

A REPLY TO JAMES A. COOK'S RESPONSE
TO MY MORAL ARGUMENT PAPER

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I am grateful to James A. Cook for his courteous and thoughtful response to my paper published in this forum.¹ However, I regret to say that I believe that Cook has misconstrued my paper in several important respects. Therefore, I ask the reader to consult my paper to judge for himself as to whether this is indeed the case. In any event, Cook's response provides me with an opportunity to better explain my views to him, someone whom I greatly respect as a friend, gentleman, and scholar, as well as to the reader. I shall first address myself to issues pertaining to the merits of the moral argument for God's existence as expounded in my paper, and then turn the side-issues relating to conflation, taking polemical advantage, and the practical consequences of that argument.

My ambition with respect to my paper was quite modest. I sought to isolate, as it were, and then criticize the gist of a version of what is called the moral argument for God's existence insofar as it is presented as (what Cook usefully calls) a stand-alone argument. That is the stand-alone moral argument prescind from all other arguments or grounds for God's existence, including what I call the moral-plus argument (i.e., one which globally argues for God's existence based upon many grounds, but including the moral). Of course, to discuss the stand-alone argument does not preclude evaluation of the other arguments and grounds in other settings. But the stand-alone argument can be profitably discussed both by Theists and Nontheists, including metaphysical naturalists. In order to engage in this dialogue, it must be procedurally assumed for the sake of argument that metaphysical naturalists have found the nonmoral and the moral-plus arguments to be unpersuasive—whether or not this finding is wise. The Theist, confident that a persuasive, if not compelling case, can be made for God's existence based upon some nonmoral and moral-plus arguments, can nevertheless safely explore the stand-alone moral argument. If a version of that argument is sound, then he has one more arrow he can store in his quiver. But if he ultimately decides that the argument is unsound, then he can rest satisfied that he is immune from any possible reproach from unbelievers—provided he abstains from using it. To facilitate the process, I "willingly concede[d] that the God of maximal theism or basic theism is logically possible," and in effect expressly assumed *arguendo* that such beings are metaphysically possible.² I thus focused on the stand-alone argument not to save space but to consider the merits of an argument which has been strongly advocated by some writers, such as William Lane Craig, Paul Copan,

¹ Arnold T. Guminski, "The Moral Argument for God's Existence, the Natural Moral Law, and Conservative Metaphysical Naturalism," directly online at www.colorado.edu/philosophy/TheoForum/gum.pdf. This paper is an expanded version, with notes, of a lecture given on 6 April 2004, sponsored by the University of Colorado Theology Forum. What is now available on the website is the paper re-edited in September and October 2004 to purge it of remaining errata and to make a few other slight changes. The paper "James A Cook's Response to Guminski" and mine are both available online at www.theologyforum.net (click on *media* and then *papers*).

² Guminski, p. 17 n. 9. Participating in the dialogue estops me from raising these points since to do so would have aborted evaluation *per se* of the stand-alone moral argument.

and P. J. Moreland. So I thought: no foul, no harm. Accordingly, the dialogue requires that the inquirer, to use the expression of law students puzzling over an assigned case involving a hypothetical situation, not to fight the problem.

Unfortunately, Cook does fight the problem. Thus he expresses dissatisfaction with my exposition of what constitutes Conservative Metaphysical Naturalism because I failed to show that the same is coherent and plausible.³ Given the nature of the stand-alone argument, it was unnecessary for my purposes to burden my paper with a defense of what I defined as among the principal tenets of CMN. The most puzzling complaint is that I have failed to show that CMN is more plausible than physicalism.⁴ This appears very strange to me—coming from a theologically conservative Christian Theist—because the adherent of CMN is doctrinally much closer to Cook than to physicalist naturalism on several important matters pertaining to the stand-alone moral argument. So also it seems to me to be especially strange for him to complain of my failure to show the plausibility of propositions with which he agrees.

Cook addresses what he "take[s] to be [my] three basic arguments for the sufficiency of human nature to ground the natural moral law."⁵ He first discusses what he calls Argument A. According to him, this argument concludes that "it is not necessary that God exist for there to be a natural moral law" because "if it is possible for [] a world [as to which the human race appears and with it the proximate ontological foundation for the natural moral law] to have been created [by God] and exist, then it follows that one **could have** actually obtained in the ordinary course of nature without God."⁶

I am afraid to say, but this is not one of my arguments. Rather, my first argument can be structured as follows: (1) "For the theologically sophisticated theist, the proximate ontological foundation for the natural law lies in that man is in the natural image of God: namely, that he is a person: a living being endowed with the radical (that is basic) potentiality to become rational and to govern oneself, and to become a person of good will."⁷ (2) Accordingly to CMN, "the universe is such that humans have appeared on the

³ Cook, at p. 5: "Wondering whether CMN is coherent and plausible is a prior question to the question of whether it avoids the conclusions of Moreland and Craig's moral argument. The reason for that is fairly obvious: what good would it be to avoid the conclusion of the specific moral argument if one's construal of CMN was incoherent or implausible? So before addressing whether CMN avoids the moral argument, let me say some things about Guminski's thoughts on CMN's coherency and plausibility." He proceeds to complain that my "direct defense of CMN's coherency and plausibility...seems quite thin to me." (Ibid.) His bill of particulars includes my failure to spell out in detail and defend how it is possible for an adherent of CMN to accept mind-body interactionism, intentionality, libertarian free will, or non-epiphenomenalist property dualism, and so so (ibid., p. 3, n. 6); my failure explain why humans are aware of the natural law given CMN (ibid., p. 8, n. 19); that I need to provide "a full accounting for the reliability ones [sic!] cognitive and sensory faculties" (ibid., p. 10). Cook signally complains that I failed to show how it is possible for God to have created a world in which the human race appears with the natural law and its proximate ontological foundation in the ordinary course of nature—albeit he states "*I do think it is possible for God to create such a world*" w2e (Ibid., p. 7, n. 18; emphasis in original).

⁴ Ibid., p. 6

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cook, p. 7.

⁷ Guminski, p. 9, par. 19.

earth in the ordinary course of nature complete with all those characteristics which, according to the standard opinion among theologically conservative Christians, constitute the natural image of God."⁸ (3) "[T]hese characteristics constitute the proximate ontological foundation for the natural moral law for both the conservative metaphysical naturalist and the theologically conservative Christian."⁹ (4) "[S]ince [the power to create a universe essentially similar to ours but in which, in the ordinary course of nature, the human race appears and with it the proximate ontological foundation for the natural moral law] is within the scope of the Maximal God's omnipotence, it could be very well be the case [prescinding from special creation] that this universe is actually one in which the requisite foundation of the natural moral law has actually obtained in the ordinary course of nature."¹⁰ Therefore, (5) the moral argument fails for both the conservative metaphysical naturalist and the traditional monotheist who agree with respect to the foregoing premises.¹¹ Since Cook agrees that it is possible for God to create a world in which the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation obtains in the ordinary course of nature, it seems to me that Cook should conclude the stand-alone argument fails (prescinding, of course, from all nonmoral arguments and the deliverances of special revelation).

One additional point: Cook contends that I was trying to show that the stand-alone argument "fails if it is intended that the force of it be a **logical demonstration**.... I do not think that Moreland and Craig were trying for is a logical demonstration in their argumentation."¹² Cook also says that I do not consider the stand-alone argument as an inference to best explanation." I agree with Cook that the stand-alone argument is not to be considered as either a purported logical demonstration or an inference to best explanation. However, it is what Craig and Moreland call a **sound deductive argument**. What these writers say is most useful.¹³ Besides noting that any argument must be both formally and informally valid (in that it neither breaks any rules of logic nor is otherwise defective, such as arguing in a circle), it must also be sound in that it has also true premises. They elaborate as follows:

[A] sound argument has premises that are more plausible than their contradictories or denials. For an argument to be a good one, it is not required that we have 100% certainty of the truth of the premises. Some of the premises in a good argument may strike us as only slightly more plausible than their denials; other premises may seem to us highly plausible in contrast to their denials. But as long as a statement is more plausible than its **contradictory** (that is, its negation),

⁸ Ibid., p. 11, par. 27.

⁹ Ibid..

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12, par. 29.

¹¹ Ibid. Moreover, if the intrinsic dignity of humans (if held to be an ontologically objective moral property) belongs to humans by virtue of their personhood (which obtains due to those characteristics constituting the natural image of God), then such the intrinsic dignity obtains in the ordinary course of nature.

¹² Cook, p. 7 (emphasis in original; note omitted).

¹³ *Philosophical Foundations of a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press), at pp. 29-30. The explanation of what a sound deductive argument is based upon the discussion of the same in Stephen T. Davis' excellent *God, Reason, and Theistic Proof* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. R. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), at 1-14.

then one should believe it rather than its negation, and so it may serve as a premise in a good argument. Thus a good argument for God's existence need not make it *certain* that God exists. Certainty is what most people are thinking of when they say, "You can't prove that God exists!" If we equate "proof" with 100% certainty, then we may agree with them and yet insist that there are still good arguments to think that God exists. For example, one version of the axiological argument may be formulated:

1. If God did not exist, objective moral values would not exist.
2. Objective moral values do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

I submit that my paper shows that this argument fails as a sound deductive argument insofar as it is presented as a stand-alone argument.

Cook then turns to what he calls Argument B—referring to my argument set forth in paragraph 32 of my paper and rightly characterizing it as an inference to best explanation. Cook is also rightly notes that the antecedent improbability of God's existence is to be understood as relative to the adherent of CMN. After all, doing so follows from the procedural presuppositions of assessing the stand-alone moral argument. But I regret to say that I believe that Cook grossly and inexplicably misunderstands my argument. He describes my Argument B as follows:¹⁴

He seems to reason that since God could have created a world where the moral law obtained in the natural course of nature that it is metaphysically possible that such a world *could exist*. That being the case the key thing to decide between the metaphysical options is the application of Ockham's razor (entities are not to be unnecessarily multiplied) and, apparently, the antecedent improbability of God's existence of the one committed to CMN (and likely any form of metaphysical naturalism). These considerations apparently tip the scale in favor of the CMN hypothesis.

Cook's purported summary of my argument in paragraph 32 rightly assumes that Ockham's razor operates to tip the scales in favor of the CMN hypothesis with respect to the scenario described in the quoted paragraph from Cook. But I did not choose to mention this point because such is clearly the case if the stand-alone moral argument fails because of Argument A *as I have expounded it in my paper*. But my argument in my paragraph 32 actually addresses the following scenario:¹⁵

We know by hypothesis that this universe, complete with humans with their special characteristics, exists and that the natural moral law with whatever is its foundation obtain. If we assume conservative metaphysical naturalism, then in order to "explain" that the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation obtain all we must do is to postulate that the same obtains in the ordinary course of nature—and

¹⁴ Cook, p. 8.

¹⁵ Guminski, p. 13.

hence is metaphysically possible. Our advocate of the [stand-alone] moral argument, I must remind you, cannot rely upon any of the nonmoral arguments. He must therefore postulate that the God of basic theism, or perhaps that of maximal theism, as not only having created this universe such that the human race appeared in the ordinary course of nature but that God also had to supernaturally, specially intervene in the course of nature for the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation to obtain.

Let me better explain myself. The Basic or Maximalist Theist, because of his participation in the evaluation of the stand-alone argument is procedurally foreclosed from denying that the human race appeared in the ordinary course of nature. Ockham's Razor operates in favor of CMN if he acknowledges that the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation obtains in the ordinary course of nature. The only way which is plausibly open to him is to assert either that it is metaphysically impossible for the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation to completely obtain in the ordinary course of nature or that the same did not, as a matter of fact, completely obtain in the ordinary course of nature of *this* universe. Accordingly, he must postulate the existence of God and his supernatural intervention in the course of nature to cause the obtaining of the natural moral law and its proximate ontological foundation. But here Ockham's Razor operates so as to favor CMN.

Cook, in quiet desperation, essayed to escape any claim by me of successful deployment of Ockham's Razor by: (1) fighting the problem by raising questions that implicitly bring in nonmoral grounds or arguments for God's existence;¹⁶ (2) by demanding *mirabla dictu* that I "would also need to show that Ockham's razor applies in metaphysical theories as well as scientific ones."¹⁷ I do not here propose to unduly burden this paper with an effort to satisfy that demand to justify a common sense principle. But instead I shall ask Cook: Do you also equally question the use by Craig and Moreland of Ockham's Razor with respect to metaphysical theories?¹⁸

Along the way Cook declares that he has "little doubt that ... [Guminski] takes metaphysical naturalism as a properly basic belief." He then asks: "but why cannot

¹⁶ Cook, at p. 8: "Guminski has not shown in his paper that Ockham's razor really applies until he has shown that his CMN is coherent and plausible itself."

¹⁷ Ibid. Cook, at p. 8 n. 20 observes: "There is a little irony here because I think that physicalists would claim a superior position to CMN based on Ockham's razor." To be sure, that's what they would claim. But their claim would be unwarranted because it would be an abuse of the Razor to cut away entities known to exist. For example, such fundamental background beliefs as humans having the radical potentiality at birth to eventually acquire (nature and nurture permitting) the actual power to reason and that intentional states of mind are causally efficacious are not only basic but are intrinsic defeater-defeaters.

¹⁸ See, e.g., *Philosophical Foundations*, at p. 479 ([discussing the Kalam Cosmological Argument] "This transcendent cause...must be beginningless and uncaused, at least in the sense of lacking an antecedent causal conditions. Ockam's razor will shave away further causes, since we should not multiply causes beyond necessity") and at p. 487 ([discussing the teleological argument] "But as a metaphysical hypothesis, the many worlds hypothesis [to explain the fine-tuning of the universe] is arguably inferior to the design hypothesis because the design hypothesis is simpler. According to **Ockham's razor**, we should not multiply causes beyond what is necessary to explain the effect")

metaphysical theism be taken as one, too. And he has not shown that theism cannot be taken as such."¹⁹ No, I do not take metaphysical naturalism to be a properly basic belief—and certainly not a belief that is not open to defeaters. Neither do I take theism to be a properly basic belief; but even if it were, it would be one open to defeaters. In any event, Cook's bringing up this matter is yet another instance of fighting the problem.

Next, Cook discusses what he represents as Argument C.²⁰ Here, sad to say, Cook gets my argument somewhat but significantly wrong. My argument drew upon that we *know* that there are properly basic beliefs deeply embedded in our belief-structure—for example, that the external world and other minds exist, or that my cognitive faculties are reliable, and so forth. In short, I *know* that (say) the external world exists without having to first know that God exists, that he created the external world, and that in such a way that I have generally reliable cognitive faculties. I peremptorily dismiss any argument to the effect that I must know that God exists in order to know that the external world exists as that is precluded by a properly basic belief which is an intrinsic defeater-defeater.²¹ So too, I *know* that the natural moral law obtains, together with its requisite proximate ontological foundation, without having to know that God exists and somehow has also fashioned the world (including me) in an appropriate way. But the advocates of the stand-alone moral argument ultimately contend that, in the last analysis, I do not really know that the natural moral law obtains together with its proximate ontological foundation because any plausible version of metaphysical naturalism is false. Craig and Moreland declare:

If God does not exist, then what is the foundation for moral values? More particularly, what is the basis for the value of human beings? If God does not exist, then it is difficult to see any reason to think that human beings are special or that their morality is objectively valid. Moreover, why think that we have any moral obligations to do anything?²²

If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by *Homo sapiens* as objectively true seems to have been removed. ...Crudely put, on the atheistic view human beings are just animals, and animals are not moral agents.²³

[I]f God does not exist, then it is plausible to think that there are no objective moral values, that we have no moral duties and that there is no moral accountability for how we live and act.²⁴

¹⁹ Cook, p. 8.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ An intrinsic defeater-defeater is a belief which per se has so much warrant that it completely overrides any putative defeater.

²² *Philosophical Foundations*, at 491.

²³ Ibid., at p. 492.

²⁴ Ibid., at p. 495. It would be easy enough to cull similar kinds of statements from Paul Copan's writings. See example his "The Moral Argument," in *The Rationality of Theism* (ed. Paul Copan and Paul K. Moser) (New York: Routledge, 2003), at p. 161: "Naturalistic moral realism suffers from the same defects found within the naturalistic philosophy of mind: although naturalism may offer some basis for *holding moral*

Interestingly enough, Cook himself observes that "if [Craig and Moreland's] argument goes through then would it not follow that without the metaphysical resources for the natural moral law, what we can the natural moral law is an illusion?"²⁵ But if the answer is yes, then it does follow that the adherent of CMN can not possible *know* that the natural moral law, with its proximate ontological foundation, obtains.

In his analysis of what he represents as my argument, Cook makes some points but none that I think are good. They all reduce to some more efforts to fight the problem—this time by my failure to give an account of the metaphysical resources of CMN to adequately explain the reliability of our cognitive faculties. "This," he declares, "seems to me a most challenging task that should be taken up by Guminiski and others before we are to take his CMN as plausible."²⁶ Strangely, he complains that "Argument C does not provide any evidence that theism does not have the resources or that CNN does."²⁷ But why should I do this in the course of considering the stand-alone argument? Moreover, I freely acknowledge that CMN and theologically conservative Christianity both have the same proximate ontological foundation for the natural moral law.

We now pass on to other matters. Cook devotes considerable energy and space, relatively speaking, to my contention (in his words) "that certain Christian philosophers have, in constructing their moral argument ... conflated all forms of metaphysical naturalism into a physicalist version which allows them to gain an apologetic advantage" Moreover, Cook asserts that I "also seem[] to imply that they conflate *in order to* gain an apologetic advantage."²⁸ Well, I do not think that these writers *consciously* intended to gain a polemical advantage by their conflation of the various forms of metaphysical naturalism such that their ostensible targets are unjustly assumed to be nonconservative metaphysical naturalists (chiefly but not exclusively adherents of some version of physicalism or epiphenomenalistic property-dualism), or perhaps naturalists who *should* (in the interest of consistency) be nonconservative. Although, for example, Craig and Moreland initially argued that "that if a physicalist version of philosophical naturalism is true, then objective moral values do not exist."²⁹ Their moral argument for God's existence depends upon the more general premise that if God did not exist, objective moral values and duties would not exist.³⁰ Their discussion discloses that they are well

beliefs, it furnishes no basis for claiming they are *true*. ...Naturalistic morality may still be true, but hthere seems to be no way that we can confidently know it."

²⁵ Cook, p. 10.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 1. Paragraph 10 of my paper reads: "Enough has been said of conservative metaphysical naturalism for me to report that the presentation by Craig, Moreland, and Copan of the moral argument conflate the various forms of naturalism. [n. 24] The metaphysical naturalist, as targeted by these advocates of the moral argument, is taken to be a nonconservative naturalist. Either that or it is earnestly contended that every naturalist should adhere (allegedly in the interest of consistency) to one version or another of conservative naturalism. Gentlemen, thanks a lot for lumping us naturalists all together—all the etter to make us grist for your dialectical mills." Guminiski, p. 6.

²⁹ *Philosophical Foundations*, at 402.

³⁰ Ibid., at 490-496.

aware that there are naturalists who believe that objective moral values exist. Their basic argument is not, let me emphasize, that if physicalism or epiphenomenalist property dualism is true, then objective moral values do not exist. Rather, it is that if atheism is true, then objective moral values do not exist. Therefore (since metaphysical naturalism is atheism plus a denial of the existence of any supernatural being), if metaphysical naturalism is true, then objective moral values do not exist. Notwithstanding Cook's objections, I persist in believing that the stand-alone moral argument by Copan, Craig, and Moreland presentation had in fact conflated the various forms of metaphysical naturalism such that the target of the stand-alone moral argument is taken to be a nonconservative naturalist or a naturalist, who in the interest of consistency, *should* adhere to one version or another of nonconservative naturalism.³¹ Please note, however, that I do not contend in my paper that these writers have conflated all forms of metaphysical naturalism into physicalism—but rather that metaphysical naturalism described (rather figuratively) as having a physicalist flavor.

My critic starts off on the wrong foot by claiming that my "case for showing that is a bit hard to follow" because I had noted in the second paragraph of my paper "that there are some Christian philosophers 'who do not accept any specifically moral arguments for God's existence.'"³² He then proceeds to extensively criticize my reference to Richard Swinburne in note 4 of my paper. This is indeed strange because my conflation assertion was made in paragraph 10 of my paper, following my account of what constitutes CMN. He then quotes from my paragraph 10 and proceeds to re-quote (with his added emphasis) statements by Moreland and Craig quoted in my note 24 in justification of my conflation charge. The quotation from Moreland and Craig (with the added emphasis by Cook) reads:³³

The term **Naturalism** [emphasis in original] has many different meanings, but a **standard use of the term** defines it as the view that the universe alone exists. Since **most current forms** of naturalism are physicalist in flavor, naturalism has come to mean that reality is exhausted by the spatiotemporal world of physical objects accessible in some ways to the senses and embraced by our best scientific theories.

Protesting against the sufficiency of this to support my conflation charge, Cook asks the reader to "[n]ote that Craig and Moreland acknowledge that Naturalism '**has many different meanings**,' but also claim they are 'using a **standard use of the term**' [i.e., "that the universe alone exists"] since 'most' of the current forms of naturalism are physicalist in flavor" [emphasis by Cook].³⁴ Alas! Cook has patently failed to correctly understand Craig and Moreland's statement. What these writers have done (after acknowledging that "the term Naturalism has many different meanings" but that its standard use "defines it as the view that the universe alone exists") is to announce to the reader **that** naturalism has come to mean that reality is exhausted by the spatiotemporal

³¹ Guminski, p. 6, par. 10.

³² Cook, p. 2.

³³ *Philosophical Foundations*, at 184 .

³⁴ Cook, p. 3.

world of physical objects accessible in some ways to the senses and embraced by our best scientific theories" **since** most current forms of naturalism are physicalist in flavor."³⁵ Interestingly enough, Cook candidly states that Craig and Moreland have addressed "metaphysical naturalism in the way they do—in the physicalist form."³⁶ And, indeed, the stand-alone moral argument by Craig and Moreland can not possibly succeed unless it is first assumed that the only some form of nonconservative naturalism is the most plausible form of metaphysical naturalism.

That Craig and Moreland that the term naturalism had come to mean in some what or another some versions of nonconservative naturalism is confirmed by their statement that "[t]he naturalist has three tasks efore he or she can defend naturalism as a broad metaphysical view: 1. *The naturalist must show that mental entities are not real....* 2. *The naturalist must deny that properties and relations are abstract entities....* 3. *The naturalist must show that abstact entities are not real....*"³⁷ That the preferred use of the term naturalism is to restrict to such forms as are physicalist in flavor, Craig and Copeland declare: (1) "if naturalism is correct, then the chemical and physical properties that describe matter should be all there is because such properties are all that was there [to] begin with;" and (2) the emergence of mental properties from latent mental

³⁵ The reader was is interested in pursuing further the meaning of this declaration may profitably consider Craig and Moreland's description of what the naturalist must do immediately following the above quoted passage from *Philosophical Foundations*, at p. 184, and they explanation of their use of *physicalism* on p. 230. They acknowledge that "[s]ome physicalists hold that while they are only physical substances, they are genuinely mental properties that emerge from and are dependent on their physical bases. This view seems to be a version of property dualism, and we will treat it as such." (Ibid.) It is clear, given their use of the term *physicalism*, that these writers consider any such version of property dualism to be epiphenomenalist. (Ibid., p. 240.)

³⁶ Cook, p. 4. See also *ibid.*: "it does seem fair to say that Moreland and Craig's presentation of the moral argument **does not** specifically discuss non-physicalist forms of naturalism." The reader should bear in mind that my conflation charge must be understood in the light of paragraph 10 of my paper since I explain: "The metaphysical naturalist, as targeted by those admovates of the moral argument, is taken to be a nonconservative naturalist. Either that or it is earnestly contended that every naturalist should adhere (allegedly in the interest of consistency) to one version or another of nonconservative naturalism." Guminski, p. 6, par. 10. Craig and Moreland, in presenting their moral argument, refer to atheistic moral realism as affirming that objective moral values and duties do exist but is dismissed as "serv[ing] as a convenient halfway house for philosophers who do not have the stomach for the **moral nihilism** that atheism seems to apply." *Philosophical Foundations*, at p. 493 (emphasis in original). Similarly dismissed in a peremptory fashion are "[s]ome philospphers, equally averse to abstractly existing moral values as to theism, [who] try to salvage the existence of objective moral principles or properties in the context of a naturalistic worldview." (Ibid.) But such philosophers "are typically at a loss to justify their starting point." (Ibid.)

³⁷ *Philosophical Foundations*, at 184-185 (emphasis in original). Interestingly, our writers acknowledge: "[H]istorically speaking, **materialism** was the view that the only substances that exist are material substances, but (1) some of these substances (living organisms) may possess a duality of material and immaterial properties and (2) immaterial abstract objects (e.g., sets, universals) may also exist (see chap. 10 for discussion of substance, i.e., a whole that is a deep unity of properties, parts, and capacities." *Ibid.*, at 229-230. Craig and Moreland acknowledge that property dualism is not necessarily epiphenomenalist but can involve event-event causation. *Ibid.*, at 240. Interestingly, our authors take into account the views of such otherwise theologically conservative Christians who adhere to the material-constitution view by which its proponents believe that it has "the resources to allow for an absolute view of personal identity without having to embrace substance dualism." *Ibid.*, at 301. The material-constitution view is clearly compatible with CMN.

potentialities in matter "violates the nature of naturalism since it implies that mental properties are ultimate in the universe as potential properties of matter that emerge when matter is organized in certain ways."³⁸ It is no wonder that Craig and Moreland's exposition of the moral argument affirms that if God does not exist human beings are just animals since there is nothing special about them, and animals are not moral agents.³⁹

Finally, Cook addresses my contention that that the stand-alone moral argument, as presented by Copan, Craig, and Moreland, "constitute an implicit suggestion [albeit unintended] that it is practically reasonable for naturalists to conform to that law whenever it would be to one's self-interest not to do so."⁴⁰ I also claimed that stand-alone moral argument, and the moral-plus argument, as presented by these writers "operates as an unintended to be sure but nevertheless pernicious-in-effect subverter of natural morality," and also that it "moreover tends to unnecessarily generate feelings of ill-will between theists and naturalists (and atheists)." My paper also "suggest[s] that there is a prima facie basis to question at the outset the soundness of the moral argument (even if temperately presented) based upon the very fact that it is so structured that its rejection by *any* metaphysical naturalist entails that he is practically unreasonable in holding that he should conform to the natural moral law as a matter of *moral* principle."⁴¹ In the course of writing this reply to Cook's response, I do not see any reason to retract these contentions. I invite the reader to judge whether these contentions have merit. Since I am not an authorized searcher of hearts, I decline to rule upon the subjective culpability of these writers for their participation in this specific apologetical exercise. But I do think that perhaps there is sufficient probable cause to justify a celestial grand jury inquisition—although I earnestly hope that no indictment will issue.⁴²

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³⁸ Ibid., at p. 264.

³⁹ The moral argument by these writers is expounded in *Philosophical Foundations*, at 490-496.

⁴⁰ Guminski, p. 15, par. 35.

⁴¹ Ibid., par. 36. I think that Cook has carelessly read paragraphs 35 and 36 if he takes them as meaning that Copan, Craig, and Moreland had any ultimate intention of doing anything other than to convert naturalists into theists. They surely did not actually intend that their moral arguments should turn metaphysical naturalists into nihilists and to disregard natural morality as providing principles of conduct, or to promote ill-will between theists and naturalists and other atheists. However, I do think that their paramount purpose appears to me to have adversely clouded their judgment in the course of presenting the moral-plus and stand-alone moral arguments for God's existence.

⁴² By common consent, Cook and I agree that his response (if any) to this reply will end our exchange.