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Kevin Corcoran

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# MATERIAL PERSONS, IMMATERIAL SOULS AND AN ETHIC OF LIFE

Kevin Corcoran

Among objections to naturalist views of human persons like Animalism and the Constitution View are two that concern alleged ethical implications. One criticism is that such views are defective because they lack the metaphysical resources to generate moral obligations or moral expectations to protect life, in either its early or late stages. Another objection relies on the claim that any metaphysical view of human persons according to which some human organisms lack the property of personhood has horrendous moral implications. With respect to the first objection I argue that resources metaphysically neutral with respect to dualism and naturalism about persons must be added to such views in order to generate moral obligations or moral expectations to protect human life. In other words, dualism about persons, no less than naturalism, fails to provide metaphysical resources necessary or sufficient for generating moral obligations or moral expectations to protect the life of a human fetus or PVS patient. And against the second objection I argue that accounts of human persons entailing that some human organisms are not also persons do not have the horrible ethical implications they are alleged to have. I then consider and respond to several possible objections to my arguments.

According to the Constitution View of human persons, human persons are essentially physical *and* essentially psychological.<sup>1</sup> One implication of the Constitution View (CV) is that no early term fetus constitutes a person. Another implication is that any entity once possessing but having lost *all* capacity for the relevant kinds of psychological states, also fails to constitute a person; and, therefore, some human organisms in so-called "persistent vegetative states" (PVS) no longer constitute persons. According to animalism, on the other hand, human persons are essentially *animals*, and only contingently *persons*. In fact, according to animalism, you and I were once human, *non-persons* as fetuses and, if things should go badly for us, we may one day be human, *non-persons* again, e.g., if we should ever be PVS patients with completely destroyed cerebra.<sup>2</sup>

Among the objections to naturalist views<sup>3</sup> of human persons like animalism and the Constitution View are two that concern alleged ethical implications. The two objections I have in mind, however, are seldom distinguished. One is that such views are defective because they lack the metaphysical resources to generate moral obligations or moral expecta-



tions to protect life, in either its early or late stages. In other words, there is a positive moral implication we want a metaphysical view of persons to have and views like animalism and the CV lack it. Another objection relies on the claim that our metaphysical view of human persons is decisive for "virtually every debated issue in biomedical ethics today"<sup>4</sup> and that any view according to which some human organisms lack the property of personhood has horrendous moral implications. Put another way, the positive moral implications animalism and the CV *do have* are horrible. In this paper I acknowledge that naturalist views of human persons like animalism and CV fail to provide metaphysical resources necessary or sufficient for generating moral obligations or moral expectations to protect the life of a human fetus or PVS patient. I point out, however, that *any* metaphysical view of persons, be that metaphysic dualist or naturalist in nature, is impotent to provide such resources. I argue that other resources, metaphysically neutral with respect to dualism and naturalism, must be added to such views in order to generate moral obligations or moral expectations to protect human life. Moreover, I think it can be shown that accounts of human persons entailing that some human organisms are not also persons do not have the horrible ethical implications they are alleged to have. I will argue then for the following three claims: (i) neither metaphysical dualism nor metaphysical naturalism about persons all by itself entails or precludes an ethic of life; (ii) metaphysical views of human persons entailing that some human organisms are not also persons are perfectly compatible with the belief that abortion, some varieties of euthanasia, etc. are morally wrong; and finally (iii) dualism is compatible with, and on some versions even entails, the claim that abortion never ends the existence of a human person.

### *I. The Charge Against Naturalists*

The most recent and explicit statement of the objection that one's metaphysics of persons is decisive for the ethical issues of, *inter alia*, abortion and euthanasia, appears in J.P. Moreland's and Scott Rae's *Body and Soul*. Moreland and Rae argue not only for "the relevance of our philosophical reflections on human personhood to many of the most intensely debated moral issues of the day,"<sup>5</sup> but they also want to "point out the ethical implications of our philosophical view of a human person."<sup>6</sup> Moreland and Rae hold that "metaphysics and morality are intimately connected."<sup>7</sup> They want to argue that the philosophical naturalist account of persons, and what they call the "Christian Complementarian" account of persons, have "serious, troublesome implications for the ethical issues [of abortion, fetal research, cloning and physician assisted suicide]"<sup>8</sup>. They seem to believe that only a substance dualist view of human persons can deliver the needed resources for a viable ethic of life. Any view of human persons according to which some human organisms are not also persons "opens the door" to the mistreatment of those at the edges of life, both fetuses and patients in persistent vegetative states.<sup>9</sup>

The argument for this claim is supposed to be delivered in chapter 3 of *Body and Soul*. The argument appears to be as follows:

1. According to naturalist conceptions of persons, human personhood is grounded in the possession of certain kinds of psychological properties or the capacity for them.
  2. If human personhood is grounded in possession of psychological properties or capacities for them, then some human organisms fail to instantiate the property of being a person.
  3. If some human organism fails to instantiate the property of being a person, then that organism lacks a moral status sufficient for generating moral obligations or moral expectations to protect its life.
- ∴ 4. On Naturalist conceptions of persons some human organisms (e.g. early term human fetuses) fail to instantiate the property of being a person.
- ∴ 5. On Naturalist conceptions of persons some human organisms lack a moral status sufficient for generating moral obligations or moral expectations to protect their lives.

It is, I believe, on the basis of such a conclusion as (5) that one might be erroneously led to conclude that naturalist conceptions of persons have the following troublesome implication, call it

6. We have no moral obligations or responsibilities with respect to non-person constituting human organisms.

The argument to 5 is obviously valid. Although questions can be raised about other premises, I want to focus in this paper on premise 3. What Moreland and Rae must do is give good reasons for accepting 3. They don't. They fail to establish a connection between a so-called naturalist conception of persons and the morality of abortion, some varieties of euthanasia, fetal research and human cloning. What they do in chapter 3 of *Body and Soul* is first assert that such a connection exists, go on to describe the metaphysics of naturalism as it relates to persons, and then reassert the connection at the end of the chapter. But nowhere in the chapter or elsewhere in the book is the alleged connection established.<sup>10</sup>

For Moreland and Rae it is a commitment to metaphysical dualism that drives the view that a metaphysics of persons is decisive for the ethical issues under discussion. Indeed I think we can capture the intuition at the root of Moreland's and Rae's argument in terms of a necessary condition for grounding our obligations to the unborn and other vulnerable human lives. Call it N.

- N: A necessary condition for grounding our obligations to the unborn and other vulnerable human lives is a commitment to persons as immaterial, substantial souls.<sup>11</sup>

Supplementing N with

- S: Naturalist conceptions of personhood assume the denial of immaterial, substantial souls.

delivers what admittedly would be, if true, a defect in naturalist conceptions of persons, namely,

- O: Naturalist conceptions of personhood are incompatible with our having obligations to the unborn and other vulnerable human lives.

The idea that N attempts to capture is, I think, that there is a very tight connection between personhood and moral status such that anything lacking personhood lacks a moral status sufficient to guarantee a prohibition against its killing. Given that intuition, and accepting N and S, seems to commit naturalists to the view that we have no moral obligations or responsibilities with respect to protecting the life of non-person constituting human organisms.

The problem, however, is that although the move to O from N and S is valid N is neither intuitively known nor self-evidently true. Not only is it not obviously true, it is, I believe, demonstrably false. Indeed I want to show that not only is dualism not necessary for generating obligations and responsibilities to fetuses and PVS patients, it is, in fact, compatible with the belief that no abortion ends the existence of a human person.

## II. *Metaphysical Insufficiency*

If I am correct, then there is at the root of Moreland's and Rae's argument the intuition that a necessary condition for grounding our obligations to the unborn and other vulnerable human lives is the fact that persons are immaterial, substantial souls. If that intuition is true, then the following couplet of claims would be in some important sense incompatible:

- (i) Human persons are necessarily, wholly material things
- (ii) Abortion, some varieties of euthanasia, etc. are morally wrong

It seems *prima facie* obvious, however, that naturalists can be committed to the moral impermissibility of abortion. This "seeming" does not itself establish the compatibility of the couplet of claims above, but it does I think suggest that metaphysical dualism about persons is not *essential* for generating a moral obligation or moral expectation to protect human life. For ease of discussion I will simply refer to the moral obligation or moral expectation to protect human life as constituting an *ethic of life*. So to see how a metaphysics of naturalism is compatible with an ethic of life consider the following.

Suppose human persons are human organisms with developed capacities for the rich sort of psychological life normally associated with paradigm instances of adult human beings; i.e., suppose human persons are *necessarily* psychological beings. If so, then no early term human fetus is a person. Surely, however, one with such a view of human persons as just described

could quite coherently protest the abortion of an early term fetus on the grounds that a) it is *prima facie* morally wrong to destroy a person *in potentia* and a normal human fetus is just such a being or b) even if the fetus is defective and does not even qualify as a potential person, it is still a member of the *human* community and to terminate the existence of a member of the community would diminish the kind of bond essential to the preservation and health of the community.<sup>12</sup>

Notice that in each of the reasons just now offered for prohibiting the abortion of the early term fetus the metaphysics of persons was supplemented with moral principles in order to yield the moral conclusion. I suggest that this is not just a fact about metaphysical naturalism or the particular reasons chosen, but a fact about the insufficiency of any metaphysics of persons all by itself to ground an ethic of life. I should hasten to point out, also, that each of the reasons offered is eminently plausible as a *prima facie* justification for prohibiting the destruction of a human, non-person.

Consider now the claim that human persons are at least partially composed of immaterial souls, which are connected as intimately as you like to human organisms. On all such dualist views currently on offer by Christian philosophers, be that dualism of the Cartesian variety or of the Thomistic variety advocated by Moreland and Rae, be it emergent dualism or creationist dualism, on all such views it is metaphysically possible for the soul both to a) continue in existence after the demise of the organism it animates and b) carry with it the identity of the person. On such views, therefore, abortion ends the life of an object that is such that if it ceases to exist no person will cease to exist as a result. For this reason it is not only plausible to think that abortion never ends the existence of a person, but it in fact is an entailment of Moreland's and Rae's own brand of dualism. And if an abortion never ends the existence of a person, then, for dualists, any prohibition against abortion cannot be because it destroys a person.<sup>13</sup>

On such a view as Moreland's and Rae's one can still oppose abortion, of course. One might, for example, offer the following as support for a prohibition against abortion: God intends every human person to be a soul-body composite, and abortion is the wrenching apart of what God intends to be joined. Notice, however, the metaphysics of dualism does not alone support the moral conclusion that the life of a human fetus ought to be protected. Instead, it is appeal to God's intentions that, coupled with the metaphysics, supports the prohibition. But such a consideration as this is no less congenial to naturalist views of persons, as I shall soon suggest. I believe that our discussion so far is sufficient to demonstrate that neither a metaphysics of dualism nor a metaphysics of naturalism about persons alone settles the moral issues at stake by either entailing or precluding an ethic of life. I conclude, therefore, that although it is true that naturalist views of persons lack the metaphysical resources either necessary or sufficient to generate moral obligations or moral expectations to prohibit the taking of human life, this is also true of dualist views of persons.

### III. Objections and Replies

**Objection:** It might be objected that naturalist views of persons are not all on a par, and that even if *some* versions of naturalism do not have horrendous moral implications, it is not the case all do not. For example, consider *animalism*. According to animalists, although every human person was once an early term human fetus, no early term human fetus is a human *person*. Therefore, every human person once was, and may be again, a human, *non-person*. Yet granting the moral principle that “a wrong making feature of a killing is the loss to the victim of the value of its future”<sup>14</sup>, it follows that aborting human but non-personal fetuses would be *prima facie* seriously morally wrong. It would be wrong because to abort them would be to deprive them of valuable futures, namely, futures just like ours.<sup>15</sup>

But now consider the Constitution View of human persons. It seems to be handicapped in ways animalism is not. For according to defenders of the Constitution View, human persons are not identical with human animals.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it appears as though defenders of the CV cannot avail themselves of a moral principle like “a wrong making feature of a killing is the loss to the victim of the value of its future”. They cannot avail themselves of a principle like this, it might be argued, since on the CV none of us human persons is, was, or ever will be, numerically identical with a human animal, including human fetuses. Since no human fetus is, was, or ever will be, identical with a human person, killing a human fetus will not deprive the fetus of a personal future. So it might be objected that the CV in particular is without the resources to ground a plausible ethic of life.<sup>17</sup>

**Reply:** Not surprisingly, I disagree that defenders of the CV are without the resources to ground a plausible ethic of life. First, we are not in the ordinary business of life given to distinguishing the “is” of identity from the “is” of constitution. Am I a human animal? Was I ever a human fetus? Well, defenders of the CV say “yes” to both, in the sense that I am now constituted by a human animal that once was a fetus.<sup>18</sup> Defenders of the CV, therefore, can employ some of the same kind of moral principles as their animalist relatives in order to generate prohibitions against abortion. For example, because a normal human fetus “is” a person *in potentia*, in the sense that it will *come to constitute* a person if left to develop in the ordinary way, the life of a human fetus ought to be protected. In the same way, even if the fetus is defective and does not even qualify as a potential person, in the sense that there is no likelihood that it will come to constitute a person, it is still a member of the biologically *human* community and to terminate the existence of a member of the that community would diminish the kind of bond essential to the preservation and health of the *morally* human community. Moreover, I have argued elsewhere that every human fetus is created by God with the ultimate intention of coming to constitute a person and on the basis of God’s ultimately good intentions for it the life of the fetus ought to be protected.<sup>19</sup> The same holds for human organisms in persistent vegetative states. It is plausible to believe that God intends every human organism to constitute a person, and in view of this there is a *prima facie* obligation not to kill a PVS patient. So even defenders of views like

the CV are not without the moral and theological resources to argue for the moral wrongness of abortion, some varieties of euthanasia, etc.

**Objection:** On the face of it, it looks as though a prohibition against killing a fetus would be because doing so would prevent it from coming to constitute a person, or in the case of human organisms in persistent vegetative states, coming *again* to constitute a person, thus pre-empting God's intentions for the human organism.<sup>20</sup> However, based on a plausible principle of persistence for human bodies I have argued elsewhere for the possibility of human bodies persisting through death, or their being resurrected some time after death.<sup>21</sup> But if God will see to it that fetal bodies and the bodies of PVS patients will not go out of existence, but persist through their deaths, or go out of existence only temporarily (only to be resurrected by God at some time in the future), the prohibition cannot owe to pre-empting God's intentions. For if what I have argued elsewhere is correct, those intentions will be fulfilled, if not before death, then after.

**Reply:** Whether God intervenes to resurrect our bodies or to see them remain intact through death, neither of these gracious acts in any way diminishes our obligation not to kill. First consider an analogy for resurrection. It would be wrong for my son to consider to destroy the table I made even though, let us suppose, it is true that I could and would restore the table. It would be wrong for my son to take actions purposefully intended to destroy the table because aside from a flagrant act of disrespect it would, if successful, temporarily thwart the aims and intentions I had as its creator. That is, it would cause the table to cease to exist; if not forever, then at least for a time. So too with acts of killing human organisms. Although God can and will raise human bodies from the dead, killing them would be at cross purposes with God's aims.

Consider now the case of immediate survival. If our bodies can survive death it is still plausible to believe that we have an obligation not to undertake actions which, save for the gracious intervention of God, would kill a human organism, since our undertaking such actions would be at cross purposes with God's intentions for natural, biological human life, i.e., they would, save for the gracious intervention of God, destroy what is necessary for human personhood, the end for which God creates human, biological life. So even if one is a naturalist who believes as I do that though we die yet shall we live, either in virtue of being resurrected or persisting through death, there are still plausible reasons for why there is a *prima facie* obligation not to kill.

#### IV. Moral Responsibility and *Entia Successiva*

There are two final issues that need to be addressed. First, it might be argued that there are broadly *moral* considerations that do seem to favor some form of a dualist metaphysics of persons over naturalist views. For example, suppose all complex material objects such as tables, ships and physical organisms are *entia successiva*, in Chisholm's sense of being successions of related objects, but not strictly and philosophically speaking, *entia per se*, i.e., genuine objects in their own right. And suppose further mereological essentialism is true such that all *entia successiva* are relatively short-



lived entities owing to their composition out of aggregates of different parts at different times. Since the bearers of moral responsibility for past actions must persist for an appreciable length of time it seems no human person is identical with an *ens successivum*. If there are human persons i.e., responsible agents, they must be *entia per se*, as *entia per se* are the only sort of thing that, strictly and philosophically speaking, endure through time. But the only candidate for an *ens per se* with which to identify a person is an immaterial and partless soul. So there must be immaterial souls if there are persons.<sup>22</sup>

There are two points to make in reply to this sort of moral consideration in favor of dualism. First, even if the metaphysics is true it doesn't follow that an immaterial soul is the *only* candidate for a human person. Chisholm's own position at one time, it will be recalled, was that we human persons are tiny *physical* objects, housed in human brains, objects that neither gain nor lose parts during the course of their existence.<sup>23</sup> So if Chisholm was right, then it is false that if there are persons they must be immaterial and partless souls. More important, however, if mereological essentialism is true and immaterial souls are the only candidates for enduring entities capable of possessing agency and responsibility, then although naturalism might entail that there are no persons or agents at all the moral question as to whether vulnerable human lives ought to be protected remains an open question. The question is not settled by metaphysics alone. After all, from the fact that no canines are persons it does not follow that we have no obligations with respect to how we treat *them*.

#### V. On The Word 'Person'

This brings me to the final issue I want to consider.<sup>24</sup> I have been using the term 'person' in the sense of "individual with a capacity for certain kinds of psychological states". There are, however, different senses of the term 'person'. Suppose instead of using the term in the sense of "individual with the capacity for certain kinds of psychological states" we use the term in the moral sense of "an entity deserving protection under an ethic of life," i.e., an entity possessing inherent value. Now if we embrace a thesis like

MB: Only human *persons* are *moral* beings (i.e., entities deserving protection by virtue of possessing inherent value)

it might be thought that we can grant that while we may have obligations toward non-persons our obligations toward moral *persons* differ in important respects from our obligations toward non-persons. For example, obligations toward moral persons are correlated with moral rights and in virtue of this we might think that our obligations toward persons are weightier than those toward non-persons. If Moreland and Rae are committed to something like MB, then they are right to think that views like animalism and CV, which deny human personhood to human fetuses and PVS patients, cannot generate moral obligations that carry anything near the same weight as those generated by views that do count human fetuses and PVS patients as persons.

There are several ways to respond to this. First, I believe a virtue of

grounding value in something like God's ultimately good intentions for God's creation is that one need tell only *one* story that obligates us to protect the life of created, living things whereas a view like Moreland's and Rae's must tell two stories; one of them yielding obligations to *persons* and another yielding obligations to non-persons. Second, a single story grounding value in theistic intentions is compatible with there being different degrees of moral weightiness. Our obligations toward moral persons might be weightier than our obligations toward non-persons based on God's intentions for each kind. But it is plausible to believe that our obligations toward *human* non-persons are, for the same reason, weightier than our obligations to *non-human*, non-persons. For example, because God intends every human organism to constitute a human person, and human persons have a privileged role in God's economy, our obligation to human fetuses and PVS patients is weightier than our obligation to non-human entities, so much so as to *prima facie* prohibit the killing of either the human fetus or the PVS patient. I believe, therefore, that naturalist views of human persons like animalism and CV can grant MB without there following any dire ethical consequences.

### Conclusion

I have been arguing against the claim that one's metaphysics of persons alone is decisive for an ethic of life. I have contended that neither a metaphysics of dualism nor a metaphysics of naturalism about persons alone either entails or precludes an ethic of life. I have also argued that views according to which some human organisms are not also persons are compatible with the belief that it is morally impermissible to kill human, non-persons. Where it might appear that a particular metaphysics of persons alone and all by itself entails a particular moral conclusion (be that conclusion for or against life) it is instead other claims supplemental to it and conjoined with it that lead to the conclusion. That in itself may not seem all that interesting, since we know that an "ought" cannot be wrung from an "is". What is more interesting is what I hope also to have established; namely, that a robust ethic of life is no less congenial to a metaphysics of naturalism about human persons than it is to a metaphysics of dualism about human persons. In fact, I hope to have shown even more than that. I hope to have shown that when it comes to *dualism* and ethics at the beginning and end of life, things are not nearly as straightforward as some dualists are inclined to think.<sup>25</sup>

Calvin College

### NOTES

1. See Lynne Baker's *Persons and Bodies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and my "Persons, Bodies and the Constitution Relation," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 37 (1999) 1-20.

2. See Eric Olson's *The Human Animal* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) and also his "Was I Ever a Fetus?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological*

*Research* 57 (1997) 95-110.

3. I am understanding "naturalism" in such a way that it is not incompatible with theism. That is, I mean to limit naturalism in this discussion to metaphysical views of *human* persons according to which such are *wholly* physical objects. This claim is perfectly compatible, of course, with the claim that there are non-human persons (e.g., God and the angels) that are non-physical.

4. *Body and Soul: Human Nature & the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 236

5. *Body and Soul*, 231.

6. *Body and Soul* 231.

7. *Body and Soul*, 10.

8. *Body and Soul*, 87-88.

9. *Body and Soul*, 255.

10. George Mavrodes pointed out to me that, even if 3 is accepted it doesn't apply to clients of Jack Keivorkian who were not lacking the relevant psychological capacities and so would count as persons on a naturalist conception. Thus the argument I attribute to Moreland and Rae seems completely irrelevant to the morality of physician assisted suicide (and wife assisted suicide, husband assisted suicide and good old fashion unassisted suicide). Therefore, I shall restrict its application in the following to cases of alleged non-person constituting organisms, like early term human fetuses and some PVS patients.

11. Moreland and Rae are clearly committed to this claim even though they are not altogether consistent in articulating their view of human persons. For example, on the very same page of *Body and Soul* they say contradicting things. They claim both that "A human person is a unity of two distinct entities—body and soul" and, further down the same page they say "We will argue that human persons are identical to immaterial substances, namely, to souls." *Body and Soul*, 121.

12. Even if we distinguish between the *biologically human* community and the *morally human* community such that strictly speaking human fetuses are members of the former but not members of the latter, it is still plausible to believe that to terminate the existence of a member of the former is to diminish the kind of bond essential to the preservation and health of the latter.

13. If the dualist objects that a living human fetus *is* a person in virtue of being ensouled, then I don't understand how a thing (a person) can become identical with a part of itself (i.e., a soul).

14. Don Marquis "Why Abortion is Immoral" *The Journal of Philosophy* 1989 (86) p.192.

15. See Peter vanInwagen's *Material Beings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Eric Olsen's *The Human Animal*, for animalist views of human persons.

16. See Lynne Baker's *Persons and Bodies* and my "Persons, Bodies and the Constitution Relation".

17. It is worth pointing out that on some readings of Thomas, human ensoulment does not occur until around the third month of gestation. Therefore, prior to the third month there is no human being in the womb, since where there is no *human soul* there is no human being. Thus the non-human "transitional beings" that exist in the womb prior to human ensoulment also will not become human beings. Rather, they will be replaced by human beings and will have been composed of the very same stuff that compose the human beings that eventually take their place. So a similar objection applies even to certain interpretations of Thomism! Of course, this is not an insurmountable problem if the basic thesis of this paper is correct. For discussions of Thomist embryology see Brian Leftow's "Souls Dipped in Dust" in Kevin Corcoran ed.

*Soul, Body and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). Christina van Dyke addresses the issue of Thomas' embryology in her "Aquinas on Human Bodies, Persons and the End of Life" (under review). See also William Wallace's "Aquinas's Legacy on Individuation, Cogitation, and Homonization" in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, ed., David Gallagher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994).

18. See for Example Lynne Baker's "What am I?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 59 (1999) 151-159.

19. See my "Persons and Bodies" *Faith and Philosophy* 15 (1998) 324-340.

20. This objection was raised by the editor, William Hasker, in correspondence.

21. See my "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps" in *Soul, Body and Survival* ed. Kevin Corcoran and also my "Persons and Bodies," *Faith and Philosophy* 15 (1998) 324-343.

22. Dave Vander Laan suggested something along these lines.

23. See Roderick Chisholm, "Is there a mind-body problem?", in *On Metaphysics* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989) 49-61.

24. The following consideration was raised by an anonymous referee for this journal.

25. I wish to thank the following people for helpful comments and criticisms: Terence Cuneo, Gregory Ganssle, William Jensen, John Mouracade, Mike Murray, Kevin Sharpe, Dave Vander Laan, two anonymous referees for this journal and members of the Tuesday afternoon colloquium at Calvin. I should also like to express my sincere appreciation to the editor, Bill Hasker, for his helpful comments and criticisms on earlier versions of this paper as well as the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities for funding a research group that I have had the good pleasure of being a part of and whose workshops and conversations were the impetus for this paper.