to provide us with reason to ϕ in addition to the reason for us to ϕ that there is because ϕ-ing would be good *for* us.

According to Kraut, considering that refraining from stopping smoking would be bad *for* us and bad *simpliciter* 'would be double counting—assigning pain more disvalue than it actually has, by seeing in it two features that count against it rather than only one'.[41] Similarly, if we consider the pleasure that going on holiday would bring us we do not think of this pleasure as both good *for* us and good *simpliciter*. And Kraut claims that the best explanation of (*) is that

> (**) Good *simpliciter* never provides us with reasons to do anything.

And that the best explanation of (**) is that nothing has the property of being good *simpliciter*.

However, it is not obvious that (**) holds; something's being good *simpliciter* seems to often provide us with reasons. We might claim that a solution to a problem or a policy proposal (such as funding for the arts) benefits all concerned and is, moreover, a good thing to do. And we might reason counterfactually about such proposals: we might

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[39] Though, to reiterate, this is not to say that there are no advantages to adopting full blown reductionist relativist views of ethics and morality; see section 1 and *supra* note 4.
[40] Kraut (2012, p. 27) clarifies that his view is metaphysical not conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism.
[41] Kraut (2012, p. 46)

argue that even if a proposal did not benefit all concerned it would be a good thing to do. Similarly, we might claim that even if apologising for the slave trade did not benefit anyone it would still be a good thing to do. Furthermore, suppose that the rainforest is good *simpliciter* but that the only person whom the rainforest's preservation would be good *for* is an evil person whom we do not care about. In this case it seems that we have reason to hope that the rainforest is preserved but this reason is provided by (or at least linked to) the rainforest's being good *simpliciter* rather than its preservation being good *for* this evil person; we seem to have (pro tanto) reason to hope that the rainforest is preserved because it is good *simpliciter* not because its preservation would be good *for* the evil person. So, it does not seem that (**) provides us with a good explanation of (*), or at least, we should see if there is an explanation of (*) that we have less reason to reject than (**). And furthermore, in section 2 I argued that we have strong *prima facie* reasons not to accept the view that there is no property of being good *simpliciter*, so if the best explanation of (**) is metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism, then we have further good reason to see whether we really must accept (**).

An alternative explanation of (*) that does not entail (**) or metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism is that the combination of (I) and (II) holds. That is that,

(I) Often the fact that makes ϕ-ing both good *simpliciter* and good *for S* is the same fact; and

(II) ϕ-ing's being good *simpliciter* or *good for S* does not provide a non-derivative reason to ϕ. Only the fact that makes ϕ-ing good *simpliciter* or good *for S* provides a non-derivative reason to ϕ.

A derivative reason is a reason that derives all of its normative force from some other consideration.[42] In this case, the idea is that if ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* because ϕ-ing would give you pleasure, the fact that ϕ-ing would be good *simpliciter* is only a derivative reason for you to ϕ because the normative force of this reason for you to ϕ (that is, that it would be good *simpliciter* to ϕ) entirely derives from the fact that ϕ-ing would give you pleasure.

[42] See Parfit (2011, p. 39).

To see that (I) and (II) explain (*) assume that:

(I) holds;
ϕ-ing is both good *simpliciter* and good *for* you; and
ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* just because it gives you (innocent) pleasure.

In this case, given (I), we should expect that, or at least not be surprised if, ϕ-ing is good *for* you just because it gives you (innocent) pleasure. But if we assume (II), the normative force of the reasons for you to ϕ will be entirely exhausted by the fact that ϕ-ing will give you (innocent) pleasure. And if the normative force of the reasons for you to ϕ are entirely exhausted by the fact that ϕ-ing will give you (innocent) pleasure, then there is no reason to count the fact that ϕ-ing would be good *simpliciter* or good *for* you as a reason to ϕ in addition to the fact that ϕ-ing would give you (innocent) pleasure.

However, if that ϕ-ing is good *for* you and good *simpliciter* are both derivative reasons to ϕ, it will still make sense to refer to *either* the reason to ϕ in virtue of the goodness *for* you *or* the goodness *simpliciter* of ϕ-ing as a way of referring or adverting to the non-derivative reason to ϕ in virtue of the (innocent) pleasure that ϕ-ing would give you. Even though it would make no sense to count these reasons to ϕ in addition to the reason to ϕ in virtue of the (innocent) pleasure that ϕ-ing would give you (which is non-derivative). And, given that it would only make sense to refer to *either* the reason to ϕ in virtue of the goodness *for* you *or* the goodness *simpliciter* of ϕ-ing as a way of referring to the non-derivative reason to ϕ in virtue of the (innocent) pleasure that ϕ-ing would give you, it would make no sense to refer to *both* the reason to ϕ in virtue of the goodness *for* you and the goodness *simpliciter* of ϕ-ing. Since to refer to *both* the reason to ϕ in virtue of the goodness *for* you and the goodness *simpliciter* of ϕ-ing would be to merely refer to the reason to ϕ in virtue of the pleasure that ϕ-ing would give you twice.

So, (I) and (II) would together explain (*). But should we hold both (I) and (II)? It seems to me that we should. (I) certainly gains plausibility from the cases that Kraut uses to motivate (*), that is, from Kraut's smoking and holiday cases. In the cases that Kraut utilises to motivate (*) the fact that makes ϕ-ing both good *simpliciter* and good *for S*

is the same fact. For instance, supposing that it is both good *simpliciter* and good *for* you if you go on holiday, the facts that make it good *simpliciter* for you to go on holiday will be the same facts that make it good *for* you to go on holiday, namely that doing so will give you a lot of pleasure. So, it seems that we have good reason to accept (I) and no reason to reject (I).

(II) is widely accepted.[43] And (II) seems intuitive. For instance, as Derek Parfit claims

> It would be odd to claim that we had *three* reasons to take some medicine: reasons that are given by the facts that this medicine is the safest, the most effective, *and* the best. Since such derivative reasons [such as that it is the best] have no independent normative force, it would be misleading to mention them in such a claim.[44]

Similarly, the fact that ϕ-ing would be good *for* you does not seem to be a reason to ϕ in addition to (or that does not derive all of its normative force from) the fact that ϕ-ing would be both pleasurable and conduce to your health. And the reasons not to smoke seem to be exhausted by the facts that smoking shortens yours (and others') lives, makes one less healthy (and that many are averse to the smell); the fact that smoking is bad *for* you does not seem to provide a reason not to smoke in addition to these reasons (or does not seem to provide a reason to smoke that exists independently of these reasons).

It should be noted that (II) does not entail that either goodness *simpliciter* or goodness *for* us are normatively insignificant.[45] (II) is compatible with the view that the goodness *simpliciter* and/or the goodness *for* someone of something, for instance pleasures, friendships, and honours, plays the role of enabling the, or making it the case that there are, reasons to pursue and desire these pleasures, friendships, and honours. On this view, (at least other things equal) the only pleasures, friendships, and knowledge that there is reason to desire and to pursue are the pleasures, friendships, and knowledge that are good *simpliciter* or good *for* someone. But although the goodness of these things makes it the case that there are reasons to desire and pursue these things the goodness of

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[43] See, for instance, Scanlon (1998, p. 97), Crisp (2008, esp. pp. 263-264), Schroeder (2009), and Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006, pp. 154-156).
[44] Parfit (2011, p. 39)
[45] Cf. Kraut (2013, p. 57 and pp. 59-62).

these things is not part of the reason to pursue these things; just as the fact that your promise was not coerced enables the fact that you promised to function as a reason to keep that promise but is not part of the reason to keep that promise.[46]

To clarify, if goodness enables reasons, and so this is why (II) holds, this would not count against my explanation of (*). Since once a reason is enabled it cannot be further enabled. (A reason can be further intensified but enablers are not intensifiers: that your promise was not coerced could not intensify your reason to keep it, only enable it). So, if there is a reason to ϕ because ϕ-ing is pleasurable and the goodness *simpliciter* of this pleasure enables the reason to ϕ because it would be pleasurable, then the goodness *for* you of pleasure cannot enable a different or distinct reason to ϕ, since the reason to ϕ because it would be pleasurable has already been enabled by the goodness *simpliciter* of this pleasure.

So, there is an explanation of (*) that is better than Kraut's explanation of (*) in terms of (**), and which does not entail good *simpliciter* scepticism. So Kraut's argument does not show that we should accept metaphysical good *simpliciter* scepticism.[47]

7. Conclusion

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[46] See Dancy (2004, pp. 38-42). See also Schroeder's (2007, ch.2) view that desires enable reasons.
[47] Kraut provides another objection against the view that there are properties of being good *simpliciter* that he claims to be the converse objection to the double-counting objection; see Kraut (2012, p. 79). According to this objection, (i) if ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* but ϕ-ing is bad *for* you or others, then we should not ϕ. But (ii) if some things are good *simpliciter*, it should be the case that sometimes you should ϕ because ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* even though ϕ-ing is bad *for* you or others; see *ibid.* ch. 14.
However, I am not convinced that we should hold (ii). We should hold

> (ii*) If some things are good *simpliciter*, it should be the case that we should sometimes respond positively to ϕ-ing (or have reasons to respond positively to ϕ-ing) because ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* even though ϕ-ing is bad *for* you or others.

But it is clear that there are cases in which we should respond positively to ϕ-ing (or have reasons to respond positively to ϕ-ing) because ϕ-ing is good *simpliciter* even though ϕ-ing is bad *for* you or others. For instance, supposing that mathematical discoveries are good *simpliciter*, we have strong reason to hope that strangers make these discoveries even if these discoveries have no good consequences for anyone and if it would be slightly worse for these strangers if they did make these discoveries. Similarly, suppose that Wittgenstein's life was in fact bad *for* him and would have been better *for* him if he had not been a philosopher. Even if Wittgenstein's philosophy were not good *for* anyone but were only good *simpliciter*, we would still have strong reasons to be glad that Wittgenstein was a philosopher because his work was so insightful, and the fact that it is insightful, on its own, makes it good *simpliciter*.

In sections 5-6 I showed that all the arguments that have been made for metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism fail. In sections 3-4 I showed that all the arguments that have been made for conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism fail. And in section 2 I showed that we have *prima facie* reason not to accept both varieties of good *simpliciter* skepticism; that is, I showed that if there are no good arguments for either variety of good *simpliciter* skepticism, then we should not accept both varieties of good *simpliciter* skepticism. So, I have shown that we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism.[48][49]

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[48] It might be claimed that defenders of good *simpliciter* should hope a defence of good *simpliciter* to show that we should reject good *simpliciter* skepticism and not only to show that we should not accept good *simpliciter* skepticism. But even if this is the case, in *supra* note 18 I argued that the arguments that I gave in section 2 of this paper can be used to show that unless we are given good reasons to accept conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism, we should reject conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism and may well be able to be used to show that unless we are given good reasons to accept metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism, we should reject metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism. So, since I've shown that there are no such good reasons to accept either form of good *simpliciter* skepticism, I've also show that we should reject conceptual good *simpliciter* skepticism, and I may have also shown that we should reject (as well as not accept) metaphysical good *simpliciter* skepticism.

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