

DISCUSSIONS & REPLIES

CRITICAL NOTICE OF J. P. MORELAND'S *CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD*

GRAHAM OPPY

Monash University

J. P. Moreland. *Consciousness and the Existence of God: A Theistic Argument*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

This book divides naturally into three parts. The first part consists of two chapters, the first of which sets out what Moreland takes to be ‘the epistemic backdrop’ against which ‘the argument from consciousness’ is properly assessed, and the second of which presents several ‘versions’ of ‘the argument from consciousness.’ The second part consists of five chapters, each of which is devoted to a close analysis of the work of a particular theorist: John Searle, Tim O’Connor, Colin McGinn, David Skrbina, and Philip Clayton. The third part consists of two chapters, the first of which develops and defends ‘the Autonomy thesis’—roughly, the claim that, where central questions of philosophy have answers, those answers do not substantively depend on science—and the second of which argues that it is fear of God that drives ‘current and confident acceptance of strong physicalism and naturalism and rejection of dualism’ (176).

I have discussed much of the material in the first two chapters of this book elsewhere—see my chapter on arguments from consciousness in C. Meister, J. P. Moreland, and K. Sweis (eds.) (forthcoming). In this review, I propose to focus more attention on the final two chapters. However, I shall begin with a discussion of the presentation of ‘the argument from consciousness’ in Chapter Two.

I. 'THE ARGUMENT FROM CONSCIOUSNESS'

Moreland begins with a 'form' of 'the argument' that works by inference to the best explanation:

According to AC, on a theistic metaphysic, one already has an instance of consciousness and other mental entities, e.g. an unembodied mind, in God. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that finite consciousness or other mental entities should exist in the world. However, on a naturalist view, mental entities are so strange and out of place that their existence (or regular correlation with physical entities) defies adequate explanation. There appear to be two realms operating in causal harmony, and theism provides the best explanation of this fact. (32)

It is clear that Moreland gives little weight to this argument, since this is the sum total of his presentation and defence of it; and perhaps that is just as well. Suppose—to take the case most favourable to Moreland—the naturalist agrees that there are brute regular correlations between mental and physical entities. Does that establish—as Moreland seems to suppose—that there is an inference to theism as the best explanation? Hardly! For, in order to determine which is the better explanation here, we have to make an accounting of other theoretical virtues: what is the price of the theistic explanation—what ontological, ideological and other additional theoretical commitments does it involve; how well does the theistic explanation comport with other well-established theories; and—at least given the presentation offered by Moreland—how, exactly, does theism *explain* those regular correlations between mental and physical entities? (Suppose, for example, that the early European explorers who came to Australia had found that the local inhabitants possessed mathematical knowledge far in advance of the then current European state of the art. Suppose, in particular, that those local inhabitants could perform immensely long and complicated calculations in the blink of an eye. Should the early European explorers have said: it is hardly surprising that these abilities should exist in finite consciousnesses, since they already exist in an unembodied mind, viz. God? That seems to me to set an extraordinarily low standard for good enough explanation—and not one that should cause naturalists to lose any sleep.)

The next 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness' that Moreland considers is 'a correct C-inductive argument [which] as a part of a cumulative case . . . contributes to a P-inductive theistic argument' (32). According to Moreland, 'assuming the presence of background knowledge' (32), taking 'T' for 'Theism is true,' 'C' for 'conscious properties are regularly correlated with physical features,' and 'N' for 'Naturalism is true,' $\text{Pr}(T/C)$ is very nearly 1. On Moreland's account, (i) $\text{Pr}(T)$ is 'much higher than many naturalists concede'; (ii) $\text{Pr}(C/T)$ is 'highly probable ($\gg .5$)'; and (iii) $\text{Pr}(\text{not-}T) \times \text{Pr}(C/\text{not-}T)$ —which is 'equivalent to $\text{Pr}(N) \times \text{Pr}(C/N)$ '—is 'highly improbable ($\ll .5$).'

In defence of (i), Moreland claims that:

[M]any naturalists are either ignorant of or simply disregard the explosion of literature in the last twenty-five years or so providing sophisticated and powerful justification for theism. And the face of Anglo-American philosophy has been transformed as a result. . . . This explosion of Christian philosophy includes fresh, highly sophisticated defences of theism . . . largely ignored by naturalist philosophers. (33)

However, even if it is granted that the literature to which Moreland adverts is sophisticated and fresh, we have been given no reason here to suppose that naturalists should revise up the value that they give to $\text{Pr}(T)$: after all, the history of philosophy is replete with 'sophisticated and fresh' defences of claims to which we all now quite properly give utterly negligible credence. For what it's worth, my own view, borrowing a turn of words from Moreland, is that, even in the light of 'the explosion of Christian philosophy,' $\text{Pr}(T)$ 'is so low that it approximates to zero'; I expect that other naturalists acquainted with the relevant literature of the last twenty-five years will say the same.

In defence of (ii), Moreland makes two claims: (a) that since 'mental properties are basic characteristics of the fundamental being that constitutes a theistic ontology . . . the theist has no pressing issue regarding the existence or exemplification of the mental' (33); and (b) 'a basic datum of persons is that they are communal beings who love to share in meaningful relationships with others and who desire to bring other persons into being' (33). This is not very impressive. On the one hand, there is a large literature on the conceptual problems that confront

the very idea of disembodied exemplification of the mental. (See, for example, Rundle (2004) and Fales (2010).) On the other hand, we all know people who are not interested in meaningful relationships with others and who have no desire at all to bring other people into being. I'm inclined to think that $\Pr(C/T)$ is inscrutable; at any rate, Moreland hasn't here given me any reason to suppose otherwise.

In defence of (iii), Moreland says:

[I]t is almost impossible for advocates of a naturalist worldview to avoid admitting that these phenomena are explanatorily recalcitrant for them, and must be admitted as brute facts. . . . And this is to admit that $\Pr(C/N)$ is very, very low indeed. (34)

I don't understand the move that Moreland makes here. We are supposing that 'N' is the claim that naturalism is true, and 'C' is the claim that 'conscious properties are regularly correlated with physical features.' What is the relationship between C and N? A natural thought, given Moreland's characterisation, is that N entails that it is a brute fact whether C. But if N entails that it is a brute fact whether C, then it is not the case that $\Pr(C/N)$ is very, very low unless it is *also* the case that $\Pr(C)$ is very, very low. After all, N's entailing that it is a brute fact whether C surely ensures that N and C are probabilistically independent—and, in that case $\Pr(C/N)$ just is $\Pr(C)$. (Perhaps an example will help to fix ideas. Suppose that it is a brute fact, relative to all else that you know ('E'), whether Richmond won the AFL Grand Final in 1980 ('R'). Surely it would be a mistake for you to suppose that $\Pr(R/E)$ is very, very low! After all, you can know that two evenly matched teams contested the AFL Grand Final in 1980 and still have no idea which of the two teams that played was the winner.)

Moreland argues at length against the suggestion that $\Pr(C/N)$ is inscrutable. He claims (a) that theism and AC provide intellectual grounds for rejecting this move; (b) that naturalism provides intellectual pressure against brute, non-physical facts; (c) that brute regular correlation of conscious properties with physical properties is 'magic without a Magician'; and (d) that there is a strong defeasible modal intuition that it is impossible for consciousness to be brutally correlated with matter by way of natural physical processes. I think that Moreland's

arguments here are not persuasive. (a) Clearly, since AC is the argument under assessment, it is question-begging to suppose that it provides reasons for supposing that $\Pr(C/N)$ is not inscrutable; and, in any case, in my view that is at least equally good reason to suppose that $\Pr(C/T)$ is inscrutable. (b) I think that Euthyphro considerations establish that theists are committed to many domains of brute facts—modal, moral, mathematical, metaphysical, and so forth; in consequence, in the context of the debate between naturalist and theists, there is no absolute intellectual pressure against brute non-naturalistic facts. (c) Theists who suppose that it is not knowable *a priori* that God exists are committed to the idea that the existence of a God is necessary in a way that is opaque to our cognitive capacities (see, for example, O'Connor (2008)); such theists have no in-principle objection to the suggestion that the correlation of conscious properties to physical properties is necessary in that same kind of way that is opaque to our cognitive capacities. (d) While some theists may have strong defeasible modal intuitions about the impossibility of brute correlations between consciousness and matter by way of natural physical processes, many naturalists have equally strong defeasible moral intuitions about the impossibility of a whole range of theistic assumptions—we don't need to start listing them before we see that there is no dialectical progress to be made on either side by appealing to such intuitions.

While there are more things to say about Moreland's treatment of this 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness,' I shall conclude with the following observation. Moreland's argument assumes that $T \text{ iff } \sim N$ —'naturalism and theism are the only live options under consideration' (32). But, even granted this implausible assumption, Moreland fails to make a strong case for *any* of his key claims, viz: (i) that $\Pr(T)$ is 'much higher than many naturalists concede'; (ii) that $\Pr(C/T)$ is 'highly probable ($>>.5$)'; and (iii) that $\Pr(\text{not-}T) \times \Pr(C/\text{not-}T)$ —which is 'equivalent to $\Pr(N) \times \Pr(C/N)$ '—is 'highly improbable ($<<.5$).' Consequently, Moreland comes nowhere near establishing that $\Pr(T/C)$ is not very low, let alone establishing that $\Pr(T/C)$ is very close to 1.

The final 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness' that Moreland considers is set out as follows (a slightly different version of the argument is given in Moreland (2003: 206) :

1. Mental events are genuine non-physical mental entities that exist.
2. Specific mental event types are regularly correlated with specific physical event types.
3. There is an explanation for these correlations.
4. Personal explanation is different from natural scientific explanation.
5. The explanation for these correlations is either a personal explanation or natural scientific explanation.
6. The explanation is not a natural scientific one.
7. Therefore, the explanation is a personal one.
8. If the explanation is personal, then it is theistic.
9. Therefore, the explanation is theistic.

In Moreland's view, the key premises in the argument are 1, 3, and 6. The middle part of the book—in which he discusses the views of Searle, O'Connor, McGinn, Skrbina and Clayton—is intended to be an 'indirect' defence of the conjunction of 3 and 6 arrived at by the examination of 'naturalistic accounts of the mental that, if successful, would defeat 3 and 6' (51). Clearly, Moreland's case in favour of the significance of 3 and 6 fails if there are plausible naturalist theories that escape the criticisms that Moreland levels against the views of Searle, O'Connor, McGinn, Skrbina and Clayton. I think that there are such theories. In particular, as noted above, I think that there are naturalist theories which claim that the correlation of conscious properties to physical properties is necessary in a way that is (currently) opaque to our cognitive capacities *in just the same way that* many theists suppose that the existence of God is necessary in a way that is (currently) opaque to our cognitive capacities. On such theories, there is an explanation for the correlations—they hold of metaphysical necessity, after all—and yet the explanation is plainly neither a natural scientific explanation nor a personal explanation. (Moreland makes various hyperbolic statements about naturalism that draw heavily on what he takes to be the implications of the claim that 'naturalism is a worldview that claims explanatory epistemic superiority to its rivals' (3). However, if theism and naturalism both have recourse to metaphysical necessities that are opaque to our cognitive capacities, the superiority of naturalism to theism can be maintained *on other grounds*.

For more on this point, see my previously mentioned contribution to Meister, Moreland and Sweis (eds.) (forthcoming).

Moreland makes various different kinds of remarks about 1. At some points, he says that he simply assumes that it is true: the main claim for which he wants to argue is that naturalists should be 'strict physicalists' (and, by implication, the argument against 'strict physicalism' is another project for a different occasion) (38). However, he also says that 'certain issues are conspicuous by their absence in defences of strict physicalism or criticisms of property dualism' and that he 'wants to get these issues before the reader' (38). And sometimes he goes so far as to say, for example, that 'property/event and substance dualism are so obviously true that it is hard to see why there is so much contemporary hostility to dualism in its various incarnations' (175).

Considerations that Moreland takes to establish that mental states are in no sense physical states will be familiar to almost all readers of his book (38-9, italics in the original):

- (a) There is a raw qualitative feel or a 'what it is like' to a mental state such as a pain.
- (b) At least many mental states have intentionality—*ofness* or *aboutness*—directed towards an object.
- (c) Mental states exhibit certain epistemic features—direct access, private access, first-person epistemic authority, expression in intentional contexts, self-reflexivity associated with 'I'—that could not be the case if they were physical.
- (d) They require a subjective ontology—namely, mental states are necessarily owned by the first-person, unified, sentient subjects who have them.
- (e) Mental states fail to have crucial features—e.g. spatial extension, location—that characterise physical states and, in general, cannot be described using physical language.
- (f) Libertarian free acts exemplify active power and not passive liability.

I think that defenders of the claim that mental states are physical states have nothing to fear from (a)-(e). Some of what is claimed therein is true, but consistent with mind/brain identity; and the rest of what is claimed

therein is false. Of course, there has been intensive discussion of (a)-(e) by naturalists in the past few decades; for the purposes of the present review, I'm happy to follow Moreland's oft-repeated rhetorical ploy, and to urge people to look at *all* of the literature relevant to the assessment of these claims. (I can't help observing that it seems utterly obvious to me that mental states have spatial location—*my* mental states are, and have always been, where my body is. How could Moreland deny this?) On the other hand, (f) is just false—there is no such thing as libertarian freedom (though there is such a thing as compatibilist freedom, and, happily, that's freedom enough).

In short: I think that naturalists have a straightforward reply to Moreland's 'deductive form' of 'the argument from consciousness.' Either—as 'strong naturalists' suppose—the first premise of the argument is false; or else—as 'weak naturalists' can suppose—the fifth premise is mistaken. At the very least, it is clear that these premises are so controversial that they can do no useful work in arbitration of disputes between theists and naturalists.

II. SCIENCE AND STRONG PHYSICALISM

Moreland appears to use the terms 'physicalism' and 'naturalism' interchangeably. At p.ix, he characterises 'strong naturalism' as the view that 'all particulars, properties, relations, and laws are physical.' At p.19, he adds that 'strong naturalists' suppose that all particulars, properties, relations and laws are *microphysical*, or else 'constituted by' particulars, properties, relations and laws that are all (ultimately) microphysical. At p.4, he seems to suggest that 'strong naturalists' suppose that 'unqualified cognitive value resides in science and nothing else'—and, indeed, that 'strong naturalists' suppose that unqualified cognitive value resides in microphysics and nothing else. By way of contrast, at p.ix, he characterises 'weak naturalism' as the view that, along with physical particulars, properties, relations and laws, there are 'emergent' particulars, properties, relations and laws (where emergent particulars, properties, relations and laws are '*sui generis*, simple, intrinsically characterisable and new relative to base' (21)). Correspondingly, at p.4, he seems to suggest that 'weak naturalists' suppose that 'non-scientific fields are not worthless and

nor do they offer no intellectual results, but they are notably inferior to science in their epistemic standing and do not merit full credence.'

There is much to contest in this; I shall not canvass all of the relevant considerations here. First, there is an obvious distinction between 'strong naturalism' and 'strong physicalism.' This becomes clear if we think about the relationship that holds between physics and chemistry. Given Moreland's account of emergence—and, in particular, given his apparent assumption that anything beyond 'structural constitution' is emergent—it seems probable that he is committed to the claim that much of the chemical is emergent relative to the physical. But an eliminative materialist who held that the chemical is emergent relative to the physical could surely be a 'strong naturalist' while yet not counting as a 'strong physicalist.' (There is a quantum-mechanical explanation of the structure of the periodic table of elements. However, at least in practice, that explanation is not a 'deduction', and nor is it the case that it appears to 'ordinary structural properties'.) Second, and relatedly, it is clear that Moreland's account of emergence and 'level relationships' is hopelessly impressionistic. The British Emergentists were enormously impressed by the novelty of chemistry relative to physics: they rhapsodised about the astonishing emergence of the properties of water from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen. (For discussion of the history of British Emergentism, see, for example, McLaughlin 1997.) I think that it is very hard to give a precise account on which the 'emergence' of consciousness from matter is more mysterious or surprising than the 'emergence' of the properties of water from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen; at the very least, we are owed some further explanation of why it is that chemistry is not '*sui generis*, simple, intrinsically characterisable and new relative to [physics].' Third, and most importantly, Moreland's account of 'strong naturalism' and 'weak naturalism' runs together considerations that should be kept separate. It is one question whether a view endorses some kind of ontological or metaphysical reductionism; it is quite another question whether a view endorses what I might call 'base chauvinism,' i.e. epistemic privileging of investigations conducted at 'lower levels.' There is nothing in ontological or metaphysical reductionism that mandates contempt for the 'special sciences': on the contrary, ontological or metaphysical reductionists can suppose that the epistemic standing of the 'special sciences' is vastly superior to the epistemic standing of

the base sciences (because, say, the ‘special sciences’ are ‘closer’ to us, or because they matter more to us, or because their results are more certain because better confirmed).

In his Chapter Eight (‘Science and Strong Physicalism’), Moreland argues for

The Autonomy Thesis: Among the central questions of philosophy that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, most can in principle be answered by philosophical investigation and argument without relying substantively on the sciences.

His argument for the Autonomy Thesis has two parts. First, he selects ‘almost at random, two paradigm case debates in philosophy-of-mind literature to serve as illustrations of the Autonomy Thesis’ (162): Paul Churchland on semantic and epistemic issues (162-3), and Jaegwon Kim on type identity physicalism (163-6). Second, he responds to two counterarguments: that science makes dualism implausible (166-8); and that physicalism is the hard core of a scientific research program (169-74).

There are many contestable details in Moreland’s argument for the Autonomy Thesis. I particularly like the following:

Not all neuroscientists adopt physicalism as a research heuristic. For example . . . Jeffrey Schwartz is a leading researcher in obsessive-compulsive disorders. Schwartz explicitly employs a substance dualist view of the person, coupled with a libertarian account of freedom in his research and he claims that this heuristic has generated accurate predictions, provided explanations for various data, and lead to cures that could not have been found on the basis of a physicalist heuristic. Schwartz may be in the minority, but even if this is so, it is just a sociological fact about the community of neuroscientists, not a view about the necessary conditions for a scientifically appropriate heuristic for research programs. (169)

So, on the one hand, the fact that the scientific establishment overwhelmingly favours a ‘physicalist heuristic’ is a merely sociological observation that provides Moreland with no grounds for revising down the credence that he attributes to the claim that physicalism is a hard core scientific research program; but, on the other hand, the fact that there has been a surge in the number of conservative Christians apologists in philosophy departments in the United States producing books and papers in philosophy of religion is a not-merely sociological observation

that provides naturalists with good grounds for revising up their credence that theism is true!

However, the point that I most wish to emphasise is that Moreland's defence of the Autonomy Thesis depends crucially upon his conception of the project of philosophy of mind. On Moreland's account of the first-order and second-order organisation of the project of philosophy of mind, it seems to me that it *is* largely plausible to claim—as Moreland does—that 'philosophical issues are, with rare exceptions, autonomous from (and authoritative with respect to) the so-called deliverances of the hard sciences.' But it also seems to me that Moreland's account of the project of philosophy of mind hardly intersects at all with what I take to be the central features of that project.

Moreland provides the following characterisation of what he takes to be 'the central first-order topics in philosophy of mind' (158-9):

1. Ontological Questions: To what is a mental or physical property identical? To what is a mental or physical event identical? To what is the owner of mental properties/events identical? What is a human person? How are mental properties related to mental events? Are there essences . . . and, if so, what is the essence of a mental event or of a human person?
2. Epistemological Questions: How do we come to have knowledge or justified beliefs about other minds and about our own minds? Is there a proper epistemic order to first-person knowledge of one's own mind and third-person knowledge of other minds? How reliable is first-person introspection and what is its nature? If reliable, should first-person introspection be limited to providing knowledge about mental states or should it be extended to include knowledge about one's own ego?
3. Semantic Questions: What is a meaning? What is a linguistic entity and how it is related to a meaning? Is thought reducible to or a necessary condition for language use? How do the terms in our common-sense psychological vocabulary get their meaning? How are meaning and intentional objects 'in' the mind?

Moreland also provides the following characterisation of what he takes to be 'the central second-order topics in philosophy of mind' (159):

4. Methodological Questions: How should one proceed in analysing and resolving the first-order issues that constitute the philosophy of mind? What is the proper order between philosophy and science? Should we adopt some form of philosophical naturalism, set aside so-called first philosophy, and engage topics in philosophy of mind within a framework of our empirically best-attested theories relevant to those topics? What is the role of thought experiments in philosophy of mind and how does the 'first person point of view' factor into generating the materials for formulating those thought experiments?

These lists prompt me to think how dull and uninteresting philosophy of mind can become when the categories that it employs are not informed by current empirical investigation. Consider, for example, Moreland's 'epistemological questions.' There is a wealth of recent research on how we actually do form beliefs about the minds of other people—but it is research that is inaccessible to anyone who supposes that theory construction in this realm begins with introspection. (For a very early example of the kind of research that I have in mind here, see Meltzoff and Gopnik (1993).) Moreover, questions about how we form beliefs about the minds of other people are only one small part of a much wider set of questions, concerning perception, cognition, emotion, behaviour, mental dysfunction, and relationships between these and other elements, that I take to be the living heart of philosophy of mind.

While I cannot argue the case here, it seems to me that Moreland's Autonomy Thesis gets things almost entirely backwards. The truth is much closer to this: Among the interesting philosophical questions that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, there are very few that can be answered by philosophical investigation and argument that does not rely substantively on the sciences. In particular, almost all of the interesting work that is now being done in philosophy of mind is at least informed by recent experimental work in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, social psychology, and other fields of scientific endeavour.

III. AC, DUALISM AND THE FEAR OF GOD

In the final chapter of the book, Moreland claims to 'identify and clarify a psychological, sociological and spiritual phenomenon, viz. the fear of God, which I believe explains the reactionary attitude towards, loathing of, and widespread rejection of dualism' (176). In particular, Moreland identifies 'three lines of evidence' that he takes to support the claim that 'fear of God sustains strong naturalism': (i) 'the low quality of argumentation when it comes to evaluating substance dualism (or theism) when it is related to philosophy of mind' (179); (ii) the fact that 'physicalists do not interact with leading dualists, particularly substance dualists, in their writing, endnotes, or bibliographies' (186); and (iii) the fact that 'there are various rhetorical devices used to dismiss dualism, AC or theism that are not worthy of those who employ them' (186). I shall focus primarily on what Moreland says on behalf of (i); but I begin with a few comments on (ii) and (iii).

I think that it is simply false that physicalists 'do not interact' with the work of 'leading dualists . . . Robert Adams, George Bealer, Francis Beckwith, Mark Bedau, Roderick Chisholm, John Foster, Stewart Goetz, W. D. Hart, William Hasker, Brian Leftow, Geoffrey Maddell, Paul Moser, Alvin Plantinga, Howard Robinson, Jeffrey Schwartz, Eleonore Stump, Richard Swinburne, Charles Taliaferro, Dallas Willard and Dean Zimmerman' (186). From Churchland (1985) to Jackson (2001), there is actually a strong record of philosophical engagement by physicalists with new and interesting defences of dualism, idealism, and so forth. (Perhaps it is worth noting, in passing, that Moreland would do well to read Churchland (1985): 'Recent psychological and neurological research indicates that what we innocently gloss as "consciousness" actually divides into a considerable variety of types and grades of internal apprehension, which have different targets, employ different media of representation, show different degrees of trustworthiness, and exploit different subsystems of the brain (for a summary of some recent results, see Churchland (1983)).' Nearly thirty years on, the indicative research has grown like Topsy.) If there has been less of this kind of engagement in the past ten years, that would likely be because the production of interesting new defences of dualism has tailed off a bit. (For some evidence that this has been the case, see, for example, the bibliography in

Robinson (2007). Indeed, Moreland's own bibliography mentions only one work by those singled out by name in the above quote that postdates Foster (2000): Schwartz and Begley (2002)!

Moreland's complaint that physicalists 'use various rhetorical devices to dismiss dualism' will, I think, resonate with many physicalists. Consider, for example: 'It is hard to see how one would argue for theism in general, or substance dualism and AC in particular with someone whose views are as indefeasible as Searle's. When statements like these are made, there is usually something more happening than mere intellectual viewpoints, and the cosmic authority problem is a good candidate for that something more' (190). With only a little editing: 'It is hard to see how one would argue for naturalism in general, or micro-physicalism in particular, with someone whose views are as indefeasible as Moreland's (Plantinga's, Craig's, insert-name-of-own-choice). When statements like these are made, there is usually something more happening than mere intellectual viewpoints, and the God delusion (fear of death, inability to tolerate disagreement, insert-psychopathology-of-own-choice) is a good candidate for that something more.' No doubt I will not be the only reader of Moreland's book who is inclined to think that his appeal to 'fear of God' is a merely rhetorical device that is unworthy of its author (or, at least, so one should hope).

Moreland offers five 'major' arguments for substance dualism (including three 'variants' of the first 'major' argument, of which I shall present only the first here):

Argument One

1. I am an unextended centre of consciousness (justified by introspection).
2. No physical object is an unextended centre of consciousness.
3. (Therefore) I am not a physical object.
4. Either I am a physical object or an immaterial substance.
5. (Therefore) I am an immaterial substance.

Argument Two

1. Personal identity at and through time is primitive and absolute. (Talk about persons is not analysable into talk about connected mental lives.)

2. (Therefore) Substance dualism is true. (From 1, by inference to the best explanation.)

Argument Three

1. Statements using the first-person indexical 'I' express facts about persons that cannot be expressed in statements without the first-person indexical.
2. If I am a physical object, then all the facts about me can be expressed in statements without the first-person indexical.
3. (Therefore) I am not a physical object.
4. The facts mentioned in (1) are best explained by substance dualism.

Argument Four

1. If human beings exercise libertarian agency, then (i) they have the power to initiate change as a first mover; (ii) they have the power to refrain from exercising their power to initiate change; and (iii) they act for the sake of reasons as irreducible, teleological ends for the sake of which they act.
2. Human beings exercise libertarian agency.
3. No merely material object can exercise libertarian agency.
4. (Therefore) Human beings are not material objects.
5. Human beings are either material objects or immaterial substances.
6. (Therefore) They are immaterial substances.

Argument Five

1. The law of identity: If x is identical to y, then whatever is true of x is true of y, and vice versa.
2. I can strongly conceive of myself as existing disembodied or, indeed, without any physical particular existing.
3. If I can strongly conceive of some state of affairs S that S possibly obtains, then I have good grounds for believing of S that S is possible.
4. (Therefore) I have good grounds for believing of myself that it is possible for me to exist and be disembodied.

5. If some entity *x* is such that it is possible for *x* to exist without *y*, then (i) *x* is not identical with *y* and (ii) *y* is not essential to *x*.
6. My physical body is not such that it is possible to exist disembodied or without any physical particular existing.
7. (Therefore) I have good grounds for believing of myself that I am not identical to a physical particular, including my physical body and that no physical particular, including my physical body, is essential to me.

There are key premises in each of these arguments that have been much discussed in the recent literature—particularly by physicalists and other naturalists—that I take to be simply false. I deny that I am an *unextended* centre of consciousness; I am certain that this claim is not justified by ‘introspection.’ I deny that personal identity through time is primitive and absolute; I also deny that, if personal identity through time were primitive and absolute, that this fact would lend support to substance dualism. I deny that the phenomenon of the essential indexical is evidence against physicalism. I deny that human beings have libertarian agency, though I insist that they do have compatibilist agency. And I deny that the alleged ‘strong conceivability’ of my disembodied existence is good grounds for supposing that my disembodied existence is possible. (I also deny that the alleged ‘strong conceivability’ of zombies is evidence that zombies are possible.) Of course, *all* of the claims that I have just made have been exhaustively discussed—and defended—by many physicalists and naturalists in the philosophy of mind literature over the past thirty years. I do not mean to add to that discussion and defence; the point upon which I want to insist here is that Moreland’s claims about ‘the low quality of argumentation’ provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with these particular claims is obviously false. Moreover, I note that, if this is right, then it follows immediately that Moreland’s claims about ‘the low quality of argumentation’ provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with the five arguments that he set out is also obviously false. Finally, I note that, if this is also right, then—granting Moreland his own claim that these five are *the* major arguments for substance dualism—it also follows immediately that Moreland’s claims about ‘the low quality of argumentation’ provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with substance dualism are also obviously false.

Moreland further claims to be able to 'turn the fear of God into an argument [for theism]'. Here is what he says:

Atheists fit a tighter control group than theists in that the class of atheists are more homogenous, viz. there is a strong, if not universal trait among atheists according to which they have had their difficulties with their father figure—he was harsh, stern and critical, or he was passive and embarrassing. . . . By contrast, theism is the ordinary response of the human person to creation; it does not need to be taught to people (though culture can influence the direction it takes) but atheism does. Moreover, the class of theists is so diverse that no single factor can be identified that unifies that class. . . . Thus, I can identify . . . the faculty distorter that causes atheists to fail to see the evidence clearly and adequately appreciate its force. . . . The same thing is going on with respect to dualism and AC. (191; with some slight grammatical modifications).

As evidence for his primary claim, Moreland cites only Vitz (1999) (though he does also mention, for comparison, Beit-Hallahmi (2007)). Vitz's book is terrible, in much the same kind of way that Johnson (1988) is terrible, albeit with a more explicit argument. Nietzsche, Hume, Russell, Sartre, Camus and Schopenhauer all had fathers who died when they were very young; Hobbes, Meslier, Voltaire, d'Alambert, d'Holbach, Feuerbach, Butler, Freud and Wells all had fathers who were weak and/or abusive. Pascal, Berkeley, Butler, Reid, Burke, Mendelssohn, Paley, Wilberforce, de Chateaubriand, Schleiermacher, Newman, Tocqueville, Kierkegaard, von Hügel, Chesterton, Schweitzer, Buber, Bonhoeffer and Heschel all had strong fathers. So what? Cherry-picked examples—even if properly described—tell you nothing at all about correlations in populations at large. Here are some more people whose fathers died when they were very young: Moses, Mohammad, Saint Nicholas, Isaac Newton, Gottfried Leibniz, Robert Baden-Powell, and Nelson Mandela. Here are some people who had strong fathers: John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, Ambrose Bierce, Albert Einstein, and David Lewis. Proceeding in this way can teach us nothing. Moreover—and perhaps more importantly—there is a mountain of empirical research that weighs against the hypothesis that Vitz defends. On the one hand, countless studies and meta-studies bear out the claim that, on average, atheists are more intelligent and better educated than theists: atheists are

over-represented in the upper reaches of the American academy, and under-represented in the nation's jails (see, for example, Nyborg (2008)). On the other hand, cross-national census data suggests that there are positive correlations, on a range of measures, between higher levels of religiosity and increased levels of societal dysfunction (see, for example, Paul (2005)). While the correct explanation of the mountain of data is not obvious, this much seems clear: it is not even *prima facie* plausible to suppose that there is a positive correlation between having your father die when you are young—or having a weak and abusive father—and having improved educational and societal outcomes. (Beit-Hallahmi concludes: atheists are 'less authoritarian and suggestible, less dogmatic, *less prejudiced*, more tolerant of others, law-abiding, compassionate, conscientious and well-educated' (my italics)!)

Moreland's claim to 'clarify' the 'phenomenon . . . of fear of God' deserves some further comment. As far as I can see, Moreland says nothing at all about what 'fear of God' might be, or about how it might be psychologically realised. It seems to me to be most plausible to suppose that the reason why so many contemporary physicalists and naturalists pay no attention to contemporary developments in philosophy of religion is because those physicalists and naturalists are neither anxious nor uncomfortable about their own views. Surely it requires a *very* powerful story to make it plausible that those who deny that there are Xs are afraid of Xs, or that those who deny that S exists are afraid of S. Do those who deny that there are vampires—or ghosts, or alien abductors, or leprechauns, or monsters under the bed—evince fear of these things? If not, why are matters any different for those who deny that there are gods (or God)? (Indeed, mightn't one suspect that those who harp on about 'fear of God' protest too much: isn't it at least as plausible to suppose that they are evincing anxiety and insecurity about their own beliefs?)

Pataki (2007) argues that, for the majority of religious people, their religiosity is founded in something like mental illness or infantilism: almost all religion is a disease born of fear and a source of untold misery. I think that Moreland and Vitz would do well to read Pataki's book carefully, attending to the way that they *feel* as they read it. Then they should think again about the implications of their *saying* that it is pretty plausible to suppose that all atheists have fathers who were weak and/or abusive and/or entirely absent. (Moreland: ' . . . there is a strong, *if not*

universal trait among atheists . . .' (191, my italics.) It should go without saying that this is extraordinarily offensive to those atheists—myself included—who have, or had, very strong fathers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beit-Hallahmi, B. (2007) 'Atheism: A Psychological Profile' in M. Martin (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 300-17
- Churchland, P. (1983) 'Consciousness: The Transmutation of a Concept.' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64, 1983.
- Churchland, P. (1985) 'Review of Howard Robinson's *Matter and Sense*.' *Philosophical Review*, 94, 1, 117-20.
- Fales, E. (2010) *Divine Intervention: Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles*. New York: Routledge.
- Foster, J. (2000) *The Nature of Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, F. (2001) 'Review of John Foster's *The Nature of Perception*.' *Journal of Philosophy*, 98, 12, 653-7.
- Johnson, P. (1988) *Intellectuals*. New York: Harper Collins.
- McLaughlin, B. (1997) 'Emergence and Supervenience.' *Intellectica* 25, 2, 25-43.
- Meister, C., Moreland, J., and Sweis, K. (eds.) (forthcoming). *Oxford Contemporary Dialogues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meltzoff, A. and Gopnik, A. (1993) 'The Role of Imitation in Understanding Persons and Developing a Theory of Mind' in S. Baron-Cohen, H. Tager-Flusberg, and D. Cohen *Understanding Other Minds: Perspective from Autism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 335-66.
- Moreland, J. (2003) 'The Argument from Consciousness' in P. Copan and P. Moser (eds.) *The Rationality of Theism*. London: Routledge, 204-20.
- Nyborg, H. (2008) 'The Intelligence-Religiosity Nexus: A Representative Study of White Adolescent Americans.' *Intelligence* 37, 1, 81-93.
- Pataki, T. (2007) *Against Religion*. Carlton North: Scribe.
- O'Connor, T. (2008) *Theism and Ultimate Explanation*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
- Paul, G. (2005) 'Cross-National Correlations of Quantifiable Societal Health with Popular Religiosity and Secularism in Prosperous Democracies.' *Journal of Religion and Society* 7, 1-17.
- Robinson, H. (2007) 'Dualism.' *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/>
- Rundle, B. (2004) *Why There is Something rather than Nothing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Schwartz, J. and Begley, S. (2002) *The Mind and its Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. New York: Regan Books.
- Vitz, P. (1999) *Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism*. Dallas: Spence Publishing.