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THE NEUTRALIZATION OF DRAPER-STYLE EVIDENTIAL ARGUMENTS FROM EVIL

William Lauinger

This paper aims to neutralize Draper-style evidential arguments from evil by defending five theses: (1) that, when those who advance these arguments use the word “evil,” they are referring, at least in large part, to ill-being; (2) that well-being and ill-being come as a pair (i.e., are essentially related); (3) that well-being and ill-being are best understood in an at least partly objectivist way; (4) that (even partial) objectivism about well-being and ill-being is best understood as implying non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being; and (5) that the truth of non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being does not fit cleanly with naturalism and, in fact, fits at least as well with theism as it does with naturalism.

1. Introduction

Draper-style evidential arguments from evil say (in effect) that, because the world’s terrible evil and suffering fit far better with naturalism than they do with theism, we have strong *prima facie* reasons to accept naturalism over theism.¹ This paper aims to neutralize these sorts of arguments by defending five theses: (1) that, when those who advance these arguments use the word “evil,” they are referring, at least in large part, to ill-being; (2) that well-being and ill-being come as a pair (i.e., are essentially related); (3) that well-being and ill-being are best understood in an at least partly objectivist way; (4) that (even partial) objectivism about well-being and ill-being is best understood as implying non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being; and (5) that the truth of non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being does not fit cleanly with naturalism and, in fact, fits at least as well with theism as it does with naturalism. Theses (1) and (2) are fairly uncontroversial. However, each of theses (3) through (5) is very controversial, and in this paper I cannot offer a full argument for any one of them. Nevertheless, I can show that there are good reasons for thinking that each is true.

¹Paul Draper, “Pain and Pleasure: An Evidential Problem for Theists,” *Nous* (1989), 331–350; Paul Draper, “Evolution and the Problem of Evil,” in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, 5th edition, ed. Louis Pojman and Michael Rea (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), 207–219; and Paul Draper, “The Argument from Evil,” in *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 142–155.

Let me stress that I will be focusing only on *Draper-style* evidential arguments from evil.² As I have indicated, these arguments put two specific hypotheses on the table, theism and naturalism, and then claim that, since naturalism does a much better job of explaining (or fitting with) the world's terrible evil and suffering than theism does, we have strong *prima facie* reasons to favor naturalism over theism. For my purposes in this paper, it is important that there be a specific alternative to theism on the table, namely, naturalism. For, indeed, my main point will be that Draper-style evidential arguments from evil fail because they assume, wrongly, that naturalism and evil fit cleanly together.

The word "naturalism" here refers to *metaphysical* naturalism, which does not deny the existence of non-natural entities, but which does entail that natural entities have only natural causes and that there are no supernatural entities (e.g., God).³ Moreover, in this paper I am construing naturalism in a way that rules out appeals to teleological laws of nature such as those that Nagel invokes in his recent book.⁴ In short, readers should assume that by "naturalism" I mean "ordinary, non-teleological naturalism."⁵

Here is a roadmap for what follows. Section 2 will motivate the move of defending theses (1) through (5), that is, the five theses mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper. Then section 3 will defend theses (1) through (3), and section 4 will defend theses (4) and (5). I will conclude with section 5, which will discuss one additional objection to the move of defending theses (1) through (5).

2. Motivating the Move of Defending Theses (1)–(5)

Evil and suffering are bad in themselves, but they can have significant instrumental value (e.g., people can become more compassionate as a result of having endured some suffering). Given this point, we might be inclined to claim that God chose to create a world containing evil and suffering because our lives are, on the whole, better in a world with evil and suffering than in a world without evil and suffering. This claim might be hard to deny if evil and suffering were never *terrible*. Yet, once we admit that the world contains plenty of terrible evil and suffering, this claim seems very strained. And, of course, the world does contain plenty of terrible evil and suffering.

²Regarding the difference in form between Draper-style evidential arguments from evil and other sorts of evidential arguments from evil, see Draper, "The Argument from Evil," 146–150.

³*Ibid.*, 149–150.

⁴Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). In sketching his version of naturalism, Nagel invokes teleological laws of nature that make the respective existences of life, consciousness, reason, and non-naturalistically construed objective values things that are to be expected (i.e., antecedently highly probable).

⁵I am mentioning this because it is not clear to me that there is a problem of ill-fit between naturalism and evil if we construe naturalism in the teleological way that Nagel does.

One might react to the foregoing by thinking: "Given theism, the world's terrible evil and suffering is extraordinarily hard to understand. This is so because one would think that, although an all-loving, omniscient, and omnipotent being may well allow for plenty of non-terrible evil and suffering, he would prevent the occurrence of all or at least most of the terrible evil and suffering that occurs in our world. By contrast, if naturalism is true, the world's terrible evil and suffering is not hard to understand. After all, if naturalism is true, then what lies at the base of all of reality is, say, indifferent matter that swirls around in accordance with similarly indifferent laws of nature; and surely, if reality is ultimately indifferent, then it is not surprising that various pockets of reality contain terrible evil and suffering. The take-away point here is that the antecedent probability of the world's terrible evil and suffering is much higher on naturalism than it is on theism. As such is the case, we have strong *prima facie* reasons to accept naturalism over theism. Granted, naturalism and theism are not the only possible views of ultimate reality. But, for simplicity, we can restrict our options to just naturalism and theism."

The above comments capture the heart of Draper-style evidential arguments from evil (henceforth I will simply refer to these arguments as "Draper-style arguments"). In response to Draper-style arguments, there are (at least) four sorts of moves that theists might make: *the counterbalancing-or-overriding-considerations move*, *the theodicies move*, *the skeptical-theism move*, and *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move*. The last of these, *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move*, consists in defending the five theses mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper.

The idea behind *the counterbalancing-or-overriding-considerations move* is to grant that Draper-style arguments give us strong *prima facie* reasons to embrace naturalism over theism and then to produce considerations that favor theism over naturalism, where these considerations have counterbalancing or overriding force (e.g., theists might advance the fine-tuning argument and claim that it has counterbalancing or overriding force). Theists may succeed if they make this move, but, so as to ease their argumentative burdens, it would be best for theists if they could block Draper-style arguments from the start.

One way to try to do this is to appeal to extant theodicies, that is, to make *the theodicies move*. The goal here would be to show that the world's terrible evil and suffering actually fit well with theism. I (who am a theist) believe that, although appeals to extant theodicies can *to some extent* explain why the world's terrible evil and suffering fit with theism, serious worries about the friction or lack of fit between the world's terrible evil and suffering (on the one hand) and theism (on the other hand) will still linger even after all extant theodicies have been considered. Also, I think that most theists, if asked directly, would agree with my belief here. Given this belief, and given also that Draper is right that the world's terrible evil and suffering fit cleanly with naturalism and its assumption that reality

is ultimately indifferent, it follows that naturalism still seems to explain the world's terrible evil and suffering far better than theism, in which case it also follows that we still have strong *prima facie* reasons to embrace naturalism over theism.

At this point theists might make the *skeptical-theism move*. Here theists might say: "We are in no position to know that there is any friction or lack of fit between the world's terrible evil and suffering (on the one hand) and theism (on the other hand). In order for us to know such a thing as that, we would need to know how likely or unlikely it is that God would create and sustain a world that contains the sort of terrible evil and suffering that our world contains; and, in order for us to know such a thing as *that*, we would need to have a decent grasp of the reasons that God might have for and against creating and sustaining a world of the sort in question. But, since God's intellect is infinite whereas our intellects are finite, it seems that we *cannot have* a decent grasp of God's reasons generally or, more particularly, of the reasons that God might have for and against creating and sustaining a world of the sort in question."⁶

Draper has responded to this sort of skeptical-theistic response by emphasizing that what primarily matters for his argument is what we know about the reasons that God would have, not what we do not know about the reasons that God would have.⁷ Here is what Draper seems to be thinking. We are asking ourselves which hypothesis, theism or naturalism, is antecedently more probable, given the world's terrible evil and suffering. Put differently, we are asking which of these two hypotheses does a better job of explaining (or fitting with) the world's terrible evil and suffering. If naturalism is true, then reality is ultimately indifferent, in which case it is unsurprising that various pockets of reality happen to contain terrible evil and suffering. But now turn to theism. Given theism, should we expect various pockets of reality to contain terrible evil and suffering? No, we should not. Because God is all-loving, he would have reasons to prevent terrible evil and suffering on the part of humans and animals; and, because God is omniscient and omnipotent, he would deploy these reasons with utter efficacy. Of course, it is possible (for all we know) that God would also have distinct, overriding reasons—ones beyond our ken—to allow for terrible evil and suffering on the part of humans and animals. For the sake of the argument, though, we can hold equal or bracket all of the reasons that God might have that are beyond our ken. This holding equal or bracketing move is justified not only because these (possible) reasons are unknown to us, but also because it does not seem any more likely that God would have reasons beyond our ken to permit terrible evil and suffering than it is that God would have reasons

⁶This paragraph follows (at least loosely) van Inwagen—see Peter van Inwagen, "The Problem of Evil, the Problem of Air, and the Problem of Silence," in *The Evidential Argument from Evil*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 155.

⁷Draper, "The Argument from Evil," 152–153.

beyond our ken to prevent terrible evil and suffering (i.e., it seems just as likely that God's reasons that are unknown to us are ones to prevent terrible evil and suffering as it is that they are ones to permit terrible evil and suffering). Thus Draper's argument can be put as follows. *Given what we know about the reasons that God would have and holding equal or bracketing all that we do not know about the reasons that God would have*, we should accept:

- (a) that the world's terrible evil and suffering do *not* fit well with (i.e., are surprising on) theism,
- (b) that the world's terrible evil and suffering *do* fit well with (i.e., are *not* surprising on) naturalism, and
- (c) that we therefore have strong *prima facie* reasons to embrace naturalism over theism.

What can theists say in response to Draper's argument when it is formulated in this way? I think that (a) should be granted. If we are taking into account *only* what we know about the reasons that God would have (and so are bracketing or holding equal all that we do not know about the reasons that God would have), then it is clear, for the reasons mentioned above, that the world's terrible evil and suffering do *not* fit well with theism. (My point here is not that evil and suffering *as such* do not fit well with theism. Rather, my point here is that *terrible* evil and suffering, especially in the quantities found here on earth, do not fit well with theism—or, more precisely, do not fit well with theism if we are taking into account *only* what we know about the reasons that God would have.)

Given that (a) should be granted, what can theists say? Theists might grant (a) and (b) but then question (c) by saying: "Given that Draper's argument requires us to bracket so much, it is no longer much of an argument—that is, it gives us nothing but *weak* *prima facie* reasons to embrace naturalism over theism." This response may have merit. Still, it would obviously be better for theists if they could convincingly claim that Draper's argument does not give us *any* *prima facie* reasons to embrace naturalism over theism.

Thus I propose that we consider (b): the claim that the world's terrible evil and suffering fit well with naturalism. Draper is confident that (b) is true, but I think that theists can successfully block (b) by making *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move*.

3. Defending Theses (1)–(3)

Theses (1)–(3) of *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move* are as follows: (1) When those who advance Draper-style arguments use the word "evil," they are referring, at least in large part, to ill-being; (2) well-being and ill-being come as a pair (i.e., are essentially related); and (3) well-being and ill-being are best understood in an at least partly objectivist way. What reasons are there for believing these three theses?

Start with thesis (1). Draper and other proponents of arguments from evil focus heavily on pain and suffering when they are discussing the evils of the world. They do this at least partly because pain and suffering are obvious examples of things that are directly (i.e., non-instrumentally) bad for humans and animals. In other words, they do this at least partly because pain and suffering are obvious components of the ill-being of humans and animals. This suffices to show that thesis (1) is true.

Turn now to thesis (2), which says that well-being and ill-being come as a pair (i.e., are essentially related). This thesis is fairly uncontroversial. It can be understood to imply (a) that, insofar as an individual's well-being is increased, this individual's ill-being is decreased, and (b) that, insofar as an individual's ill-being is increased, this individual's well-being is decreased. Further, notice that, although we can appropriately speak of an individual's well-being *and* ill-being, these are in fact two (essentially related) aspects of some one thing, where this one thing can be improved or diminished or stay at the same level. In what follows I will, for convenience, sometimes speak *only* of an individual's well-being, as opposed to speaking of an individual's well-being *and* ill-being. (Also, for convenience, I will from now on use "well-being" and "ill-being" to refer specifically to *human* well-being and ill-being.)

Now consider thesis (3). This thesis says that well-being and ill-being are best understood in an at least partly objectivist way. In advancing this thesis, I mean to be claiming that the best theory of well-being is either a purely objectivist one or a hybrid one. On a purely objectivist theory, there are various basic goods (e.g., accomplishment, knowledge, aesthetic experience, health, pleasure, and friendship), where each of these basic goods is directly good for each human, and where this holds true regardless of the pro-attitudes (e.g., the desires) that each human has or lacks.⁸ On a hybrid theory, the basic goods are appealed to, but they are not assumed to be components of people's well-being from the start—that is, the basic goods are assumed at the start to be valuable in some pro-attitude independent sense, but not in the sense of directly contributing to well-being. What, on a hybrid theory, makes any given basic good become a component of well-being? The answer is that, if (and only if) someone has the right sort of pro-attitude (be it enjoyment, or desire, or endorsement, etc.) toward any given basic good, then this basic good thereby becomes a component of this person's well-being. In sum, although both purely objectivist theories and hybrid theories appeal to the basic goods, purely objectivist theories assume that all of the basic goods are components of one's well-being from the start, whereas hybrid theories assume instead that, for each basic good, it cannot count as a component of one's well-being unless one has the right sort of pro-attitude toward it. With regard to ill-being: On a purely objectivist theory, any given human's ill-being can

⁸For an example of a purely objectivist theory, see John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 59–99.

be understood in terms of the frustrating of his or her ability to engage in or benefit from any of the basic goods; and, on a hybrid theory, any given human's ill-being can be understood in terms of the frustrating of his or her ability to engage in or benefit from any of those basic goods that are components of his or her well-being.

Thesis (3) is extremely controversial. It asserts that we should be either pure objectivists or hybrid theorists about well-being. However, many philosophers are either welfare hedonists or desire-fulfillment welfare theorists; and, though Draper himself is an objectivist about well-being, it seems likely that some philosophers who accept Draper-style arguments are either welfare hedonists or desire-fulfillment welfare theorists.⁹ I will now provide reasons for rejecting both welfare hedonism and desire-fulfillment welfare theories, starting with welfare hedonism.

Welfare hedonism entails (a) that nothing except one's own mental states (in particular, one's own pleasure, pain, enjoyment, and suffering) can enter the content of one's well-being. Moreover, standard versions of welfare hedonism entail (b) that the welfare-value or welfare-disvalue of the mental states that enter the content of one's welfare cannot be directly affected by anything except one's own mental states. There are non-standard versions of welfare hedonism that reject (b), but, for now, we can focus solely on standard versions of welfare hedonism.

It is well known that cases of delusion pose serious problems for standard versions of welfare hedonism. An example from Sumner will help here:

Consider the woman who for months or years has believed in, and relied on, the devotion of a faithless and self-serving partner. Her belief concerning a crucial condition of her life—a state of the world—was false. . . . If you ask her during this period whether she is happy, she will say she is; if you ask her whether her life is going well for her she will say that it is. If you ask her how she sees the same period after the delusion has been exposed, she will probably say that it now seems to her a cruel hoax and a waste of that part of her life. Clearly she *now* thinks that her life was not going well *then*; she has retrospectively re-evaluated her well-being during that period.¹⁰

It may make things clearer here if we divide Sumner's example into two separate cases.

First Case: The woman lives her actual life, that is, the life where she is deluded about her partner's faithfulness.

Second Case: The woman lives a life that is the same as her actual life, except that her partner is faithful to her.

⁹Draper noted to me through email correspondence that he is an objectivist about well-being. His welfare-objectivism can also be inferred from his writings (e.g., in "The Argument from Evil" he uses "flourishing" and "languishing" to refer to well-being and ill-being, and he uses these terms in a welfare-objectivist way).

¹⁰L. W. Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 157.

The woman has qualitatively identical mental states in both cases (i.e., her life is the same “on the inside” in both cases). Therefore, if we accept any standard version of welfare hedonism, we must say that the woman is equally well off in the two cases. But the truth seems to be that the woman is faring far better in the second case than in the first case.

Aside from biting the bullet, a welfare hedonist might respond by moving to a non-standard version of welfare hedonism. More specifically, a welfare hedonist might revise his or her theory so that, although it still entails (a) that nothing except one’s own mental states (in particular, one’s own pleasure, pain, enjoyment, and suffering) can enter the content of one’s well-being, it now also entails (b) that something besides one’s own mental states (in particular, some standard of reality or truth) can play a direct role in determining the welfare-value of at least some of the mental states that enter the content of one’s well-being.

Feldman’s truth-adjusted version of welfare hedonism is an example of a welfare theory that entails both conditions (a) and (b).¹¹ With regard to condition (b), Feldman’s version of welfare hedonism asserts that, although all of the pleasures that one has enhance one’s welfare, the pleasures that one has that are grounded in true beliefs are worth *ten times more*, welfare-wise, than the pleasures that one has that are grounded in false beliefs. If we accept Feldman’s version of welfare hedonism, then, regarding the two cases that involve the woman from Sumner’s example, we can say: “The woman is faring well in both cases, since she is, on balance, experiencing more pleasure than pain in both cases. However, the woman’s welfare is ten times higher in the second case than in the first case, because the pleasures that she experiences in the second case are reality-based pleasures, whereas the pleasures that she experiences in the first case are delusion-based pleasures.”

Though Feldman’s truth-adjusted version of welfare hedonism correctly implies that the woman is faring much better in the second case than in the first case, it also implies that the woman is faring well in the first case, that is, in some minimal way. And this latter implication seems false, for the truth seems to be that the woman is faring poorly in the first case. After all, as Sumner says in relation to the first case, the woman, when looking back on her time spent with her faithless and self-serving partner, is apt (correctly) to deem the whole thing to have been “a cruel hoax and a waste of that part of her life.”

Feldman could try to fix this problem by claiming that delusion-based pleasures actually *diminish* one’s welfare. But, if Feldman were so to claim, then it would be clear that we are no longer working with a theory that prizes pleasure or enjoyment and the absence of pain or suffering above

¹¹Fred Feldman, *Pleasure and the Good Life: Concerning the Nature, Varieties, and Plausibility of Hedonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 109–114. For simplicity, I am here ignoring Feldman’s distinction between sensory and attitudinal pleasures.

all else, in which case it would be clear that we are no longer working with a version of welfare hedonism at all.

Stepping back, we now have good (albeit, I admit, perhaps not decisive) reasons for rejecting welfare hedonism in general. Let us now turn to desire-fulfillment theories (DF theories).

DF theories divide into two general types: the actual and the hypothetical. On an actual DF theory, one's well-being is wholly determined by, and hence reducible to, one's actual desires. The idea here is that, if you desire some (any) state, then this state thereby becomes directly good for you. Moreover, if this state obtains, your well-being is thereby advanced. Regarding ill-being, actual DF theorists typically claim that it consists in (and only in) having one's desires frustrated. Hypothetical DF theories are structurally similar to actual DF theories, except that, instead of relying on actual desires, they rely on hypothetical desires—that is, the desires that one would have if one were in some non-actual, idealized setting (say, a setting wherein one has just been fully and vividly informed with respect to non-evaluative information).¹² Also, both actual and hypothetical DF theories entail that the desires that determine one's well-being are *non-instrumental* desires. (For brevity, I always use “desire” to mean “non-instrumental desire.”)

Actual DF theories are implausible. They implausibly imply (a) that a person cannot fail to desire something that is directly good for him or her, and they implausibly imply (b) that everything that a person desires is directly good for him or her.

Start here with implication (a): People sometimes stumble upon activities that they have never previously encountered or known about and find that they love them (e.g., this could happen with wind-surfing). With regard to these cases, it seems that the relationship of prudential fit (i.e., the directly-good-for relationship) between the activity in question and the person in question is in place prior to this person's coming to know about this activity and so prior to this person's forming the desire to engage in this activity. This suggests that there are plenty of things that are directly good for people but that they do not desire, simply because they do not know about them.

Turn now to implication (b). It is hard to deny that there are people who desire money, fame, and power—here, for instance, we might think of Donald Trump and his passion for money, certain reality TV stars and their passion for fame, and Saddam Hussein and his passion for power. Yet, when we ask ourselves whether money, fame, and power can be directly good for people, we are apt to answer that, although these things can obviously be indirectly (i.e., instrumentally) good for people, they cannot be directly good for people. Actual DF theorists might protest: “But, if the people who want these things judge that these things are directly good

¹²For an example of a hypothetical DF theory, see Peter Railton, *Facts, Values, and Norms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 43–68.

for themselves, then why should we deny that these things are directly good for them? Shouldn't it be *their* judgments that matter here, not *our* judgments? After all, it is *their* well-being that is at issue, not *ours*." This protest can be turned against actual DF theories, for people often judge that they themselves are no better or even worse off for having had certain of their desires fulfilled.¹³ For example, someone might desire to get a certain job (or to take a certain class, or to go on a certain trip, etc.), have his or her desire fulfilled, and then judge (either immediately or after time has passed) that he or she is no better or even worse off for having had this desire fulfilled. Sometimes these judgments are dramatic and concern significant stretches of one's life, as when Augustine eventually judged that his having been a Manichee was directly bad for himself, even though he had wanted to be a Manichee.¹⁴ With regard to these kinds of cases, actual DF theorists must claim that these individuals are *mistaken* when they judge that they are no better or even worse off for having had certain of their desires fulfilled. But, if actual DF theorists are willing to admit that people's judgments concerning their own welfare can be mistaken in these kinds of cases, then it is hard to take actual DF theorists seriously if and when they claim that we should not question the judgments of Donald Trump, certain reality TV stars, and Saddam Hussein, that is, in relation to the welfare-value of money, fame, and power.

How do hypothetical DF theories fare in relation to implications (a) and (b) from above? Regarding implication (a): Hypothetical DF theories ordinarily employ full-information conditions; that is, they ordinarily entail that an individual's well-being is determined by what he or she would desire after he or she has vividly internalized all of the value-free facts there are. Thus hypothetical DF theories are ordinarily not plagued with the problem of individuals not knowing about, and so not desiring, various things that intuitively seem to be directly good for them. Regarding implication (a), then, hypothetical DF theories are in fairly good shape. But now consider implication (b): It seems sensible to think that fully and vividly informing people would rid them of plenty of their defective desires (i.e., their desires for things that intuitively do not seem to be directly good for them); however, it also seems sensible to think that *some* defective desires would remain even after their holders were fully and vividly informed. For example, it is doubtful that Donald Trump would lose his desire for money simply in virtue of his being fully and vividly informed with respect to non-evaluative facts (after all, he already knows all of the relevant non-evaluative facts concerning money). And, *mutatis mutandis*, the same goes for certain reality TV stars' desires for fame and Saddam Hussein's desire for power.

¹³James Griffin, *Well-Being* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 10.

¹⁴Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Augustine describes his loss of the desire to be a Manichee in Book 5 (see 5.7 and 5.14), and there he also denounces the Manichees as "false and deceiving" (see 5.10).

Furthermore, there are problems that hypothetical DF theories have but that actual DF theories do not have. Perhaps the most damaging of these problems concerns the personality changes that fully and vividly informing people can bring about. Learning new facts can change one's personality, sometimes significantly. Assume, then, that Lucille enters the hypothetical setting and undergoes a significant personality change while being fully and vividly informed. According to hypothetical DF theories, it is the desires of hypothetical Lucille that determine the well-being of actual Lucille. But this is hard to accept. After all, hypothetical Lucille and actual Lucille have significantly different personalities, and so it stands to reason that much of what hypothetical Lucille desires would *not* be prudentially fit for actual Lucille.¹⁵

We now have good (albeit, I admit, perhaps not decisive) reasons for rejecting DF theories in general.¹⁶ Moreover, the case that we now have against both welfare hedonism in general and DF theories in general can fairly easily be extended in such a way as to cover all welfare theories that are not at least partly objectivist (i.e., that are not either purely objectivist theories or hybrid theories). Thus it seems that the best general options that remain are that of adopting a purely objectivist welfare theory and that of adopting a hybrid welfare theory.

In this paper I will not choose between these two remaining general options. Both purely objectivist theories and hybrid theories are attractive. Both capture the sensible thought that a human's well-being clusters around, and depends on, general goods such as friendship, accomplishment, pleasure, health, aesthetic experience, and knowledge.

4. Defending Theses (4) and (5)

Thesis (4) of the *naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move* asserts that both purely objectivist welfare theories and hybrid welfare theories are best understood as implying non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being. Why should we accept this thesis? Here is the start of an answer. Both purely objectivist theories and hybrid theories entail the existence of the basic goods (i.e., pro-attitude independent goods such as friendship, pleasure, knowledge, accomplishment, health, and aesthetic experience). In virtue of this commitment, both purely objectivist theories and hybrid theories are committed to the existence of robust, objective values. Here "objective values" refers to values that are irreducible to mental states (i.e., mental states that humans have either individually or in some collective sense), and here "robust" signals that the objective values in question are

¹⁵Regarding this personality-differences issue, see Connie Rosati, "Persons, Perspectives, and Full Information Accounts of the Good," *Ethics* 105 (1995), 296–325.

¹⁶In arguing against DF theories, I have relied on ideas contained in previous work. See William Lauinger, *Well-Being and Theism: Linking Ethics to God* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 23–57.

ones that take us beyond mental states in a way that is considerable.¹⁷ What, though, does this talk of robust, objective values have to do with ethical naturalism and ethical non-naturalism?

The answer is this. The natural and social sciences aim to describe the world, but in a way that is *non-evaluative*, that is, in a way that involves no commitment to the existence (or non-existence) of normatively forceful values or disvalues. Therefore, if values are to fit into the framework of the natural and social sciences—that is, if values are to count as being purely naturalistic entities—then they need to be (entirely or almost entirely) reducible to something non-evaluative. The clearest and historically most common way to try to show that values are reducible to something non-evaluative is to try to show that they reduce to mental states, which, of course, can be understood non-evaluatively. However, we saw above (in section 3) that there are grave problems with welfare theories that entail that well-being and ill-being reduce to mental states; and, indeed, it seems that, instead of accepting one of these theories, we should accept a welfare theory that is at least partly objectivist. Of course, if we do that, then we must accept the existence of the basic goods, in which case we are committed to the existence of robust, objective values. Values of this sort (by definition) cannot be reduced to mental states. And, more than this, it is difficult to believe that there is *anything* non-evaluative that values of this sort can be (entirely or almost entirely) reduced to. It therefore seems that, in accepting the existence of the basic goods, we are committing ourselves to the existence of values that are at least partly non-natural.

Many lines of objection might now be put forward. Though I cannot discuss them all, I can discuss the two that seem to be the most important. The first questions my assumption that the natural and social sciences are committed to providing *non-evaluative* descriptions. The second grants this assumption but claims that the basic goods, though not reducible to mental states, nonetheless are reducible to something that can be understood non-evaluatively.

Here is the first line of objection: “You claimed above that the natural and social sciences are committed to providing *non-evaluative* descriptions. But biologists study and describe the health of organisms, and social scientists (e.g., psychologists) study and describe subjective well-being. Therefore values *are* part of the subject matter of the natural and social sciences. Perhaps, then, we can accept (a) that the basic goods exist, (b) that the basic goods are irreducibly evaluative, and (c) that the basic goods nonetheless fit into the framework of the natural and social sciences (i.e., are purely naturalistic entities).”

Remarks along these lines are sometimes made by philosophers (such as Sturgeon) who view ethics as being an a posteriori enterprise, in the same

¹⁷To be clear, pleasure is a mental state, so it does not take us beyond mental states. However, the other basic goods do take us beyond mental states, and in a way that is considerable.

way that the natural and social sciences are.¹⁸ My response here is this. Biologists do study health, and psychologists do study subjective well-being. Further, I do not doubt that biologists generally assume that health is good and that psychologists generally assume that subjective well-being is good. Nevertheless, the claim "health is good in a normatively forceful sense" does not seem to be one that can be established within the domain of biology, and the claim "subjective well-being is good in a normatively forceful sense" does not seem to be one that can be established within the domain of psychology, at least not if we are construing psychology as a social science (as opposed to, say, construing it as a clinical field). Regarding the basic goods, then, natural and social scientists can certainly study them (e.g., psychologists can certainly study friendship), but only in a way that screens out their irreducibly evaluative character. Assuming that this is correct, the basic goods are not purely naturalistic entities.

The second line of objection is this: "Suppose that you are right that the natural and social sciences are committed to describing the world in a *non-evaluative* way. Does it follow that you are right that, in accepting the existence of the basic goods, we are accepting entities that are at least partly non-natural (i.e., entities that do not fit into the framework of the natural and social sciences)? No, this does not follow, for it is still open to us to claim that the basic goods are (entirely or almost entirely) reducible to something non-evaluative. True, in accepting the basic goods, we are accepting robust, objective values; and robust, objective values (by definition) cannot be reduced to mental states. However, we need not give up our belief that robust, objective values reduce to something non-evaluative simply because the mental-state-reduction route is blocked. After all, it may be that robust, objective values reduce to something non-evaluative, but that this (non-evaluative) reduction base is so complicated that we cannot capture it in our thought and language except by employing value-laden terminology."

Brink is among those philosophers who accept this way of thinking.¹⁹ However, I find it to be more like a declaration of faith (i.e., in the compatibility of ethical naturalism and robust, objective values) than a rationally motivated hypothesis. Think of the point this way. When ethical naturalists such as Railton and Lewis try to reduce values and disvalues to mental states, they are clearly doing something that is rationally motivated.²⁰ After all, values and disvalues as we intuitively think of them ordinarily do involve mental states in crucial ways, and therefore it is reasonable to try to see if there is a way of reducing values and disvalues to mental states. However, once this mental-state-reduction project is given up (and

¹⁸Nicholas Sturgeon, "Ethical Naturalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, ed. David Copp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91–121.

¹⁹David Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 156–159.

²⁰See Railton, *Facts, Values, and Norms*, 43–68 and David Lewis, "Dispositional Theories of Value," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 63 (1989), 113–137.

Brink agrees with me that this project should be given up), there seems to be no good reason left for assuming that values and disvalues reduce to something non-evaluative.²¹ For, aside from the pleasures, pains, and desires of conscious beings (e.g., humans), it is incredibly difficult to think of anything non-evaluatively construable that values and disvalues might reduce to. Noting that it is possible (for all we know) that there is a (non-evaluative) reduction base for robust, objective values hardly provides us with a reason for believing that there *really is* such a reduction base.

One might protest: "But Brink has done much more than just state that his position might be true, for all we know. After all, he has argued that we can understand ethical facts as being exhaustively constituted by natural facts, in a way that is similar to a table's being exhaustively constituted by micro-physical particles."²² And Brink's exhaustive constitution view regarding ethical facts seems true. Take any given ethical fact—say, the fact that what Prof has done is wrong. This ethical fact is wholly constituted by certain natural facts—say, by the fact that Prof told his students on Friday that he would grade their papers over the weekend, the fact that Prof decided to watch football all weekend, and the fact that on Monday Prof did not give the students their papers back. All that we have here are natural facts. Yes, there is an ethical fact here, namely, the fact that what Prof has done is wrong. But still, it is not as though this ethical fact is anything over and above the natural facts that constitute it. We should not think, then, that this ethical fact is at all non-natural."

Following FitzPatrick, we can note that, in fully accounting for any given ethical fact, we must (a) cite all of the natural facts that are in play *and* (b) relate these natural facts to whatever ethical standard is in play, be it the standard of well-being, or the standard of morality, or perhaps some other ethical standard.²³ The ethical fact in question will not fall out until we take step (b). Proponents of Brink's exhaustive constitution view take step (a) but fail to take step (b). If they were to take step (b), they would see that we must ask whether the ethical standard that is in play can be understood purely naturalistically or not. If it can be understood purely naturalistically, then the ethical fact that falls out when we take step (b) will be a purely natural fact—however, if this ethical standard *cannot* be understood purely naturalistically, then the ethical fact that falls out when we take step (b) will *not* be a purely natural fact. Reflection upon ethical standards tells us that the standard of well-being is the one that is most amenable to a purely naturalistic cashing out (it is certainly more amenable to a purely naturalistic cashing out than the standard of morality is). However, assuming that what was said in section 3 is correct, the standard

²¹Regarding Brink's rejection of this mental-state-reduction project, see *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics*, 217–236.

²²*Ibid.*, 156–159.

²³William FitzPatrick, "Robust Ethical Realism, Non-Naturalism, and Normativity," in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics Volume 3*, ed. Russ Shafer-Landau (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 159–205.

of well-being should *not* be understood in a way that reduces to mental states, and it *should* be understood in terms of the basic goods, which is to say that it should be understood in terms of robust, objective values. So we are back where we were before we considered Brink's exhaustive constitution view—that is, we are back with robust, objective values, and we cannot think of anything non-evaluative that they might reduce to. Brink could reply that, although the standard of well-being should be understood in terms of robust, objective values (i.e., the basic goods), it is possible (for all we know) that these robust, objective values are somehow reducible to something non-evaluative. But, if Brink were so to reply, he would again be doing no more than stating that it might be true (for all we know) that ethical naturalism and robust, objective values are compatible with each other.²⁴

At this point proponents of Draper-style arguments might say: "Maybe well-being and ill-being are best understood non-naturalistically; and, more generally, maybe theses (1)–(4) of *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together* move are true. Still, thesis (5) must be considered. This thesis says that the truth of non-naturalism about well-being and ill-being does not fit cleanly with naturalism and, in fact, fits at least as well with theism as it does with naturalism. But this is questionable. Many excellent philosophers combine ethical non-naturalism with (metaphysical) naturalism. For instance, Parfit, Wielenberg, and FitzPatrick all do this.²⁵ And presumably they have good reasons for doing this."

In effect, our question here is this: What explains the truth of ethical non-naturalism better, theism or naturalism? If the correct answer is either "theism" or "there is a tie," thesis (5) stands. But, if the correct answer is "naturalism," thesis (5) falls. In assessing this matter, we should consider both metaphysical and epistemological issues.

Metaphysical Issues: Suppose that a theistic ethical non-naturalist says, "The metaphysical discontinuity between the natural order and non-natural values is not awkward on theism, for theism already entails there is at least one very important entity (namely, God) that exists outside the boundaries of the natural order. However, given naturalism, this metaphysical discontinuity is very awkward." What might the naturalist who accepts ethical non-naturalism say in response? Following Parfit, he or she might say: It is not true that, given naturalism, there is an awkward metaphysical discontinuity between the natural order and non-natural values—this is not true because non-natural values *are not metaphysical things at all*. Parfit says: "Like numbers and logical truths, [non-natural] normative properties and truths have *no* ontological status."²⁶ Part of what

²⁴For more on Brink's exhaustive constitution view and FitzPatrick's reasons for rejecting it, see Lauinger, *Well-Being and Theism*, 131–135.

²⁵Derek Parfit, *On What Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Erik Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," *Faith and Philosophy* 26 (2009), 23–41; and FitzPatrick, "Robust Ethical Realism, Non-Naturalism, and Normativity."

²⁶Parfit, *On What Matters*, 487.

Parfit is thinking here is that debates between Platonists and nominalists about the reality of numbers are unclear. If we ask whether “numbers really exist in a fundamental, ontological sense, though they do not exist in space or time,” we are, says Parfit, asking a question that is too unclear to answer.²⁷ Instead of answering “yes” (as Platonists do) or “no” (as nominalists do), we should, Parfit believes, accept a third answer, one that says that numbers exist, *but not in any ontological sense*.²⁸ And, *mutatis mutandis*, Parfit holds the same view about logical truths and non-natural normative properties and truths (or, for short, non-natural values).

I find it oxymoronic-sounding to speak of things that have a *non-ontological existence*, for existence seems *by definition* to be an ontological category. We may not be able adequately to describe the precise ontological way in which numbers, logical truths, and non-natural values exist, as there may be no extant ontological category or concept that adequately captures the precise ontological way in which these things exist. But still, if we want to reject anti-realism about these things (as Parfit does), then presumably we must accept that they exist *in some ontological way or other*.

Notice, moreover, that theists can provide an answer that differs from both the Platonist and nominalist answers mentioned above. As Plantinga has said, theists can claim that numbers and other abstract objects exist necessarily, but in such a way that they are divine thoughts.²⁹ On this theistic view, we have numbers and other abstract objects existing necessarily, but in a way that involves their being grounded in a concrete, necessarily existing object, namely, God. Thus, on this theistic view, Platonists are right to think of numbers and other abstract objects as existing necessarily, but wrong to think of numbers and other abstract objects as existing in a free-floating way, that is, without being grounded in any concrete object.

Regarding my favored version of ethical non-naturalism: I am inclined to think that there are some basic, necessarily existing non-natural values that are uncreated entities that have always been contained in God’s mind, that is, as divine thoughts. There is some kind of dependence here, but it is not causal: The basic non-natural values that necessarily exist depend on God in that they are thoughts that God essentially has, but it is not true to say that God has ever caused them to exist or ever produced them.³⁰ I realize that this non-causal dependence is obscure.³¹ Nevertheless, it

²⁷Ibid., 476.

²⁸Ibid., 481.

²⁹Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 288.

³⁰Here I seem to be parting ways with Plantinga, since he seems to think that abstract objects that are divine thoughts are caused by God to exist (ibid., 291).

³¹To see what this non-causal dependence might look like, see pp. 269–271 (i.e., the section on “Divine Conceptualism”) in Paul Gould, “The Problem of God and Abstract Objects,” *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011), 255–274. One further obscurity in my version of ethical non-naturalism: As an anonymous referee noted, it is natural to think that thoughts in humans are always concrete mental events, but to assume, as I am doing, that abstract objects such as necessarily existent non-natural values are divine thoughts is to assume that there can be

seems less obscure to construe non-natural values as being non-causally grounded in God in the way that I am suggesting than it is to embrace Parfit's oxymoronic-sounding claim that non-natural values have a non-ontological existence.

Of course, one can be a naturalist who accepts ethical non-naturalism without accepting Parfit's claim. Wielenberg seems to be one such naturalist. Also, Wielenberg might say that his combination of ethical non-naturalism and naturalism is, in relation to metaphysics, superior to my combination of ethical non-naturalism and theism.

There are (at least) two points that Wielenberg might make here. First, he might note that his view is ontologically simpler than my view in that my view entails the existence of at least one more entity (i.e., God) than does his view. Second, he might make a point about supervenience: He might note that, when it comes to the task of explaining the relationship between the natural order and non-natural values, his view and my view are on a par in that both views entail that there are brute, metaphysically necessary connections that obtain between the natural order and non-natural values (e.g., both views entail that it is a brute, metaphysically necessary truth that pain has the property of intrinsic badness, where pain belongs to the natural order, and where intrinsic badness is a supervening non-natural property).³²

I grant that, if we are counting the number of entities posited by a view, then Wielenberg's view has an advantage over my view. Further, I am willing to grant (at least for the sake of argument) that, when it comes to supervenience and the positing of brute, metaphysically necessary connections between the natural order and non-natural values, Wielenberg's view and my view are on a par. However, there is also a Bayesian question to consider in this context, namely, the question of whether the existence of non-natural values is antecedently more probable on theism or on naturalism. And the correct answer here, I believe, is that the existence of non-natural values is antecedently many times more probable on theism than on naturalism.

Think of the point this way. Since theists already accept that there is an all-good God that is ontologically fundamental and that does not fit within the boundaries of the natural order, it is not all that surprising, given theism, that there would be non-natural values, that is, normatively forceful values that do not fit within the boundaries of the natural order. But now turn to naturalism. On naturalism, there is the natural, causal order, and this order is sufficient unto itself in that it needs only its own matter and laws to operate. Furthermore, on naturalism, humans are

divine thoughts that are not concrete. My (tentative) response: Given the differences between God's nature and human nature, it seems reasonable to think that there are probably some differences between God's thoughts and humans' thoughts; in turn, it does not seem unreasonable to think that, even if all human thoughts are concrete occurrences, there nonetheless can be thoughts in God's mind that are abstract objects.

³²Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 28.

wholly physical (i.e., not-at-all immaterial) beings, ones that have been produced by the purely natural process of unguided evolution. So, given naturalism, would we expect there to be non-natural values, that is, normatively forceful values that are utterly central to the lives of humans and that do not fit within the boundaries of the natural order? I do not think that we would expect this at all. I think what we would expect, given naturalism, is either for there to be nothing non-natural at all or for there to be some rather unimportant non-natural entities. Given naturalism, we certainly would *not* expect there to be non-natural entities that are of the utmost importance (i.e., that are, to echo the title of Parfit's book, *what matters*).

Wainwright has (in effect) already made this Bayesian point. At the end of an article responding to Wielenberg, Wainwright says:

In a theistic or Platonic World, the Good lies at the heart of reality. The existence of [non-natural] objective values . . . [is] surely less surprising in a world of this sort than in a world in which what is deepest is matter, energy, natural law, or chance. While the existence of [non-natural] objective values is formally consistent with a naturalistic metaphysics, it doesn't comport well with it.³³

I do not see a plausible response that a naturalist might offer here, except, perhaps, to voice a general suspicion about Bayesian ways of thinking. However, it is not open to proponents of Draper-style arguments to voice any such general suspicion, for Draper-style arguments are themselves Bayesian arguments.

Summing up: Given that the existence of non-natural values is antecedently many times more probable on theism than on naturalism, it seems safe to say that, in relation to metaphysics, the truth of ethical non-naturalism is explained at least as well by theism as it is by naturalism. Thus, in relation to metaphysics, thesis (5) seems to be in good shape.

Epistemological Issues: Ethical non-naturalists standardly assume that we have the cognitive ability to access non-natural values, and to do so in a way that is reliable or truth-tracking. This ability of ours is very puzzling from a naturalistic point of view. For why would unguided evolution (i.e., a mindless, purely natural process concerned with reproductive fitness and survival) work out in such a way as to provide us with the ability to access values that are not themselves any part of the natural, causal order?

On theism, there is less of a puzzle here. After all, theists might say: God made us with immaterial minds that have a power of rational intuition that allows us to access non-natural values. Or theists might say: We are not at all immaterial, but in creating the natural world God set up the laws of nature and the cosmic initial conditions in such a way as to guarantee not only that we would arise from evolutionary processes, but also that evolutionary processes would build into us a faculty of rational intuition

³³William Wainwright, "In Defense of Non-Natural Theistic Realism: A Response to Wielenberg," *Faith and Philosophy* 27 (2010), 463.

that allows us to access non-natural values. And, aside from these two options, there may be others available to theists.

Now consider naturalists. How might they account for our ability to access non-natural values? Here I will focus on Parfit's view. Parfit holds that it is plausible to assume that unguided evolution built into us a general cognitive ability to access various kinds of truths (e.g., mathematical, logical, and evaluative truths) that are not themselves any part of the natural, causal order. Regarding our ability to access mathematical truths, Parfit thinks that the following occurred. Through random genetic mutation, some early humans or pre-humans came to be able to access simple mathematical truths (e.g., the truth that $2 + 1 = 3$). Having this ability helped these early humans or pre-humans to survive (e.g., being able to count the number of lions nearby helped them to avoid being eaten by lions). Since this ability to access simple mathematical truths was survival-enhancing, it was favored by natural selection and hence was passed down from generation to generation for many thousands of years, often being slightly improved along the way.³⁴ Eventually humans found that they were able to access a large domain of mathematical truths, many of which have no clear connection to reproductive fitness or survival. Parfit elaborates:

Our cognitive abilities, we can assume, were partly produced by evolutionary forces. But these abilities later ceased to be governed by these forces, and had their own effects. Natural selection gave us wings, but when we could fly, we soared into the sky. We used these cognitive abilities to discover new kinds of truths. Nagel gives, as one example, our understanding of arithmetical infinity.³⁵

Parfit thinks of our ability to access non-natural evaluative truths as flowing out of our general cognitive ability to access non-natural truths of various sorts. On Parfit's view, our non-natural evaluative beliefs were not mostly produced by evolutionary forces; even so, evolutionary forces are responsible for our having the general cognitive ability to access non-natural truths of various sorts, and we use this general cognitive ability—Parfit often refers to it as rational reflection—to access non-natural evaluative truths.³⁶

How convincing is this? Parfit's story about the evolutionary origin of our ability to access simple mathematical truths is plausible, for knowing basic arithmetic clearly is survival-enhancing. Thus Parfit has a plausible account of how humans *began* to access the domain of truths that are not contained within the natural, causal order. However, the assumptions that Parfit makes after this—for instance, about how our cognitive abilities later ceased to be governed by evolutionary forces and had their own effects, ones which allowed us to soar “into the sky” (i.e., to access important truths not contained within the natural, causal order, including

³⁴Parfit, *On What Matters*, 496.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 520.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 534–542.

non-natural evaluative truths)—are questionable. In general, the problem with Parfit's story—and this problem seems to afflict all naturalistic stories of how humans have come to be able to access non-natural values in a reliable or truth-tracking way—is that, to a significant extent, it makes our ability to access non-natural values appear to be an accident (i.e., a lucky side-effect of evolutionary processes). Explaining our ability to access non-natural values as something that is, to a significant extent, an accident would presumably be acceptable if non-natural values were things that are relatively unimportant. But, given that non-natural values are utterly central to our lives, it seems implausible to claim that our ability to access non-natural values is, to a significant extent, an accident.³⁷ Given theism, we need not posit that our ability to access non-natural values is (to any extent) an accident, and, insofar as this is so, theism has a significant explanatory advantage over naturalism.³⁸ In line with this, it seems safe to say that, in relation to epistemology, the truth of ethical non-naturalism is explained at least as well by theism as it is by naturalism.

In sum, I have argued that, in relation to both metaphysics and epistemology, the truth of ethical non-naturalism is explained at least as well by theism as it is by naturalism. Assuming my argument is sound, it follows that thesis (5) stands.

5. The Red-herring Objection

I will now discuss one additional objection that proponents of Draper-style arguments might raise when confronted with *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move*. Call this *the red-herring objection*. Here is how it goes: “Draper-style arguments start with an observation of the patterns of well-being and ill-being that the world contains. Then Draper-style arguments ask: Are these patterns better explained by the hypothesis that there is an all-good, omniscient, and omnipotent being that is ontologically fundamental or, instead, by the hypothesis that naturalism is true and, by extension, that what lies at the base of reality is indifferent matter that swirls around in accordance with similarly indifferent laws of nature?

³⁷I have stressed this point before (*Well-Being and Theism*, 139–140).

³⁸Enoch finds it misleading to speak of humans' *access* to non-natural values, since humans can form true beliefs about non-natural values without *accessing* them—see David Enoch, *Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 174. On Enoch's view, what we must explain are simply the correlations between humans' (often true) evaluative beliefs and the non-natural evaluative truths that independently hold. However, even if we accept Enoch's framing of the problem, it still seems true that, when naturalists who accept ethical non-naturalism respond here, they inevitably end up positing that the human ability to form largely true evaluative beliefs is, to a significant extent, an accident. For example, see Erik Wielenberg, “On the Evolutionary Debunking of Morality,” *Ethics* 120 (2010), 441–464. In particular, see pp. 459–461, where (a) Wielenberg notes that his account of moral knowledge (which does not require us to *access* non-natural values) requires there to be a certain coincidence of ethical supervenience relationships and the laws of nature and (b) Wielenberg more or less admits that, if we reject (i) theism, (ii) Nagel's teleological naturalism, and (iii) the (very controversial) claim that the laws of nature hold with metaphysical necessity, then we will probably have to say that the obtaining of this coincidence is an accident.

Draper-style arguments answer that the latter hypothesis does a much better job of explaining the patterns in question (e.g., if we observe a four-year-old who undergoes a year of painful treatment for brain cancer, only to die in the end, then we should conclude that the naturalistic hypothesis does a much better job of explaining the ill-being observed here than the theistic hypothesis does). Moreover, *there is nothing more that needs to be delved into here*—in particular, there is no need to determine what theory of the nature of well-being and ill-being is correct, and there certainly is no need to delve into a meta-ethical debate about whether well-being and ill-being should be understood in an ethical-naturalist way or, instead, in an ethical-non-naturalist way. Indeed, *the naturalism-and-evil-do-not-fit-cleanly-together move* is really a red herring, for it tries to force us to focus on issues that are not directly relevant to the question ‘Which hypothesis better explains the patterns of well-being and ill-being that we find in the world, the indifference-naturalism hypothesis or the theism hypothesis?’. If (as we should) we simply restrict ourselves to this question and refrain from delving into disputes about theories of well-being and ill-being and ethical naturalism and ethical non-naturalism, then we will see that Draper-style arguments are sound.”

I grant that, if we leave “well-being” and “ill-being” unspecified (i.e., leave them to be used in a way that is not made more specific by a theory of the nature of well-being and ill-being) and refrain from delving into debates about ethical naturalism and ethical non-naturalism, then Draper-style arguments may well strike us as sound. But it is *not* a red herring, in this context, to ask (a) what the true natures of well-being and ill-being are and (b) whether well-being and ill-being are best construed in an ethical-naturalist way or in an ethical-non-naturalist way. Draper-style arguments start with an observation of the patterns of well-being and ill-being that the world contains. Given this starting point, it seems appropriate to ask “How, exactly, should we understand the terms ‘well-being’ and ‘ill-being’ here—that is, what is the true nature of well-being and ill-being?” If it is answered (as it should be) that well-being and ill-being are best understood in an at least partly objectivist way, then at that point it seems appropriate to ask, first, whether well-being and ill-being, so understood, fit within the boundaries of the natural order and, second, whether well-being and ill-being, if understood non-naturalistically, fit better with theism or with naturalism. In saying that this last, two-part question seems like an appropriate one to ask, I have in mind the general context (i.e., we are discussing Draper-style arguments, which are arguments for naturalism over theism) and two further points: first, the point that many philosophers seriously doubt that objective values fit within the boundaries of the natural order and, second, the point that many philosophers believe that ethical non-naturalism fits poorly with naturalism. Given this general context and given these two further points, I do not see how it could rightly be considered a distraction to ask this last, two-part question.

Proponents of Draper-style arguments might protest: "You have clearly missed the point of the red-herring objection. To keep things simple, go back to the case of the four-year-old who dies from brain cancer. When we consider this case and the ill-being that it contains, we are apt to see the world as being fundamentally indifferent. This fundamental indifference fits well with naturalism and poorly with theism. And that is all that needs to be said here."

But that is *not* all that needs to be said here. For we should provide as full a characterization of the ill-being contained in this case as we can; and, once we do that, we will find ourselves construing the ill-being contained in this case non-naturalistically, at which point it will no longer be clear that this case fits well with naturalism and, in turn, at which point it will no longer be clear that naturalism has an explanatory edge over theism with respect to this case.

To be clear, I am well aware that theism has a serious explanatory problem when it comes to cases of terrible evil and suffering such as the one from just above. My main point in this paper has been that naturalism *also* has a serious explanatory problem when it comes to cases of this sort. This main point is important, for it allows for an effective neutralization of Draper-style arguments.³⁹

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³⁹Thanks to Paul Draper, Tom Flint, two anonymous referees from *Faith and Philosophy*, and two readers from another journal for very helpful comments.