

On the Two Consciousnesses Model: An Assessment of James Arcadi's Defence

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Abstract: In a recent review published in the *Journal of Analytic Theology*, James Arcadi offers a defence of the Two Consciousnesses Model against my criticisms previously published in this journal. Arcadi postulates that Christ could have one centre of the two ranges of consciousness and one centre of operation. I argue that Arcadi's postulation preserves the unity of the person but is beset by another problem, namely that on Arcadi's view the one centre of experiences of Christ would have experienced the unlimited scope of awareness through his divine nature, which rule out the possibility that he experienced human limitations with regards to his scope of experiences.

One of the problems confronting the coherence of the Incarnation concerns Christ's awareness. Was he or was he not aware of the day of his coming? Being divine seems to entail having such an awareness, but Scriptural passages such as Mark 13:32 seem to imply that Christ did not have such an awareness.

In a recent review of my monograph published in *Journal of Analytic Theology*, James Arcadi (2016) offers a response to this problem utilizing the Two Consciousnesses Model, and he offers a defence of this model against my criticisms. Arcadi proposes we think of concrete natures as essentially having a specific concrete set of capacities and powers that enable the possessor of them to perform certain kind actions. For example, "the alligator nature endows the possessor of it to crush an entire chicken with its jaws, the possessor of a human nature enjoys no such capacity" (462). Applying this proposal to the Incarnation, Arcadi (2016) argues

Christ cannot just "be aware" of something, he has to do so in virtue of one or other of his natures. Thus his "awareness" will always be modified by which kind of capacity is operating. Yet there is only ever one "I" in these statements, Christ is the possessor of his awareness, just as he is the possessor of his natures. (463)

Given this, he suggests that Christ's first person perspective ought to be understood as follows:

- 1) "I am humanly aware of myself being humanly unaware of the day of my coming."
- 2) "I am divinely aware of myself being divinely aware of the day of my coming."

3) "I am divinely aware of myself being humanly unaware of the day of my coming." (462-3)

Arcadi concludes "Thus, Christ can have two consciousnesses, but it is only ever the one Christ who operates those consciousnesses" (Arcadi 2016, 463). On Arcadi's proposal, from the point of view of Christ's first person perspective, there was only one 'myself' who was humanly unaware and divinely aware of the day of 'my' coming. There was one centre of the two ranges of consciousness, one centre of experiences and one centre of operation, viz. the one Christ. The centre of consciousness refers to the 'I' (i.e., the subject to which a person's experiences and intentions belong). For example, I am seeing the computer screen, listening to music and typing this sentence right now; the sight of the computer and the sound of music is being experienced by one and the same 'centre' (the subject) who intentionally typed this sentence.

Arcadi's proposal is different from the classic form of the Two Consciousnesses Model proposed in Thomas Morris's landmark study *The Logic of God Incarnate* (1986). According to Morris's model, Christ had two distinct minds and consciousnesses:

1. The divine mind of the Logos encompassing the full scope of omniscience, and which was consciously aware of everything.
2. A human mind that came into existence and grew and developed as the boy Jesus grew and developed, and which was not consciously aware of everything.

Morris's model has been criticized in my article previously published in *Journal of Analytic Theology* (2014a), and incorporated into his monograph *A Kryptic Model of the Incarnation* (2014b). I argue that, on Morris's Two Consciousnesses Model, Christ would have self-consciousness SC1: 'I am aware of myself being consciously aware of the day of my coming'; and simultaneously self-consciousness SC2: 'I am aware of myself being consciously unaware of the day of my coming'. I explain

The problem here is that 'myself being consciously aware' occurs in SC1 and 'myself being consciously unaware' occurs in SC2, and that these two self-consciousnesses are contradictory and therefore cannot exist in the same self simultaneously. To say that there are two contradictory self-consciousnesses simultaneously is to say there are two selves. (Loke 2014b, 47)

I note that proponents of Morris's Two Consciousnesses Model might reply that one could avoid two simultaneous and contradictory self-consciousnesses by saying "The Logos is aware of himself being consciously unaware of the day of his coming *in his human nature*, and aware of himself being consciously aware of the day of his coming *in his divine nature* at one-and-the same time." I respond that this reply seems to amount to postulating three different and contradictory self-consciousnesses –

1. The human consciousness of his human nature in which the Logos might say 'I am not aware of myself being consciously aware of the day of my coming.'
2. The divine consciousness of his divine nature in which the Logos might say 'I am aware of myself being consciously aware of the day of my coming.'
3. The subject consciousness of the Logos in which he might say 'I am aware of myself being consciously unaware of the day of my coming in my human nature, and aware of myself being consciously aware of the day of my coming in my divine nature, at one-and-the-same time.'

– which seem to imply three selves (Loke 2014b, 47-48).

Defending a model similar to Morris's, Richard Cross (2002, 316), following Karl Rahner, thinks that the human Jesus and the Logos could engage in dialogue and conversation. However, the possibility of such a dialogue implies that the human Jesus and the Logos could be involved in a genuine I-Thou relationship, which would imply two persons (i.e. Nestorianism) (Loke 2014b, 48).

Arcadi's model is immune to my criticisms against Morris and Cross. As noted earlier, Morris's model seems to suggest that the divine Logos remained consciously aware of everything throughout the Incarnation, and it seems to imply a divine self-consciousness that was different from that of Jesus of Nazareth who wasn't aware of everything in Mark 13:32. On Morris's model there were two different self-consciousnesses and two different centres of consciousnesses. However, on Arcadi's model there was only one self-consciousnesses and one centre of consciousnesses. Moreover, on Arcadi's model there was only one common centre for the two ranges of consciousness of the human Jesus and the Logos, and therefore it cannot be the case that the human Jesus and the Logos engaged in a genuine dialogue and conversation. Thus my objection against Cross' model does not apply to Arcadi's model.

In summary, Arcadi is defending another form of Two Consciousnesses Model, which is different from the one proposed by Morris and Cross. Arcadi's model has the advantage of preserving the unity of the person, and it is immune to my criticisms against Morris and Cross. In answer to the question whether Christ is a material being or an immaterial being, Arcadi can reply that Christ is one person with two concrete parts, a material part and an immaterial part.

However, Arcadi's model is beset by another problem. Given that Christ's divine awareness was all encompassing, and given Arcadi's model that there was one centre of experiences in Christ, would Christ have experienced human limitations with regards to his scope of experiences?

As noted earlier, Arcadi thinks that Christ's "awareness" will always be modified by which kind of capacity is operating, and that on his view Christ would say "I am humanly aware of myself being humanly unaware of the day of my coming." Here 'humanly unaware' refers to a capacity on Arcadi's view; on his view Christ's human nature did not possess the capacity to be aware of the day of his coming. However, my question does not concern Christ's capacities or Christ's experiences of his capacities. Rather, it concerns the scope of Christ's experiences. On Arcadi's view the one centre of experiences of Christ would still have experienced the unlimited

scope of awareness through his divine nature, which seems to rule out the possibility that he experienced human limitations with regards to his scope of experiences.

To illustrate: suppose a person had two eyes and that his right eye could see everything that his left eye saw. Suppose that his left eye was subsequently injured and became nearly blind, but his right eye remained intact. In that state, he experienced the limitation of capacity in his left eye, but he could still see everything that he could see previously.

Likewise, on Arcadi's view the one centre of experiences in Christ would still possess the same scope of awareness after the Incarnation as he did before the Incarnation. If that is so, Christ would not have experienced any limitation of his scope of awareness, and he would not have genuine human experiences. This conclusion would be inconsistent with the behaviour of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as portrayed by the Gospels. For given Arcadi's proposal that there was one centre of experiences in Christ and that Christ's divine awareness was all encompassing, Christ would have been fully aware when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane that he would indeed be crucified the next day. However, Christ's prayer that the cup of suffering might be taken from him (Mark 14:35-6) indicates that Christ was not aware that he would indeed be crucified the next day.

One might reply: it was Christ's human nature who prayed according to his human will. However, prayers are offered by persons, not natures apart from persons, and the implication of Arcadi's proposal is that there was only one centre of operation in Christ (viz. the person of Christ) and that the person of Christ was aware through his divine faculty of consciousness that he would indeed be crucified the next day. Thus the problem remains.

The Divine Preconscious Model (DPM) fairs better than Arcadi's model, because DPM affirms that Christ restricted his scope of awareness during the Incarnation and was not aware that he would indeed be crucified the next day, and thus it is consistent with the behaviour of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as portrayed by the Gospels (see Loke 2014, 32-33, 119).

In summary, I do not think Arcadi has successfully defended the Two Consciousnesses model. As a Christian, I do not have a strong motivation to refute the Two Consciousnesses Model. Indeed, the more possible models there are, the better it is for Christians defending the coherence of the Incarnation. Nevertheless, it still seems that the Two Consciousness model is indefensible. Thankfully, this model is not the only possible model of the Incarnation, nor the only possible way to respond to the problem concerning Christ's awareness. In my view, DPM provides a better way of responding to this problem.

Bibliography

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