

**Richard Swinburne. *Mind, Brain, & Free Will*.
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Ted Poston
University of South Alabama

It is hard to think of a contemporary philosopher who has done more to defend the rationality of a Christian worldview than Richard Swinburne. His trilogy on the coherence and rationality of theism—*The Coherence of Theism*, *The Existence of God*, and *Faith & Reason*—is required reading for anyone interested in philosophy of religion. His tetralogy on the central Christian claims—*Responsibility and Atonement*, *Revelation*, *The Christian God*, and *Providence and the Problem of Evil*—stands out as among the best analytic philosophy of religion has to offer. This tetralogy has expanded into a pentalogy with the publication of *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*. Then there are his other books which fill out his philosophical views: *Space and Time*, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, *The Concept of a Miracle*, *Epistemic Justification*, *The Evolution of the Soul*, and now *Mind, Brain, & Free Will*. Swinburne constantly seeks to improve his arguments in light of new evidence and has produced revised and second editions of many of these books.

In *Mind, Brain & Free Will* (MBFW) Swinburne returns to his case for substance dualism. His original case for substance dualism came in 1986 with *The Evolution of the Soul* (ES) which he revised in light of new developments in 1997. I suspect he intended to publish a second edition of *ES* but realized that his arguments for dualism could be considerably strengthened and expanded. *MBFW* is notable in this respect. Swinburne takes a broader philosophical approach to dualism in the present work beginning with two chapters on ontology and epistemology. Swinburne lays out his general approach to what is involved in telling the complete history of the world and what criteria there are for forming justified beliefs about the complete history of the world. This differs from *ES* which after a short introductory chapter launches into the nature of the mental life. While this wider stance is good because it clarifies more general metaphysical and epistemological issues lurking in the background to debates over the nature of the mind, it will be tough sledding for a more general audience. The effort, though, rewards by paying clear dividends in the specific arguments for substance dualism. *MBFW* also contains updated arguments for a libertarian conception of free will and the claim that humans are morally responsible for their actions. In the following I will briefly summarize the contribution of each chapter.

Chapter 1 'Ontology' is devoted to specifying identity conditions of substances, properties, and events. According to Swinburne's ontological view, all reality can be accounted for in terms of substances, properties of substances, and events. All there is is captured in these terms. Laws of nature are properties of substances. Swinburne

then proceeds to lay out his views about meaning and possibilities (7-20). The upshot is a particular view about identity statements containing informative designators (20). Such statements are knowable *a priori* because in virtue of containing informative designators a subject who understands the language knows which property is picked out by the informative designator. A subject “who knows the meaning of an informative designator knows *a priori* the necessary and sufficient conditions for a thing to be the thing referred to by that designator” (20). Thus, in virtue of knowing the meaning of ‘pain’ and ‘C- fibers’, a subject is in a position to know whether the identity sentence “pain is C-fibers firing” is true. Swinburne then argues against Putnam’s view that there may be logically contingent truths about property identity and then closes the chapter with a discussion of identity criteria between substances.

Chapter 2 ‘Epistemology’ lays out Swinburne’s view of the justification of belief. Swinburne develops an internalist theory of epistemic justification in terms of the epistemic probability of a subject’s belief at a time given her evidence at that time. The crucial elements of his view are first the principle of credulity and second his views about the explanatory virtues. The principle of credulity states that in the absence of defeating evidence the fact that a sentence seems true makes it epistemically probable that it is true. The explanatory virtues provide justification for theories removed from direct experience. These virtues include simplicity, explanatory power, and fit with background evidence. Swinburne helpfully includes a section entitled ‘Justified beliefs about logical modalities’ (44-54) which explains the conditions under which a subject is justified in believing that a sentence is logically possible or impossible. The chapter closes with a discussion of the causal criterion in the justification of belief. If one’s belief that (e.g.,) it is raining outside is not caused by the fact that it is raining, this can provide an undermining defeater for the justification of one’s belief. Swinburne proposes what he calls “the fundamental criterion” that “justified belief that some event occurred requires the assumption that the event is accessible (in a privileged way) to the believer, or causes an event thus accessible—unless this is justifiably believed to be the consequence of some theory which predicts other events justifiably believed to occur on grounds independent of that theory” (65). Swinburne claims that this causal assumption undermines a justified belief in epiphenomenalism. Because epiphenomenalism denies a causal connection between conscious experience and physical events there could be no evidence that any physical event occurred. Evidence, recall, must be both accessible in a privileged way and caused by the relevant fact. Hence, given the truth of epiphenomenalism no one could have a justified belief that it is true.

Chapter 3 ‘Property and Event Dualism’ contains Swinburne’s argument for property dualism. He defines a ‘pure mental property’ “as one whose instantiation in a substance does not entail the instantiation of any metaphysically contingent physical property in that substance” (68). He then claims that it is obvious that there are pure mental properties. The property of ‘having a headache’ or ‘having ten spots in one’s visual field’ are pure mental properties. Suppose, however, one doubts whether there are any properties that do not entail a physical property. Is there an argument that there are pure mental properties? I think there is. Swinburne reasons that the informative designators of physical and mental properties are not logically

equivalent (69). The criteria associated with the phrase ‘being in pain’ are such that for any physical property, φ , there is no logical contradiction found in the sentence “Being pain is not φ .” Why is that? Swinburne thinks that we have privileged access to mental properties. That is, an individual has a way of knowing that a mental property is instantiated that is not available to any other individual. The question then becomes whether this observation about linguistic criteria can serve to generate a robust theory of metaphysical possibility. And that returns us to the issues in chapter 1 in which Swinburne lays out his theory of metaphysical possibility. In the remainder of the chapter Swinburne lays out his view of mental events (72-87), discusses Wittgenstein’s private language argument (87-93), and the errors of physicalism (93-99). Regarding the physicalism, Swinburne claims that “it simply ignores the fact that there are pure mental events, picked out in English by such words as ‘pain’, ‘after-image’, ‘purpose’, and ‘thought’, to which their possessor has privileged access” (96).

Chapter 4 ‘Interactive Dualism’ contains Swinburne’s argument for mental to physical causation. Swinburne’s argument proceeds thusly. It seems to us that our intentions cause bodily movements and given the principle of credulity, the seeming makes it epistemically probable that there is mental to physical causation. Swinburne then examines challenges to this view. These challenges, if successful, would provide evidence against the seeming; and if the counterevidence is powerful enough it would make it such that we are more justified in believing that there is no such causation. The first challenge comes in the form of an *a priori* argument for the causal closure of the physical. The idea is that unless we have a good explanation for mental to physical interaction we are not justified in believing that there is such interaction. But, Swinburne replies that it is absurd to claim that because we don’t know the mechanics that explain how a pin prick causes pain we should think that the physical event (the prick) doesn’t cause the mental event (the pain). Before we had chemical theory, we knew lots about chemical reactions (e.g., water puts out fire). He then turns to a challenge posed by recent neuroscience. Swinburne considers Libet-type experiments which show that there is some neural event prior to the formation of an intention. Some writers take these experiments to show that intentions are epiphenomenal. Swinburne claims that this research doesn’t show that intentions are causally inefficacious. Rather the research shows at most that the neural event prior to conscious intention is a necessary condition for the formation of an intention to move a part of one’s body. Next Swinburne considers evidence from large scale physical theory for the causal closure of the universe. He argues that developments in quantum mechanics undermines key principles in these arguments. These principles are (1) *any causal interaction involves an exchange of energy* and (2) *the rate of change of total energy in a closed region of space is equal to the total rate of energy flowing through the spatial boundary of the region*. Swinburne claims that quantum theory makes (2) dubious. Swinburne closes the chapter with a general argument that no experimental results of any science could be justification for the causal closure of the physical. These experimental results would depend on things like the veracity of research subjects and their intentions to speak the truth. But in that case they must suppose that there are mental events that cause certain physical events. The upshot of Swinburne’s argument is powerful. Given that it seems to us

that intentions cause bodily movements, these seemings justify us in believing that on the condition that there are no more powerful defeaters. But Swinburne argues that we could never have a defeater that arises from experimental results from any science. Consequently, the initial seeming is not defeated.

Ch 5 'Agent Causation' is a brief chapter defending the claim that the cause of a person's actions are not events within him but the agent himself. In some cases an agent aims to bring about an end and can do this in a basic way. For example, I can decide to move my arm. This action of mine is an instrumentally basic action. There is no recipe I consult in order to move my arm. Rather I can simply bring it about that I move my arm. One objection to Swinburne's line of reasoning here is that it might be that basic actions are really brought about by some distinct event inside a person. I believe Swinburne would respond to this objection by stressing that it follows from the principle of credulity that if a person appears to be the basic cause of an event then it is probable that a person is the cause. Moreover, the objections to agent causation are not probative enough to overcome the initial seeming of agent causation. Consequently, given the epistemological framework Swinburne argued for in chapter 2, it follows that it is probable that there is agent causation. Swinburne ends the chapter with a brief discussion of Hume's view of causation. Hume affirms that we have no impression of causal necessitation and so no 'idea' of a causal connection beyond a regularity of succession. Swinburne denies Hume's claim and affirms that we do have an idea of a causal connection because it does seem to us that we bring about certain acts. Swinburne then claims that since the principle of credulity states that what seems true is probably true and since we have no sound arguments against agent causation, it is probable that we are the causes of some events.

Chapter 6 'Substance Dualism' argues that persons are pure mental substances who can survive the destruction of their bodies. Human persons do not essentially have bodies. Persons endure through time in virtue of a primitive *thisness* had by each mental substance. Swinburne argues against views of personal identity according to which a person, *P1*, is the same person as *P2* if and only *P1* and *P2* have sufficiently many properties in common. Swinburne argues that it is metaphysically possible that two different substances share many properties and yet are distinct individuals. He closes the chapter with a discussion of the human soul (170-173). The soul is the essential part of a human which can continue to exist after the death of the body and has an individual's thinness (170). A human being then is a composite consisting of a physical body and a rational soul.

Chapter 7 'Free Will' defends a libertarian conception of free will according to which free will is incompatible with causal determination. Value beliefs, beliefs about goodness or badness, are crucial on Swinburne's account of free will. Value beliefs provide a subject with reasons to perform actions. No subject could believe that an act is good without having some reason to perform that action. The scope of individual decision occurs when a subject must decide to act on the reasons she has. In many cases a subject will face conflicting desires and must form an executive intention about the course of action she takes (184-5). The rest of the chapter discusses challenges to a libertarian conception of free will and the extent to which neuroscience can predict behavior.

Chapter 8 'Moral Responsibility' closes the book by discussing the criteria for someone being morally responsible and whether free will is sufficient for being morally responsible. Swinburne argues that persons are morally praiseworthy or blameworthy only for their intentions to perform certain actions (212). Moreover, the merit or demerit accruing to a subject is sensitive to whether or not it was within a subject's power to perform the act as well as the relative ease or unease in performing the action. Swinburne defends the view that free will and moral beliefs are necessary and sufficient for moral responsibility. He distinguishes his incompatibilist view from Fisher's reason-responsive compatibilist position (218-9). He defends the coherence of libertarianism from the challenge that indeterminism rules out moral responsibility (222-225). And finally he discusses the extent to which persons are responsible for actions in the past and the limits of free will (225-229).

The overall conclusions Swinburne reaches in this book are for the most part the same as *ES*. This book succeeds in providing a more thorough defense and discussion of substance dualism, libertarianism, and the criteria for moral responsibility. One notable difference in the philosophical landscape since *ES* initially appeared in 1986 is that Swinburne now stands in a growing company of philosophers at least sympathetic to substance dualism. William Lycan has observed that the prejudice against substance dualism in the past fifty years is without significant rational foundation (see William Lycan (2009) 'Giving Dualism its due' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87(4):551-563). Moreover, Richard Fumerton's recent book *Knowledge, Thought, and the case for Dualism* (Cambridge, 2013) offers a vigorous defense of substance dualism. I suspect we shall see even more discussion and defense of traditional dualist views in the near future. It is to a philosopher's credit to rationally defend views that, given the milieu of the time, do not stand up to socially preferred views. Swinburne's philosophical system certainly give us much to think about. Even if one disagrees with Swinburne's conclusions, it is a task to locate which premise is mistaken and to clearly explain why. Swinburne's latest book makes it even more difficult to resist his views about the nature of human beings.