

The Divided Mind Model Defended: A Response to Tim Bayne

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ABSTRACT: During the latter half of the twentieth century, Richard Swinburne proposed a model of the incarnation built upon Freud's divided mind theory. Swinburne's model has met its most robust critique in two articles by Tim Bayne. In this paper, however, I argue that Bayne's objections rest on key misinterpretations of Swinburne's work. Moreover, when one properly understands the model, these objections lose their force. Below, I begin by expositing Swinburne's divided mind model (DM), highlighting its four foundational theses. Next, I respond to Bayne's objections against DM, demonstrating they rest upon misconceptions of the model.

1. Swinburne's Divided Mind Model

During the latter half of the twentieth century, Richard Swinburne proposed a model of the incarnation built upon Freud's divided mind theory. Swinburne's model has met its most robust critique in two articles by Tim Bayne. In this paper, however, I argue that Bayne's objections rest on key misinterpretations of Swinburne's work. Moreover, when one properly understands the model, these objections lose their force. Below, I begin by expositing Swinburne's divided mind model (DM), highlighting its four foundational theses. Next, I respond to Bayne's objections against DM, demonstrating they rest upon misconceptions of the model.

The following four theses express the core of Swinburne's DM model:

(DM1) Necessarily, for all S , S is divine if and only if S is omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good, perfectly free, a source of moral obligation, omnipresent, creator of some universe, eternal, and necessary.¹

(DM2) Necessarily, for all S , S is human if and only if S possesses a human body and a human soul.²

¹ One might wish to add that S is a member of the Trinity as a necessary and sufficient condition for divinity. Provided one adds this condition to (1) and (7) below, the validity of the present argument is not affected. Likewise, one might wish to remove "creator of some universe" as a necessary condition.

² Here one can understand a "human body" as a class of organism with a shared genotype and phenotype. Swinburne understands possession of a "human soul" as the instantiation of certain mental properties (see Swinburne 2011, 158-160). The specific properties Swinburne has in view are given in (DM3).

(DM3) Necessarily, for all S , if S has a mental life R and R includes logical thought, moral awareness, free will, and structure, then S has a human soul.³

(DM4) Necessarily, for all S , if S can operate in the world through some human body, B , and acquire beliefs through B and feel sensations through B , then S possesses a human body.⁴

Each of the above theses provides a definition needed to establish a coherent model of the incarnation. (DM1) delineates the essential properties of divinity. (DM2) gives the necessary and sufficient conditions for being human. (DM3) asserts what it means to have a human soul. Likewise, (DM4) gives the conditions upon which an agent is said to possess a human body. Given these four theses, the possibility of the incarnation follows by asserting:

(1) Possibly, for some S , (i) S is omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good, perfectly free, a source of moral obligation, omnipresent, creator of some universe, eternal, and necessary. (ii) S has a mental life R , and R includes logical thought, moral awareness, free will, and structure. (iii) S can operate in the world through some human body, B , and acquire beliefs through B , and feel sensations through B .

Given (1) and (DM1), (DM3), and (DM4) one derives:

(2) Therefore, possibly, for some S , S is divine, and S has a human soul, and S has a human body.

and finally from (2) and (DM2):

(3) Therefore, possibly for some S , S is divine and human.

³ One might object that (DM3) is too broad to avoid obvious counterexamples. For instance, one might think that other members of the Trinity or lesser supernatural beings (e.g., angels and demons) meet all Swinburne's criteria for possession of a human soul. With respect to other members of the Trinity, the proponent of DM can respond by denying that purely divine agents possess structured mental lives in the sense Swinburne intends. In other words, an omniscient being does not hold any beliefs on the basis of other beliefs. Rather, such a being knows, simpliciter, the truth-value of any given proposition. Assuming, then, that God the Father or the Holy Spirit are omniscient in this sense, they would not meet Swinburne's criteria for possession of a human soul. Lesser supernatural agents, however, present a more difficult case. Neither instinct, experience, nor revelation provides much detail regarding the proposed ontology of these beings. Nevertheless, for those that accept the biblical account of these beings, enough data remains to suggest they meet all the conditions (DM3) requires for possession of a human soul. As such, for those operating within this tradition, the viability of DM will likely require a modification of (DM3), which more adequately captures the unique properties of a human mental life. My thanks to Dan Cabal for bringing this difficulty to my attention.

⁴ Swinburne developed his divine mind model over the course of three publications. The initial presentation of the model occurred in "Could God Become Man?" (1989). Five years later, Swinburne included the model as a part of his case for Christian theism (Swinburne 1994). Swinburne draws heavily from his initial presentation of the model; however, he expands on the model in two ways. First, he deploys the notion of "thisness" as the individuating factor between persons. Second, he more thoroughly explores the historical background surrounding the Christological Creeds. Swinburne's latest publication on the model came in 2011 as a part of Marmodoro & Hill's *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* (Swinburne 2011). Here Swinburne presents a truncated version of the model. However, he spends notably more time tracing the development of thought on the incarnation. As a result, Swinburne gives the most detailed exposition in this work of the Christological creeds found in any of his publications on DM.

Swinburne's model begins innocently enough with the first two theses. (DM1) represents a largely standard definition of divinity, which Swinburne has defended at length elsewhere (Swinburne 2016).⁵ (DM2) accords with the Chalcedonian understanding of a human being.⁶ The real contribution of Swinburne's model begins with (DM3). Swinburne argues that various features of an agent's mental life serve to distinguish one mental substance from another. Some features remain common among all mental substances (e.g., sensations, thoughts, purposings, beliefs, and desires). The features listed in (DM3), however, occur uniquely in human beings. Since Swinburne understands soul—in the Chalcedonian sense—to refer to faculty sets of this kind, a mental substance is said to possess a human soul if that substance has the range of consciousness outlined in (DM3).⁷ Likewise, Swinburne understands a mental substance as the animating force of a human body. When such a substance stands in the relations to a human body described in (DM4), the substance is said to possess that body.

In his published work, Swinburne considers a number of possible objections to the DM model (Swinburne 1989, 56-59; 1994, 193-196). For the most part, Swinburne deals with these objections either by repudiating them or modifying DM to accommodate the additional criteria they posit. The one exception to this strategy is the so-called Limitation Objection. According to the Limitation Objection, a human being is necessarily limited with respect to knowledge and power. Thus,

- (4) Necessarily, for all *S*, if *S* is a human, then *S* is limited with respect to knowledge or power.

Put another way, (4) asserts that no human being possesses the properties of omnipotence or omniscience. Taken together with (DM1), therefore, one infers:

- (5) Necessarily, if *S* is a human, then *S* is not divine.

Swinburne concludes that the simplest response for the proponent of DM is to deny (4) (Swinburne 1994, 196). Unfortunately, the New Testament portrait of Jesus renders the simple route untenable. As Swinburne observes, the depiction of Jesus in the Gospels includes explicit references to a lack of knowledge (Swinburne 1994, 199-209).⁸ While one might still reject (4) as a metaphysically necessary principle, a biblically faithful model of the incarnation must at least affirm:

- (6) Jesus was limited with respect to knowledge.

⁵ See footnote 1 for additional qualifications on this premise.

⁶ For a thorough defense of DM's compatibility with the Chalcedonian definition see Swinburne (2011). Swinburne suggests that the Chalcedonian assertion that Christ possesses a "rational soul" means that Christ instantiated a set of mental properties, which Swinburne delineates in (DM3).

⁷ One complication in expositing Swinburne's model lies in the discrepancy between his use of "soul" and how he understands the authors of Chalcedon to have used the term. Swinburne understands a soul as a pure, immaterial substance, which serves as the subject of all experiences (Swinburne 1994). The Chalcedonian authors, Swinburne argues, used the term to refer instead to a set of properties—though he notes their usages were not always consistent on this point (Swinburne 2011, 158-159.) See also Swinburne (1994, 252).

⁸ Swinburne also addresses Christ's limitations with respect to power and openness to temptation. However, Jesus' limited knowledge is central to his treatment of these latter two issues.

Once again, from (6) and (DM1) one derives that Jesus was not divine.⁹ Hence, DM fails. At this junction, Swinburne introduces into the model Freud's conception of a divided mind.¹⁰ Freud's psychological model allows that an individual can have two systems of belief, operating in partial independence from one another within a single mind. In particular, the division between belief systems cuts across one's conscious and subconscious mind.¹¹ Here, Swinburne gives the helpful example of a mother that has lost her son but refuses to acknowledge that fact consciously (Swinburne 1994, 201). Freud's theory explains how such a mother can, simultaneously, believe consciously that her son is alive—performing some actions in accordance with that belief—and subconsciously that her son has passed—performing other actions on the basis of that belief. In other words, although one belief system lies in the subconscious, it maintains the capacity to influence the behavior of the individual. With Freud's divided mind theory in hand, DM undergoes the following refinements:

(DM1*) Necessarily, for all S , S is divine if and only if S is omnipotent, omniscient with respect to some belief system M , perfectly good, perfectly free, a source of moral obligation, omnipresent, creator of some universe, eternal, and necessary.

(DM3*) Necessarily, for all S , if S has a mental life R and R includes logical thought, moral awareness, free will, and some belief system, M , such that M is structured, then S has a human soul.

(DM4*) Necessarily, for all S , if S can operate in the world through some human body B , and acquire beliefs through B within some belief system, M , and feel sensations through B , then S possesses a human body.

Now suppose that in the incarnation, Jesus possessed two mental systems: a divine system, c , and a human system, d , where $c \neq d$.¹² On DM, the following picture emerges:

(7) Possibly, Jesus is omnipotent, omniscient with respect to c , perfectly good, perfectly free, a source of moral obligation, omnipresent, creator of some universe, eternal, and necessary.

(8) Possibly, Jesus has a mental life R and R includes logical thought, moral awareness, free will, and a belief system d such that d is structured.

⁹ Since (DM1) entails, via the M-axiom, that for all S , S is divine just in case S possesses the ten properties specified in the premise. Furthermore, provided (6) is taken to mean that Jesus was not omniscient, it follows that Jesus fails to instantiate one of (DM1)'s ten requisite properties for divinity. Hence, Jesus is not divine given (6) and (DM1).

¹⁰ For a defense of the use of psychological theories in incarnational models see Loke (2017).

¹¹ Though Loke follows Bayne in misunderstanding Swinburne's model, Loke's Divine Subconscious model bears similarity to Swinburne's DM model. Loke also cites several other authors who have developed subconscious-based models. See Loke (2013).

¹² The importance of Freud's divided mind theory for DM lies in the establishment of the possibility that a single mind encompasses two, partially independent belief systems. The model remains neutral regarding the manner in which Christ possesses or experiences these belief systems. The belief systems may find location within Christ's consciousness and subconsciousness. Alternatively, Christ may possess these belief systems in a manner wholly unique to himself as the incarnate God-man. Nevertheless, Freud's theory suffices to demonstrate the possibility of this phenomena, which is all the DM model requires.

- (9) Possibly, Jesus can operate in the world through some human body B , and acquire beliefs through within d , and feel sensations through B .

It follows from (7) and (DM1*) that Jesus is possibly divine, from (8) and (DM3*) that Jesus possibly has a human soul, and from (9) and (DM4*) that Jesus possibly has a human body. Furthermore, from these latter two inferences together with (DM2) one derives:

- (10) Possibly, Jesus is divine and human.

Moreover, on this model, one can still affirm (6) provided one indexes knowledge to a particular belief system—which refined DM already requires. Thus (6) becomes:

- (6*) Jesus was limited with respect to knowledge in d .

Likewise,

- (11) Jesus was not limited with respect to knowledge in c .

To summarize the discussion thus far, Swinburne developed his model of the incarnation by first articulating careful definitions of divinity and humanity. With those definitions in hand, Swinburne concluded that the only genuine issue in positing the existence of a substance that is both divine and human arises if the individual's humanity requires limitations of power or knowledge. Since the New Testament portrays Jesus as having limitations of knowledge, Swinburne refined the model using Freud's theory of the divided mind. The divided mind theory postulates that a single individual may possess two systems of belief concurrently. Thus, in the case of Jesus, the possibility remains that he possesses two such belief systems—one omniscient, the other finite. Therefore, provided one accepts the four theses of DM along with (7)-(9), the possibility of the incarnation follows necessarily.¹³

One additional feature of DM bears mentioning. The model, as described above, provides a logically coherent, fully Chalcedonian picture of the incarnation. A thoroughly orthodox Christology, however, should include not only the stipulations of Chalcedon but the Third Council of Constantinople as well (Crisp 2013). Unique to Constantinople was the proclamation that Christ had both a human and a divine will. Swinburne allows for this stipulation by introducing a definition of will into the model:

- (DM5) For all S , S has a will of type A just in case S wills to do actions available to agents of type A , according to desires that are typical for agents of type A (Swinburne 1994, 208-209).

To say Jesus has a human will, on (DM5), means Jesus wills to do actions available to human agents and does so under the influence of desires typical for human agents. Likewise, Jesus' divine will consists of his willing to do actions available to divine agents according to desires typical of divine agents. Moreover, on DM the former occurs within the operations of Jesus' human belief system while the latter occurs within the operations of Jesus' divine belief

¹³ Here I assume an S5 logic according to which whatever is possible is necessarily possible.

system.¹⁴ Hence, with the acceptance of (DM5), Swinburne’s model accords with all orthodox stipulations for the incarnation.

2. Bayne’s First Objections

Having explicated Swinburne’s DM model, we turn now to Bayne’s objections to the model. Bayne identifies Swinburne, along with Thomas Morris, as a proponent of what he terms the Inclusion Model of the incarnation (Bayne 2001).¹⁵ Bayne presents several objections to the Inclusion Model—as articulated by Swinburne and Morris—and offers his own Restricted Inclusionism Model as an alternative. Sadly, with respect at least to Swinburne’s work, all Bayne’s objections rest upon two misunderstandings of the DM model. First, Bayne asserts that Swinburne rejects the so-called “Singularity Thesis” (Bayne 2001, 132-133). According to the Singularity Thesis, “a single subject of experience can only have a single stream of consciousness at a time” (Bayne 2001, 132). This misunderstanding underlies three of the four primary objections Bayne levels against DM: the Unity Objection, the Demarcation Objection, and the Essential Indexical Objection. Second, Bayne attributes to Swinburne a strong interpretation of the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* (Bayne 2001, 137). This misunderstanding underlies Bayne’s Divine Infallibility Objection. Below, each of these objections is addressed in turn.

Bayne writes of the Inclusion Model, “the model claims that Christ had two consciousnesses, not just that he had two cognitive, doxastic or volitional systems” (Bayne 2001, 125-126). Such a claim violates the so-called Singularity Thesis, which Bayne commends as a plausible axiom of mental phenomenon. Undoubtedly, Bayne’s Singularity Thesis has a great deal of plausibility. Hence, rejection of the principle would certainly count against the model. As it stands, however, Swinburne makes no such claim. I cite three observations in support of this interpretation. First, Swinburne repeatedly refers to Christ’s consciousness as possessing two systems of belief, never to Christ possessing two concurrent consciousnesses (Swinburne 1989, 64-68; 1994, 201-203). Second, in explicating the DM model, Swinburne distinguishes between beliefs held in a system and beliefs admitted to the consciousness of an agent. Further, he allows that a belief system may contain beliefs not admitted by an agent’s consciousness (Swinburne 1989, 65; 1994, 201). Moreover, Swinburne illustrates the DM model with the example of a grieving mother refusing to consciously admit the death of her son, while simultaneously performing actions that display a subconscious knowledge of that fact (Swinburne 1994, 201). Within the illustration, the mother clearly does not possess two streams of consciousness. Rather, she holds one stream of consciousness guided by two systems of belief. Third, Freud’s notion of the divided mind, upon which Swinburne builds his model, does not posit the possibility of an individual operating with two streams of consciousness. Rather, Freud posited that an individual’s conscious belief system could contain a different set of beliefs from their subconscious belief system and that both could

¹⁴ Pawl understands Swinburne’s model to posit the existence of a single will that is both divine and human (see Pawl 2016, 20). While Swinburne is admittedly somewhat unclear on this point, plausibly one can understand him to posit the existence of two wills within his framework. Swinburne defines a will as a manner of willing and holds that Christ “wills” in both a divine and human manner (Swinburne 1994, 198). Likewise, he at times speaks of the two wills as separate (Swinburne 1994, 208).

¹⁵ I make no attempt in this article to defend Morris’ model from Bayne’s objections.

simultaneously influence the behavior of that individual. Bayne demonstrates an awareness of this point; however, he accuses Swinburne of misunderstanding Freud's theory (Bayne 2001, 128). More plausibly, Swinburne has understood Freud's theory and built his DM model accordingly.

In defense of his interpretation, Bayne writes, "what did Swinburne have in mind is [*sic*] saying that we 'get a picture of a divine-consciousness and a human consciousness of God incarnate, the former including the latter but not conversely'? I took these claims to mean that Christ's human experiences are quite literally contained in two consciousnesses, a human-consciousness and a divine consciousness" (Bayne 2003, 107-109).¹⁶

To see the error in Bayne's exposition, one needs to examine the passage he quotes from Swinburne in its larger context:

However, [Jesus'] divine knowledge-system will inevitably include the knowledge that his human system contains the beliefs that it does; and it will include those among the latter which are true. The separation of the belief-systems would be a voluntary act, knowledge of which was part of the divine knowledge-system but not the human knowledge-system. We thus get a picture of a divine consciousness and a human consciousness of God Incarnate, the former including the latter, but not conversely (Swinburne 1989, 65).

When taken in context, Swinburne's usage of "consciousness" clearly refers not to streams of consciousness but belief-systems. Moreover, by "included," Swinburne does not mean that one stream of consciousness somehow fused into another. Rather, he refers to the set of beliefs held within different belief-systems. In other words, to say that Jesus' human-consciousness is included in his divine-consciousness, in the sense Swinburne intends, means only that the set of all true beliefs contained in Jesus' human belief system is a proper subset of the knowledge within his divine belief system.

Once one sees this error in Bayne's exposition of DM, most of the objections he levels against the model lose their force. Consider, for instance, the Unity Objection. Here Bayne asks the question, "in virtue of what do Christ's two consciousnesses belong to the same subject, viz. Christ?" (Bayne 2001, 133). Bayne concludes that on DM, the divine consciousness must fuse with the human consciousness in order for both to properly belong to Christ. However, Swinburne's formulation of dualism denies the possibility of fusion between streams of consciousness (Bayne 2001, 134). Hence, DM wanders into inconsistency with Swinburnian dualism. One can formalize Bayne's argument as follows:

(12) Necessarily, for any streams of consciousness A and B, if $A \neq B$, then A is not fused with B.

(13) Jesus' divine stream of consciousness \neq Jesus' human stream of consciousness, and both consciousnesses are fused.

Premise (12) formalizes Swinburne's rejection of fusion between streams of consciousness. Premise (13) represents Bayne's understanding of the DM model. Since (13) is the negation of (12), to the extent that one endorses (12), they have a defeater for (13). Likewise, to the extent that Swinburne accepts both, his philosophy is self-referentially inconsistent.

¹⁶ Bayne cites from (Swinburne 1989, 65). Furthermore, Bayne's article is written in response to objections raised by Richard Sturch in (Sturch 2003).

Happily, DM asserts nothing so fanciful as a single agent possessing two streams of consciousness concurrently. As noted above, on DM, Jesus' divine and human minds constituted two different belief systems held by the same consciousness. Put another way, Jesus had two belief systems operative at the same time, each of which constituted a facet of a single overarching stream of consciousness. Accordingly, one has good grounds to dismiss Bayne's Unity Objection along with his other objections related to DM's supposed denial of the Singularity Thesis. The lone exception lies in Bayne's Divine Infallibility Objection, which is considered below.

3. Bayne's Second Objection

Bayne's second misunderstanding of Swinburne's DM model concerns the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*. While Bayne correctly attributes an endorsement of the doctrine to Swinburne, he fails to appreciate the nuances of Swinburne's position (Swinburne 1994, 197, 211). Swinburne rejects what he terms the "total interpenetration" version of *communicatio idiomatum*.¹⁷ According to this version, one may attribute all Jesus' properties to him without reference to the nature from which they arise. Instead, Swinburne endorses a "Calvinistic" reading according to which predications regarding Christ are indexed to the nature from which they arise. The distinction between these two versions becomes crucial when one examines Bayne's formulation of the divine infallibility objection:

(14) Jesus had false beliefs.

(15) All of Christ's beliefs are properly attributed to God.

Therefore,

(16) God had false beliefs.

Since (14) and (15) make no reference to the constituent natures of Christ, Bayne evidently presupposes the total interpenetration version of *communicatio idiomatum* in his argument. To adequately capture the Calvinistic version of the doctrine, one must make the following modification to (14):

(14*) Jesus had false beliefs within his human belief system.¹⁸

From (14*) and (15) it follows:

(16*) God had false beliefs within his human mind (i.e., human belief system).

¹⁷ For a helpful discussion on this doctrine see chapter 6 in Pawl (2016). Swinburne's "total interpenetration" version of the doctrine corresponds to Pawl's assertive use of the *qua* operator. Likewise, Swinburne's "Calvinistic" interpretation corresponds roughly to Pawl's subjective use of the *qua* operator.

¹⁸ Here Jesus' human belief system is understood as the belief system by virtue of which he has a human soul, i.e., the system referenced in (8).

One may still wish to reject (16*); indeed, a strong case can be made against it (McKinley 2009, 236-242). Nevertheless, (16*) avoids the straightforward absurdity of (16). Furthermore, the proponent of DM may flatly deny (14) and (14*) without violating the integrity of the model by asserting that within his human mind, Jesus was either correct or agnostic about his beliefs, but never incorrect (McKinley 2009, 242). At most, then, Bayne's objection elicits a modification of DM not an outright repudiation of the model.

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